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Information should be disseminated in a way that is accessible to all disabled people and in languages understood by minorities in that country.

European Commission

Accurate communication is an essential prerequisite for quality service provision. It is essential that information on language is captured in order to identify client needs.

NCCRI

Local service providers are heavily reliant on interpreting (spoken) and translation (written) services to facilitate equality of access to services that all persons are paying taxes for.

Daniel Holder

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CARLOW LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND ETHNIC MIGRANT GROUPS

- SITUATION ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

The presented document is an outcome of the Carlow Local Authorities' research aiming at analysis and better understanding of their ethnically diversified community and its own role within this community as the government services provider.

No one could predict at the beginning of this survey the scale of the problem under investigation. When the initiator – Carlow Local Authorities' Corporate Services Senior Executive Officer – for the first time discerned some cracks in this particular monolith Governmental service provider, he could not even imagine that it is not the façade but rather the fundament that required special attention and urgent treatment. The case examined in this document began to be studied at the same time as initial research for Carlow Corporate Services during my internship was started. This paper, therefore, is a result of the initiative taken by the Carlow Local Authorities to investigate already existing as well as potential problems that might arise from miscommunication with ethnic groups.

As proven further in this paper, Government representation and service delivery – the main objectives of the Carlow Local Authorities – need to be, in light of inward migration, broadened and re-considered since there might be some other problems arising together with the emergence of a multicultural society.

From presented later opinions and findings it became clear why this 'communication case' so frequently refers to *racism*, *discrimination* and *social inclusion*. It is not a surprise (and many practitioners and professionals have proven this) that improper communication caused by language and/or cultural differences is a direct reason for limited or distorted information flow which might lead to many forms of direct or indirect discrimination and, as a result, the social exclusion of certain groups of people.

Respectively, the objectives of this survey are:

- To raise awareness among the Carlow Local Authorities members about the scale of migration in the County.
- To indicate existing and potential communication problems with the Council's services in reaching ethnic migrant groups.
- To present the solutions and actions proposed and implemented by other Local Authorities that might be taken as a careful and forward-looking step towards migrants' social inclusion.
- To suggest recommendations both on how to communicate with those groups more effectively and by what kind of products' and services' adaptation the Carlow Local Authorities would be able to meet the actual needs of migrants.

1. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM STATEMENT

As a result of discussion with the Carlow Corporate Services Senior Executive Officer it turned out that CLA are facing a kind of *vicious circle* that has a direct link with communication aspects. Surprisingly, there is no hard evidence to prove whether cultural or language differences might cause problems in delivering CLA services. Lack of studies on that aspect makes it impossible to know what kind of needs this group may have and how these needs differ from those of the native citizens. This in turn may have a direct effect on the inability to produce and deliver required services/products.

The main concern of Carlow Corporate Services' Officer was the incapability of achieving Corporate Goals. In order to reach the highest standards of service delivery, CLA desired to be proactive in identifying potential problems while delivering quality services to a rapidly growing group of other nationalities living in County Carlow. The influx of mostly Eastern European citizens in the past three years, caused directly by EU enlargement, has put Carlow Local Authorities in a new situation: some of their Core Values like Service Quality and Efficiency might be jeopardised as there is no insight into the opinions, moods, expectations or needs of these present but never surveyed groups (Carlow Local Authorities, 2004).

The scheme presented below portrays the mechanism of this *vicious circle*:

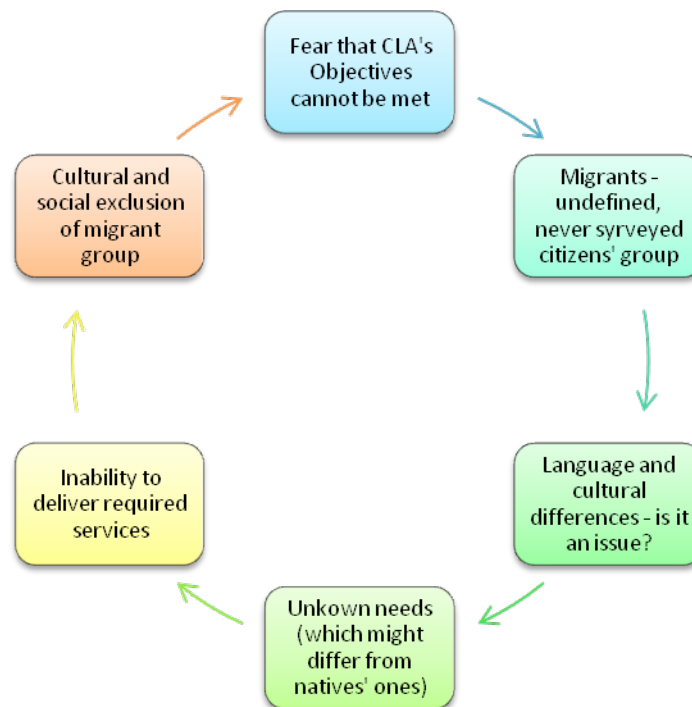


Figure 1: CLA Problem Statement graph

For the purpose of this research the following Problem Statement has been formulated:

To define the most suitable communication methods that would enable the Carlow Local Authorities to fulfil its Corporate Objectives in regards to communication with Carlow migrant groups.

In order to achieve that goal there was a need to narrow down the topic and grasp the problem from the right angle. Therefore the Central Question had to be stated:

What communication improvements (methods and tools) might enable the Carlow Local Authorities to become a more proactive provider of the highest standard services for a growing multinational County Carlow community?

To find the answer to this question it was necessary to find out what kind of actions the CLA has undertaken so far. How does a tailored communication plan with migrants look like? What is the CLA's attitude towards bilateral communication issues? Has a communication plan aimed at migrants ever been considered? What are the migrant groups' understanding, requirements, and ideas regarding communication with the CLA? Is there only a need for one-way 'sending-receiving' services or co-operation based dialog? These and even more queries waiting to be answered arose immediately at the beginning of the research.

To study this problem from the perspective of different public in the CLA field of forces, further sub-questions have been formulated:

1. How do Carlow Local Authorities assess the condition of their communication methods with non-Irish citizens?
2. Why do CLA consider communication with ethnic minorities as a problem that requires a survey?
3. To what degree are CLA aware of the scale of the problem with reaching migrant groups?
4. Are there any Governmental Institutions and/or NGO's that already deal with this problem?
5. What is the nature of the major obstacles that limit CLA delivering service processes?
6. What are the major migrant groups living in County Carlow?
7. What are the attitudes, expectations, complaints and wishes of those migrants?
8. What would be the best methods, tools that might improve service delivery by CLA?

