

MIC AFRICA DAY 2025



MIC

MARY IMMACULATE COLLEGE
COLÁISTE MHUIRE GAN SM



EDII

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion
and Interculturalism @ MIC

Comhionannas, Éagsúlacht,
Ionchuimsitheacht agus
Idirchultúrachas @ CMgS



INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

Scholarship Equity

Date: Thursday 29 May 2025

Location: Halla, Mary Immaculate College

ABSTRACT BOOKLET





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Scholarship Equity MIC Africa Day 2025

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For more information, email us:

AfricaDay@mic.ul.ie

For more information, visit our website:

<https://www.mic.ul.ie> › edii

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For more information, find us:

**Mary Immaculate College, South Circular Road,
Limerick, Ireland, V94 VN26**

MIC AFRICA DAY 2025 PROGRAMME - THURSDAY, 29 MAY 2025			THEME: SCHOLARSHIP EQUITY VENUE: THE HALLA, MIC		
9.30 - 10 am		Registration Coffee/Tea Networking	MASTER CHEF		
10 - 11 am					
	10 - 10:05	Welcome by Professor Lorraine McIlrath, Director of Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Interculturalism, MIC			
	10:05 - 10:15	Opening Remarks by the Mayor of Limerick City and County			
	10:15 - 10:25	Address by Professor Dermot Nestor, President of Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick			
	10:25 - 11:05 am	Keynote by Dr Lilian Nwanzee, Maynooth University			
11:05 am - 11:15 pm		COFFEE BREAK WITH NIGERIAN PUFF PUFF	MASTER CHEF		
11:15 - 1:30	11:15 - 11:45 am	First Thesis Presentation	Edith Ike - Eboh	Analysing the role of community radio in promoting equality, diversity, inclusion and interculturalism in grassroots empowerment in the Irish community	
	11:45 - 12 pm Spoken Word Performance by MuRli, Limerick-based composer and producer				
	12 noon - 12:30 pm Second Thesis Presentation		Augustus Kweku Sobeng	Community perception of forest reserve regulations enforcement in the Tano-Offin forest reserve, Ghana	
	12:30 - 1:30 pm BREAKOUT SESSIONS BY THEMES FIRST BREAKOUT SESSION				
		Breakout Table Theme: Education and Empowerment	Georgina Nnamani	The inclusion of people of African descent starts with us	
			Dr Foster Gondwe	Technology-Enhanced Learning and the (Re)Construction of Teacher Professional Identity in Malawi	
Tabitha Ciyamba Nseka			Not Just a Journey but A Becoming		
Petrades Joseph			The effectiveness of selected roles of public primary school head teachers in addressing educational needs of vulnerable pupils in Iringa and Mufindi Districts, Tanzania		
Hugh O'Donnell BSc MEngSc PhD			About the Munster Technological University / Murang'a University of Technology Partnership		
Breakout Table Theme: Arts, Languages and Religion		Dr Lawrence E. Modeme	Africans are God's Chosen People		
		Rev Fr. Dr Deogratias Kisweka	Languages of the Land: The Literary Power of Tanzanian Indigenous Languages in Cultural Preservation and Creative Expression		
		Dr Asante Lucy Mtenje	Chitenje and the Politics of Dress in Malawian Popular Culture		
		Sheenagh Geoghegan	The Art of Noticing: Influence, Visibility, and Transformative Practice		
		Sarah Emmanuel Mmari	Catholicism and Education: A Personal and Philosophical Reflection		
Breakout Table Theme: Climate Change		Dr Dickson Boateng	Living through the heat: Ghana's urban poor and the struggle to (mal)adapt to rising city heat		
		Augustus Kweku Sobeng	Community perception of forest reserve regulations enforcement in the Tano-Offin forest reserve, Ghana		
Breakout Table Theme: Media		Ibinabo Enebi	A Fresh Look at Media Representation of Ethnic Minorities in Irish Print Media: What Has Changed?		
		Edith Ike-Eboh	Analysing the role of community radio in promoting equality, diversity, inclusion and interculturalism in grassroots empowerment in the Irish community.		
		Dr Lylian Fotabong	Decoding African Narratives: A Longitudinal Corpus-Driven Critical Discourse Analysis of Diachronic Shifts in Irish Media Discourse (1998, 2008, and 2018)		
1:30 pm - 2:30 pm LUNCH BREAK		CUISINE FROM GHANA AND NIGERIA		MASTER CHEF	
2:30 PM - 4:00 PM					
	2:30 pm - 2:35 pm	Unveiling of Roscommon-made African Union Flag		Alli Osasumwen Tender	
	2:35 pm - 3:35 pm SECOND BREAKOUT SESSION				
		Breakout Table Theme: Early Childhood	Dr Aoife Gallagher Dr Hadjer Hammadi Kerry McCarthy Mary Cantwell	Supporting Early Literacy in Migrant and Multilingual Children: Community Co-Development Initiative (ELMC-CO).	
Rebecca Adeyemo Kate Darmody			Empowering Communities Through Education: The Early Learning Initiative's Inclusive Support for African Families in Dublin's Inner City		
Dr Florence Ajala			Barriers to Nigerian Immigrant Mothers' Engagement in Early Childhood Care and Education within the Irish Context		
Breakout Table Theme: Migrant Health and Gender		Santhi Corcoran David Chisanga	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Well-being of African Migrant Women in the Midwest of Ireland: Exploring experiences of access to and knowledge of supportive services		
		Naitururru Lemoshira	Lived Experiences of Maasai Female Chiefs in Kajiado County, Kenya: Challenging Traditional Gender Norms through Leadership		
Breakout Table Theme: Politics and Economy		Jusu M. Ngobeh	A Strategic and Sustainable Approach to Effective Change in Africa for Equality, Inclusion, and Social Justice for its Socio-Economic Development		
		Toms Emeke Ugwu	From Sustainable Development Goals to Action: A Strategic Framework for Racial Justice and Equality in Irish Employment		
		Dr Shaibu D. Sunday	The Geo-Politics of Changing Time: Can Africa Escape?		
Breakout Table Theme: Justice and Human Rights		Dr Uche Osakwe	A Crisis in the Making: Strict Migration Policies Fuel Human Trafficking		
		Bruno Onyinye Umunakwe	Addressing Western Control in Africa: The Relevance of Thomas Pogge's Principle of Global Injustice		
3:45 pm - 4:00 pm		Concluding Remarks & Call For Action by Dr Holly Cowman, Director, International Office, MIC			

Welcome Note

Professor Lorraine McIlrath, Director of Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Interculturalism (EDII), Mary Immaculate College

We at Mary Immaculate College (MIC) are delighted and honoured to host the fourth MIC Africa Day on May 29, 2025. This event provides a space for knowledge sharing on African scholarship to extend intercultural learning and emergent research on Africa and from Africans in Ireland.

In addition, MIC and the EDII Office are delighted to welcome Dr Lylian Fotabong as our first Race Equality and Sanctuary Manager, who commenced in this role on the 1st May 2025. Under Lylian's leadership we strive to ensure that all forms of racism are eliminated, that MIC is warm and welcoming place to work and study for everyone regardless of their backgrounds, and that those seeking international protection in Ireland can continue to transition to higher education to enhance their employability and to ensure that their lives flourish in Ireland.

Our MIC scholars and colleagues lead this event in partnership with the MIC International Office, EDII Office, MIC staff, students, and community partners. I want to honour the work of Dr Lylian Fotabong, along with Dr Florence Ajala, MIC Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies, and Linda Kirwasa, who have led and pioneered Africa Day at MIC since 2022. We appreciate their leadership and creativity in terms of ensuring that this event is mainstreamed in the MIC calendar. They, with their energy and passion, have catalysed huge momentum to create this very successful and significant annual day that becomes increasingly more successful year on year.

Since 2018, MIC has been committed to the development of Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Interculturalism (EDII) and was embedded within the Strategic Plan, 'A Flourishing Learning Community' (2019). The College is now undergoing a new strategic planning cycle under the leadership of the new MIC President, Professor Dermot Nestor, and EDII will continue to feature as a major strategic theme for the college.

A unique aspect of this work at MIC is the inclusion of ‘interculturalism’ as a key objective, aimed at creating a culture of welcome for diverse communities and ensuring that MIC promotes inclusion for all. MIC is committed to making ‘a difference in the broader world, bearing in mind a received obligation to galvanise efforts to foster social justice and promote equality for the most marginalised’ (2019, p. 33). The EDII work strives to be innovative and creative, seeking to engage all members of the MIC community. The hosting of Africa Day is central to our ethos and practice.

In addition, Africa Day coincides with a very significant moment in terms of equality, diversity, and inclusion in Ireland, as the Irish government, through the Higher Education Authority, launched the Race Equality Implementation Plan 2022-2024 in September 2022. Followed by the Anti-Racism Principles for Irish Higher Education Institutions in March 2023. This work aims to harness the power of Irish higher education institutions (HEIs) as leaders of positive change in society, challenging racism and racial inequality. Irish HEIs have seen a growth in the ethnic diversity of their staff and students, reflective of the diversity in Ireland’s population and these Anti-Racism Principles seek to embed a culture of race equality across higher education. The Principles were signed by the MIC President in 2023, and montages of these Principles now hang in various parts of our campuses framed as a living document. The annual Africa Day and the role of Race Equality and Sanctuary Manager at MIC represent significant steps towards the realisation of these Principles.

