



integration

A two way process

REPORT TO THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE, EQUALITY AND LAW REFORM
BY THE INTERDEPARTMENTAL WORKING GROUP ON THE
INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES IN IRELAND



DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, EQUALITY AND LAW REFORM
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“people from different
backgrounds and cultures can
enrich the society around them
and contribute to the continued
development of Ireland”

understanding

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Preface

IRELAND - A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY, NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

In the past, Ireland has generally regarded itself as a country of emigration rather than a country of immigration. Our geographic location and the fact that our closest neighbours have traditionally taken in people fleeing persecution, has meant that refugees have not generally reached Ireland.

Irish society has undergone major changes in the 1990s with the growth of the economy making it an increasingly more attractive country of destination for asylum seekers and other foreign nationals who wish to come here to work or study.

Until the early 1990s the number of persons seeking refugee status in Ireland was in the order of 20 to 60 per year. The 1992 figure was 39 and by 1998 that figure had grown to 4,626 applications - over a hundred fold increase and the figure for 1999 will exceed 7,000. The profile of asylum seekers has also changed during this period with increasing numbers coming from the African continent - Nigeria, Zaire/DR Congo, Algeria and Libya. Asylum seekers and refugees living in Ireland now represent more than 100 nationalities. Asylum statistics for the period 1992 to 1999 are at Appendix 1.

In the period 1992 - 1998, 539 persons were granted refugee status. Up to 30 November, 1999 a further 480 people had been granted refugee status. This figure is set to increase in the coming months as further progress is made in processing the backlog of asylum applications. Between 1992 and 30 November 1999, 190 persons were granted temporary leave to remain on humanitarian grounds. This is granted by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform to persons whose claim to refugee status is not considered to meet the criteria set out in the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol but who are not returned to their country of origin because of war or for some other compelling reason. In the past two years, over 1,300 people have been granted residency on the basis that there is an Irish born child.

In addition to persons seeking asylum, the State has responded down through the years to requests from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and has admitted to the protection of the State, groups of persons fleeing war or conflict, the most recent example being refugees from Kosovo. Before the arrival of the Kosovar refugees the main groups admitted to Ireland were Bosnian and Vietnamese refugees. Ireland also accepted 530 Hungarian refugees in 1956, 120 Chileans in 1973-74 and 26 Iranian Bahais in 1985. Today there are over 1,300 Bosnians and 800 Vietnamese

Preface

living in Ireland, including some 252 children born here. These figures include persons admitted to Ireland under family reunification schemes. Persons arriving in Ireland under these programmes are referred to as 'Programme refugees'.

From being a country of outward migration flows, Ireland has now become a country of net immigration (see Appendix 2), although it must be recognised that the immigration flow also includes Irish nationals. Nevertheless, the increase in the number of asylum seekers together with the arrival of other foreign nationals introduces society to different cultures and religions.

The integration of third country nationals living in Europe on a long-term basis will be an ongoing task for the European Union and its Member States. In Ireland, this requires us to look at how we do things and how we respond to people from different backgrounds and cultures. We must continuously monitor how we respond to changes in society.

This is particularly important in the case of refugees many of whom, it must be remembered, fled their homes in fear of persecution to seek the protection of this State. If they are to settle in Irish society, it is important that barriers or impediments to their integration are identified and removed. It is critical that Irish society accepts this and is involved in the process.

Refugees and other immigrants living in Ireland can enrich the society around them and contribute to the continued development of Ireland. They can do so by participating in the activities of the community and society, drawing on their own experiences, culture and background - just as Irish emigrants have done down through the years in other countries.

The task of transforming the social environment in Ireland into a country which welcomes refugees and embraces cultural diversity must be shared by the government of Ireland and its people. Each citizen has a responsibility for contributing to the development of a tolerant society.

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INTERDEPARTMENTAL
WORKING GROUP ON INTEGRATION
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participation

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1 introduction

1.1 Establishment of the Interdepartmental Working Group on Integration

In February, 1998, the Interdepartmental Committee on Immigration, Asylum and related matters issued a report on State services for asylum seekers. The report of the Committee stated that “when persons have been recognised as refugees or given leave to remain in the State on humanitarian grounds it is necessary that their integration into Irish society be facilitated.” The Committee went on to recommend that “all appropriate assistance should be given, to facilitate the integration into Irish society of persons recognised as refugees or given leave to remain in the State on humanitarian grounds”.

The Government accepted the Interdepartmental Committee's recommendations and the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Mr. John O'Donoghue T.D., established an Interdepartmental Working Group in December 1998 to formulate a strategy for implementing the Government's policy of responding positively to the needs of persons granted refugee status or leave to remain.

The terms of reference of the Working Group were :

“To review the arrangements for integrating persons granted refugee status or permission to remain in Ireland, including the appropriate institutional structures for the delivery of these services and to make recommendations.”

1.2 Membership of the Working Group

The following Departments were represented on the Working Group which was chaired by Ms Berenice O'Neill :

- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Chair)
- Department of Education and Science
- Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
- Department of Environment and Local Government
- Department of Foreign Affairs
- Department of Health and Children
- Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs.

1.3 Responsibilities of government departments

Each of the government departments represented on the Working Group is involved in the provision of services to refugees.