Aiming at understanding the character and scale of this theme it may be convenient to picture Carlow Local Authorities' Public Groups. The identification of them is the first step before any other could be taken while considering preparation of a communication plan on latter stage (Herle, Rustema, 2005). CLA field of forces consists of:

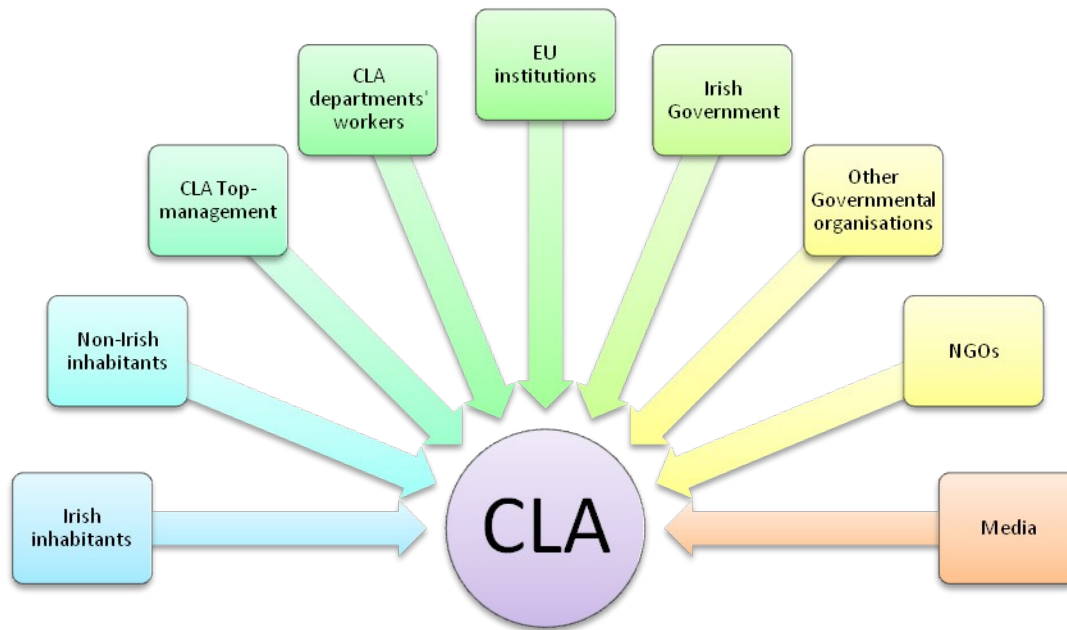


Figure 2: CLA Field of Forces

Obviously, not every stakeholder pictured above had the same importance while analysing CLA's problem. Since the main problem was rooted in external communication with CLA customers, it was reasonable to seek for information among those parties involved that have dealt with migrants to the highest degree.

1.1 JUSTIFICATION OF RESEARCH METHODS

According to Corporate Services' findings there are two groups identified within the CLA Field of Forces: four key-players from internal forces and five from the outside world. Because of practical reasons the research among the Internal Public has been decided to be as close to real life as possible. To do so, interviews and questionnaires have been considered as an information gathering tool. Consequently examination of the External Public has been divided. Some of e.g. the European Commission's documents were supposed to be found while conducting desk research. Other Governmental organizations, however (e.g. neighbouring counties) were asked for support in exchanging information and documents via e-mail.

The aim was to avoid 're-inventing a wheel' since some institutions might have already found interesting answers or observations on that topic. Choosing them as survey participants was done at random; mail with research help requests had been sent to 12 (out of 38 Irish and Northern Irish) counties whose contact details had been acquired by that time. These external sources include measures of the EU and the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI), solutions from Northern Ireland's County Tyrone as well as recent developments of the County Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown and County Louth.

The choice of four (out of 11) CLA departments was, however, a matter of calculation, based on discussion with Corporate Services Officer, pre-research. Therefore, the **Motor Tax Office** has been chosen for the biggest number of direct contacts with non-Irish County citizens on a daily basis. In this Department questionnaires have been proposed for two different target groups: MTO staff (a group of 11 people) and MTO customers. The purpose of this questionnaire was to examine the MTO staff experiences and opinions regarding migrant groups they deal with. It was meant to help to identify the core problems while dealing with migrants as well as to examine staff's opinions, comments and suggestions. The second one – Customers Questionnaire (CQ) was completed by 70 (out of 120 printed and displayed by a counter copies) non-Irish random customers of the MTO who, in that period of time, had made use of its services. All data has been given, collected and processed between September and December 2007. Even though those 70 people cannot be taken as the right representative sample group they could bring to light some interesting observations.

The Carlow Town Housing Department, similar to MTO, also has a high number of direct contacts with migrants while conducting face-to-face housing interviews, which assess the needs of particulars for a social housing scheme. For that reason interviewing one of the Department's officers was one of the actions of this research.

The same applied to the next step which was to interview the CLA **Social Worker**. The reason for choosing that particular person was his multi-task role within the CLA and his direct insight into the problems of migrants. This single person deals with social housing, domestic violence, vulnerable groups as well as single mothers and disability issues (mentioning only the most relevant ones). Additionally, to some extent, he fulfils the role of an Ethnic Liaison Officer, even though, officially, there is no such position within the County. In addition, in the perception of Corporate Services (and CLA top-management) he is responsible for all external relations with non-Irish citizens.

Community and Enterprise Department, the last of those considered for an interview, is dealing with all cultural and business-oriented initiatives of Irish and non-Irish citizens. Their experiences and opinions might be taken into account as a valuable source of information.

Unfortunately, all three interviewees: Carlow Town Housing, Community and Enterprise and Social Departments declined to be recorded and therefore their opinions are presented in **Appendix A** in a descriptive form only.

Finally, in order to keep the paper comprehensible and smooth while reading some abbreviations have been introduced. These are:

CLA – Carlow Local Authorities

CQ – Customers Questionnaire

MTO – Motor Tax Office

SQ – Staff Questionnaire

2. CLA SITUATION ANALYSIS

2.1 INSIDE CLA

Carlow County is area of 943 square kilometres. The principal towns in the county are: Carlow, Tullow, Muinebheag, Hacketstown and Borris. This, located in South-East Region County, became, in the recent three years, a very popular place for settlement of Eastern European citizens. Relatively low cost of living, a vast range of businesses and its close proximate to the Dublin airport are identified as the main factors that influence the attractiveness of this particular area. It is estimated that approximately 1/10 of the 50.000 inhabitants living in this County are newcomers, with Poles as the biggest single national group (Central Statistic Office Ireland, 2007).

According to their statement, the CLA are willing to:

(...) provide a quality local government service for the people of County Carlow, through the protection and enhancement of the environment and improvement in the quality of life.

The CLA consists of eleven Departments responsible for different areas of CLA's businesses which in brief are as follows:

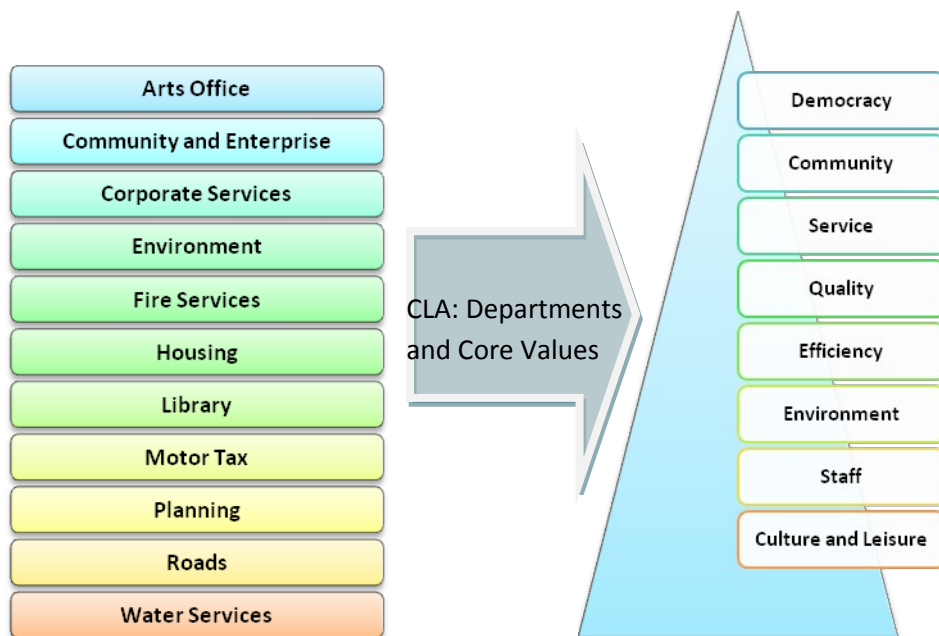


Figure 3: CLA Departments and Core Values

The Mission and Vision of CLA are presented in The Corporate Plan which states as its main objective **“to achieve change in the planning, management and delivery of quality services to the people of Carlow”** (Carlow Local Authorities, 2004).