On behalf of the EDII Office at Mary Immaculate College, I would like to thank the organising committee, our keynote speaker Dr. Lilian Nwanze-Akobo from Maynooth University, the presenters, our guests, the International Office and EDII Office teams and all those who have made this event possible.

MIC Africa

Day 2025

Paper

Abstracts

Scholarship Equity

Supporting Early Literacy in Migrant and Multilingual Children: Community Co-Development Initiative (ELMC-CO)

Dr Aoife Gallagher (University of Limerick)

Email: Aoife.Gallagher@ul.ie

Dr Hadjer Hammadi (Doras)

Email: hadjer.hammadi@outlook.com

Kerry McCarthy (Doras)

Email: k.mccarthy@doras.org

Mary Cantwell (LCETB)

Email: mary.cantwell@lcetb.ie

Supporting early language acquisition in multilingual children is essential for fostering inclusive education and long-term academic success. In Ireland's increasingly diverse linguistic landscape, a clear gap remains in accessible, culturally responsive resources for families and early years practitioners. This lack of support can hinder the development of foundational language skills, particularly for children from migrant backgrounds whose parents may have limited proficiency in English or their home languages. To address this gap, the Early Literacy Multilingual Children: Community Co-Development Initiative (ELMC-CO) aims to co-design educational resources that empower parents, early childhood educators, and primary school teachers in Limerick and Clare to support multilingual children's language and literacy development. Aligned with the Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) strategy, the initiative addresses structural barriers to early learning by promoting home-language maintenance alongside English acquisition. The project will be guided by current research in multilingual education and early language development to inform the design of these resources. Data will be gathered through focus groups with parents, ECCE practitioners, and primary school teachers, exploring their experiences, needs, and strategies for supporting multilingual learners. The co-design process will ensure that the final materials are practical, user-friendly, and reflective of the linguistic and cultural diversity of the communities involved. By engaging key stakeholders and drawing on local contexts and lived experiences, the ELMC-CO project aims to develop evidence-based tools that strengthen early language development at home and support multilingual families and set the foundation for lifelong learning.

About:

Dr Aoife Gallagher is an Associate Professor in the School of Allied Health at the University of Limerick. She worked as a Speech and Language Therapist before completing her PhD in Health Services Research as part of the HRB-funded SPHeRE Programme. Aoife is involved in several national and international projects to create a more inclusive society for those with communication needs. She is particularly interested in rights-based healthcare, inclusive education and justice.

Hadjer Hammadi, PhD, is Doras's researcher and intercultural engagement specialist. Her PhD at the University of Limerick focused on intercultural interactions in multicultural workplaces. She is currently engaged in research on multilingualism and inclusive education and contributes to the design and delivery of the ALL project, supporting literacy development. Her research interests include intercultural and community engagement, equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), and fostering inclusive language education.

Kerry McCarthy, MA, is the Online Education Coordinator at Doras, where she leads the development of SaorEd, an online education platform supporting migrants and asylum seekers in Ireland. She also supports learners through Doras' Employment Hub in Limerick. Kerry holds a BA in English and an MA in Child, Family, and Community Studies and has a background in English language teaching. Her work is driven by a strong commitment to improving access to education and literacy resources for migrants and those in the international protection system.

Mary Cantwell is an Adult Education Guidance Counsellor with the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, bringing over thirteen years of experience in Further Education and Training (FET) in Ireland. Her career reflects a deep commitment to promoting access, inclusion, and lifelong learning across various educational pathways. In recent years, Mary has focused on supporting migrant communities, including international protection applicants and refugees. Her role involves providing tailored guidance to help individuals overcome structural barriers and successfully engage with the Irish education and training system. Mary's dedication to equity and social justice is central to her practice. She plays an active role in projects that address the unique needs of underrepresented learners, most recently contributing to the Supporting Early Literacy in Migrant and Multilingual Children: Community Co-Development Initiative (ELMC-CO). Her work is informed by a belief in the transformative power of education to build inclusive communities and meaningful futures. Email: mary.cantwell@lcetb.ie

Chitenje and the Politics of Dress in Malawian Popular Culture

Dr Asante Lucy Mtenje

Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study (STIAS), University of Malawi

This book project analyses representations of the chitenje in the Malawian popular culture. Commonly known in other African countries, such as Zambia, Zimbabwe, and parts of East Africa, the chitenje is ubiquitous in Malawi by names such as khanga or kitenge. It is considered a traditional female dress often associated with female modesty. As a form of dress common to Malawian women, it has been imagined in Malawian popular arts such as newspaper cartoons, carvings, paintings, songs and even oral art forms such as proverbs. However, the focus on this dress has often been limited to the occasions that it is worn and how and why it is worn. Hence, a dearth of critical work interrogates the representation of the chitenje in the Malawian popular imaginary and the complex, disrupted and negotiated meanings that obtain from these representations. I examine how the chitenje has been variously implicated in the control of women's bodies, in women's articulation and negotiation of agency through their self-fashioning and resistance against hegemonic control in post-colonial Malawi. In this study, the chitenje thus becomes a site through which to understand questions of gender, sexuality, class, nation building in Malawi and women's place in it, also reminding us that it is women who are figured as symbols/embodyments of the moral standing of community, family and nation, yet simultaneously perceived as morally weak and polluting. This research is interdisciplinary as it is located within literary/cultural, feminist and dress studies, and blends literary and social science methods of inquiry. Drawing on archival and close reading methods, I am analysing a range of literary and cultural texts (such as plays, songs and cartoons) dating from Banda's dictatorial regime, in particular from 1973 (when the Decency in Dress Act was enacted) to 2014, twenty years after the attainment of the multiparty democracy which saw the legislation in the constitution of various freedoms such as the freedom of dress. I am thinking through the project by mainly working with a range of African feminist scholarship which demonstrates how the female black body is "the battlefield for cultural-moral struggles," (Tamale 2016), a site of intersecting forces where multiple codes are inscribed and negotiated (Gqola 2015, Magubane 2004, Bakare-Yusuf 2011).

Community perception of forest reserve regulations enforcement in the Tano-Offin forest reserve, Ghana

Augustus Kweku Sobeng

email: augustus.k.sobeng@mic.ul.ie

LinkedIn: [inkedin.com/in/augustus-kweku-sobeng-4205595b](https://www.linkedin.com/in/augustus-kweku-sobeng-4205595b)

In areas of high ecological importance, regulations are required to ensure that anthropogenic land uses are sustainable. In regulating such areas, it is essential to consider the perspectives of land users to assess how regulations are being effectively enforced and whether they are achieving the desired goals. While local perspectives have proven valuable in ensuring forest regulation compliance, little is known about community members' perceptions regarding the enforcement of forest reserve regulations. Using survey data from the Tano-Offin Forest Reserve in Ghana, this study develops a model to examine the spatial, socioeconomic, and demographic factors influencing local perceptions of forest reserve regulation enforcement. The study finds that community members who reside within 0.15 km from the forest reserve (AOR = 1.669, CI = 1.358–5.252, $p = 0.010$) and have secondary education or more (AOR: 1.689, CI: 1.176–3.694, $p = 0.022$) are significantly more likely to perceive that forest reserve regulations are being enforced. Moreover, the study establishes that females (AOR: 0.574, CI: 0.211–0.862, $p = 0.018$) and migrants (AOR: 0.575, CI: 0.169–0.860, $p = 0.025$) are less likely to perceive that forest reserve regulations are being enforced. We suggest that forest and land managers in Ghana take into consideration diverse spatial, socioeconomic, and demographic factors to assess the efficiency of the enforcement of forest reserve regulations, particular in a period where public confidence in forest reserve protection has dwindled due to the influx of illegal mining activities.

About:

Augustus Kweku Sobeng is a PhD scholar in the Department of Geography of the Mary Immaculate College (MIC). He holds a Master's in Environmental Change, Impact, and Adaptation from Aberystwyth University, UK, and a Bachelor of Arts in Geography and Rural Development from the KNUST, Ghana. He is a recipient of several awards, including the Commonwealth Shared Scholarship (UK), the MIC Departmental Assistantship, and the MIC Department of Geography Postgraduate Award. Augustus has seven publications in international peer-reviewed journals and has presented at prestigious conferences, including the Conference of Irish Geographers. He has a keen research interest in circular economy, human-environment interactions, just transitions, indigenous knowledge and environmental management.

