



MOBILITY PROJECT STUDY VISIT REPORT



« ORGANISATION OF VOLUNTEER WORK AT REGIONAL LEVEL » NORTHERN IRELAND - FRANCE

- **Number of participants:** 8
- **Age of participants:** 58 to 70 years
- **Country of origin:** Northern Ireland (Belfast)
- **Date:** 15 to 18 June 2009



→ **Purpose of study visit:** First of all, to observe the work of a Vincentian conference in Paris, similar to our own at regional level, and understand how they support the very poorest people and how they have kept the original spirit of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society. Secondly, to meet the members of staff at the Paris offices of the International Confederation, to familiarise ourselves with the work of the organisation on behalf of the Society in 148 countries.

→ **Activities in which you took part:** Visit to the 'Madeleine Day Centre' for the homeless; introduction to a new type of project helping migrants to find work; reports on home visits from Parisian Vincentians; sharing best practice and current projects in Northern Ireland, such as welcoming the homeless during summer holidays; sharing experience of problems found in voluntary work in France and Ireland; meetings and lunch with the team at the International Confederation of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society.

→ **What effect has this study voyage had on your voluntary work?** We want to tell other Irish Vincentians about their discoveries and sharing, by publishing an article in the National Council's magazine. Members of our group working for Non-governmental organisations will also have the chance to talk about this study trip to Paris. Their experience has motivated them and given them fresh ideas for new tasks in Belfast. They now hope to reach out to volunteers aged 50 and older, retired or unemployed people, and give them a new meaning in life: become a volunteer!

→ **Testimony...:**

«The visit was inspiring, fascinating and very informative for our group, and we hope many other members around Europe will have the chance to see the work being done in other countries by members of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society. Sharing experiences and culture has been a wonderful, learning experience and worthwhile for our work as volunteers ».