According to their core values and vision described in their Corporate Plan, CLA are primarily focused on: listening to various public opinions, cultural diversity recognition, fair and efficient delivery of the highest quality services, environmental sustainability that might satisfy present and future community needs and finally conveying development opportunities for CLA staff and cultural and leisure amenity for all citizens (Carlow Local Authorities, 2008).

It is logical that desk research for all existing secondary data is simply not enough when dealing with a real-life problem solving case such as this. Respectively, this document includes interviews and questionnaires launched within the Carlow community among both service providers and receivers. This is meant to be the most important source of evidence regarding the real condition of the communication and the information flow between these parties.

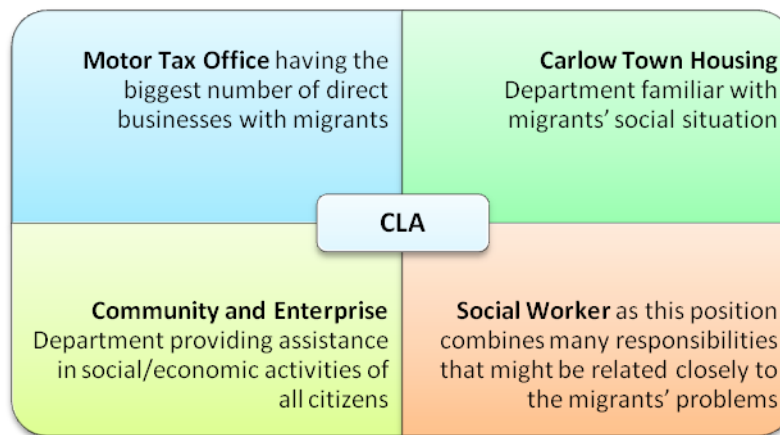


Figure 4: Surveyed CLA Departments

2.2 CLA EXTERNAL FORCES

An emphasis has been put on discovering how other Irish counties are dealing with this same issue; what kind of local policies enabled them to work on communication with ethnic migrant groups; how they response to their needs, and what are the national and supranational directives and regulations regarding this topic. In this respect CLA Field of Forces consists of five major groups from which three will be examined more closely:



Figure 5: CLA external stakeholders

All information gained from these institutions (as a secondary data from desk research as well as primary data obtained from correspondence exchange during the survey) form a solid base for an understanding of the CLA situation.

3. THE RESEARCH

As mentioned earlier the central concept of the whole research was based upon an initiative of CLA Corporate Services Senior Executive Officer. His interest in a deeper analysis and understanding of communication with migrant groups has been demonstrated already during the first conversation, two months before the official beginning of the whole survey. From this initial discussion it became clear that communication with migrants or even worse - the migrants' very presence in the county has become a kind of problematic issue.

On the one hand all parties involved, ranging from CLA Chancellors, through CLA higher and lower staff members, relevant persons of other Governmental institutions and NGO's, to the migrants themselves – seemed to be desperately seeking for any official confirmation of this new situation for the County Carlow – ethnic diversification. The reason for this feeling was simple – a growing number of non-Irish citizens on the streets of County Carlow, and subsequently more foreign customers seeking CLA services, as well as questions, and problems arising mainly from language differences. On the other hand both migrants and Irishmen have been acting 'blind', chaotically and in separation, without one set communication plan or strategy that would enable a consolidation of their efforts. Ethnic migrant groups demanded attention and CLA staff were unable to fulfil their needs – the Officer revealed.

“The client was very aggressive... Did not understand what I was saying”

Together with the start of the survey in September 2007, the CLA Corporate Services Officer has presented his findings from a few self-created questionnaires aiming at an analysis of the experiences of CLA Front Desk workers while dealing with migrants. All three participants have noticed in different periods of time that some non-Irish customers with basic English language skills were to some extent 'lost' in Irish administrative rules and did not know what kind of services from which department they might seek for. In one extreme case a frustrated foreigner could not hide his anger and, according to the surveyed staff member, was just a few steps away from the physical abuse of the officer (Nolan, 2007).

At the same time the Corporate Services Officer mentioned, with pride, that since a couple of months ago there have been made available informative booklets in four major foreign languages: Polish, Czech, Hungarian and Russian. The authors of this initiative – Officials of the South-East Regional Authority (SERA; this region next to Carlow includes also County Wexford, Kilkenny, Waterford and South Tipperary) have issued the booklets in those four East-European languages without any local survey. They took for granted data of Irish Central Statistic Office (SERA, 2007).

“Ethnic diversity – something to be valued and celebrated”

3.1 DESK RESEARCH FINDINGS AND FIRST FIELD RESEARCH REVELATIONS

Customer Service Action Plan was the first CLA document found while conducting desk research. Surprisingly, even though CLA have recognized increasing ethnic diversity in the Carlow community and claimed that this is “something to be valued and celebrated, with new cultural experiences to be shared to the benefit of all”, they focus only on the traditional Irish (Gaelic) language. It has been stated in this document that “The Carlow local authorities are anxious to ensure that all customers can avail of our services in Irish, English or bilingual” (Carlow Local Authorities, 2006).

Already at this point the validity of values expressed in the Corporate Plan seemed to be endangered by negligence of other languages. Respectively, the very first questions that needed to be answered were: “What are the languages of the major migrant groups?” and “On the basis of what sources was this information obtained?”

3.1.1 SITUATION FROM MTO STAFF PERSPECTIVE

At the beginning of October 2007 the first field research was accomplished. All eleven Motor Taxation Office staff members have handed in completed questionnaires which have shed some light on the ethnic character of CLA customers. What is more, their answers revealed not only the biggest migrant national groups but also confirmed language difficulties and tensions while dealing with migrants.

The Poles happened to be the biggest national group of CLA customers (91% of responses). 73% indicated Lithuanians as the second largest group and 55% claimed Latvians are the third biggest migrant community.

While asked: “What (if any) are the difficulties you encountered during the course of your work when dealing with members of the migrant population?” (SQ2) 90% indicated the language barrier, 64% lack of knowledge of available services.

There were some suggestions given by MTO staff regarding tackling these difficulties:

- ✓ Translation of relevant forms into the languages of the biggest migrant groups;
- ✓ Translation of some basic information sheets into the languages of the biggest migrant groups;
- ✓ Hiring a multilingual staff member;
- ✓ Translation booth/translator;
- ✓ A TV programme in the waiting room showing how to fill in forms correctly;
- ✓ Signs in other languages indicating opening hours of MTO;
- ✓ Explanation of required insurance details;
- ✓ General Information Desk to provide information on the basic services.

Having at that time findings from MTO Staff Questionnaire it seemed to be relatively easy to define target groups for CLA communication activities. However, desk research was being continued conducted and, even before it brought its first results, the nature of the ethnic population changed.

“Communication problems with migrants? We are about to fall into recession – they will leave the country. I don’t see there’s a problem!”

This was an unofficial statement a Social Worker has repeated from some CLA top-management officer. According to the Social Worker, there was no space for discussion on how to deliver CLA services to migrants effectively or how to break down language barriers. Instead, top-managers hoped that no actions would need to be taken and that the problems would vanish with the migrants’ disappearance. Of foremost importance was to familiarise County Council management with statistics – the scale of the presence of ethnic migrant groups in Carlow area.

