

A top-down view of several hands of different skin tones working together to assemble a large red puzzle. The puzzle pieces are interlocking and form the words "INTEGRATED WORKPLACES" in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The background is a dark, textured surface.

INTEGRATED WORKPLACES

AN ACTION STRATEGY TO SUPPORT INTEGRATED WORKPLACES

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An Action Strategy to support Integrated Workplaces is a social partner initiative organised by representatives of Congress, IBEC, the Small Firms Association, the Construction Industry Federation, Chambers Ireland, the Office of the Minister for Integration and the Equality Authority. Funding for this strategy has been provided by the Office of the Minister for Integration and the Equality Authority.

A Strategy to Assist You:

- to manage a culturally diverse workplace,
- to contribute to and develop an integrated workplace.



FOREWORD

Foreword by Minister Conor Lenihan T.D.

I am delighted to join with the Equality Authority and support these initiatives by the employers and the trade unions.

Research has shown that businesses enhance their efficiency and effectiveness when they have appropriate policies which reflect the diversity of their workforce and customer base.

Integration is a dynamic process of mutual accommodation which affects everyone irrespective of their nationality, and the representative organisations are actively promoting integration by their support and participation in these initiatives.

Conor Lenihan T.D.
Minister for Integration



Above: Minister for Integration, Conor Lenihan T.D., Dr Angela Kerins, Chairperson, Equality Authority and Niall Crowley at the launch of Anti-Racist Workplace Week 2007.

Foreword by Mr Niall Crowley

The initiatives developed by employer organisations and trade unions through this action strategy are timely. These initiatives respond to a high level of demand from employers, trade unionists and employees for practical advice and support in effectively managing and responding to cultural diversity in the workplace. These initiatives draw a particular strength from the partnership of employer and trade union interests involved in this strategy – a partnership that reflects a shared commitment to workplaces that are integrated and free from discrimination, accommodating of different cultures and proactively focused on achieving equality for migrant workers and other Black and minority ethnic employees including Travellers.

Niall Crowley
CEO, The Equality Authority



CONTEXT

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) reported in the Quarterly National Household Survey for March to May 2008 that the total non-Irish national labour force figure stood at 362,500 or 16.3% of the total labour force of 2,223,900. This non-Irish national group is made up of 49.3% from the more recent EU Member States, 16.2% from UK, 9.1% from the initial fifteen EU Member States excluding Ireland and UK, and just 25.4% from outside the EU. While the level of migration has decreased in recent months this still reflects a high level of cultural diversity in the Irish workplace.

This context of cultural diversity holds significant promise for business success, employee wellbeing and societal harmony – promise that can only be realised where a successful integration of different cultures is achieved in the workplace. Integration means doing business in a way that values all cultures in the workplace and enables the contribution of all cultures to business success in a context characterised by non-discrimination and equality.

INTEGRATED WORKPLACES:

- are free from discrimination and harassment;
- are welcoming to all migrant workers and other Black and minority ethnic including Traveller employees and customers or service users;
- acknowledge and provide for cultural and linguistic diversity among employees and customers as well as making adjustments for diversity among all migrant workers and other Black and minority ethnic employees including those with disabilities;
- take practical steps in order to achieve full equality in practice for all migrant workers and other Black and minority ethnic employees;
- communicate a message promoting greater equality within the wider culturally diverse community served by the business.

This Action Strategy includes a range of initiatives to assist employers and trade unions to respond effectively to the potential and challenges of a culturally diverse workforce and to create integrated workplaces by:

- supporting all employees to operate effectively and without discrimination or harassment within a culturally diverse workforce;
- supporting all migrant workers and other Black and minority ethnic including Traveller employees to adapt to the workplace;
- reviewing and further developing all workplace policies, procedures and practices to ensure that they adequately take into account and adjust for cultural and linguistic diversity within the workplace.