Contact

Addressing Western Control in Africa: The Relevance of Thomas Pogge's Principle of Global Injustice

Bruno Onyinye Umunakwe

Email: umunnabruno@gmail.com

Philosophy Department, University of Nigeria Nsukka

Everything about Africa has been modelled to European tastes, planning, and architecture since the Berlin West Africa Conference of 1884-1885, which heralded the partition and scramble of Africa. African economies and governments are being manipulated, which has practically turned into colonisation and neo-colonialism, sustaining imperialism, leading to neo-slavery, poverty, underdevelopment and failed leadership in Africa. The relationship between developing and developed countries influenced Thomas Pogge to investigate how affluent countries perpetuate global poverty. Pogge argues that powerful nations and corporations shape the current global economic order in ways that systematically disadvantage poorer countries. Trade agreements, intellectual property laws, and financial regulations often favour wealthy nations, making it difficult for developing countries to compete. This study aimed to explore theoretical principles in addressing social injustice in Africa. Content analysis was adopted to analyse Pogge's thought on global injustice and how it can be of relevant in addressing social injustice in Africa. Findings show that the current economic disorders and leadership failures in Africa are linked to Western influence. The study concludes that implementing complete self-rule in Africa, where every policy and plan is determined in African settings, will go a long way in driving Western control in Africa.

Keywords: Africa. Colonialism. Social Injustice. Neo-colonialism. Scramble.

About:

Bruno Onyinye Umunakwe is currently a postgraduate student with University of Nigeria Nsukka, Philosophy department. He has contributed to several book chapters and in published articles in both indigenous and international journals. Bruno's area of academic interests includes cultural studies, ethics, philosophy of human rights, education and community health planning and implementation.

Languages of the Land: The Literary Power of Tanzanian Indigenous Languages in Cultural Preservation and Creative Expression

Rev Fr. Dr Deogratias Kisweka
fr_deo@yahoo.com

Tanzania is a linguistically rich nation, home to over 120 local languages in addition to Kiswahili, the national and most widely spoken language. While Kiswahili plays a crucial role in national unity and formal communication, local languages carry deep reservoirs of cultural knowledge, oral heritage, and community values. This paper critically examines how Tanzanian local languages enhance literature by fostering cultural preservation, ensuring narrative authenticity, revitalising oral traditions, and promoting linguistic inclusivity in creative expression. Drawing on scholarly research, policy documents, and examples from Tanzanian literary practices, the study reveals the intrinsic connection between language and identity, arguing for a more deliberate integration of indigenous languages into the country's literary and educational frameworks. The paper proposes practical strategies for strengthening the role of local languages in publishing, curriculum development, and national cultural policy, ultimately advocating for a literary ecosystem that reflects the country's rich multilingual heritage.

About:

Rev. Dr. Deogratias Kisweka is a Lecturer in English Literature within the Department of Social Sciences and Humanities at Mwenge Catholic University, Tanzania and graduated from MIC with a PhD in English Literature in October 2022 and [this link](#), which contains his photo

Living through the heat: Ghana's urban poor and the struggle to (mal)adapt to rising city heat

Dr Dickson Boateng

Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, Ireland

Centre for Nature Sustainability and Rural Enhancement, Ghana.

kwameboateng181@gmail.com

Although countries in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) are among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, they remain largely unprepared to manage its adverse effects. This vulnerability is exacerbated by rapid urbanisation, which is often accompanied by the depletion of natural vegetation. As a result, urban populations in SSA, such as those in Ghana, are increasingly exposed to the negative consequences of global environmental change, particularly extreme heat events. Low-income populations are disproportionately affected within these urban settings due to their limited access to resources and lower adaptive capacity. While access to electricity is a critical factor in mitigating the impacts of extreme heat, there is a notable lack of research on how existing urban electricity access frameworks in Ghana address the needs of the urban poor. This reveals a critical gap in the literature concerning the nexus between energy access and the adaptive capacity of vulnerable urban communities to withstand climate-induced stressors. Investigating electricity access in the context of extreme heat in urban Ghana has become an urgent priority, especially as urban planning frameworks often overlook such climatic events or address them in reactive, inefficient, and unsustainable ways. This study employs a mixed-methods approach to explore this issue, using Kumasi, Ghana's second-largest city, as a case study. The findings are expected to contribute to discussions on (mal)adaptation to climate change and serve as a practical resource for policymakers and stakeholders seeking to enhance urban resilience and improve the quality of life in rapidly urbanising contexts.

Keywords: Ghana; Extreme heat events; Urban poor; Electricity access; (mal)adaptation.

About:

Dr Dickson Boateng recently completed a PhD in Arts from the Department of Geography at Mary Immaculate College, Ireland. He also earned an MSc in Sustainable Environmental Management from the University of Greenwich (UK) and a BA in Geography and Rural Development from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Ghana. His research interests centre on the interrelated themes of energy poverty, political ecology, just transitions, rural development and environmental management.

Analysing the role of community radio in promoting equality, diversity, inclusion and interculturalism in grassroots empowerment in the Irish community

Edith Ike-Eboh

Mary Immaculate College, Limerick

Email: 21189358@micstudent.mic.ul.ie

This study critically examines the role of community radio in promoting equality, diversity, inclusion (EDI), and interculturalism as mechanisms for grassroots empowerment within Irish communities. Recognised as a vital “third tier” of broadcasting (AMARC, 2000), community radio offers an alternative to mainstream media by providing a platform for marginalised voices and fostering public engagement (McMahon, 2019). In the context of growing societal pluralism and enduring inequalities, it serves as a key medium for amplifying diverse perspectives and encouraging intercultural dialogue. Drawing on interdisciplinary frameworks from communication studies, cultural studies, and community development, the research employs a methodological triangulation approach that combines interviews, content analysis, observation, and focus group discussions. It investigates how programming content, participatory structures, and institutional policies reflect and respond to the lived experiences of minority and underrepresented groups. The study further interrogates how community radio addresses social inequalities, involves marginalised communities in content creation, and influences local perceptions and civic dialogue. It also examines the structural challenges and enabling conditions that impact the implementation of EDI and intercultural principles within community media. Grounded in participatory communication and critical media theory, this research contributes to broader debates on media justice, representation, and community empowerment in contemporary Ireland

About:

Edith Ike-Eboh is a PhD candidate in Media Studies at Mary Immaculate College, a seasoned journalist and media professional with over 15 years of experience in news reporting, editing, community engagement, and content development. She has a deep commitment to seeing how local media contributes to grassroots development. Her research focuses on the role of community radio in promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in Irish communities. Through her work, Edith investigates how community radio empowers marginalised groups, challenges dominant narratives, and contributes to building more inclusive communities. The study's findings aim to inform media policy and community development practices, highlighting the crucial role of community radio in fostering a more just and equitable society.

Barriers to Nigerian Immigrant Mothers' Engagement in Early Childhood Care and Education within the Irish Context

Florence Ajala

Mary Immaculate College, Limerick

Florence.Ajala@mic.ul.ie

This paper will present findings from a doctorate study that examined the lived experiences of Nigerian immigrant mothers' engagement with their children's early childhood care and education (ECCE) within the Irish context through the lenses of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory and Epstein's (2019) Framework of Six Types of Involvement. One research aim of this doctoral study was to explore the social and cultural factors that influence the engagement of Nigerian mothers in their children's Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). This qualitative research study was underpinned by a social constructivist ontological perspective and an interpretivist epistemological paradigm. Data obtained from 15 semi-structured interviews and analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2019; 2022) reflexive thematic analysis indicated that cultural differences in childrearing practices between Nigeria and Ireland, restricted face-to-face in-person interactions during the COVID-19 pandemic and Nigerian mothers' work schedules were impediments to Nigerian mothers' engagement in their children's ECCE. The findings highlight the need for ECCE settings in Ireland to adopt more inclusive and culturally responsive strategies to enhance active engagement of Nigerian immigrant parents in their children's ECCE.

About:

Dr Florence Ajala is an Assistant professor of early childhood education at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, Ireland. She successfully defended her doctoral thesis in September 2024 and is due to graduate in October 2025. Her research and teaching interests include early childhood education, inclusive education in early childhood, and African immigrant parental engagement in early childhood care and education.

Technology-Enhanced Learning and the (Re)Construction of Teacher Professional Identity in Malawi

Dr Foster Gondwe

Education Foundations Department, University of Malawi

Email: fgondwe@unima.ac.mw

Research on digital education programmes has demonstrated the effectiveness of tablet technology in enhancing learning outcomes and addressing educational inequalities in Malawi's primary schools. As a result, the Ministry of Education endorsed a plan to scale digital technology across all primary schools by 2029, positioning Malawi as one of the first nations to implement a nationwide digital education programme. However, despite the hype surrounding these digital education initiatives, there has been little critical examination of the programmes' unintended consequences. The available, albeit scant, critical literature suggests that the programmes in Malawi are characterised by rushed implementation, with limited clarity on how the Ministry of Education is adopting these initiatives. Furthermore, since many of these interventions are still in progress, there is a lack of comprehensive research on their implementation, impact, and scalability. Meanwhile, one notable outcome of the digitisation of education in Malawi has been a growing policy focus on the professional development of teachers. Thus, digital technology can inspire new conversations and policies around teachers, teacher education, and instructional practices. Premised on this consideration, the proposed study will critically examine how teachers are represented in Malawi's ongoing digitization efforts. Specifically, the research will explore how digital technology shapes the professional identity of teachers and teacher educators in Malawi. The following question will guide the study: How are teachers and teacher educators represented in the broader narrative of digital transformation, and what implications do these representations have for their professional identities in Malawi's education system? Answers to this question are crucial for understanding how digital education programmes impact teachers' pedagogical practices and how they align with or challenge existing norms. The findings will also inform teacher training in digital technology.

