

Promoting Critical Awareness of Global and Social Justice across the Curriculum: Theology, Education and the Humanities

◆ UBUNTU NETWORK ◆ DIALOGUE DAY ◆ 4TH MARCH 2008 ◆

UBUNTU in the Mater Dei Institute

Authors: Gareth Byrne, Elaine McDonald, Barrie McEntee, William Murphy, Ethna Regan, PJ Sexton, Mater Dei Institute



Aims of the project:

- To explore how DE issues find expression in the academic programmes offered at MDI
- To develop critical awareness of global and social justice among staff and students

Key Tasks:

- An interdisciplinary staff survey mapping where themes of global and social justice are currently addressed in MDI modules
- An annual Global and Social Justice Week in MDI
- To initiate a series of interdisciplinary seminars for staff and students on relevant themes
- To encourage ongoing research



African Drummers at Global and Social Justice Week 2008



Mater Dei student, Fiona Mallon speaking on her experiences of her MDI/Trócaire visit to Kenya

Global and Social Justice Weeks

Gender and Justice: 12-15 March 2007

- We focused on gender and justice with particular emphasis on the female face of HIV and AIDS
- Events included a keynote address by Michael Kelly SJ, an expert on HIV/AIDS policy in Zambia

Climate Change and the Poor: 4-8 February 2008

- We focused on global warming with particular emphasis on the consequences for the poorest of the poor
- The week coincided with the launch of the Trócaire Lenten/ADMITT campaign on climate change
- Special lectures, construction of an African hut to represent those at risk due to climate change, fund-raising and practical carbon reduction challenges

Ongoing Research

- Postgraduate researchers are engaged in a review of academic and teaching resources in the area of global and social justice
- Religion, Ecology and Sustainable Development: e.g. interdisciplinary publication, Andrew G. McGrady and Ethna Regan, 'Ethics in a Global World: the Earth Charter and religious education' in *British Journal of Religious Education*, vol.30 (2008)

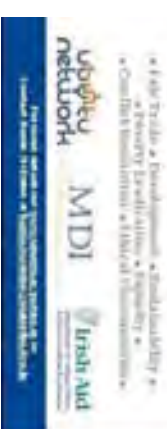


African hut representing those at risk from climate change

GLOBAL & SOCIAL Justice Week



4th-8th Feb '08



SLAVERY:

Raising Critical Awareness Across Disciplines 2007-2008

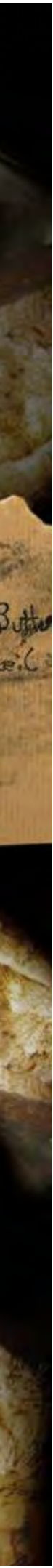
- Special screening of *Amazing Grace*
- Irish Studies/Ubuntu Lecture: Dr. Nini Rodgers, QUB: Ireland: Slavery and Anti-Slavery 1720-1838
- Seminar on contemporary slavery

For more information on this project, please contact Ethna Regan,

Mater Dei Institute, Clonliffe Road, Dublin 3

Tel: 01 837 6027, Email: ethna.regan@materdei.dcu.ie





Promoting Critical Awareness of Global And Social Justice Across The Curriculum: Education, Theology And The Humanities

Gareth Byrne, Elaine McDonald, Barrie McEntee, Will Murphy, Ethna Regan and PJ Sexton, Mater Dei Institute

Mater Dei Institute, a college of Dublin City University, has a strong commitment to the teaching of issues of global and social justice across all our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. While the largest number of our students are those pursuing a four year concurrent teacher education programme which qualifies them to teach Religious Education and either English, History or Music at second level, we also have undergraduate students pursuing a BA in Religious Studies and Irish Studies. Our taught postgraduate programmes are constituted by a number of MA courses in Religion and Education or Religion and Culture. There is a staff Ubuntu committee made up of people from the Schools of Education, Theology and the Humanities and our Coordinator of Chaplaincy Services.

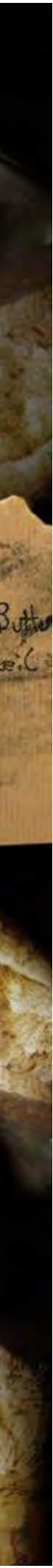
Research

Faculty Audit: *What are we teaching about Global and Social Justice in our courses?*

Two years ago, we conducted a faculty audit whereby each member of staff was asked to submit details of any course they teach which touches on areas pertinent to global and social justice. This audit was a very useful exercise as it highlighted the interconnections between courses, pointed to interdisciplinary engagement on these issues and, as we had hoped, highlighted areas which were not being adequately addressed.

