

# SANCTUARY IN POLITICS

## *Empowering and Equipping Sanctuary Ambassadors*

The Sanctuary in Politics course has run three times in Dublin and twice in Waterford. This booklet aims to give the main components of the course as it has developed in Ireland. The time scale used was five full days, with two week gaps between sessions and a variety of 'extra-curricular activities; it can, however, be adapted to any time frame. We recommend that the course be adapted to the local political and media context.

### **Aim of Course**

The aim of Sanctuary in Politics is to educate, engage and empower groups of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in the Irish political system and history, working with the media, public speaking, awareness raising and advocacy. Using a series of lectures, interactive teaching sessions, facilitated discussions, assignments and placements, this course helps equip a new generation of refugee and migrant leaders to reach their full potential in a diverse, outward-looking 21<sup>st</sup> century Ireland. The diversity of the students' backgrounds also means that students have a unique opportunity to build friendships with other minority groups previously unknown to them. The ultimate aim is for a new generation of 'sanctuary ambassadors' to be empowered and equipped to bring the voice of refugees into mainstream society.

### **The Needs**

This course arose from needs and gaps expressed by refugees, asylum seekers and migrants regarding a disconnect from mainstream society and an inability to find ways of connecting. Many were telling us they knew nothing about how elections and politics work in Ireland, what 'the Troubles' were or how present day Ireland was formed over the past century. Migrants who were active citizens in their own country were feeling they knew neither the system nor the people to help them get involved, and there was a growing sense of disengagement. Along with this was a feeling of frustration that no-one was helping them to get their voice heard, and fear about engaging with the media. This gap is borne out by statistics – only two migrant councillors in the whole country where the migrant population is estimated to be 17%. With these needs in mind we put together the course outlined below.

### **Recruitment**

Courses were advertised through our extensive networks and through previous course graduates. All students wishing to apply were asked to send us their details and to write a paragraph explaining why they wanted to join the course. This helped us to decide if the applicant was suitable for the course, and with a few applicants we followed up the application with a phone call. Recruitment was difficult the first year, but from the second year, courses were over-subscribed and some applicants had to be turned away.

## **Course Teaching Methodology**

The course is facilitated by a core team, mostly trained and experienced facilitators. At all points in the course we encourage student participation and give them ample opportunities for application and action to ensure active learning. A variety of teaching methods are used in this course, including:

- Lectures (mainly external lecturers, experts in their field, giving their time pro bono)
- Practical teaching sessions with group work
- Group work with facilitators/mentors
- Guided assignments
- Review, summary and reflection
- Interviews and analysis
- Panels of experts (politicians, media practitioners or campaign leaders have all participated in panels)
- Assignments and feedback
- Supervised placements

All the course content is prepared by people qualified and experienced in adult education. Language learning, while not an overt topic on the course, is a vital consideration, given that none of the students are native English speakers. The course requires a minimum level of Intermediate English (ESOL Entry 3 and above) but language competency varies and facilitators and visiting speakers need to be aware of this. Lecturers who are not used to working with such groups are briefed on use of language and encouraged to use visuals, and lectures are normally followed or interspersed by an opportunity for reflection, feedback and questions.

The courses normally have around 30 students from a big variety of language groups, parts of Ireland, English competency levels, immigration status, age and background. In order to ensure each student is helped to maximize the learning, we rely on a team of mentors.

## **MENTORS**

Mentors are recruited from two main sources:

1. Irish volunteers from City of Sanctuary and other sources; some bring expertise in a relevant area such as media or politics.
2. Graduates from previous SiP courses who are using the learning and want to become 'ambassadors for sanctuary'.

We aim to recruit at least 15 mentors for a course of 30 students, and give a one day training immediately before the course begins. Mentors are then formed into teams of one Irish person and one SiP graduate; each team is assigned a group of up to six students and work with that group throughout the course.

## OUTLINE OF COURSE

*Sessions normally run 11 to 3*

1-2 weeks before course starts	Mentor training (mix of Irish and SiP graduates)
Session 1	Introductions and getting to know each other Introduction to group work Understanding and being understood (language and its use by Irish people and immigrants) How to tell your story and prepare for public speaking
Session 2	Introduction to Irish politics Elections (Proportional representation and voter rights and registration Overview & History of Irish Politics
Session 3	Working with the media Newspapers and print media Radio and TV work Techniques and practice in being interviewed Media good practice and how to address poor practice
Session 4	Practical work around Politics (meeting panel of politicians where students have prepared questions and presentations, or external meeting/conference
Session 5	Social campaigning and getting your message across Lectures from campaigners in Ireland (eg Marriage Equality Referendum campaign leaders or Amnesty International Campaign leaders) Inspirational speech from a refugee who is a sanctuary ambassador  Graduation and planning for follow up
1-2 months after graduation: Sanctuary in Oireachtas (Irish Parliament)	Graduates of SiP 3 course to meet and make presentations to Minister for Justice, Minister of State with Responsibility for Integration and groups of political representatives (MPs and Senators)  This session will be planned during the final sessions of the course or in an extra session. Students prepare by agreeing on main topics to be brought to the attention of the politicians; preparing a manifesto; selecting a group of about 10 who will speak during the day and others who will ask questions. All students and mentors actively encouraged to invite their local MPs and Senators.
Assignments	Assignments may follow any of the sessions and all students are expected to hand in a written assignment in order to graduate. Mentors are on hand to help students in their group.

