



SSIIM UNESCO CHAIR

On Social and Spatial Inclusion of International Migrants – Urban Policies and Practice

The right to adequate housing of migrants factsheets

N.6 United Kingdom

July 2010

THREE CASE STUDIES ON THE CHALLENGES AND SUBSEQUENT SOLUTIONS FOR HOUSING LOW
WAGE MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE UK.

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The right to adequate housing for migrants - factsheets

The right to adequate housing for migrants is a series of thematic factsheets on migrants' level of access to adequate shelter in different urban contexts. Written by academic researchers and experts solicited by SSIIM UNESCO Chair, the factsheets were aimed at providing background information for the 2010 Report of UN-Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing Dr. Raquel Rolnik.

Besides presenting the picture of the overall housing situation of migrants in the concerned contexts, authors were asked to highlight what the conditions of international migrants (regular and undocumented) are with respect to

- access to public housing and/or government subsidies
- access to housing loans
- access to the private housing market (discriminatory attitudes)
- inclusion into regularization and land tenure policies (if any, highlighting whether it is a local or a central government policy)

Authors were also invited to underline whether differences in policies/attitudes between local (poor) population (including rural-urban migrants) and international migrants are put in place and if any particularly interesting policy is being implemented that could be pointed out as innovative example.

Through the network of the partner universities, research centres and other relevant actors, SSIIM UNESCO Chair on Social and Spatial Inclusion of International Migrants - Urban Policies and Practices aims at:

- Identifying policies and practices that promote the urban inclusion of international migrants
- Supporting local governments in shaping adequate actions to foster effective urban governance and the social/spatial integration of international migrants
- Disseminating the experiences that can provide ground for effective policy exchange (good practices)
- Raising the awareness of policy-makers and the civil society at large, on the importance of international migrants' urban social and spatial inclusion

West Cornwall Migrant Worker Action Group (MIGWAG) 2005- present

In the early 2000's the Cornwall Council (formerly Kerrier District Council) the number of the migrant workers began to rise due to demand of agricultural working force. The Council is a largely agricultural area and the employers began to rely on cheap migrant workers to fill labour shortages in agriculture, food processing and hospitality. In 2007, an estimated 3000 to 4000 foreign workers lived in the area. Their living standards were substandard. The majority lived in the caravans.

The Migrant Worker Action Group was set up as a response to complaints from the public about unauthorised caravan sites. The West Cornwall Migrant Worker Action Group (MIGWAG) is a multi agency approach to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of Migrant Workers working and living in the area. Instead of each statutory agency which forms the Membership of the group working in isolation to address the issues that have emerged from the influx of Migrant Workers in the area, the group works efficiently and collectively together.

The group has gathered evidence about the housing and health conditions of the migrant workers including their needs in terms of public services, that they previously didn't have access to. As a result of MITWAG action the standards were set for setting up, managing and maintaining caravan sites, the group is looking to set minimum standards for temporary accommodation for travelling agricultural workers. Today, arrangements are in place to roll this project out across the whole of Cornwall to make it a county wide initiative.

Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council

In 2004, many accession workers, mainly from Poland started arriving to Crewe to fill low-paid vacancies in packing, distribution and food processing. In 2007, there were estimated 3000 Polish workers in the area, making them the largest local minority.

In the first months, the concerns were raised about exploitation and poverty. In addition, local residents complained about, what was thought to be – anti social behaviour of newcomers living homes in multiple occupation. This raised concern within the Council about potential for increased community tension and conflict. In the first instance the Council, represented by council officers and members responded to help workers and prevent tensions from escalating.

This was followed by setting up two successive projects to help the migrant workers' circumstances in the area. These projects are: Invest to Save Budget: Changing Community in Crewe Project 2006/08 and Cheshire East Migrant Project: 2008/11

Invest to Save Budget: Changing Community in Crewe Project 2006/08

ISB project that run from 2006 till 2008 on the area of Crewe and Nantwich Borough council served 1499 beneficiaries, 99% of Polish origin.

Services were provided by Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council. This included a variety of services across the borough within a two-tier system of local government. Beneficiaries received forms of support in housing integration which helped them to settle in the local area, training courses, help in job seeking and language courses including volunteers help in local schools. One of the main objectives of the project were co-ordinating an improved response and reducing stress on service providers by migrant workers and their families, as well as providing services in language of the migrants (Polish). As part of this project the Polish Association was found with the goal to encourage self-help and aid integration.

The outcomes and success of this project has helped the Cheshire East Council to bid for the new funding stream to continue work with the migrant workers. This project is briefly covered below.

Cheshire East Migrant Project: 2008/11

Cheshire East Migrant Project is a continuation and expansion of former ISB Project across Cheshire East area. Joint funding bid with CFRS to provide innovative support to migrants across 4 unitary authority areas.

The services are provided by Cheshire East Council, a new unitary authority providing services across the former districts of Crewe and Nantwich, Congleton and Macclesfield in Cheshire. The project is aimed to serve 1500 beneficiaries.

The aim of the project is to continue providing services proved by the ISB project and in addition provide intercultural training and advice for front-line staff, Information and advice drop-in sessions, skills training to increase access to education and employment and multicultural activities to foster cohesion. In addition the programme aims Continued development of Migrant Worker Association, Development of sustainable services for migrants and access to funding.

As a result of these two project, the initial danger of community tension has been reduced as a result of pro-active community development activities. Migrants' access to services (such as health and education), employment and housing have been improved.