

NewsPeople



Attendees pictured recently at Africa Day celebrations at Áras an Chontae, Roscommon. Photo: Michael Finan



Nora Fahy (Roscommon Women's Network), Dr Lylian Fotabong, Catherine Mahoro Coughlan, Chris Flynn (Director of Services, Roscommon County Council), Cllr Paschal Fitzmaurice, Naiturruru Lemoshhir, Osasumwen Oransaye, and Caitriona McCarthy pictured at Africa Day celebrations in Áras an Chontae, Roscommon. Photo: Michael Finan

Council hosts successful Africa Day

The persistent radiant blue skies over recent weeks fittingly matched the explosion of colour and energy that marked the launch of this year's Africa Day, which took place in the foyer of Áras an Chontae on Thursday, May 8th.

The event was officially opened by Cathaoirleach of Roscommon County Council Cllr Paschal Fitzmaurice, as members of the local African community were joined by academic researchers, activists and community groups who support the African community, such as the Roscommon Women's Network.

The event was not just a celebration of African music, food, and culture, but also highlighted the opportunities and challenges facing members of the African community in counties such as Roscommon. It also examined how cross-community collaboration was proving mutually beneficial for local

and African communities who have made Roscommon their home.

Cllr Fitzmaurice said the Africa Day was a celebration – not just of music and dance, food and colour – but also of community, contribution, and connection, “offering us a precious chance to open our hearts and minds to the richness of African cultures, and to acknowledge the vital role that African and African-Irish people play in the life of our county and our country. “Roscommon may be a small county on the map of the world, but our spirit is big. And that spirit is made stronger by the people who now call Roscommon home – people who bring with them new traditions, languages, ideas, and energy.

“Our diversity is not something to be simply accepted – it is something to be embraced and celebrated.

“To those from African backgrounds who live, work, study, and raise fami-

lies in Roscommon – thank you. You are part of us. You are shaping our shared future. You are helping to write the next chapter in the Roscommon story – one of inclusion, vibrancy, and mutual respect”, remarked Cllr Fitzmaurice.

Earlier, proceedings were opened by Naiturruru Lemoshhira, who said Africa Day was a deeply symbolic event for Africans living in Roscommon and “not just a celebration but a statement that Africa is present here” adding: “we are stronger when we celebrate with each other, opening doors of friendship and solidarity.”

Newly-appointed Director of Services with Roscommon County Council Chris Flynn also spoke at the launch.

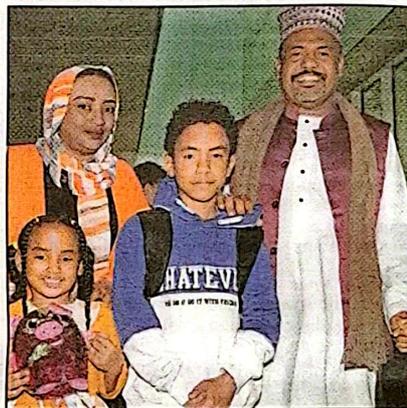
Mr Flynn said Africa Day was a moment to reflect, to celebrate, and to learn, “a day where the spirit of community, culture, and global connectedness takes centre stage.” He

added: “Roscommon is a county with a proud heritage, but it is also a place that embraces change and welcomes diversity.

“But celebration must also be accompanied by action. As a local authority, Roscommon County Council recognises its responsibility not just to celebrate diversity, but to support it – meaningfully, consistently and with compassion.

“We've seen the importance of this in recent years. Roscommon has opened its doors to families from Ukraine fleeing war. We've welcomed communities from Syria and Afghanistan, and people of many other nationalities seeking safety, stability, and a new beginning.

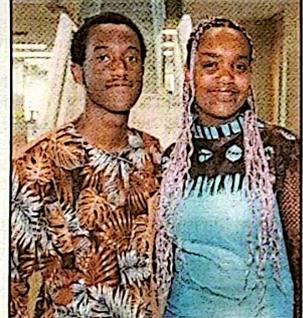
“In supporting new communities, we are not simply offering help – we are investing in our collective future. A diverse Roscommon is a more vibrant, creative, and resilient Roscommon.”



Ibrahim Maki and family pictured recently at Africa Day celebrations in Áras an Chontae, Roscommon. Photo: Michael Finan



Attendees enjoy the Africa Day celebrations at Áras an Chontae, Roscommon. Photo: Michael Finan



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Nora Fahy (Roscommon Women's Network), Dr Lylian Fotabong, Sister Margaret O'Brien, Catherine Mahoro Coughlan, Sister Therese Stritch, and Naiturruru Lemoshhir pictured celebrating Africa Day in Áras an Chontae, Roscommon. Photo: Michael Finan