## SANCTUARY IN POLITICS – DETAILED OUTLINE AND SAMPLES

*(please custom to your own local needs)*

### RECRUITMENT FORM

#### SANCTUARY IN POLITICS 2018 – APPLICATIONS INVITED

Are you a refugee, asylum seeker or migrant? Would you like to:

- Learn how to speak in public, raise awareness and tell your story
- Find out how politics works in Ireland and know your rights
- Get your voice heard by the decision-makers and politicians
- Learn how to work with the media
- Discover the keys to successful lobbying and campaigns
- Make new friends from all over the world

This course will give you an introduction to public speaking, Irish politics, working with the media, social campaigning and related topics.

It is free of charge to all participants. Tea, coffee and lunch will be provided.

The course will take place in Trinity College Dublin on the following Saturday mornings (11am to 3pm):

17 February, 3 March, 24 March, 7 April and 21 April.

You must be able to attend on these dates and be willing to complete assignments. Mentors will be on hand to help you. All successful students completing the course will receive a certificate.

#### HOW TO APPLY

Please send us your name and contact details including mobile phone number and write a short letter (max 500 words) explaining why you would like to attend the course. Please use this letter to describe your interest in the topics and how you would like to use the learning. Places on this very popular course are limited, so a well written application is highly recommended. You are advised to apply well before the 9<sup>th</sup> February deadline.

Applications should be sent by email to [cityofsanctuarydublin@gmail.com](mailto:cityofsanctuarydublin@gmail.com)

## MENTORS FOR SANCTUARY IN POLITICS 3

### Information for Applicants

Sanctuary in Politics is an interactive course where students grow in understanding of Irish politics and how to engage with decision makers and learn to tell their own stories in the media or a variety of public forums. Mentors will be there to work alongside the facilitation team to accompany the students in the learning, facilitate discussions, and work in teams of two to facilitate small group work.

In order to be a mentor, you will need:

- Basic understanding of the course and content
- Understanding of the backgrounds and particular needs of participants especially refugees
- Ability and availability to help with assignments, sometimes including English language support
- Ability to listen non-judgementally and use English appropriate for second language speakers
- Respect for confidentiality and understanding of boundaries within this role
- Ability to facilitate small groups and work in a team

### Roles & Requirements for Mentors

1. Attend at least 3 course sessions and co-facilitate small groups
2. Meet, phone or email students between sessions to go over content or help with assignments as required.
3. Help organise outside speaking engagements (eg radio programmes, newspaper interviews, opportunities for people to speak in schools, colleges, churches etc), occasionally accompanying students and help them prepare & debrief.
4. Work with students who may want to organise a campaign, petition etc and link them with groups like Uplift for this purpose.
5. Agree to City of Sanctuary guidelines around boundaries and confidentiality.
6. Report to facilitating team if any difficulties arise with any individual student.
7. (Optional) Attend OPMI conference 24<sup>th</sup> March and/or Sanctuary in the Oireachtas (May?) and helping students who are speaking at these events.

## MENTORING AND GROUP FACILITATION FOR SIP 2018

### TRAINING OUTLINE

Date: Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2017

Time: 10.30 – 1.00pm (maybe offer tea/coffee from 10.00?)

Topics to be covered:

- Introductions (this is important and mustn't be rushed; it's a team and they need to get to know each other).
- Introduction to the course. Graduates encouraged to chip in with some comments.
- Introduction to what is expected of the mentors including **boundaries** and **confidentiality**
- Minding our language: tips on using English for speakers of other languages (draw on what they know – some are ESOL teachers)
- How to facilitate a small group discussion: facilitating team (this session should begin with drawing out what the mentors already know).
- Small group work – working with a sample question from the course or similar. This exercise will:
  - Help to cement the sense of team
  - Give some practice of group facilitation
- Questions and practical details including mentors indicating their availability.

## SESSION 1

### *Introductions, language, public speaking, confidence building*

- 10.30 Arrival, welcome, registration, tea, coffee, scones, fruit.
- 11.00 Short relaxation exercise
- 11.05 Welcome and introducing the team
- 11.10 Formation into small groups and short 'getting to know you' conversations in those small groups, including sharing on hopes and expectations for course (fed back to larger group and recorded on newsprint)
- 11.30 Speaking clearly in public: making your voice heard in Ireland'  
Broadcaster and voice trainer *or* Actor
- How the Irish use English (accents and pronunciation)
  - Irish people's lack of experience of 'foreign' English – how to get over that
  - Making sure your English is clear (pace, tone, pronunciation, grammar)
  - How to get help with achieving this
  - Breathing exercises for all to prepare for speaking.
  - The importance of body language, eye contact, pausing and slowing down
- 12.10 Being interviewed by the media:
- What questions to ask them before they ask you
  - Requesting information in advance
  - Practising your answers
  - Keeping your responses simple, short and clear.
- 12.30 Public speaking in practice  
Break into small groups of four students and two mentors so that all students can practice interviewing each other on a one-to-one basis.
- 1.15 Observations and feedback
- 1.30 LUNCH
- 2.00 Introduction to story-telling – analysis of short clip of Barack Obama speech  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEjeyQw6KhA>).  
What are the elements that make that speech effective? (group work with feedback to list on flip chart)
- 2.20 Assignment: Find another example of an inspiring speech and share it with your group over next two weeks (can be on youtube, in a book you have read, or one you heard)
- 3.00 Final briefing and departure