The Officer stressed that even though Authorities are aware of the existence of a vague non-Irish group within Carlow society, lack of firm actions which should have been taken so far to foster social inclusion might be caused by unawareness of the extent of this phenomenon. Therefore, presenting them with the most updated statistical data might be the best ‘eye-opener’ and also an impulse for more active behaviour (Social Worker, 2007).

It seemed that CLA management’s attitude towards the whole issue of migrants’ presence within Carlow County needed to be changed.

3.1.2 'UNSEEN' STATISTICS

With this information in mind it became very important to collect some statistical data that would give a picture of the Irish population. This could help to understand that the issue of immigration is a relatively new trend in Ireland as for several years this country has been facing the emigration, it is a matter of fact.

Respectively, data from National Census held by the Irish Central Statistic Office in 2006 indicated the presence of new citizens. It is worth remembering that the pace of immigration increased before 2006 has not slowed down yet and as a result the data presented below might not reflect the real *status quo* of Ireland today.

“Take Bagenalstown – the population ratio there is fifty-fifty!”

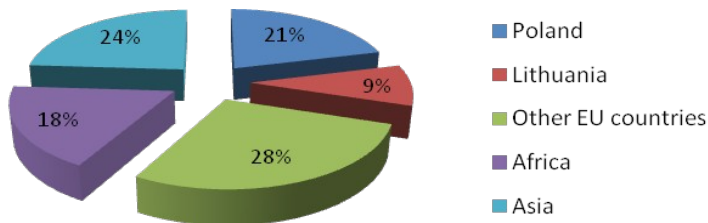
According to Central Statistic Office, foreigners (mainly Eastern-Europeans) became a strong force within this small (counting 4 millions inhabitants) country. Comparing it to other EU countries (e.g. The

Netherlands, UK or France) the major non-native group in Ireland are Poles (their number exceeds the total number of migrants from all Asian and African countries together). In the opinion of the CLA Social Worker, in some County Carlow towns, such as Bagenalstown, the population ratio is 50% native and 50% foreigners.

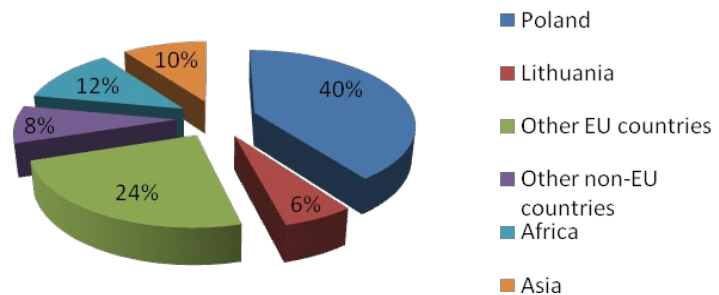
EU countries	Number
Poland	33.397
Lithuania	7.376
Latvia	4.052
Slovakia	3.622
France	3.375
Spain	3.119
Germany	2.885
Czech Republic	1.917
Netherlands	949
Non EU countries generally	Number
Asia	8.749
Africa	3.260

Figure 6: Census 2006 – Usual Residence and Migration (Central Statistic Office Ireland, 2007)

Although the presence of diverse ethnic groups is visible, their numbers on the national level might differ from those in particular region and county. Therefore, the graphs shown below might help to look at that situation from more narrowed down perspective: migrant inhabitants of Leinster - Carlow's Region and County Carlow itself (Central Statistic Office Ireland, 2007).



Leinster Region Ethnic Population 2006



Carlow Ethnic Population 2006

Figure 7: Leinster and Carlow Population 2006

In order to make *Census 2006* more up-to-date some queries were sent to both Central Statistic Office and An Garda Síochána (Irish Police) regarding the most recent data. Retrieved findings gave more details which actually confused the situation regarding the migrant population in Ireland rather than clarifying it.

It turned out that there are no other surveys to date. CSO replied simply that their *Census 2006* “is the most up-to-date data produced by the CSO” and the Police were even more astonishing in their answer admitting openly that:

“Gardaí do not collate figures on all non Irish citizens. EU citizens are not recorded”

Regardless of any other (e.g. population or crime monitoring) drawbacks of such behaviour this situation disheartens any initiatives for developing a communication plan as there is no insight into the character of the audience. The identification of a dialog partner and developing communication methods in an ethnically diversified society is crucial as, quoting M.Vos and H. Schoemaker (2005): “Messages can have a different *significance* when they are interpreted in another culture or context” and respectively, without understanding of the most basic cultural differences a process of *encoding* and *decoding* information might not meet desired goals.

At this point of the research, having in mind the MTO SQ results, the Social Worker opinions and statistical data, it appeared that there was little doubt that Ireland had indeed joined the group of multicultural states of the modern world.

As the research went on – the questionnaires filled in by MTO customers, planned interviews were waiting to be carried out and research help requests were sent away to neighbouring counties – further desk research data was found.

3.1.3 CLA CASE VERSUS EU AND NATIONAL IRISH DIRECTIVES

To keep order while searching for information, it was decided to start desk research from the top, namely from EU level. The European Commission’s understanding of this issue is important. If there are any directives that should be taken into account by all Member States they, respectively, should be considered by their local representatives.

“Information should be disseminated in a way that is accessible to all disabled people and in languages understood by minorities in that country”

This Statement of the European Commission has been found in the document *Developing Anti-discrimination Law in Europe – The 25 EU Member States compared* (European Commission, 2007). In the same document one can find a compilation of the laws of all EU Member States that focus on the

question of direct and indirect discrimination of the ethnic minorities with special emphasis put on language as the aspect of communication with migrants.

Furthermore, The Commission of the European Communities (2005) agreed that “the EU needs to develop appropriate responses to the different needs of new migrants, established minorities of immigrant origin and other minority groups”. In the light of this project, local authorities have been asked to undertake more proactive measures, like communication with migrants in their native languages to combat discrimination while delivering services (due to the language barrier) and also to investigate the needs of those ethnic minorities which might differ (due to cultural differences) from the local inhabitants’ ones.

Additionally, already in 2004 *The Green Paper* document was published as another tool that might help to foster better communication with ethnic minorities. It has been recognized that non-discrimination legislation and related policies, measures and by-laws can support Member States’ efforts to promote the inclusion and participation of minorities in States’ social life.

The Chapter 3.6 of *The Green Paper* (European Commission, 2004) document says:

With regard to migrants and ethnic minorities, national measures in the employment and social inclusion field continue to place the main emphasis on the need for migrants and members of ethnic minorities to adapt, most notably through integration measures, such as language courses. While these initiatives are important, they should be accompanied by measures that address the potentially discriminatory behaviour, attitudes or practices of the *majority* of the population, which can prevent a migrant or member of an ethnic minority from accessing a job or service or training course irrespective of his or her qualifications, experience or language ability.

In order to reach above mentioned requirements, all Local Authorities should:

- ✓ Identify ethnic minorities within its community
- ✓ Identify problems in delivering the governmental services to a diversified society
- ✓ Identify specific needs of each particular ethnic group
- ✓ Fulfil these needs in the most appropriate way

“Accurate communication is an essential prerequisite for quality service provision. It is essential that information on language is captured in order to identify client needs”

Tracing down the problem of delivering Governmental services to migrants on a local level - The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism has been found to be an expert Irish organization on multiculturalism.