**SUPPORTS BEING
PROVIDED**

A. IBEC will establish a system of supports for employers to effectively manage cultural diversity and to develop integrated workplaces.

IBEC will:

- put a dedicated support structure in place to enable employers to achieve workplace integration;
- create networking and learning opportunities for employers in different industry sectors and regions;
- identify and promote models of good practice in workplace integration;
- produce practical training and support materials for employers.

Further information on these supports is available from IBEC Employee Relations Information Unit at (01) 605 1542 or www.ibec.ie and the Small Firms Association at (01) 605 1500 or www.sfa.ie

B. The Construction Industry Federation will develop and provide tailored training on integrated workplaces within the construction sector.

The Construction Industry Federation will provide tailored training to its member companies on integrated workplaces in a manner that responds to the specific needs of the construction sector. This training will be targeted towards the needs of senior management, line managers and employees in developing and managing integrated workplaces.

Further information on this training initiative is available from Stephen Sands, Executive Industrial Relations Employment and Manpower Services at (01) 406 6000 or at www.cif.ie

C. Chambers Ireland will promote actions for integrated workplaces within a local business context.

Three Chambers of Commerce in locations around Ireland will undertake networking projects that bring local companies together to support action for integrated workplaces by:

- providing opportunities for networking and mentoring among companies in the local area with the aim of communicating information on good practice in developing integrated workplaces;
- developing initiatives to support effective management within culturally diverse workplaces and quality customer service within a culturally diverse community;
- providing practical supports for companies to develop as integrated workplaces.

Further information on this local networking is available from Chambers Ireland at (01) 400 4300 or at www.chambers.ie



D. Congress will provide supports to enable trade unions and their members to contribute to the development and implementation of integrated workplaces.

An Equality and Diversity Champions Fund will be established to resource trade union initiatives to:

- communicate to trade union members the benefits and challenges of integrated workplaces;
- communicate to trade union members information on good practice in creating integrated workplaces;
- support identified and trained equality and diversity champions within the trade union movement to implement action plans to support trade union members to advocate for and engage in developing integrated workplaces;
- provide training for trade union representatives (e.g. branch chairs or secretaries, shop stewards) on advocating and negotiating for integrated workplaces.

Further information on this initiative is available from Congress at (01) 889 7777 or at www.ictu.ie



E. The Equality Authority will coordinate this action strategy to support integrated workplaces.

The Equality Authority will:

- convene regular meetings of the partner organisations to ensure and support a coherent and coordinated approach to supporting integrated workplaces;
- review case law under the Employment Equality Acts 1998 to 2008 on the race and Traveller grounds to provide guidance for employers, trade unionists and employees on compliance and good practice in culturally diverse workplaces.

Information on this initiative is available from Amanda McCrudden of the Equality Authority at (01) 417 3362 or amccrudden@equality.ie



RESOURCE MATERIALS

- *Promoting Equality in Intercultural Workplaces* – Equality Authority;
- *The IBEC Guideline to Conducting a diversity audit* – IBEC;
- *A Pamphlet for Trade Unions: Promoting Equality in Diversity* – Congress;
- *Managing Diversity in the Workplace* – Chambers Ireland;
- *The Business Impact of Equality and Diversity (The International Evidence)* – Equality Authority;
- *Toolkit for Cultural Diversity in the Workplace* (Forthcoming) – Irish Management Institute.

A BUSINESS CASE FOR ACTION

Cultural diversity in the workplace can be good for business. However, it is necessary to manage this cultural diversity effectively if the business benefit is to be realised. Research published by the Equality Authority has shown that:

- workplace policies on positive action and on equality and diversity in top team management enhance organisational performance;
- diversity and equality systems in the workplace enhance labour productivity and workforce innovation and reduce employee turnover.

If the supports provided through this strategy can be of assistance to you make contact with the relevant organisation now. For further details please contact Amanda Mc Crudden of The Equality Authority on **01 417 3362** or by email amccrudden@equality.ie

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