



SPIRASI

SPIRASI

Newsletter

Issue 1: January – July 2007

Mary Hanafin Visits SPIRASI for Graduation Ceremony

The Minister for Education and Science, Mary Hanafin, TD, was a special guest of honour at a Further Education Training Award Certificate (FETAC) graduation ceremony held at SPIRASI in December 2006. At the ceremony, 36 students received FETAC certificates in Communication and a further 31 adult learners received in-house certificates of achievement.

Minister Hanafin in congratulating those receiving certificates said: "SPIRASI is a lovely, warm, happy, welcoming place to be. There is a real sense of celebration and achievement going on". Addressing the students, she continued, "To fully integrate, you have to be understood and understand. I see it in the schools where 24,000 children are without English as a first language. To ensure that all children learn and grow together, we have 1,150 teachers teaching only English as a language in our schools. But their English at school will not improve unless there is English at home. Parents need English to understand what teachers are saying at school and understanding children's education. But you are also learning English for yourselves, to feel comfortable in society."

Welcome to the first ever SPIRASI Newsletter!

This is a new venture for SPIRASI aimed at keeping you up to date on what's been happening over the past few months, and informing you of any upcoming events that SPIRASI has planned.

In the next few issues, we'll experiment with the design and layout of the newsletter, and we would greatly appreciate any feed-back you may have to offer! If any skilled graphic designers out there would like to donate some of their time and labour to helping us with this newsletter- we'd love to hear from you!

Feedback and queries can be directed to sduadmin@spirasi.ie

The Minister also mentioned that in many of the different nationalities and faces there can be loneliness, isolation. "People are cut off from family, from the world of work, from the culture and conversation that goes on in society. But the rest of Ireland is not going to learn your language. That is also why it is so wonderful that you are learning and upskilling all the time. Any certificate in education is an achievement. In your case, it is more than a certificate. You are opening doors- to education and to society. Your own cultural background is opening too." The minister concluded with the following perceptive comment, "You are taking steps toward inclusion and involvement in society, helping your families, yourself, your children and the wider Irish society. This certificate is only one step. But it is a lot more too. The great thing about education is that it never stops. And the great thing about FETAC is that you can keep working up."



CEIM Staff with Mary Hanafin at Graduation Ceremony

Director Fr. Michael Begley welcomed Ms. Hanafin to SPIRASI before a large assembly

of staff and students, and thanked the teaching staff for their enthusiastic dedication and professionalism. Fr. Begley reminded the Minister that the Trustees of SPIRASI, the Holy Ghost Congregation, are well known in Ireland for their historic commitment to second level education through their colleges: Blackrock, St. Mary's, Rockwell, St. Michael's and Templeogue College.

There is also an active involvement at third level through the various HETAC accredited courses offered at the Kimmage Development Studies Centre. He further noted the sterling reputation these courses have gained for innovation amongst development practitioners both here in Ireland and abroad.

Fr. Begley suggested that "perhaps less well known is the long standing tradition of the Trustees in founding and supporting NGOs with an international humanitarian remit such as Aidlink, Concern, Refugee Trust (now know as VITA), and the World Mercy Fund. SPIRASI, founded in 1999, is the latest in this honourable list of humanitarian organisations".

After outlining the various services currently offered by SPIRASI to asylum seekers, refugees and survivors of torture, he explained that "from the very beginning, we recognized that gaining proficiency in English as well as basic computer skills would be a primary pathway for refuge seeking immigrants to enhance their skills for active participation in Irish society. Equally, we realised that the 'learning wide' and 'learning deep' dimensions of adult learning are intrinsic in the process of integration, a key focus of our Centre for the Education and Integration of Migrants (CEIM)". The manager of CEIM, Egidie Dhala, outlined how this aspiration has been practically transposed into the delivery of a new full-time integrated 20 hour training programme with modules on English language, computer literacy, life skills and cultural orientation, art and mentoring support.

Art Projects

Visual Art

Wednesdays 9TH, 16TH, & 23RD May

IMMA, (Irish Museum of Modern Art)

This programme was devised to introduce participants to the world of contemporary art in Ireland and to see how they engage with the art that they see. Participants look at various exhibitions in the gallery and discuss what they think of the art. This discussion is followed by a practical workshop in visual art.

Photography

Thursdays, 17TH, 24TH, 31ST May & 7TH, 14TH June

Venue: Temple Bar Gallery & Studios

This is an outreach programme run by Temple Bar Gallery in connection with an upcoming exhibition 'Saphir' by French Algerian artist Zeneb Sedira. Participants will be introduced to the world of art photography through visits to galleries, meetings with artists and instructions on using photography as an art form. Participants will be invited to respond to Sedira's work both in discussion and more importantly through the use of their own photographic voice.

Photography

Friday 18TH May – 6th July. 9.30am – 12.30pm

Venue: SPIRASI

Photovoice is a method of instruction that believes that people who traditionally are 'depicted' by others should be empowered to depict their own lives as they would like to show them to others. The emphasis is on empowerment and storytelling.