The inclusion of people of African descent starts with us

Georgina Nnamani

georgina.nnamani@manchester.ac.uk

Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty that affects the skills and acquisition involved in accurate and fluent reading and spelling. Dyslexia characteristic features include impaired phonological awareness, difficulty processing information (both verbal and visual), organisational skills, and time management skills. Dyslexia is considered a learning difference, meaning that individuals with dyslexia think and learn in distinct ways and are often regarded as neurodivergent. Over the years, debates about dyslexia have questioned its existence; however, these debates are frequently based on the assumption that dyslexia only affects reading—an assumption that is not only flawed but can be dangerous to dyslexic individuals who may be denied the necessary support to succeed or face marginalisation due to their dyslexia. Although dyslexia is classed as a disability and is a protected characteristic by law, it is discriminatory to deny access to reasonable accommodations to a dyslexic in a situation where they would otherwise be at a disadvantage without them. It is estimated that 1 in 10 individuals has dyslexia, with some being unidentified and unaware of their condition. As such, some individuals may experience discrimination in their daily activities, including employment, education, and even within their close social circles. For dyslexic individuals of African descent, the challenges they face may be exacerbated by a lack of understanding about the condition, cultural attitudes toward disability that may associate disability with shame, taboos, or religious beliefs that may associate disability with spiritual causes or as something to be cured from. This can lead to a perception that people with disabilities are inferior to non-disabled people. The inclusion of people of African descent starts with us; however, how can we include Africans with dyslexia if we do not understand what it is or accept its existence? How can parents, families, friends, and colleagues support the inclusion of individuals with dyslexia if we cling to misconceptions and blind spots about the individuals? In my presentation, I will discuss the story of four individuals of African descent who have dyslexia, including myself. The aim is to raise awareness of what we, as Africans, can do to promote the inclusion of people with dyslexia in our communities, whether they are our children, parents, friends, family members, or colleagues, remembering that fostering inclusion for individuals with dyslexia of African descent begins with us.

About:

Georgina Nnamani is a final-year Doctoral Researcher in Education at the University of Manchester. Her research evaluates the effectiveness of educational policies in promoting the social inclusion of learners with dyslexia in mainstream schools in England from an ecosystemic perspective. Georgina is particularly interested in how inclusion is understood in different contexts and the implications for learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Georgina has worked in disability services and schools across the UK, Ireland, and Canada for over twenty years, and she has been involved in developing several awareness programmes to raise awareness about the rights of disabled people to access services.

A Fresh Look at Media Representation of Ethnic Minorities in Irish Print Media: What Has Changed?

Ibinabo Enebi

Email: ibinaboenebi@gmail.com

Over the last 15 years, Irish scholars have carried out a series of studies on the representation of ethnic minorities in the Irish print media and their research showed that the print media in Ireland has been biased and stereotyped. This work offers a fresh perspective on the representation of ethnic minorities in Irish print media news production. It aims to re-examine the portrayal of ethnic minority groups by the media in Ireland to determine if there have been any changes, and secondly, to explore the nuances of ethnic minority representation within the mainstream media and between the mainstream and alternative media. The study collated all stories relating to issues specifically affecting ethnic minority people in Ireland from April 2019 to June 2019, sourced from the mainstream media, including the Irish Independent and Irish Times broadsheets, as well as the alternative media, such as Metro Éireann tabloid. The data collected showed the total number of ethnic minority related stories published during the sampled period and the dominant thematic frames. Results from the sampled period revealed that there were no biased or stereotypical portrayals of ethnic minority groups by the mainstream media, despite a few reports of hesitation by local residents and protests by certain groups. It also highlighted the similarities and differences in the nuances of ethnic minority representation within mainstream and alternative print media. Although the findings indicate a positive trend, they serve as a stand-alone analysis of a small section of the Irish print media over a relatively short period. Nonetheless, it offers valuable insights into the current attitude of the Government, the Irish print media and the Irish society towards migrants, asylum seekers and refugees.

About

Ibinabo Enebi is an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher and podcast host. She earned her bachelor's degree in English Studies from the University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria, and subsequently obtained a master's degree in Journalism from the University of Limerick. Recently, Ibinabo completed a postgraduate diploma in Adult and Further Education at Mary Immaculate College. As the host of the podcast "Ibi Speaks," she shares powerful stories and engages in thought-provoking conversations about personal growth. Through her work, she fosters a supportive environment that encourages reflection and empowerment, particularly for individuals navigating life's challenges. Ibinabo firmly believes, "Our stories and expertise serve as streetlights and survival kits for those who come after us." In addition to her podcast, Ibinabo is the convener of "Refresh to Relaunch," an annual online seminar designed to help individuals build confidence, clarify their goals, and successfully transition into new personal or professional chapters as they approach a new year. By blending her educational background with her lived experiences, she fosters learning, resilience, and community through both initiatives. Ibinabo is married and a proud mother of four children.

A Strategic and Sustainable Approach to Effective Change in Africa for Equality, Inclusion, and Social Justice for its Socio-Economic Development

Jusu M. Ngobeh

Parul Institute of Engineering and Technology, Parul University, India

Email: ngobeh@gmail.com

Sustainable development and Pan-Africanism are crucial because many Africans feel alienated. Some African countries even attempt to distance themselves from their continent and seek affiliations that are often difficult to comprehend. Suppose Africa is to unite and prosper as a single nation despite its diverse national governments, cultures, and complex ethnicities. In that case, we must see ourselves as a cohesive entity on equal footing. This requires abolishing racial and economic segregation and promoting a single voice, a single purpose, and a standard trading system without intricate geographical boundaries that hinder travel and free movement between us. We must cultivate a high level of symbiosis to collectively combat the common enemies of Africa: the imperialist 'big brothers' who keep dividing us because they have a hidden agenda to create enmities among us as national countries and within the African continent. Africa has enormous potential for prosperity, but is often perceived as underdeveloped and underprivileged, plagued by disease and widespread poverty. This is despite the continent's abundant natural resources and its immense potential for human capital. When given the opportunity, Africans demonstrate extraordinary abilities. However, economic and social injustice, along with a lack of equality, are major impediments to progress. People from impoverished families face significant barriers to accessing modern education and key resources that are predominantly reserved for the elite. This inequality of privilege is a common problem in all African countries, exacerbated by excessive segregation, corrupt leadership, tribalism, nepotism, and the circumvention of justice, especially by corrupt politicians, their families, and the wealthy and privileged. The exploitation of natural resources benefits only a few and leaves the poor and uneducated masses without fair distribution or just treatment in all sectors.

About:

I'm **Jusu M. Ngobeh**, a Sierra Leonean pursuing a PhD in Electrical Engineering. I'm in my final semester at the Parul Institute of Engineering and Technology, Faculty of Engineering and Technology, Parul University, Waghodiya Road, Vadodara – 391760, Gujarat, India. I work for the Electricity Generation and Transmission Company in Sierra Leone, a government parastatal under the Ministry of Energy. I am a multidisciplinary researcher and a writer with numerous research publications in engineering and beyond. I am passionate about knowledge and happily married with two beautiful daughters.

Africans are God's Chosen People

Dr Lawrence Emeka Modeme
Manchester Metropolitan University
lawmodeme@yahoo.co.uk

In the Hebrew and Christian Bibles, the Israelites claim that God promised their forebears that He and their descendants were His chosen people. While many Bible believers, including hundreds of millions in Africa, accept this narrative, more critical people find it objectionable that God would choose one people at the expense of others. However, both believers and critics miss the point: that the God who chose the Israelites was their national deity since the Bible advances henotheism. This is a re-statement of what has been true from time immemorial: Gods of religion are national, tribal, racial, ethnic, communal, and ancestral, and that all people are special to or chosen by their Gods. It is this nature of religious divinity that makes organised religions reflective of the cultures and traditions of their founders. This understanding of divinity creates in the original adherents of a religion an automatic sense of divine connection, empowerment, and superiority. Africans are the most prominent example of people who have lost belief in their specialness to God, even though their motherland is supposed to be the cradle of humanity and civilisation. Having forgotten that God is local, ancestral, and traditional, they chase after other people's Gods and interpretations of divinity. By doing so, they lose their sense of originality, power, and accomplishment, as well as their understanding of their innate and individual connection to the universe. Africans must rediscover their identity if they are to recover their lost glory.

About

Dr Lawrence Emeka Modeme is a barrister, solicitor, academic, author, publisher, and public educator. He obtained a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degree from the University of Nigeria Nsukka, an LLM from Southampton Solent University and Nottingham Trent University, and a PhD from the University of Manchester. Dr Modeme has extensive and long experience in academia. He is a senior lecturer and LLM research leader at the Manchester Metropolitan University, a visiting professor at the School of Professional and Continuing Education, University of Hong Kong, and a visiting lecturer at the University of Manchester. Dr Modeme's legal expertise is in international human rights and humanitarian law. He is also an avid promoter of spiritual enlightenment, for which purpose he has multiple books and a YouTube channel.