This Governmental organisation played a key role in the preparation of the National Action Plan against Racism which “provides the strategic direction to develop a more inclusive, intercultural society in

Ireland through reasonable and common sense strategies that have the potential to receive broad support across Irish society” (Diversity Ireland, 2006). Not surprisingly while visiting the NCCRI website it is easy to find a number of related publications such as:

Challenging Myths and Misinformation about Migrant Workers and their Families – a comprehensive leaflet about the main aspects of this newly emerged citizen group;

Improving Government Services to Minority Ethnic Groups – Useful Terminology for Service Providers – an eminently valuable glossary of main expressions and related wording;

Polish Migrant Workers in Ireland – bilingual (English-Polish) report on the presence, situation and indeed all issues related to that particular group living in Ireland.

Nevertheless, the most important, from the perspective of this survey, are two subsequent publications highly recommended to further studies for all those who want to truly and deeply embrace the problem of communication between local authorities and migrants. These are: *Improving Government Services Delivery to Minority Ethnic Groups* accompanied by the report *How Authorities Provide Services to Minority Ethnic Groups* (both works comprise studies not only from Republic of Ireland but additionally also those launched in Northern Ireland and Scotland).

The whole spectrum of the NCCRI actions indicated in *Improving Government...* has been set upon its positive statutory duty which should be acknowledged by Carlow Local Authorities in the first instance as “obligations on public authorities to be proactive rather than reactive” (NCCRI, 2006).

What might be relevant from the local CLA perspective is that in light of that publication 95% of surveyed migrant groups’ representatives indicate the language issue as the most important while seeking access to public authorities. The same number of respondents sees lack of understanding of cultural differences as the main barrier. This was manifested in various forms, for instance: an officer talking to a woman only while dealing with Muslim couple or expressing low power distance while dealing with representatives of a high power distance culture. Such behaviour, according to Herle and Rustema is a very frequent, problem-causing approach of unaware representatives of the Western culture (Herle, Rustema, 2005).

Having in mind governmental and local authorities’ service provision, NCCRI enhances local authorities by:

- ✓ Sharing cross-border experiences (among Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland according to this publication);
- ✓ Understanding and tackling racism through information campaigns;

- ✓ Positive duties ‘more action than bureaucracy’ (“government service providers must be proactive”);
- ✓ Member staff training, even though not sufficient in itself, is considered “a valuable tool in an overall package of measures to address racism and promote the inclusion of minority ethnic groups” (NCCRI, 2006).

Summing up desk research, NCCRI suggestions, recruitment and employment policies that focus on teaching staff additional languages or hiring bilingual office workers are of the high importance for today's Irish government service providers. Seeking communication improvements CLA should make use of those presented by NCCRI observations and recommendations.

3.2 ‘IN-DEPTH’ PRIMARY DATA OF FIELD RESEARCH

From mid-November 2007 the main element of field research started to yield some relevant information. While waiting for the MTO Customers completed questionnaires, there was time to find out the opinion on this topic among representatives of the chosen CLA departments and other counties’ officers.

All received e-mails from neighbouring counties’ Liaison Officers and Social Workers were written in a very enthusiastic way. They consisted of many relevant hints, instructions and suggestions focusing on the communication with as well as serving and working for ethnic minorities’ communities. At the same time all interviewed CLA workers failed to hide their dissatisfaction and frustration. Surprisingly, their worries did not stem from the lack of communication plan with migrants, but from CLA Management's incorrect attitude.

“Local service providers are heavily reliant on interpreting (spoken) and translation (written) services to facilitate equality of access to services that all persons are paying taxes for”

3.2.1 ANIMATE OF NORTHERN IRELAND VERSUS CLA SOCIAL WORKER'S EXPERIENCES

The ANIMATE (Action Now to Integrate Minority Access to Equality) Project launched in County Tyrone Borough is an official programme that analyses many aspects of difficulties and opportunities which, due to migration phenomenon, have arisen between ethnic groups and local authorities with regards to communication, social inclusion and integration. The document *Issues facing Migrant Workers and their families in Northern Ireland* written by Daniel Holder covers, among other things, the role of the Public Services.

In the chapter 6 *Public Services: Specific Issue* Holder (Holder, 2007) persuades:

The role local government can play in promoting equality and cohesion is both crucial and multifaceted. First there are specific legal duties to lead tackling racism within respective local

government districts. Second local government needs to ensure its own provision; policy and services are available to migrant workers on an equitable basis. Third local government, alongside NGOs can become a crucial lobbying voice on public service, policy and related issues that are outside its own powers.

Considering communication as a means for better service delivering processes which enhance social inclusion, integrity and cohesion, ANIMATE acknowledges that it is very important to promote the “bilingual practitioner models and initiatives to mainstream language skills” enhanced by translation services as well as interpreter training (Holder, 2007).

While talking about language as a key-element for better communication and a guarantee for service provision, the CLA Social Worker stressed the importance of qualified translators and/or interpreters. In order to support social inclusion, the interviewee highlighted the value of the presence of qualified, evaluated for validity and confidentiality, professional interpreters. Migrants’ children (who usually have better English proficiency than their parents) in many occasions play this role. It has been proven, however, that in situations where children are taking the role of their parents (while translating) it distorts proper parent-child relations. It also has to do with moral and ethical aspects since many adult problems (sexuality- or health-related ones) should not be children’s matters as they might cause harm in their proper growth (Social Worker, 2007).

On the other hand, qualifications of the translator/interpreter can not be overestimated in regards to cultural background of particular citizens. The interviewee gave some examples of the critical situations that might arise from the services of not properly chosen and evaluated interpreters (despite their language predispositions). The examples mentioned are: different gender interpreter in Arab culture (representatives of the Muslim culture in Carlow have Middle East, Africa and Asia origin), Serb translating Croat (many post-Yugoslavians escaped from Balkan’s war to Ireland) and Hutu serving Tutsi (both Rwanda’s tribes’ refugees are present in Ireland). In all these situations the religious, political, historical and cultural aspects still have too serious meaning to be ignored by Authorities while hiring *ad hoc* interpreters (Social Worker, 2007).

Respectively, in received from ANIMATE document, Holder points out that despite relatively well-developed multilingual services delivery in Northern Ireland:

- ✓ The gaps identified within some areas of the public sector need to be acted on;
- ✓ There is a need for a HR strategy for the public to mainstream language skills;
- ✓ Education sectors need to consider English and other languages as essential skills;
- ✓ There is an acute need across service providers to raise awareness on languages and the realities of language acquisition along with tackling insensitivities and prejudices.

The Social Worker’s criticism of CLA was not difficult to understand in the light of the correspondence with counties in the vicinity . In that period of time, right after the interview with the Social Worker, Officers of other Irish Local Authorities have sent inflammatory descriptions of their projects.

3.2.2 COUNTY DUN LAOGHAIRE-RATHDOWN VERSUS CARLOW TOWN HOUSING DEPARTMENT

One of a number of interesting actions taken upon the examination of communication with migrants was launched in 2007 by the Anti-Racism and Diversity Steering Committee of the Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Authorities. The main objective of this Plan was to:

(...) develop a coordinated approach to service delivery at local/county strategy level that is consistent with the aims and objectives of the National Action Plan Against Racism (Roe, 2007).

The *Report of a Consultation Process with Minority Ethnic Groups in the County Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown* was a part of County's development of so-called *Moving Forward Together: An Anti-Racism and Diversity Plan for the County Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown* and can be taken as a very good example of a proactive and forward looking approach of local authorities.