Dance

Date, time and venue to be confirmed

NB: Men Only

This project is funded by the Arts Council and is led by Christopher Harrington. His artistic concept is to create a fictitious football team who will be depicted as mega heroes similar to the way the top league footballers are seen by the general public – The main difference is that this 'team' will be a multicultural one and the imagery produced will reflect what would normally be associated with superheroes – thus producing for the viewer a sense of appreciation of the valuable input that members of minority ethnicities can make in Irish society

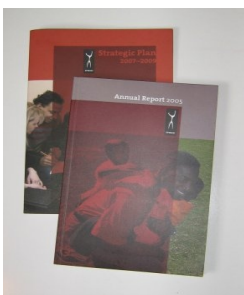
Drama

Starting in June (evenings)

Various Venues, including SPIRASI

This drama project will invite participants to join from Irish and minority ethnic communities. The participants will devise the direction and themes of the project. Anyone interested in drama, set design, play writing or just having fun is invited to contact Anne or Grainne at SPIRASI.

Upcoming Publications



With expert help from Development Consultant, John Grindle, SPIRASI completed a strategic planning process in December 2006. The resulting 'SPIRASI Strategic Plan, 2007-2009' outlines our shared priorities for the coming years. The Strategic Plan will be formally launched by Her Excellency

Priscilla Jana together with the 'SPIRASI Annual Report 2005' and the new-look SPIRASI website, on the 22nd June 2007 from 11am-12pm at SPIRASI. (All SPIRASI supporters and friends are welcome to attend this event.)

Above:
'SPIRASI Strategic Plan, 2007-2009'
Right: The new SPIRASI website



Drumming at the Festival Of World Cultures - 25th & 26th August

Following on from the wonderful success for the SPIRASI drummers who took part in the 'City Fusion' Pageant at the St Patrick's Day Parade we will be taking part in a drumming project at the World Cultures Festival in Dun Laoghaire this August. If you have some drumming experience you are invited to drop into SPIRASI and speak with Anne about getting involved. Drumming workshops will be held during the summer months. Everyone is welcome.

Storytelling Phase 1 – Gathering & Sharing Stories

Starting in June at SPIRASI

Participants are invited to come to these workshops and share stories from their childhoods. The stories will be recorded and transcribed and produced in book form. Participants will also be invited to train to tell stories to children. After training, participants will go to schools in Ireland to share their stories with the school children.

Storytelling Phase 2 – Telling Stories using Flash Animation

Starting in June at SPIRASI

This project will teach participants how to depict stories in cartoon form using a computer technique called FLASH ANIMATION. Participants will each recreate a traditional folk story from around the world in cartoon form. The intention is to introduce these stories to school children throughout Ireland. We believe that in learning to value these stories we also learn to value the people – and their cultures – that have brought them to Ireland.

Board of Directors

The Board of SPIRASI meets on a quarterly basis. Members of the Board include: Fr. John Coleman, CSSP (Chairperson), Dr. Mohammed Al-Sadr (Vice-Chair), Fr. Michael Begley, CSSP (Secretary), Dr. Michael Murphy, Dr. Paddy Roe, Mr. Chinedu Onyejelum and Mr. Patrick Killian McMorrow.

The board would like to thank Ms. Fionnuala Gilsean for her valued service as a SPIRASI Board member. She has been recently appointed as a development specialist to the Irish Embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Likewise, we acknowledge the sterling service of Ms. Anne Spollen who served for many years as recording secretary to the Board. In the past year, she has been recruited by the legal department of the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin. It is with much appreciation that we extend our best wishes to Fionnuala and Anne in their new and challenging occupational settings.

Upcoming Events:

Summer 2007

On **Wednesday 20th of June**, the **World Refugee Day Awards ceremony** will take place in the Atrium of the Civic Offices on Wood Quay.

On **Friday 22nd of June**, the South African Ambassador to Ireland, Her Excellency Priscilla Jana will publicly launch its 2005 Annual Report the Strategic Plan for 2007-2009 along with its new web-site. (Further details of the launch will be published on the SPIRASI web-site when confirmed.)

The **United Nations Day in Support of Victims of Torture** will be marked on the 26th June by the Centre for the Care of Survivors of Torture with a party for their clients.

On **Tuesday 10th July** staff and students of SPIRASI will be holding their first **Sports Day** in Grangegorman (*new date & venue*). This will be a fun day out with events including five-a-side football, volleyball, 100 meter sprint, relay race, egg and spoon race, and a 3 legged race.

On **Thursday 19th July** the students of the English classes will receive their certificates on the **SPIRASI Graduation Day** at 2pm at Wynne's Hotel on Lower Abbey St.

On **Friday 27th July** the SPIRASI **Summer Barbecue** will take place at 3pm at the back of the SPIRASI house.