Decoding African Narratives: A Longitudinal Corpus-Driven Critical Discourse Analysis of Diachronic Shifts in Irish Media Discourse (1998, 2008, and 2018)

Lylian Fotabong

Mary Immaculate College, Limerick

Email: Lylian.Fotabong@mic.ul.ie

Scholars from non-ethnic minority backgrounds primarily examine discourses surrounding the representation of immigrants in Western media, focusing on asylum seekers, International Protection Applicants (IPA), refugees, and discrimination. Concurrently, there is a notable absence of minority representation and authorship. This study addresses the gap in the literature by employing a blend of methods from Corpus Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis. The Discourse Historical Approach (Wodak 2001) and van Leeuwen's (1996) strategies of foregrounding and backgrounding analysed a self-compiled corpus dataset from *The Irish Independent* and *The Irish Times*, amounting to 3,923,355 words portraying Africans across selected periods from 1998 to 2018. The combined methods show the relationship between data triangulation, semantic prosody, and topoi argumentation analysis regarding the perpetuation of racialised power dynamics and the marginalisation of Africans in Irish media discourse. The researcher identified keywords, topoi, and themes frequently associated with representational repression, characterised by the systematic exclusion, misrepresentation, and stereotyping of Africans. While these perspectives evolved over time, they remained consistent. Furthermore, although Irish newspapers tended to adopt more covert, negative, and exclusionary representations of Africans, *The Irish Times* demonstrated a greater bias in comparison to *The Independent*. Additionally, a new topos was identified, and a methodological synergy (Baker et al. 2008) was proposed, based on manual collocation in corpora to uncover journalistic strategies. A public policy approach was suggested, emphasising how marginalised groups implement discursive practices to emancipate themselves and reduce discrimination. Implications and recommendations for future research are also included.

About:

Dr Lylian Fotabong is the inaugural Race Equality and Sanctuary Manager at MIC, a role informed by her lived experience and a robust academic and professional background. Her recent PhD in Applied Linguistics from MIC, combined with postgraduate lecturing and a career in radio and newspaper journalism across Ireland and internationally, equips her with a deep understanding of the media's influence on societal attitudes towards marginalised groups. Through the lens of corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis (discourse-historical approach), her research explores the complex intersections of media language and crucial themes, including race, racism, xenoracism, ethnicism, identity, and discrimination. Lylian's work uncovers discriminatory language patterns and advocates for emancipatory practices that promote equity, inclusivity, and social justice, aiming to develop activist and solution-oriented approaches within academic discussions of these vital issues.

Lived Experiences of Maasai Female Chiefs in Kajiado County, Kenya: Challenging Traditional Gender Norms through Leadership

Naiturrurru Moi Lemoshira

Email: naiyneto@gmail.com

This study explores the lived experiences of Maasai female chiefs in Kajiado County, Kenya, focusing on how they challenge traditional gender norms through their roles as government-appointed local administrators. Historically, the patriarchal Maasai community has excluded women from leadership, but the recent appointment of female chiefs offers a valuable lens to examine shifting power dynamics in traditional societies. Using a qualitative methodology informed by feminist theory, intersectionality, and empowerment theory, the study engaged 14 Maasai female chiefs through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation. Data were analysed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA). The findings highlight education as a key empowerment tool, enabling women to access and navigate formal leadership spaces. However, patriarchal structures remain pervasive, with many chiefs depending on male, particularly spousal, support to legitimise their roles. Female chiefs described facing a ‘triple burden’ managing domestic roles, community expectations, and official leadership duties. Despite resistance, they employed strategic practices to drive change, including role modelling, community engagement, mentoring girls, and collaborating with local and national stakeholders.

This research contributes to the limited literature on women’s leadership in non-elected, state-assigned roles in traditional African contexts. It sheds light on the agency of Maasai women navigating the intersection of state power and cultural norms. The study calls for targeted educational initiatives, promotion of male allyship, and culturally responsive leadership strategies to advance gender equity in pastoralist communities.

About:

Naiturruru Moi Lemoshira is a community development practitioner and researcher with an MA in International Development from Maynooth University. Her research focuses on the leadership experiences of Maasai female chiefs in Kenya and how they challenge traditional gender norms through state-appointed roles. With extensive experience across Africa and Europe, she has led programme design, advocacy, and grassroots mobilisation initiatives. Naiturruru serves on several NGO and school boards in Ireland and is passionate about amplifying marginalised voices, mentoring women, and promoting inclusive, community-led approaches to leadership and development.

The effectiveness of selected roles of public primary school head teachers in addressing educational needs of vulnerable pupils in Iringa and Mufindi Districts, Tanzania

Petrades Joseph

Mwenge Catholic University, Tanzania
Mary Immaculate College, Limerick
Email: jpetrades@gmail.com

The study examined the effectiveness of selected roles of public primary school head teachers in addressing the educational needs of vulnerable pupils in Iringa and Mufindi Districts, Tanzania. Guided by Epstein's theory, it focused on the roles of five head teachers: communication, sensitisation, collaboration, networking, and building school culture in addressing the educational needs of vulnerable pupils. A sample of 490 was generated. A mixed-methods approach was used for data triangulation. Reliability was ensured through consistent coding, reflexivity, peer review and Cronbach's Alpha. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 27, and descriptive data (frequencies, percentages, and means) were presented. Inferential tests included ANOVA, Kruskal-Wallis, and Ordinal Logistic Regression, all at a 5% significance level. Qualitative data from interviews and observations were analysed thematically using Turbo-Scribe and QDA Miner. Findings revealed that head teachers effectively use parent meetings, letters, phone calls, face-to-face communication, school committees, UWAWA, pupils' clubs, songs, poems and engagement with village and ward leaders in addressing pupils' needs. However, lack of government guidelines on identifying vulnerable pupils led to informal identification methods and indoor seminars. It was concluded that Head teachers' way of communication, sensitization, collaboration, networking and building school culture like use of parent meetings, letters, phone, face to face talk, school committee, UWAWA, pupils' clubs, village and ward leaders positively impacted on support for addressing vulnerable pupils' needs. Head Teachers should promote regular parent meetings, strengthen feedback mechanisms and enhance TUSEME clubs and UWAWA. Additionally, Head Teachers and the MoEST should provide training and distribute clear guidelines on identifying and supporting vulnerable pupils.

About:

My name is **Petrades Joseph**, a PhD student at Mwenge Catholic University, specialising in Educational Planning and Administration. My Phd studies aim to evaluate the effectiveness of selected roles of public primary school Head Teachers in addressing the educational needs of vulnerable pupils. I hold a Master's degree in Educational Planning and Administration from the same institution and a Bachelor of Arts in Education from Tumaini University Makumira. Before joining my PhD studies, I served as in different capacities in Primary Schools. With my teaching background, I am dedicated to enhancing educational outcomes and addressing the challenges faced by vulnerable pupils.

Empowering Communities Through Education: The Early Learning Initiative's Inclusive Support for African Families in Dublin's Inner City

Rebecca Adeyemo & Kate Darmody

National College of Ireland

rebecca.adeyemo@ncirl.ie

kate.darmody@ncirl.ie

The Early Learning Initiative at National College of Ireland was developed to address the problem of educational underachievement in marginalised communities. Situated in Dublin's inner city, ELI has witnessed first-hand the significant increase in immigration in recent years and caters to an increasingly diverse population. Included in this is a growing community of African descent. ELI engages with African families to promote social inclusion and equity through numerous programmes. Home Visiting provision offers intensive, individualised support for parents and children, as well as visiting families in local IPAS centres. These evidence-based and informed programmes empower parents to support their child's learning and development, and promote and support social inclusion. Talking Heads provides English as an additional language migrant learners, at primary and secondary levels, with the opportunity to practice everyday English in an informal social setting after school. This programme has proved to be an enjoyable experience for the young people involved, with the majority of students feeling more confident speaking English after participating. In 2024, ELI celebrated Africa Day by hosting a celebration event to promote and celebrate the diverse culture and heritage of people of African descent living, studying, and working in Dublin's inner city through music, food and workshops. The event was well-received in the community, promoting learning and awareness of African culture among both children and adults.

About:

Rebecca Adeyemo studied Community and Youth Work at Maynooth University. She has several years of experience supporting young people in various settings. In her current role at ELI, she is involved in promoting community engagement with young people and families from migrant backgrounds, as well as fostering inclusion. Her passion lies in creating safe, empowering spaces where young people can grow and reach their full potential.

Kate Darmody is the Research Lead in the Early Learning Initiative with a BA and a MSc in Psychology from UCD. Prior to joining NCI in 2018 Kate worked in the area of early intervention for children with developmental delays utilizing evidenced based interventions to improve outcomes. Her special interests include but are not limited to prevention and early intervention, evidenced-based practice, child development, community action research.

