WHY MIGRATION MATTERS IN THE NORTH WEST

On 26 September, UKREN and Migrants Supporting Migrants held a workshop and informal conference in Manchester to examine why migration matters in the North West of England.

Some 100 people participated in the event, which kicked off with a short speech by Alan Anstead, Coordinator of UKREN, on the situation in the UK on race equality and immigration, and some of the challenges that were looming, such as the debate about replacing the Human Rights Act and whether the UK will remain a signatory to the European Convention on Human Rights, the debate on immigration in the lead up to the general election in 2015, and the debate on EU free movement and the possible referendum on whether the UK remains in the EU in 2017.

The participants then joined work groups to discuss:
- What the situation was for undocumented migrants in the North West, led by Professor Jon Spencer from Manchester University;
- How people could get together to campaign for the living wage for all in the North West, led by Tom Skinner from Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign;
- How migrants can demonstrate that they contribute much to society, led by Roger Casale from New Europeans;
- What would be a new positive migrant narrative, led by Tanya Warlock from the Trades Union Congress.
Following the workshop a range of speakers gave their short anecdotes, experience and stories on migrant issues and being a migrant in the informal conference. Speakers included Angeliki Stogia, Labour Councillor for Whalley Range; Sam Harris, International Society; Prof. Cathy McIlwaine, Queen Mary University; Roger Casale, New Europeans and Dr Rosa Mas Giralt, Leeds University.

This was followed by honouring the volunteers and friends of Migrants Supporting Migrants, which was celebrating its 5th birthday as an active organisation in Manchester.

The finale was a spread of world food from every continent and music from flamenco, Ukrainian dance and African drumming, plus a catwalk show by a migrant designer Ana showcasing her dress creations all made from paper and modelled by Miss Bolton, Miss Bury and friends.

Our thanks to the Open Society Foundations - Europe for supporting this event.