

**Arrival and departure: 15-18 May 2007 and 20-24 May 2007, respectively.
Billeting and Accommodation; Countries in Europe and provinces in the Philippines represented.**

Caridad B. Fiar-od

There were a total of 48 participants who registered for the conference. There were others who joined the Gala Night only, like the Igorot miners from Tipperary, the other members of the Filipino community, and the Irish band and dancers. The Cordillera provinces that were represented were Benguet, Ifugao, Mountain Province, and Kalinga. There were no delegates who trace their roots from Abra and Apayao. The number of representatives from other countries was: two from Canada; three from the USA; one each from Germany, The Netherlands and the Philippines; three from Austria; five from Great Britain; and four from Switzerland. The rest were from Ireland. The ages of participants ranged from 1 to 61 years old with majority of them from the labor force age group of 25 to 55 years old.

As early as May 15, 2007, which was two days before the conference, the organizers were on alert with their cars to fetch the participants arriving in Dublin airport and bring them to the conference venue. Though Ireland was chilly with rain showers, there was a warm welcome from BIBAK Ireland and warm greetings from other participants, manifested by the sincere expression of “hi!”, “hello!” as well as the usual hugs and kisses.

Those who arrived early on May 15, 2007, were Patrick and Cristabel ‘Dono’ Bounggick, and Ruth Licay from Vienna, Austria; Yvonne Belen from The Netherlands, and Caridad B. Fiar-od from the Philippines (via London.) Carmen and Tim Umayat hosted a welcome dinner for the ‘early birds.’ Their under-five three kids were too disciplined, which amused and inspired everyone. They became the youngest participants.

Rose and Claus Nabert from Canada also arrived on May 15, 2007.

On May 16, 2007, Henry Foken, Frederick Baldo, Rick Kilongan from Switzerland arrived early in time for another welcome dinner hosted by Judith Balangyao and Martin Bowens. Others who arrived later after dinner were Rhino Oblas from Germany, Fely Bongalos from Wales and Kathleen Tadawan from Bristol, Great Britain.

On May 17, 2007, the arrivals were Anna Liza Anton from New York, USA; the Agnaonao (Peter, Susan with son, Cristobal) and Cuyob (Ric, Alice and daughter, Marivonne) families; Monica Donguez and Jane Batnag from Scotland; Fred Labfayong from Zurich, Switzerland; and Conchita B. Pooten from London. The last to arrive on May 18, 2007 from the U.S. were Elizabeth Omengan and her son, Kai.

The above-mentioned delegates from different countries were all billeted at Marino Conference Centre’s Bed and Breakfast accommodation. Members of BIBAK-Ireland were also accommodated with the other delegates; those nearby came early for the sessions with their cars.

Likewise, after the formal closing ritual, and many informal parting ceremonies among the participants with the emotional singing of Auld Lang Syne, there was the unending picture taking, followed with the usual hugs and kisses, giving of gifts of love, sincere expressions of “Goodbye, see you in Germany!” or “Bye and God Bless You” or “Bon Voyage!” As departure came, the accommodating organizers drove the participants to the Dublin airport. The trips to the airport, from May 22-24, 2007, were according to the participant’s varied flight schedules.

The first to depart was Fred Labfayong, who had to leave in the exigency of going on duty. He left just after the closing ritual while all others went for the Sunday Mass at the Parish of

St. George and St. Thomas with the Rev. Katharine Poulton as the mass celebrant. The delegates had lunch with other members of the congregation.

Afterwards, the Agnaonao and Cuyob families left for the airport while Rose and Claus Nabert toured other places of Ireland.

In a caravan, some delegates boarded different private cars driven by Dave Aragones, Tim Umayat, Mark Calawen, Jane Gavino, James Quintin, Judith Balangyao and Martin Bowens. They proceeded to the Tipperary mine fields where they joined the miners in their cottage farm house for a camping with hands-on workshop on Igorot dances. Others opted to exhibit their talents in sing-along as others prepared the *pinikpikan* and barbecue. The parting for the departure of some delegates ended with picture taking, singing of Auld Lang Syne, and saying goodbye with hugs and kisses.

From the parting in Tipperary, Conchita Pooten, Yvonne Belen, Mary Kay-an, Anna Liza Anton and Caridad Fiar-od went with Jane Gavino and Judith Balangyao to several directions of Ireland and reached the famous cliffs of Moher in County Clare. Patrick and Dono Bounngick, and Ruth Licay went to Mark and Brenia Calawen's place. Those from Switzerland, Germany, and Scotland took off back to their workplace. Elizabeth Omengan and son, Kai stayed two days more in Dublin.

Finally, on May 22, 2007, Eryl and Dave Aragones hosted a farewell dinner for overseas delegates left behind. Liza Anton was left to travel on May 23 to London, and Yvonne Belen to travel back home on 24 May 2007 to the The Netherlands.