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Well-being of African Migrant Women in the Midwest of Ireland: Exploring experiences of access to and knowledge of supportive services

Santhi Corcoran & David Chisanga

Midwest Migrant Community Network (MMCN)
Gender Orientation and Sexual Health HIV (GOSHH)
Mary Immaculate College, Limerick

The National Sexual Health Strategy 2015–2020 is a strategic framework for the sexual health and wellbeing of the Irish population, launched in October 2015. Its key goals are that everyone has access to appropriate sexual health education and information, high-quality sexual health services are available and affordable, and that good-quality data is available to guide the service. This small-scale project explored the experiences of African migrant women regarding access to sexual and reproductive healthcare in the Midwest of Ireland. The project collaborated with women who had arrived from different African nations, who, due to cultural taboos, stigmas and lack of information in their own country, are often unable to discuss sexual and reproductive health issues openly. They may also have experienced discomfort or a lack of confidence in accessing or engaging with sexual or reproductive health services in Ireland. The literature reviewed suggests that migrants are generally healthier upon arrival in their new countries of residence; however, their health deteriorates due to poor living standards, unfavourable working conditions, and the adoption of risky health behaviours (Sserwanja and Kawuki, 2020). Additionally, migrants were less likely to access or fully benefit from the healthcare system in their host countries, because of various challenges such as language barrier, being undocumented, and negative healthcare provider attitudes (Sserwanja and Kawuki 2020). The theory of change was applied as a guiding tool to capture these insights and process discussion-based narratives to evaluate the collated data (Vogel 2012, p. 5). The women who participated in our project discussed the taboos, stigmas and shame associated with sexual health and reproductive health issues within their communities. They highlighted the lack of information about services, access to products and constraints within their culture in accessing help for better sexual health and well-being in Ireland.

About:

Santhi Corcoran is a Lecturer in Psychology in Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland and supports children and young people who have experienced Grief, Bereavement, Separation and Loss with the Children's Greif Centre, Limerick. She is also the co-founder of the Midwest Migrant Community Network – an online community network based on social-justice initiatives in Limerick and DIEN Ireland (Diversity and Intercultural Education Network). Santhi has a professional background in Education, Psychology, Healthcare, Social Care, Child Protection, Adult Education, Community Regeneration and Development. She has developed and delivered training to various public, educational, NGO, and community sectors, including mediation services in Ireland and the United Kingdom, on topics such as culture, diversity, racism, and intercultural dialogue. Santhi also delivers QQI programmes in Health, Social Care, and Disability and Equality Studies for the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB). She has contributed to and published health, education, and migration research in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Santhi is a recipient of the Anna Lindh Foundation Intercultural Education award (2019) and an alumnus and fellow of the Dialogue Perspective programme (2022), funded by the German Federal Government.

David M.S. Chisanga is a Zambian-born media and communications specialist based in Ireland. He is a multiple award-winning journalist, a journalist mentor, a TV and radio broadcaster, a blogger, a scriptwriter, and a public relations (PR) professional. His career spans over five (5) years with experience in broadcast journalism, print and online journalism, radio and TV production, filmmaking, academia and PR. David is currently a PhD Candidate at Mary Immaculate College (MIC) in the Department of Media and Communication Studies. He is the administrative secretary of MMCN. He is also a volunteer at Wired FM, where he produces and presents his award-winning radio program, "In the Diaspora." He aspires to achieve great success in life.

Catholic Studies in Ireland: Challenging, Constructive, and Critical Voices'

Sarah Emmanuel Mmari

24602721@micstudent.mic.ul.ie

Tengeru Institute of Community Development, Tanzania/Mary Immaculate College

Catholic education has historically played a significant role in shaping the intellectual, moral, and spiritual development of learners. However, its holistic impact on learners remains underexamined in scholarly discourse, particularly in Africa. This paper addresses the gap by exploring the core contributions of Catholic education through a reflective narrative approach supported by a contemporary literature review. This review aims to examine the holistic contributions of Catholic education. Drawing on lived educational experiences and recent scholarly sources (2020–2025), the study explores core themes such as prayer, moral formation, discipline, and community service. Thirty-two peer-reviewed articles were selected from databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and ERIC, based on relevance, accessibility, and contextual focus on African and global Catholic education. Thematic analysis identified recurring patterns within the narrative and literature, providing a grounded understanding of Catholic education's enduring role in shaping ethical and compassionate individuals. The paper also critically addressed the current challenges faced by Catholic schools, including secularisation, curriculum reform, and competition from non-faith-based institutions. The findings indicate that Catholic education is vital in nurturing holistic development and cultivating individuals committed to excellence, compassion, and the common good. Ultimately, the study affirms the enduring importance of Catholic educational philosophy in African and global contexts. It recommends that Catholic institutions integrate moral and spiritual themes more deliberately into existing curricula, provide regular in-service training for teachers on values-based and faith-integrated pedagogy, establish mentorship and service-learning programs that connect students with their local communities, and share successful practices and stories from their schools to strengthen visibility, inspire replication, and promote collaborative learning among Catholic educators regionally and globally.

About:

Sarah Emmanuel Mmari is an Assistant Lecturer at the Tengeru Institute of Community Development in Tanzania. She holds a Master's Degree in Education and is pursuing a PhD in Educational Planning and Administration. Sarah has experience in teaching, research, and quality assurance. She is passionate about education that inspires personal growth, integrity, and community impact. Her work reflects a strong commitment to nurturing learners and making education more relevant to community needs. She enjoys guiding students, shaping meaningful learning experiences, and contributing to academic improvement at her institution. Sarah believes in the power of lifelong learning and the transformative impact of education.

The Geo-Politics of Changing Time: Can Africa Escape?

Dr Shaibu D. Sunday

Smart City Technologies

dublin@sctsmartcity.ie / dan.based@gmail.com

The mission of this study is to examine the dynamics that often lead Western democracies to exclude African realities through the lens of global geopolitics. This exclusion of Africans is significant to interrogate for clarity, given the continent's substantial contributions to the economic emancipation of Western nations over several centuries. This study highlights Africa's geo-economic and political significance, particularly concerning strategic movements across the continent aimed at promoting universal democratic initiatives from the 1960s to the late 1990s, which are often disconnected from aspirations for African liberty and social justice. Despite the adoption of democratic frameworks by African sovereign states, the continent continues to face considerable challenges in realizing effective democratization norms and social justice in its interactions with the Western world. This situation prompts an inquiry into the adequacy of the democratic strategies employed in Africa. This study investigates the historical interplay between Africa's geopolitical landscape and its challenges in achieving democratic equilibrium with the Western world, utilizing John Rawls's principles of social justice to analyze the barriers facing African states. Furthermore, the study examines misleading interpretations of African history disseminated by Western media, which often distort narratives and impede efforts to achieve social justice in Africa. Ultimately, this research aims to clarify pathways through which social justice can be realized in contemporary multicultural societies and explore the complexities of multiculturalism within modern Western democracies. Where does the Continent of African Belong in the contemporary time of the changing world?

About:

Dr. Shaibu D. Sunday is an academic researcher specializing in African political, diplomatic studies, political psychology, and strategic analysis. His work has advanced the understanding of modern African geopolitics, including pre-colonial Africa, post-decolonization, post-democratization, neo-colonialism, the psychology of extremism, and the root causes of underdevelopment. His research has been published in esteemed European scientific journals, highlighting his commitment to African political dynamics. He is also a public speaker, author, lecturer, and scholar known for his contributions to Nigerian language policy.

The Art of Noticing: Influence, Visibility, and Transformative Practice

Sheenagh Geoghegan

Limerick City Gallery of Art

sbg283@gmail.com

As an artist currently in residence at Limerick City Gallery of Art (LCGA), my practice is grounded in the belief that art fosters critical thinking, especially the capacity to question. In a time of increasing complexity, I see artistic engagement as a vital tool for examining the world more deeply, sharpening our awareness, and encouraging ethical reflection. I work across painting, drawing, and assemblage, and see painting in particular as a highly sensitive medium — one that holds space for ambiguity, feeling, and perception. My work explores emotional complexity and the slipperiness of experience, asking how art might make visible what is often overlooked or denied. I believe this kind of attentive noticing can create space for dialogue, empathy, and cultural reckoning. In the spirit of Africa Day, this presentation reflects on how art can contribute to more equitable, inclusive, and socially just futures. In Ireland, the fact that museums and galleries remain free to the public signals a quiet but meaningful commitment to cultural access — one that invites participation across difference. I see these public institutions as places where we can think, feel, and question together. My work is informed and nourished by the profound contributions of artists, writers, and curators of African descent — including Claudia Rankine, Saidiya Hartman, Okwui Enwezor, and Faith Ringgold — whose practices continue to shape and expand the field of contemporary art.