All data and observations gained in this Report, together with drawn conclusions and proposed recommendations embrace such variety of aspects as:

- ✓ The overall (positive and negative) experiences of migrants living in Ireland
- ✓ Direct and indirect racism and discrimination incidents
- ✓ The role of the Garda Síochána
- ✓ Migrants' perception of the employment process and the workplace

The most relevant findings are related to the language and communication issues (presented in Chapter 4) and the study on accessing the *Public Services* (Chapter 8) as well as the subsequent and more general *Accessing Information* (Chapter 9).

A very general overview of their answers might be taken as confirmation that lack of English proficiency is the biggest barrier on the way to integration; it limits the communication with public service providers, impinging socialisation and integration and as a result could cause the creation of ghettos – according to Roe (2007).

Furthermore, the Report reveals that lack of understanding of cultural differences, together with shortages of qualified interpreters might be a direct source of serious miscomprehensions:

Many respondents talked about the difficulties they had in accessing information on various services such as English classes, the Visa Office, the Motor Tax Office, the Irish education system, healthcare, citizens' rights, legal aid, and gaining employment (Roe, 2007).

In that respect participants of focus groups gave the following suggestions to the Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown authorities (which might be, without any bigger moderations, proposed and implemented by CLA):

- ✓ Designing the website in different languages
- ✓ Provision of information leaflets or a handbook in languages other than English
- ✓ Provision of forms in Governmental Offices
- ✓ Hiring interpreters and employment of ethnic minorities in Citizen's Information Offices and Governmental Offices
- ✓ Active recruitment of ethnic minorities into civil service positions

“The majority of staff is not suitable to fulfil their tasks anymore”

An unexpectedly strong contradictory view has been presented by the next local interviewee – a Carlow Town Housing Department officer. While asked how her department responds to the migrants' need she openly admitted that there are almost no actions taken to promote equal information access: not all front line officers are trained how to deal with migrants or disabled people.

Answering the question: “How do the Carlow Town Housing Department reach non-English speakers as there are no brochures in foreign languages?” she openly admitted that in order to do so the national migrant groups must be identified first. Unfortunately, the database, forms and official applications do not include details of applicants' nationality and no studies have been launched on the number of ethnic minorities' members seeking this particular Department's help. This poses a direct problem in acquiring information on their ethnic background, therefore further steps towards the introduction of informative leaflets or acquiring translators/interpreters cannot be reached.

As a main reason for this situation the interviewed officer suggested: the lack of one coherent vision or plan on how to deliver Housing services. There is no project that might be successfully designed, launched and accomplished by one responsible person and, as there is no policy to do so, the officers might be asked to leave their duties and change department from day to day. Correspondingly, this kind of situation is worsened by the fact that the majority of staff are not suitable to fulfil their tasks anymore - most of office workers have been hired 20 or 30 years ago when Ireland was a forgotten land on the European map. Together with the emergence of a multicultural society, who's growth is unprecedented in history, all Local Authorities need to seek for skilled, open-minded officers familiar with the multicultural issues (Carlow Town Housing Department, 2008).

3.2.3 COUNTY LOUTH VERSUS CLA COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE DEPARTMENT

The last example of Local Authorities proactive behaviour came with the mail from County Louth. To date their *Challenge for Change Project* aiming at enhancement of intercultural understanding has included:

- ✓ Development of the *Anti-Racism and Diversity (ARD) Plan for Louth*
- ✓ Organisation of events to mark Intercultural week and Anti-Racism in the Workplace Week
- ✓ Securing of EU funding for *Challenge of Change* project jointly with Newry and Mourne District Council (with emphasis on the service provision aspect)
- ✓ Provision of funding for intercultural events in Louth
- ✓ Council staff attendance at North/South intercultural forum
- ✓ Assistance in the setting up of Polish Support Group (*Polski Louth*) in 2007
- ✓ Translation of documents
- ✓ Provision of phone and face-to-face interpreting service (commencing later in 2008)

Many more expectations, however, have been put into the above mentioned *Challenge of Change* project (the project is still underway). Together with the creation of an officer vacancy specifically assigned to that particular project, County Louth desires to:

- ✓ Develop a Citizen's Charter Against Racism which would be adopted by and incorporated into Councils' code of conduct
- ✓ Launch staff attitude surveys "which feed into: a programme of joint training for all staff of both organisations focusing on cultural diversity, anti-racism and the delivery of services to people from different ethnic backgrounds"
- ✓ "Investigate the feasibility of employing bi-lingual workers within the Local Authorities"
- ✓ Promote anti-racism and Interculturalism by liaising with all local communities (voluntary groups, employer, trade unions etc.)
- ✓ Create an open-access database in County Louth containing interpreters and translators
- ✓ Offer a variety of training for ethnic minority community representatives
- ✓ Organize a conference directly related to the *Challenge of Change* issues in June 2008

The above presented and already introduced innovations and actions taken might be understood as some feasible suggestions which, if introduced with care and commitment could, to a high degree, improve not only service delivery process but also an overall coexistence regardless geographical situation.

Interestingly, Community and Enterprise Department officer's opinions (least critical among all CLA interviewees) were expressed with a very similar tone; more seeking for understanding and a change of attitude towards newcomers within Carlow society than pointing out drawbacks and shortages of any other nature.

“The positive discrimination – careful and inclusive policy”

When asked what CLA should take into account concerning a high quality service delivery for ethnic groups, the Officer has acknowledged that although small improvements do not guarantee a corporate sustainability, they should be done in the best possible way. In other words, the County’s Authorities should seriously think about incorporating some new standards of values into their Code of Conduct. It should be clarified in so-called *universal access policy*.

What the respondent meant by this term was, generally speaking, to guarantee all citizens the same high level of access to information, services and products. No matter if it would be an English-, Gaelic-, Arab- or Hindu-speaking, deaf or blind customer, with or without a wheelchair, or the Travellers’ or Romanian Gypsy’s group representative – the full set of officially available governmental products should be obtainable to them.

The interviewee emphasised, however, that every department should be *inclusive* – proactive and not reactive in the social inclusion process. An introduction of multilingual brochures and interpreters or improvement of access for disabled is not enough to secure the CLA’s services sustainability. What should also be done, and what should be the source of main concern, is how to change the top management’s attitude towards multinational issues. The first line officers cannot be asked for a full commitment as long as they remain unsupported from above. A new approach from those at the top of CLA should be re-considered.

If this remains unchanged, the respondent summed up, the whole set of improvements of any kind, as well as debates about social inclusion, would be nothing more than a ticking-off ‘of the things to be done’ from the governmental list with no deeper understanding of their meaning.

The *positive discrimination* – careful and inclusive policy of hiring disabled or ethnic minority members might be the first step towards service delivery improvement. The introduction of ready-to-print forms in many languages (including Braille), clear and comprehensible departments’ and rooms’ signage within County and Town Hall buildings, training for staff members on how to deal with other cultures’ representatives, training on how to use devices for people with hearing problems or making available a low counter for those in wheelchairs – all these measures should be introduced as soon as possible.

The above interview, carried out in January 2008, and the following one held with a Community and Enterprise Department representative have shown crack in CLA staff’s common goals and shared values. The opinions within CLA were divided; examples from outside overshadowed local developments and the opinions of the most interested group – migrants – remained unknown. The last part of this survey – the outcome of the MTO Customers’ Questionnaire might now decide whether or not improvement of communication between CLA and migrant community was just a matter of the introduction of simple technical tools and devices.

“What limits the quality of MTO services is: lack of forms in own language, lack of MTO’s website in own language and lack of native officer – 97% of responses”

3.2.4 MTO CUSTOMERS’ VOICE

MTO Customers’ Questionnaire was held between 15 October and 15 December 2007. As mentioned above, it was completed by 70 non-Irish customers of MTO who in that period of time have made use of its services.