Research Project: *What academic and teaching resources are available?*

The faculty audit in the first year was followed, in the second year, by a resource audit i.e. an interdisciplinary survey of academic and teaching resources in the areas of global and social justice in our college library, in order to look at areas of strength and weakness. With the help of funding from the Ubuntu Network, two postgraduate students were appointed to conduct this audit and to research suitable bibliographical and pedagogical resources in other libraries and relevant organisations. The results of this audit were then presented to the MDI Ubuntu committee and the remaining funding was used to



augment resources in the areas of global and social justice that both the faculty audit and the research project had pointed to as areas of weakness. It is planned to develop this research project into an intranet link whereby the available resources can be accessed on a thematic basis, pointing staff and students to material available for research and teaching purposes. Newly purchased resources can then be added to this database.

Student Audit: *What are our students really learning about global and social justice?*

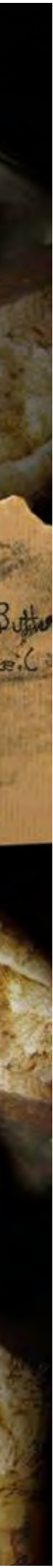
While we have a stated commitment to global and social justice we hope now to examine what undergraduate and postgraduate students consider they have learned about these issues. Towards the end of the academic year, a qualitative survey will be drawn up which those graduating in 2009 will be invited to participate in. The primary focus of the survey will be on the attitudes to justice among students and the integration of the various themes into their programmes. Notwithstanding the difficulty of 'measuring' attitudes it is hoped that this will, at least, indicate what the relationship is between our stated commitment to global and social justice and the impact of that on our students.

Action

Global and Social Justice Week

This is an annual event in the Mater Dei Institute and is organised by our Coordinator of Chaplaincy Services, Barrie McEntee, usually timed to link with Trócaire's Lenten Campaign. The theme of the 2008 week, 4-8 February, was 'Ecology and Care for the Earth', with specific focus on Trócaire's campaign 'The effects of global warming, especially on the poorest people in our world'.

- On Monday 4 February a 'Mud Hut' was constructed in the foyer of the college by some of the students and the chaplain. The 'Mud Hut' was to serve as a symbol of those most affected by the increase in temperatures globally and to raise the profile of the Global and Social Justice Week. Lecturers were kind enough to allow some of the Global and Social Justice Week team into their lectures to speak to the students and allow an official launch and presentation of the timetable for the week.
- The second area of global and social justice addressed in the academic year 2007-08 was Slavery and Human Trafficking. During this week, there was a seminar given by Dr. Nini Rogers of Queen's University, Belfast on the topic 'Ireland... Slavery and Anti-slavery 1720-1838'. Part of the MDI Irish Studies Seminars, this seminar showed the cross curricular nature of the Global and Social Justice Week. This event also marked the First Annual Irish Studies/Ubuntu Seminar. Dr Rodgers, whose



book on this subject was published by Palgrave in 2007, gave a fascinating talk which prompted a lively discussion. The event was attended by staff, students and visitors to the College.

It was an important contribution to the efforts of the Ubuntu Committee to raise awareness of the issues of slavery and human trafficking within the College, ensuring that those who attended were better equipped to discuss these issues within a historical context.

- Tuesday 5 February was a day to encourage everyone in the Institute to refrain from using electrical appliances between the hours of 5-7pm in order to reduce the draw on the national grid at this 'Rush hour' time. There was also a chance for students and staff to sign up to the Trócaire ADMIT campaign, inviting people to contact local public representatives to highlight the dangers of global warming.

- Wednesday's emphasis was on students and staff choosing eco-friendly methods of getting to and from college. It was also Ash Wednesday and in addition to some staff and students receiving ashes as a sign of the beginning of Lent, students were asked to make a commitment to at least one eco-friendly initiative for the month or even longer. Five MDI students, who were going to Zambia during the summer to help teach children affected by HIV/AIDS, sought support for their trip and highlighted the need for education for the local people in the areas of water

conservation, correct use of land and deforestation.

- On Thursday we welcomed one of Trócaire's education officers to the college and the fourth year B.Rel Ed students were given a presentation highlighting the Global Warming topic. Trócaire set up a stand in the college where students could ask questions and learn more about how they could help. The canteen served only Irish products to stress the need to reduce the air miles that some food has to travel. We focused on turning off lights and appliances that weren't in use, and water conservation. Members of the MDI Margaret Hassan Social Awareness group demonstrated how classroom art could be created from recycled household waste.

- African drummers were invited to play in the foyer of the college during break times to again highlight the theme of the week.
- Friday saw the Third Years being introduced to the topic 'God and the Earth: Theological Perspectives on Ecology' by Dr. Ethna Regan which brought to a close the 2008 Global and Social Justice Week.

Figure 12 - African drummers in the foyer of the Mater Dei Institute during 2008 Global and Social Justice Week



Figure 14 - School visit Zambia 2008 by MIDI students



Figure 13 - A traditional style home built in the foyer of MIDI, February 2008

