On Tuesday Twilight organised a bus to collect visitors arriving at Dublin airport and to transport them to the Club House Hotel in Kilkenny where they were staying for the duration. Having settled into their accommodation Twilight organised an evening meal and this communal gathering allowed the assembled participants to interact and to become acquainted. This first gathering was a key factor in the overall success of the project as the invited guest mingled and formed strong bonds of understanding and friendship. This beginning set a positive tone and as the days progressed these bonds strengthened allowing our guests to express firmly held opinions with conviction and freedom.

On Wednesday the delegates paid a courtesy visit to City Hall. Here they were guests of the Mayor Cllr Martin Brett who greeted, welcomed them to Kilkenny and conducted a personal tour of the facility, highlighting the historic significance of the building and viewing the many rare artefacts on show. After the pleasantries the delegates joined the Mayor in formal discussions exploring area of common interest in education, crafts and tourism. Commitments were given to work closely together to push forward common goals. To help cement these embryonic relationships it was agreed that the Twilight Community Group would act as intermediaries between the participating parties.

The group enjoyed an interlude for lunch in Coffee Lane Restaurant, on John Street. Afterwards, Twilight arranged a guided tour of Kilkenny Castle. Recognised by the Irish Tourist Board as one of Ireland’s premier tourist attraction, the Castle, its history and its preeminent importance in society caught the imagination and enthralled.

Later that evening, at dinner in the Club House Hotel, the participants, returned to formal endeavours, when they met the President of Kilkenny Chamber of Commerce, Marion Acreman, and some of her colleagues. Together they discussed areas of mutually beneficial business interests. It was agreed that Twilight would act as a conduit between Kilkenny and these countries and communities with whom Twilight has friendship agreements. Twilight would arrange a collaboration between these entities allowing each to promote their goods and services abroad.

On Thursday the assembled groups visited MacDonagh Junction which is built on the site of a workhouse where the poor and indigent of Kilkenny resided during the Great Famine of1847. The site, as well as being Kilkenny’s major shopping centre also hosts the world famous ‘Famine Experience Tour’. This comprehensive tour brings visitors back in time and lets them relive the horror of this institution. Here men, women and children were housed waiting the inevitability of death by starvation. This moving tour resonated with our guests and brought awareness and balance with present day activities.

Thursday afternoon was allocated as a free period for delegates and allowed them to explore our Medieval city, visit shops and museums and sample the culinary delights on offer as part of Kilkenny’s internationally renowned Savour Food Festival. This pleasant afternoon of individual discovery was much appreciated and remarked upon.

Dinner that night was in the award- winning Langton House Hotel. Hosted by the owner Mr Eamon Langton, our guests were joined, at table, by Government Party representative Mr Pat O’ Neill. Though informal, nonetheless, the meeting delivered deep debate and wide -ranging discussions. Mr O’ Neill’s political role locally and nationally, allied to his position within the Irish financial sector facilitated a unique and a comprehensive insight into Ireland’s present economic and political climate.

On Friday morning the delegate, speakers and invited guests were joined by the Ambassadors of Poland and Morocco for light refreshment, introductions and photographic opportunities, prior to the formal commencement, at 9am, of the conference. Behind the scenes, during the previous days, a lot of the ancillary work of the delegates was completed. Finally, with the welcoming words from Cllr Peter Cleere, Chair of Kilkenny County Council, the longed- for Twilight conference on ‘The Stigmatization of Migrants, ICE 2, co funded by Europe for Citizens, began.

To accommodate the altered schedule it was decided that the conference would be divided into distinct segments, with each segment exploring areas of relevance to the plight of migrants and addressing the legal, financial and humanitarian measures required to help alleviate current abhorrent structures and impediments. Each segment had an accompanying workshop with the speakers expanding and explaining the prevailing reality and the actions required to augment change and to facilitate integration. These workshops included serious audience participation as delegates sought advice, questioned speakers and offered personal solutions.

The segments included:

Highlighting National and International Stigmatization:

Speakers: Samanta Ncube: Direct Provision: Stephanie Mc Dermott: Rohingya Ireland: Daniella Kosic Fitzgerald: Romanian Advocate

Implemented Programmes to Aid Integration

Samanta Ncube, Stephanie Mc Dermott, Daniella Kosic Fitzgerald

Financial Structures Available:

Speaker: Fergus Horgan: Kilkenny Leader Partnership

Sport and its Role in Social Inclusion:

Speakers: Pat Daly, GAA: Des Tomlinson, FAI:

Policing Hate Crime:

Garda Andy Neill, Kilkenny/Waterford District.

Government Policy on the Rights of Migrants:

Minister John Paul Phelan TD

The International Solution:

Ambassador Poland: H.E. Ms Anna Sochanska: Ms Marta Wroblewska, Malbork District Council:

Ambassador Morocco: H.E. Mr Larchen Mahraoui: Ms Samiri Ideicadi, Tiznit District Council:

Welcoming Migrants: Locally

Speakers: Chair Kilkenny County Council: Cllr Peter Cleere

Mayor of Kilkenny: Cllr Martin Brett,

Green Party Representative: Cllr Malcolm Noonan

The International Cultural House: The Twilight Solution

Mr Martin Brennan, Chair Twilight Community Group:

Sean O hArgain, School Principa:, Emmanuel Samuel, South Sudan:

Liviu Iftime, Romania: Syed Mustafis Rachman, Bangladesh:

With only a brief fifteen-minute break at 11.15am and a forty-five-minute break for lunch at 13.30, the conference continued, unabated, until 18.00. Throughout the day guest speakers and delegates were intervie1wed in our specially organised media room.

After the hectic schedule of the day our guests were treated to and epicurean delight in a local Indian restaurant The ???????. To help everyone relax Twilight arranged for the John Travers ensemble to perform a selection of their popular hits. Tiredness evaporated, replaced by revelry, as the music continued into the early hours. Luckily Saturday was a day for mental repose, permitting delegates to casually wander the narrow lanes and streets of Kilkenny, to relax and peruse the newspapers, with a cup of coffee, in one of the many bars and restaurants to be found in the city.

The group gathered that night in the idyllic village of Bennetsbridge to sample some local cuisine, to chat and discourse and interact with the residents. This was an ideal way to conclude our final meal together as a group.

Sunday morning, after breakfast we bade a sad farewell to our friends, as they departed for Dublin airport, and began their journeys back to their homelands.

Ice 2 was completed,