In the process of gaining information all MTO workers were engaged; they were asked to propose a questionnaire, to be filled out, to every person they thought might have non-Irish roots.

The results of this survey have brought the following findings:

The absolutely dominating group were Poles (CQ8); they completed 46 forms (almost 66%) against 5 Lithuanian and 4 Latvian. Surprisingly, there was no visible comparable domination of any other citizens from European nations filled out 2 questionnaires each (alphabetically): Botswana, Great Britain, Hungary and Romania. To highlight the ethnic diversity of the county the following nationalities delivered one form each: Estonian, French, Indian, Nigerian, Russian, Serbian and Ukrainian.

Although 57% of the respondents declare that they have been resident in Ireland for longer than 2 years and 21% over 1 year (CQ9), almost 1/3 have had language-related problems while dealing with local administration and institutions (CQ7) and a further 18% have language-linked communication problems on a daily basis (CQ6).

At the same time, over 60% feel unbounded by the language problems while dealing with the Irish community (CQ6) and for 53% administration-related tasks do not pose any problem (CQ7). This high level of self-confidence which might indicate that there is no need for any improvements is, however, slightly overshadowed by the responds for CQ5 - what limits the quality of MTO services. The answers to that question are: lack of forms in own language – 54%, lack of MTO’s website in own language – 26.6% and lack of native officer – 17%.

Most of the customers were looking for a basic service: a Motor Tax Renewal (81.4%) and at the same time many of Carlow’s minority representatives sought for the information about Full Driving Licence and were willing to exchange their national one (CQ1) into Irish.

An overall assessment of the quality of the MTO services was for 97.1% excellent or good (CQ2) and it resulted from: kindness – 27 answers; efficiency and good timing – 26 answers; good overall service – 16 answers and assistance of the Polish officer during the survey– 15 answers (CQ3).

MTO is one of the CLA divisions which deals with migrants on a daily basis. Therefore it was not difficult to find out from them what the expectations are regarding the improvement of the service provision. These are:

- ✓ Information obtainable in own languages;
- ✓ Presence of the Officer or interpreter speaking their language;
- ✓ Introduction of multilingual leaflets, brochures and forms as the source of information and a specimen for correct filling;
- ✓ Creation of the County's multilingual internet website.

Unfortunately, despite several attempts, St. Catherine's Community Services Centre and local media (pictured in the Figure 5) could not be included in this research due to lack of reaction during the survey.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The initial character of this research seemed to concentrate around basic communication tools and methods the introduction of which would help to improve CLA communication and service delivery to migrant communities. These were the first expectations and intuitions of the Corporate Services Officer. During the survey, however, primary evidence supplemented by secondary findings of desk and field research have shown that what seemed to require a 'technical cosmetic treatment' was in fact a serious syndrome of CLA corporate malfunctions.

Communication aspects (theories and tools) such as those proposed by other Counties (introduction of multilingual website and brochures, forms and leaflets, hiring officers from ethnic groups, socio-cultural training courses for CLA staff members) have become, in light of these findings, just small facets of a bigger and more complex issue. Obviously, CLA are facing not just a local communication problem with migrant communities as the whole County becomes a part (or a victim) of an inevitable globalisation process.

The research has proven that CLA have to deal not only with language-based, culturally-caused miscommunication but with a behaviour which might jeopardise their Objectives, mainly due to negligence and indifference among CLA top-management. What has been revealed while studying CLA was a rising crisis among their workers.

This, however, might have its origins not only in the poor judgement of CLA decision-makers but rather in the strength and scale of the migration phenomenon both locally and globally. This is also evidence that there was a weak information campaign launched on the national level which did not reach and/or convince CLA management; a result of insufficient corporate communication between Irish Authorities. The figure below might illustrate the situation:

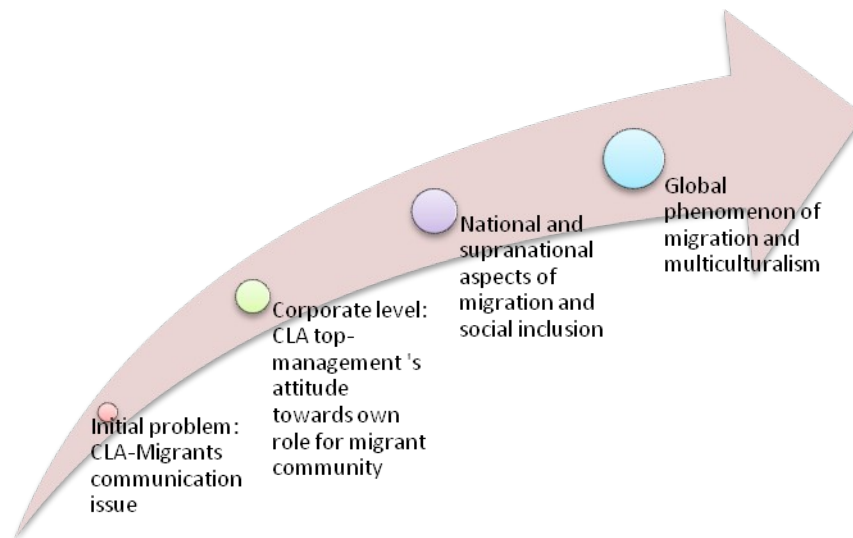


Figure 8: Different levels of CLA problem

4.1 SWOT ANALYSIS

Although CLA are facing multifaceted problems, SWOT analysis might help to present and recognize the factual CLA condition. To reiterate: the main objective of Carlow Local Authorities is listening to the various public opinions, cultural diversity recognition, as well as fair and efficient delivery of the highest quality services to the public (Carlow Local Authorities, 2004).

In that respect what hampers and what poses challenges for CLA is:

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Governmental organisation – unlimited resources of information and experts' support	Top-management's indifferent, overconfident attitude towards migrants' situation within Carlow community	Geographical situation attracts businesses→ in-migration→ overall growth→ CLA as a friendly host	Problems in service delivery→ impossibility to realise Corporate goals
Care for preservation of Governmental norms of Public Service's Code of Conduct	Lack of cohesion between Departments and some staff members in reaching Corporate Objectives	Easiness in avoiding 're-inventing the wheel' thanks to exchange of information and experiences with other Irish counties	Staying behind other Irish counties that are implementing diversity programmes
Small scale of the CLA – easiness to identify problems and get the message across	Small scale of CLA→ limited resources (human and material) from national level →no funds for studies, projects etc.	Possibility to become a 'place-worth-to-live-in' if equal access to services and high standard of life guaranteed	Marginalisation of migrants→ violation of national and international norms
Strong group of aware, critical and engaged in the migrants' issues workers (among people from Corporate Services and other Departments)	Lack of database embracing experiences of other institutions and NGO's	Presence of education centres (Institute of Technology, St. Patrick's College and VEC)→ multinational students→ easiness to launch studies on their needs/moods	Weakened Corporate identity→ deformed image→ dropping citizens' satisfaction
CLA as host of thriving Irish community	Gaelic Irish as a second official language→ unequal position of other languages	The same institutions can achieve understanding of multinational community	Outflow of migrants' workforce

Figure 9: SWOT Analysis

CLA bottlenecks seem to have three main layers: external – on national governmental level; external/internal – a corporate top-bottom communication within Irish Local Authorities and finally internal – applying to CLA only. It appears that the aspect of interconnected bottlenecks on the corporate level was, according to *casual model* mentioned by the authors of *Setting up a strategic*

communication plan (Vos, M., Otte, J., Linders, P., 2003), a direct source of the CLA external communication problem. Following the suggestions of these specialists, the key-issues of this case are:

- a) Priority – the core problem requiring urgent action is improvement of internal corporate morale by realisation of a proper corporate communication policy. This applies to CLA staff as their trust towards top-management ebbed and the role and mission of Local Authorities has been undermined. There should be set a well-thought out communication plan for day-to-day service for ethnically diversified society.
- b) Perspective – as it was Corporate Services who discerned the issue of communication with migrants, they should also be employed as the main problem-solvers; their actions should be taken in regards to customers, middle staff and top-management.
- c) Causes – this situation, as mentioned before, might originate from:
 - ✓ improper internal communication of Irish Authorities (visible in lack of coherence among all Local Authorities);
 - ✓ ‘old-fashioned’ perception of some local decision-makers on their passive representative role in the society and their indifference to the up-to-date character of the country;
 - ✓ Inability to implement Core Values (shared by all Local Authorities) within CLA; lack of well-trained staff – inability to discern and answer the needs of migrants.
- d) Communication’s role – ironically, Corporate Services’ care and commitment to serve migrants have brought into the light a much more serious problem than underdeveloped external communication; even though this aspect should be taken into consideration, more attention should be paid to improvement of internal and corporate communication of CLA.

Respectively, three communication goals might be formulated:

- ✓ To change the top-management’s attitude towards migrants’ presence in the county
- ✓ To work on cohesion in understanding of corporate CLA Core Values, Mission and Vision statement among CLA staff members
- ✓ To assure high quality day-to-day service provision for migrant community

It seems that the crucial role in introducing a new plan of action and initiation of any changes is assigned to CLA Corporate Services; this Department has discerned a problem at the beginning, decided to examine it and, respectively, should make use of all findings as a inter-mediatory body between CLA higher and lower staff as well as, more generally, between the Irish Government and migrants of County Carlow.

The target groups found to be crucial during this survey are therefore: CLA top-management, CLA lower staff members and CLA customers from migrant community. The overall goals and tools are:

Target Group	Objective	Instrument	Comments
CLA top-management	Immediate familiarization with the scale and related problems with migrants' presence Change of attitude towards CLA active role in governmental services provision for migrants	Line communication; Newsletters Informative meetings Reports (including directives, statistics, other Local Authorities' experiences etc.)	Action should be fostered by ruling regional or national level authorities as well as supported by local Corporate Services' informative campaigns
CLA lower staff members	Day-to-day consistency with high quality services' provision to migrants	Line and parallel communication; Informative booklets Meetings and trainings on multiculturalism Leaflets, forms in main foreign languages Support of multilingual translator/interpreter	Corporate Services should highlight the importance of Corporate Values and Goals and the Mission of Local Authorities' role; simultaneously database of all interpreters should be created
CLA customers from migrant community	Instantly raise the awareness of available CLA services, citizen's rights and local cultural-economic- political events	Informative booklets, website in major foreign languages Access to evaluated translators Multicultural informative meetings	Efforts of all local organisations and institutions striving for migrants' well-being should unite their forces while information exchange and planned activities

Figure 10: General communication Objectives and Tools

4.2 SMART – CONCRETE OBJECTIVES PER TARGET GROUP

To be more specific with recommendations, especially in regards to the time and manner of their introduction, a SMART analysis should help to perceive the feasibility of the proposed suggestions. Using typology of communication objectives used in *Setting up...* (Vos, et al., 2003) all three are applicable in the CLA case:

- ✓ Knowledge-based referring to both CLA customers and staff
- ✓ Attitude objective definitely applying to CLA top-management and staff
- ✓ Behavioural objective problem addressed mainly to first contact officers but also to management

Getting to the point, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-specific objectives are:

CLA top management

- Corporate Services (with support of Regional Authorities) rise the problem of service provision to migrants in an official internal statement among all managerial officers immediately
- As soon as possible Authorities launch a survey on migrant population and their problems in Carlow
- County Manager and Chancellors discuss Report outcome (statistics) during first planned County Session (mid-August 2008)
- Both re-consider service provision to migrants by reinforcing Corporate Values and Objectives among entire CLA community from the day of taking such a decision
- An action plan including threats and opportunities of migrants' presence is proposed to be ready for next County Session (Fall 2008)
- Intercultural events (e.g. folklore, film or theatre festival) taken into consideration while planning 2009 budget
- Resources guaranteed in 2009 budget for all first contact staff training on languages, multiculturalism and/or hiring translators

CLA lower staff

- Within two years 60% of all officers and in one year 80% of first contact officers will take courses on Governmental services provision for migrants organized by NCCRI
- A full time vacancy of Social Inclusion Officer created as soon as possible (if no resources - question taken into consideration while making 2009 budget)
- Using contacts and experiences of all Departments' workers and other Governmental and local NGO's Database with all acknowledged translators/interpreters is ready to use in Fall 2008 (updated regularly once a month)
- Polish, Russian and Spanish speaking Officers present or available on telephone for CLA customers immediately

CLA Customers

- Polish, Russian and Spanish speaking migrants have an access to information on CLA Website or on-line translator as soon as possible
- Through intensive informative campaign within 6 months from creation of Social Inclusion Officer post at least 60% of Carlow migrants know about his/her role while facing problems (employment, health, housing, legal etc.)
- Ready-to-print multilingual explanations of all mostly used forms available on the Website or from Officers by the end of 2008
- Informative, updated and multilingual Governmental newsletters (local and national) on CLA Website introduced immediately

Figure 11: SMART analysis of communication objectives for CLA

Being aware of the fact that this document has no power to initiate a *domino effect* which will make these plans happen, it remains in the sphere of wishes that these kinds of reports will finally find a reader (from Carlow or a similar community) facing problems comparable to those that are presented here. Hopefully, with some measure of good luck, such a paper might give them an impulse and provoke them to take actions from which the entire community can benefit.

5. CLOSING NOTES

Local Authorities, as State Government representatives, should be, according to the evidence presented, an active and more innovative player that not only seeks the best possible way of delivering existing services and products but will also to be able to identify potential ones to all tax payers regardless their background.

Answering the Central Question of this survey: **“What communication improvements (methods and tools) might empower the Carlow Local Authorities to become a more proactive provider of the highest standard services for a growing multinational County Carlow community?”** - there are two major levels of developments that should be taken into consideration.

According to the testimonies of interviewed persons as well as the suggestions of the MTO staff members and customers, the CLA top management’s approach towards the whole aspect of their service delivery as well as the social inclusion processes should be re-considered. It has been highlighted that without a certain change of attitude towards these issues no changes, improvements or developments of a small character would bring about desired goals. What should be developed from the CLA management perspective is one specific plan and vision that would assure the CLA sustainability in regards to all their aspects.

Secondly – as a result of the above mentioned changes of CLA top management attitude – a whole set of smaller changes could be developed and successfully implemented. The list of presented recommendations, therefore, could be, by this time, only richer and more complete as correctly motivated, properly trained and well-supported staff would be rewarded for their innovative, pro-active work not only in a form of financial benefits but also moral satisfaction.

A well thought out, time and money specific communication plan should be developed and introduced in order to keep the local (directly) and national Government (indirectly) Corporate Image out of any damage.

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Appendices

I. Irish Central Statistics Office – Census 2006

Table of non-Irish nationalities living in Ireland

Table of migrant nationalities per county

II. Interviews

Interview with the County Carlow Social Worker

Interview with Community and Enterprise Department representative

Interview with Carlow Town Housing Department representative

III. Motor Taxation Office Customers' Questionnaire outcome