About:

Sheenagh Geoghegan completed her MFA at The Slade School of Art, London, 2013, at her graduate degree show, she was awarded the Stanford Scholarship, The Orpen Award and The Charles Heath Hayward Award. She has exhibited widely in Europe and America including Cornell University, New York, 2019, Alma Zevi in Venice and Leila Heller Gallery, New York, She has participated in the Colour and Poetry Symposium at The Slade, University College London in 2025, 2024 & 2025. Recent solo exhibitions include Atelier Concorde in Lisbon (2023), and Camera Cluj, Cluj Romania (2024). Sheenagh is currently Artist in Residence at Limerick City Gallery of Art.

Not Just a Journey but A Becoming

Tabitha Ciyamba Nseka

Freelancer

ttabithacnseka@gmail.com

When I arrived in Ireland, I came with more questions than answers. I left behind everything I had ever known, my language, my community, my rhythm of life to step into a land where I had no family, no guide, and no clear sense of how things worked. It was not easy. There were days I wanted to give up, days when the weight of starting over felt like too much. I stood in food queues with tears burning in my eyes, not just from hunger, but from shame. I had left behind the familiar to become a stranger in search of survival. But I made a choice. I chose not to let those difficult moments define me. I chose not to hide behind excuses. I chose integration not as surrender, but as strength. I chose to learn, to adapt, to grow, and to still dream. That choice gave birth to something beautiful. In the silence of struggle, I found my voice. I started writing, not just stories, but truths. My truth. And in doing so, I discovered purpose. To every student reading this: your background is not your barrier. You have the power to choose courage over comfort, growth over fear. Whether you were born here or arrived by journey you belong. Bring your whole self to the table. Because Africa is not just a place, it's a spirit that rises, no matter where it's planted. Today, I remain living proof of hope.

About:

This can be found in my book title the Radiant, Divine Favour on the journey of integration. You can get it on Amazon:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0F4WFNFBR>, on

<https://selar.com/750281> or my website https://tabithaciyambanseka.com/book_detail.php?a=the-radiant-path--divine-favor-on-the-journey-to-integration.

From Sustainable Development Goals to Action: A Strategic Framework for Racial Justice and Equality in Irish Employment

Toms Emeka Ugwu
University College Cork
tomsugwu@hotmail.com

There is persistent racial discrimination against ethnic minorities in employment throughout the European Union (EU), including Ireland, despite the presence of anti-discrimination laws and policies. This study constructs a strategic framework, informed by lived experiences (Joseph, 2020; McGinnity et al, 2021), to translate SDG principles into actionable steps for racial justice, equality, and human rights in Irish employment. Equal opportunity in employment, as provided in the Irish Constitution (Article 40(1) of the Irish Constitution, 1937) is a fundamental human right available to all, regardless of race and ethnicity, to promote international norms and sustainability. The EU adopted anti-discrimination legislation in 2000, known as the Race Equality Directive 2000/43/EC, to address employment inequalities based on race and ethnicity in EU Member States and to rigorously implement the Directive into their national legislation (Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 Implementing the Principle of Equal Treatment between Persons Irrespective of Racial or Ethnic Origin., 2000). This aims to protect against and prevent employment discrimination against ethnic minorities while aligning with global norms and sustainable human rights practices. In line with the anti-discrimination trend in the EU, the Irish Employment Equality Acts 1998-2022 prevent employment discrimination in recruitment and general working conditions, regardless of ethnicity or race (Employment Equality Act 1998-2022). The demand for equality and social inclusion from the current multicultural Irish society necessitates a practical acceptance and equal treatment that supports the inclusiveness of employees from minority ethnic groups. Although full employment equality among employees (UDHR) is determined by the level of respect for human rights in the workplace, it remains a key factor in maximising employee productivity to achieve sustainable development goals. To realise the expected enhancement of employment equality rights, several factors- such as the clarity of anti-discrimination laws, the accessibility of legal procedures, the availability of resources, and the commitment of relevant institutions to address discrimination in Ireland- need to be addressed.

About:

Toms Emeka Ugwu is a PhD Researcher at the School of Law University College Cork (UCC). He holds LLM (International Commercial Law - Griffith College Dublin LLB, BA in Law - Technological University (TUD) Dublin HND (Business & Law) - Inchicore Dublin FMCI - London Dip. Journalism - London.

A Crisis In The Making: Strict Migration Policies Fuel Human Trafficking

Dr Uche Osakwe

European Institute of Policy Research and Human Rights

olanmaic@gmail.com

Human trafficking flourishes because of governments' draconian immigration policies. Government-controlled visas and work permits, which are often inaccessible to ordinary people, disproportionately benefit traffickers. Individuals, upon entering a jurisdiction under the guise of legitimate migration, frequently find they have fallen victim to human trafficking. The promised enhancement of living conditions is replaced by exploitation, where traffickers force victims, primarily women, into prostitution to repay debts. Other victims face excessive labour demands with minimal compensation. Cases of abuse, humiliation, and abandonment by perpetrators are also documented. This paper explores whether the stringent migration policies of various governments are necessary and argues that such restrictive measures significantly heighten the vulnerability of these individuals. The argument rests on the belief that states have a moral obligation to protect victims of human trafficking. Using rational choice theory as an analytical framework, this paper is supported by both primary and secondary sources grounded in existing literature. In conclusion, this study recommends several actions, including the removal of strict visa conditions, decriminalisation, and the adoption of more inclusive policies that promote the humane treatment of migrants and fair trade among nations.

About:

Dr Azukaoma Uche Osakwe, Ph.d., MPhil, M.Sc., B.Sc., SRFP, is a Senior Research Fellow at the European Institute of Policy Research and Human Rights. His research interests include Postcolonial Thought, Interreligious Dialogue, Peace Studies, Ethno-nationalism, and Geopolitics. He is the author of several works including: *The Divided House: NdiIgbo At A Crossroads* (2014), *The Second Coming* (2016), *The Conspiracy of Silence: Deception, Hypocrisy, and Bloodshed Under Muhammad Buhari* (2022), and *Nigerian Postcolonial Thought and Peace Process in Northern Nigeria* (Bloomsbury, unpublished, 2025). Some of his articles are titled: *Sustainable Development, Resource Management, and Transformation of Social Relations Are Essential for Conflict Transformation in the Niger Delta*, published in the *African Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*, and *A Crisis in the Making: Strict Migration Policies Fuel Human Trafficking* in the *European Institute of Policy Research and Human Rights*.

Additional Talk Opportunity on Campus

English Language and Literature in Ireland BIP 2025

Monday, 19th May 2025, 3 pm

Online session 'Research and Teaching at the MIC English Language & Literature Department'

Monday, 26th May 2025

Room G10, Foundation Building

Focus: Getting to know each other

1.30 pm Arrival, tea, coffee and light lunch (sandwiches)

Arrive at MIC main reception (South Circular Road, V94 VN26).

Collect your welcome pack and enjoy tea, coffee and sandwiches while meeting other participants.

2.00 pm Welcome and opening remarks by Prof. Dermot Nestor, President of Mary Immaculate College; Dr Holly Cowman, Director of International Engagement; and Prof. Eugene O'Brien, Head of English Language and Literature Department.

3.30 pm Tour of Limerick City with Dr Paul O'Brien. This will be about 3 km walk on foot, please bring comfortable shoes and a waterproof jacket – just in case! The tour will finish in the city centre and we will recommend places for food and drinks in the area.

Tuesday, 27th May 2025

Room G10, Foundation Building

Focus: English and Irish Culture and Literature

9.30 am – 10.30am Introduction to Irish Language and Culture

Dr Vicky Brady, Roinn na Gaeilge (Department of Irish), Faculty of Arts

10.30am – 10.45am Tea & Coffee Break

10.45am – 11.30am Introduction to Irish English

Dr Brian Clancy, MIC Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts

11.30 am – 12.30 pm "When a frog grows hair"- Idioms and ESOL Learners in Ireland, Dr Justin McNamara, MIC Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts

12.30 pm – 2.00 pm Lunch break – College Restaurant

€5 voucher will be provided towards the cost of your lunch.

2.00 pm 21st Century English Language Literature – Perspectives from Ireland and Africa

Part 1: 21st Century English Language Literature in Ireland

Prof. Eugene O'Brien, Department of English Language and Literature, Mary Immaculate College

Part 2: 21st Century English Language Literature in Sub-Saharan Africa

Dr Asante Mtenje, English Department, University of Malawi;

Rev. Dr Deogratias Kisweka, Department of Social Sciences and Humanities, Mwenge Catholic University, Tanzania

Part 3: Discussion

4.00 pm Finish

Wednesday, 28th May 2025

Room T206, TARA Building

Focus: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

10.00 am – 10.45 am Loanwords in English

Deborah Tobin, MIC Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts

10.45 am - 11.10 am Tea & Coffee Break

11.10 am – 11.40 am Innovative Language Teaching Methods

Cecilia Lasa, Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, University of Buenos Aires

11.45 am - 12.30 am Assessment and ELT

Ilona Costelloe, MIC Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts

12.30 pm – 2.00 pm Lunch in the College Restaurant

€5 voucher will be provided towards the cost of your lunch.

