

## PRESS RELEASE

### Minister Deenihan Launches Kerry Cultural Diversity & Integration Campaign & Exhibition

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Launched at 3pm on 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2014  
At the Department of the Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht,  
Killarney

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Minister Jimmy Deenihan today launched the Kerry Cultural Diversity & Integration Campaign & Exhibition at the Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht, Killarney. The aim of the campaign is to raise awareness of the rich cultural diversity that exists in the County and the opportunities this can bring to our communities.

Kerry is now a much more diverse society with just over one in ten of the population being of non-Irish origin. The key message from this campaign is about embracing the rich blend of nationalities and cultures in Kerry today, and ensuring that those who have settled here feel welcome and can participate fully in community life.

Launching the campaign Minister Deenihan said *“Diversity involves recognising the validity and importance of other people’s way of life, belief and cultures. As Kerry people, each and every one of us has a responsibility to welcome and assist newcomers – as we have been welcomed throughout the world, to respect their culture and beliefs and ensure that they can participate fully in our communities. It is my hope that this campaign will create a greater understanding of different cultures and identities in Kerry and that we can celebrate our differences as well as our similarities.”*

The campaign has a number of elements. It started with a poster competition to select posters for the promotion. The next step is the publicity campaign using the winning posters and the countywide exhibition of shortlisted entries which will travel to towns throughout Kerry.

At the launch, the Minister announced the winners of the poster competition and presented the winners with their prizes. He congratulate the winners and all those who took part in the competition.

In 1<sup>st</sup> place (€500) – Teegan Meehan, St. Joseph’s School, Ballybunion for her poster *‘Kerry – a kingdom where diversity reigns’*.

In 2<sup>nd</sup> place (€300) - Maryanne Keane, Lixnaw for her poster '*It's simple....Some see differences. Some see friends. Let's all respect cultural diversity.*'

In 3<sup>rd</sup> place (€200) - Declan Sugrue, Cahirciveen for his poster '*Integration not segregation for a Culturally Sweeter Kingdom.*'

The core message is about raising public awareness. The winning posters will be used in the countywide publicity campaign. These posters will be distributed for display in schools/colleges, GP/dental surgeries, community centres, offices, bus/train stations, buses and supermarkets etc.

Both the winning & shortlisted poster entries will feature in a countywide exhibition which will travel to venues throughout Kerry from May-Dec 2014. The exhibition will remain at the Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht until the 13<sup>th</sup> June. It will then move to Tralee, Killarney & Cahirciveen libraries during June & July, before moving to other towns and venues. The full exhibition schedule will be available at [www.kerrycoco.ie/kerryintegration](http://www.kerrycoco.ie/kerryintegration) where the on-line exhibition can also be viewed.

One of the panels on display in the exhibition gives a very simple list of things we can all do to better understand other cultures. It is hoped that as well as visiting the exhibition, people take the opportunity to do one thing from the list to continue reflecting on cultural diversity and what it means in a Kerry context.

The campaign is an initiative of the Integration Implementation Group, a subgroup of the County Development Board and an action in the Kerry Integration Strategy 2013-2014.

Speaking at the launch, Maura Walsh, Chairperson of the Integration Implementation Group said that the group through its strategies has been successful in raising awareness of integration issues and supporting member bodies in developing targeted supports for migrants in the County. She stressed the need for keeping the topic of integration alive and on the agenda in Kerry. She added "*failure to invest in social inclusion has a high cost for society with consequences for generations to come. Nationalities from all over the world now share our workplaces, our schools, our communities and contribute to society in all areas. We must be vigilant against racism and discrimination creeping into our communities We must work to ensure that we are creating a more inclusive and intercultural society that will enrich all our lives.*"

In bringing the launch to a close, Deputy Mayor of Killarney, Cllr. Michael Gleeson referred to Kerry's long history of emigration and the personal experience most families have of the challenges and opportunities emigration & integration present. He continued "*Both Kerry and Killarney are prime tourist destinations and we are known for 'our welcome' for visitors & tourists. But we need to ensure that welcome is extended to migrants who have made Kerry their home, to help them become part of our communities and participate in our civic structures*".

For further information, contact the Community and Enterprise Dept, Kerry County Council at 066-7183680

Notes for Editors:

Integration Implementation Group

The Integration Implementation Group (IIG) is a partnership of organisations working together to improve the quality of life of migrants and support their integration into the social, economic & cultural life of Kerry.

This interagency group has representatives from Kerry County Council, Tralee Town Council, IRD Duhallow, Kerry Education & Training Board, HSE, Kerry County Childcare Committee, An Garda Síochána, Kerry Community & Voluntary Forum, North & East Kerry Development Co., Killarney Asylum Seeker Initiative, Tralee International Resource Centre, South Kerry Development Partnership.

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**Photos will be circulated by from Dominic Walsh Photography.**