## Session 2 – Contemporary Irish Politics (Sessions 2, 3 and 4 can be interchanged)

10.30 Arrival, registration, refreshments

11.00 Warm-up/relaxation

Reflection on previous week's learning

11.15am The Irish Political System (External Speaker)

- Terminology and the meaning of key Irish words
- The make-up and selection of representatives in the Oireachtas
- Types of election and who is permitted to vote
- Key political leaders today
- The constituencies in Ireland and how to contact your political representatives
- Practical exercise around Proportional Representation/Single Transferable Vote
- Comparison with system in students' home countries

12.15am Irish Political History and Main Political Parties (External Speaker)

- The history of independence
- The border, troubles and peace process
- The main parties and their background and policies
- Coalition and minority governments and how they work

1.00pm Group work for discussion and reflection on the teaching content

1.30pm Lunch

2.00pm Questions and group discussion about politics

2.30pm Reminder about assignments. Additional assignment:

- Students register as voters
- Students find out the name and contact details of their constituency and representatives.
- Students prepare and write questions for panel of politicians

Optimal Field Trips – Tour of the Book of Kells, Collins Barracks or other place with historical interest

### Session 3 – The Irish Press and Media

11am Warm-up

Reflection on previous week's learning

11.15am An Introduction to the Irish Media (Press & other written media)

Lecture Topics include

- The current media climate in Ireland
- How to contact and inform reporters
- Press releases
- Social media
- Practical analysis of a positive story about migration
- Looking at pro and anti immigration media samples

12.00pm Group work preparing for an interview with or letter to newspaper

12.30pm Working with radio & TV (Radio programme presenter)

- Preparing for a radio interview
- Special considerations for live or phone-in radio
- Pro immigration radio stations
- Voice effectiveness on radio
- Working with TV journalists

1pm Lunch

1.45pm Group exercise to reflect on the learning and share experiences of the Irish media

2.15pm Preparing to meet politicians

Assignments for graduation

Group discussion around assignments

2..45 Close

Optional follow-up – speaking in radio programme (can be arranged for groups of students)

## Session 4 – Meeting the Politicians

11am Warm-up

Reflection on previous week's learning

11.15am Politicians Panel (6 External Speakers)

5 TDs, Senators and Councillors from different parties speaking about their party and its views on immigration

Journalist and immigration expert chairing panel and follow up session

Questions from the floor

Group work, each group with a different politician

Feedback from groups and politicians share what they learnt from groups

1.0 Lunch, followed by preparation for graduation & assignment discussion

### WORKSHEET – FINAL ASSIGNMENT

All students should prepare a 2-3 minute speech. Please use the speech to highlight ONE problem you or other refugees or migrants have experienced, and to suggest what could be done to alleviate the problem.

#### POSSIBLE TOPICS

You can choose your own topic, but here are some suggestions:

- Family reunification
- The right to work
- Delays in processing asylum claims
- Accessibility to health or housing services

#### POSSIBLE AUDIENCES

Prepare a speech with a specific audience in mind; if you would like to deliver the speech to your chosen audience at a later date, please let us know and we will try to help you to find a suitable venue and setting.

Here are a few possible audiences, there may be others you think of:

- A school assembly or class group (name the age group)
- A group of university students and lecturers
- A church or other faith group
- A group of politicians

#### PREPARATION

Please discuss your speech with one of your mentors or facilitators; they will be happy to help you and check it out. We suggest you present your speech following these steps:

- Greet your audience and create a connection with them
- Present your topic (it's often good to do this with a quick and simple story)
- Identify ONE change you would like to see happen and how the audience can help achieve this
- End on a positive and encouraging note with thanks

## **Session 5- Campaigning, Making an Impact**

11am Warm-up

Reflection on previous week's learning

11.15am Planning and Running a Successful Campaign (External Speaker)

The story of a successful campaign

Winning over the 'neutrals'

Clarity, chronology, and capacity measurements

Research and testimony

Reflection and feedback/questions (small groups)

12.15am Using your voice effectively (External Speaker)

1pm Lunch

1.45pm Graduation ceremony (certificates given by local dignitary or one of the speakers)

Students make short speeches before each session and three additional speeches after graduation

2.30pm Planning session for Sanctuary in the Oireachtas or other follow up

3.30pm Departure

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**Throughout the course, practical placements for public speaking and working with media personnel should be arranged by the facilitators and mentors for students.**