2.00 pm 'Sing for Every Tatter in its Mortal Dress': Contemporary Irish Poetry

Dr John McDonagh, MIC Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts

3.30 pm Finish

Thursday, 29th May 2025

Room T206, TARA Building

Focus: Inclusion and innovative teaching methods

9.30 am – 10.15 am Multilingual Education and Inclusive Methodologies in Irish Classrooms

Dr Conchúr Ó Brolcháin, MIC Department of Language & Literacy Education, Faculty of Education

10.15 am – 11.00 am Linguistic Diversity and English Language Policy in Tanzania

Dr Doris Lyimo, Mwenge Catholic University, Tanzania

11.00 am – 11.15 am - Tea & Coffee Break

11.15 am – 12.15 pm AI and Inclusion in Education

Dr Keith Young, MIC Department of STEM Education, Faculty of Education

Dr Forster Gondwe, Instructional Design and Technology, University of Malawi

12:15 pm – 1:15 pm Digital Applications for Language Learning.

Dr Chris Fitzgerald, MIC Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts

1.15 pm Lunch Break – College Restaurant

€5 voucher will be provided towards the cost of your lunch.

2.30 pm -4.00 pm Inclusive ELT Practices for Learners with Dyslexia

Giana Hennigan, MIC Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts

4.30 pm Finish and walk together to a restaurant (about a 10-minute walk from MIC) for an informal networking dinner.

5 pm -7 pm Networking dinner – Bobby Byrne's

The organisers cover the cost of the meal, but drinks are at participants' own expense.

Friday, 30st May 2025

Cultural Immersion - Killaloe

9.00 am Departure to Killaloe from MIC campus (bus bay beside the Lime Tree Theatre).

Trip to a local town Killaloe including a boat cruise on Lough Derg.

Return to Limerick to arrive in the city at around 2pm and finish.

About the Munster Technological University / Murang'a University of Technology Partnership

Hugh O'Donnell BSc MEngSc PhD

Biomedical Engineering Lecturer & Course Co-Ordinator

Munster Technological University, Cork

Hugh.ODonnell@mtu.ie

The partnership between Murang'a University of Technology and Munster Technological University originated from an initial contact made by MTU engineering lecturers Paul Keane and Hugh O'Donnell with Kenyan entrepreneur Linda Kamau at the University Startup World Cup in Copenhagen in September 2023.

The team delivering the Innovative Product Development (IPD) modules in the Mechanical, Biomedical, and Manufacturing Engineering Department at MTU constantly seeks to develop new opportunities for our students and expand the scope of IPD. The fact that the modules are delivered online provides us with the freedom to collaborate that is not available when delivering other class-based modules.

In March 2024, it was decided to approach Linda to determine if we could partner with suitable Kenyan education providers in the area of student innovation and entrepreneurship. Linda arranged a meeting for us with a broad group of interested Kenyan parties. One of these was Prof. Christopher Maina Muriithi, Dean of the School of Engineering and Technology at Murang'a University of Technology (MUT). Of the potential partners we met, MUT seemed the most suitable candidate for collaboration, so Paul and Hugh conducted further meetings with Prof. Muriithi to determine the best way to develop the initiative. We then created a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Prof. Muriithi, which was signed by Prof. Muriithi and Michael Loftus, MTU's VP of External Affairs. The MTU/MUT MOU will initially run for two years. The cost of student registration will be covered by the MTU for the two-year period, during which time other funding sources for the initiative will be sought.

With the MOU signed, we then set about organising the recruitment of students. The agreement was to admit six MUT students (gender balanced) onto the IPD modules. Prof. Muriithi recruited these six students, who were in the 5th Year (Final Year) of the Electrical Engineering and Manufacturing Engineering programmes at MUT. The students are Joyce Githinji, Cynthia Kimani, Denis Kioko, Brian Kimani, Benedict Oduor and Caroline Onyancha. Each student was placed in a multidisciplinary IPD group with approximately six other MTU students. The students are registered as MTU students, with access to MTU email addresses, the learning management system (Canvas), and MTU library services, among other benefits.

So far, lecturers have received very positive feedback from all the students. Despite having no previous experience in providing modules across such a diverse spectrum, both geographically and culturally, the lecturers are managing the process very well. There were some minor communication issues (mainly of a technical nature) at the beginning. Still, these issues were quickly resolved, and the MUT students are now making significant contributions to the development of their group's project/product. This year, two of the IPD innovative products – a wildlife management system for crop protection and a safety system to predict building collapse in Kenya – were initiated by MUT students.

The feedback from MUT students is that they have been strongly advising students in the year below them to apply to undertake IPD next year. It has also been a unique experience for MTU students to work on a common objective alongside students from Kenya, and in some cases, to collaborate on a project specific to Kenya. The success to date of the initiative has also been enormously satisfying for the lecturers involved.

Another unique development from this IPD initiative is the MTU Innovation Challenge (<https://www.mtu.ie/news/mtu-innovation-challenge-2025/>). This is a multinational, extracurricular activity in which companies and NGOs provide challenges or problems for groups of students to solve over an approximately 8-week period. Afterwards, they present their solutions to the challenge provider. It is also run online. This year, we sourced two of the Challenges from the Kenyan startup company SowPrecise. Linda Kamau, our initial contact in Kenya, is the owner of SowPrecise, a green-tech startup which provides irrigation equipment to small farmers in semi-arid parts of Kenya. Five of the six MUT students registered on IPD also registered for the 2025 MTU Innovation Challenge, and one of them, Cynthia Kimani, worked on the Kenyan SowPrecise challenge! Cynthia and Joyce, another Kenyan student, were on two of the winning teams; Joyce's team's project concerned a challenge provided by Cork's Marymount Hospice.

Cynthia Kimani provided the following reflection on her experience of IPD over the year: .

Being part of the online IPD programme in Ireland has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. Joining online from Kenya, I was initially nervous about how I would connect in a virtual environment, but the warmth and support I've received have been overwhelming. My groupmates have become like family, always ready to help and share ideas, making this journey unforgettable. This programme has opened my eyes to new ways of thinking and collaborating. This programme has not only enriched my knowledge but also demonstrated to me the power of collaboration and kindness across borders. It's been a journey I'll always cherish.

Concluding Remarks

Dr Holly Cowman, Ed.D.

Director of International Engagement

International Office

Phone: +353 61 774787

Email: Holly.Cowman@mic.ul.ie

Location: JHN02

Africa Day 2025 has reminded me once again of how much Limerick has transformed and how much Mary Immaculate College has grown, in every sense, in recent years. Academic programmes at MIC have benefited from the contributions of many international perspectives worldwide, particularly at the postgraduate level. Our student body has included students from many African countries in recent years, including Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, and we have had staff and student exchanges with universities in Algeria, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Morocco, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda. We are working to expand this list further in the coming years.

It is so exciting to see Africa Day, organised by our staff and students from Africa, as a staple in the college's academic calendar. It has become a powerful showcase for the research of students and staff of MIC and other institutions willing to share their research with us and help our efforts at internationalisation at home, bringing ideas and thought leadership from and related to Africa to our campus in Limerick. I am excited to see so many fascinating contributions this year on themes of inclusion, empowerment, community and plurality, giving voice to narratives that may not have readily found their way to audiences in Irish higher education.

Something else that Africa Day highlights each year is the commitment and energy of our talented, highly-organised and creative colleagues, Lylian Fotabong and Florence Ajala. Once again this year, they have worked so hard to ensure that everything about Africa Day at MIC runs smoothly, while simultaneously creating such a sense of joy and fun around the event that they make it seem effortless - and it certainly is not! Thank you again to all of our colleagues, students and friends who made the day such a success and congratulations, in particular, to Lylian and Florence.

Concluding Remarks

Dr Florence Ajala

Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education.
Mary Immaculate College, Limerick

As one of the organisers of the MIC Africa Day event, when we started this journey four years ago, we aimed to showcase the works of MIC African scholars. However, our focus has evolved to include collaboration with the community and promoting other African scholars' works in Ireland and beyond. I want to thank Mary Immaculate College for embracing this vision and providing a platform for African scholars at MIC to shine.

Dr Lylian Fotabong

Race Equality and Sanctuary Manager
Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Interculturalism Office
Mary Immaculate College
Location: G40

The fourth MIC Africa Day has again proven to be a powerful platform for research, learning, cultural exchange, and community building. It has highlighted Africa's incredible heritage and promising future in research. We have explored, we have shared, and we have celebrated. I sincerely thank the EDII and International Office for their unrelentless support, all our authors, speakers, performers, and volunteers, and especially each of you, our attendees, for your active participation. Let the connections we have forged and the knowledge we have gained inspire us to continue fostering understanding and unity, not just today, but every day within our college and beyond. Thank you, and we look forward to welcoming you to our fifth Africa Day next year! Go raibh maith agat.

MIC AFRICA DAY 2025

ABSTRACT BOOKLET

Date: Thursday 29 May 2025

Location: Halla, Mary Immaculate College



MIC
MARY IMMACULATE COLLEGE
COLÁISTE MHUIRE GAN SM



Equality, Diversity, Inclusion
and Interculturalism @ MIC
Comhionannas, Eagúlacht,
Ionchuimsitheacht agus
Idirchultúrachas @ CMGS



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