All staff, volunteers and all other friends of SPIRASI are invited to each of these events (except the party for survivors of torture). If you would like to attend, please get in touch as we need to plan our catering based on the projected numbers of attendees.

Framework Document on Medico-Legal Reports for Survivors of Torture

According to the Director of SPIRASI, Fr. Michael Begley, the first quality international standard for the assessment and formal documentation of alleged torture for determination bodies is that found in the Istanbul Protocol (Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment). He explains that it is "developed by an international panel of 75 medical, legal, human rights and forensic science experts".

The Protocol outlines the procedures and details the steps to be taken by States, investigators, legal and medical experts to ensure the impartial medical and psychological investigation and documentation of alleged torture.

An important development in the Irish context is that the Istanbul Protocol formed the basis for the drafting of a 'Framework Document for the Production, Interpretation and Use of Medico-legal Reports in

Determining Refugee Status' which includes a format for Medico-legal reports and has now been adopted by examining physicians at the Centre for the Care of Survivors of Torture at SPIRASI.

This process was guided by the independent chair of the Dublin office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and at a multi-agency meeting held on 12th December 2006, a final draft of the Framework was completed by the principal parties: the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal, the Refugee Legal Services, and the Centre for the Care of Survivors of Torture at SPIRASI. Over the three year life cycle of negotiations, the Centre for the Care of Survivors of Torture at SPIRASI was represented by Fr. Michael Begley (Director), Dr. Patrick O'Sullivan (Senior CCST Physician), Edward Horgan (CCST Manager) and Greg Straton (SDU Manager).

It is anticipated that the 'Framework Document for the Production, Interpretation and Use of Medico-legal Reports in Determining Refugee Status' together with a more comprehensive compilation of relevant material in the form of annexes, such as the Istanbul Protocol, will be published during 2007. An international conference scheduled for 2008 is also planned in Dublin to explore related medico-legal issues.

The Director of SPIRASI, Michael Begley, firmly believes that "the importance of this agreement is that it will not only contribute to better quality medico-legal reports against an agreed international standard but also enhance a better understanding and use of them by representing solicitors and adjudicating authorities at both initial and appeals stages in the determination process".

Intercultural Evening

Sports Against Racism Ireland (S.A.R.I.) together with Bridewell Garda hosted a an event to welcome all new communities. On Friday the 27th of April, 21 SPIRASI students attended the Intercultural evening in The Park Inn Hotel, Smithfield, Dublin 7. Deemed Ireland's fastest growing intercultural event, many various new communities displayed their rich cultural heritage including food, drinks, music and traditional cloths. People from countries from around the world came together to celebrate cultural integration.

Staff News

After volunteering their services over the past year under the FÁS sponsored Local Training Initiative (LTI) programme at SPIRASI, two SPIRASI staff have been appointed to full time positions. Andreas Mokake has been appointed to the newly created post of Central Services Operations Officer and Fatima Gholizadeh is the newest administrator for the Centre for Care of Survivors of Torture.

Meanwhile, Dr. Jaseem Siddiqui, Dr. Eileen Keane and Dr. Abdul Bulbulia have been working as examining physicians since December 2006 while Eileen Cartin and Benny McCabe – both sessional psychotherapists – started their work with survivors of torture in April 2007.

The Strategy and Development Unit would like to wish Jenny Polden all the best in her new post and for the future. In her three years with SPIRASI, she has contributed a great deal to the work of the organisation.

At the same time, we would like to welcome on board Erin Thomas and Loreta Anele who will be working as grants-writer and financial assistant respectively.

James O'Brien and Sadet Vey currently share responsibility for the running of the busy SPIRASI reception service which so often involves multi-tasking skills. We want to congratulate Sadet who has recently returned from maternity leave on the occasion of the healthy birth of her first born child, Stefan.

World Refugee Day Awards 2007



Each year on 20th June, World Refugee Day, awards are given to celebrate Ireland as a country of welcome for asylum and refuge seekers and to highlight the positive contribution that asylum seekers and refugees have made to their local communities where they live. The awards highlight the positive contribution that asylum seekers, refugees and the local community have made in the integration process and are a way of reflecting the positive interaction between people across Ireland. Last year a dedicated and hard-working SPIRASI staff member, Deo Ladislas Ndakengerwa received an award in the "Health and Welfare" category and Catherine Butler, another member of staff received an award in 2005 for her dedication and commitment to survivors of torture.

SPIRASI,

213 North Circular Road,
Dublin 7.

Phone: **01 8389664**

Fax: **01 8686500**

Email: info@spirasi.ie

Web-Site: www.spirasi.ie

SPIRASI and its work is supported by: The European Refugee Fund, The European Institute for Democracy and Human Rights, The Health Service Executive, The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, The World Mercy Fund, The Holy Ghost Provincialate, FÁS, Pobal, CDVEC, The Family Support Agency and The Reception and Integration Agency.