The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform is responsible for processing claims to refugee status and granting temporary leave to remain. The Department is also responsible for the operation of the family reunification scheme for persons granted refugee status and the granting of citizenship. The officials of the Department are often, therefore, the first people to come in contact with those seeking refugee status.

The Department of Education and Science has a role in providing education for the children of refugees of school-going age at first and second level and also in relation to English language training for adult refugees.

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment is responsible for formulating national training policies. These policies are delivered through FÁS, the Training and Employment Authority, which is responsible for providing training to enable refugees to access employment.

The Department of the Environment and Local Government is responsible for the housing needs of refugees who are unable to provide housing for themselves from their own resources. The Department exercises its functions in this area through the local authorities.

The Department of Foreign Affairs has responsibility for the admission, and through the Refugee Agency, the resettlement of refugees who have been admitted to Ireland by Government in response to crisis situations (referred to as 'Programme refugees').

The Department of Health and Children has certain public health responsibilities which it discharges through the Health Boards.

The Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs is responsible for the provision of benefits to refugees in accordance with the provisions of the Social Welfare Acts.

1.4 Methodology

The Working Group met on 10 occasions between January and December, 1999. At its first meeting the Group agreed the following approach:

- formulate a definition of integration
- examine existing services available to refugees
- identify the issues for integration
- examine EU models
- draw conclusions and make recommendations.

To assist the Working Group in identifying the issues facing refugees in integrating into Irish society, submissions were invited from Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), the UNHCR, the Refugee Agency, the Eastern Health Board and the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism.

The Working Group wishes to acknowledge the time and effort taken by all the groups who made written submissions and attended round table discussions (Appendix 4).

The Working Group was also able to draw on international experience in the area of integration. In particular, the position paper prepared by the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)¹ on the integration of refugees in European societies proved useful in identifying some of the difficulties that refugees experience in integrating. Experiences of other EU Member States in developing integration policy and responding to the needs of refugees were also examined.

¹ ECRE is a pan-European organisation concerned with the protection of and assistance to asylum seekers and refugees in Europe. The position paper on integration of refugees in European societies, referred to in this report, was compiled following discussions and conferences hosted by the ECRE Task Force on Integration in November 1998. It represents the views of some sixty refugee-assisting non-governmental agencies throughout Europe.

1 introduction

The report of the survey on the Bosnian and Vietnamese Communities² carried out by the Refugee Agency also proved useful in assisting the Working Group in identifying general issues that are facing refugees trying to integrate into Irish society.

1.5 Description of the Client Group

The Working Group's terms of reference refer to the following categories³ of persons :

Convention⁴ refugees

A Convention refugee is defined in Section 2 of the Refugee Act, 1996 as,

"a person who, owing to a well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his or her nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his or her former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it, ..."

Applications for refugee status are processed by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform at the Refugee Applications Centre. While asylum seekers are awaiting a decision on their status, they are entitled to emergency accommodation as well as health and social welfare support in the same way as Irish citizens. As an exceptional measure, those who had applied for asylum prior to 26 July, 1999 and who had been 12 months in the asylum process without a final determination, were given the right to work. Those formally granted refugee status are entitled to take up employment and to receive health, education, social welfare, housing and other public services on the same basis as Irish citizens.

Programme refugees

Section 24 of the Refugee Act, 1996 defines a Programme refugee as

"...a person to whom leave to enter and remain in the State for temporary protection or resettlement as part of a group of persons has been given by the Government... whether or not such person is a refugee within the meaning of the definition of "refugee" in section 2"

These are persons who are invited to Ireland by the Government usually in response to a humanitarian crisis and at the request of the UNHCR. In general, they have the same rights as Convention refugees.

² This survey was carried out in 1997 by the Refugee Agency and was funded by a number of governmental departments. The report was published in June 1998.

³ References to refugees throughout the report encompass all categories of persons within the remit of the Working Group. However, distinctions are drawn in certain instances where rights vary.

⁴ The term "Convention" relates to the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its protocol which sets out the criteria for granting refugee status.

Persons granted leave to remain

This is a status which is granted at the discretion of the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform to persons whose claims to asylum are not considered to meet the criteria set out in the 1951 UN Convention but who are not returned because their country is at war or for some other compelling reason. In general terms, persons granted leave to remain have similar rights to persons granted refugee status.

Persons admitted under family reunification programmes

Section 18 of the Refugee Act, 1996 provides that refugees may apply for members of their families to enter and to reside in the State. This Section of the Act is not yet in force. However the current procedures for family reunification follow closely the procedural arrangements set out in the Act and a person admitted under a family reunification programme has the same rights as a Convention refugee. The Refugee Act, 1996, as amended by Section 11 of the Immigration Act, 1999 is due to be implemented in its entirety early in 2000.

1.6 Definition of Integration

The Working Group recognised that the process of integration is a very complex matter and that it would be necessary at the outset to arrive at a working definition of the concept of integration. It also recognised that integration should not be seen as a static concept but rather as a process which undergoes constant change as society evolves.

In arriving at a definition of integration, the Working Group had regard to the working papers prepared by ECRE and the submissions received from Non-Governmental Organisations.

As a starting point the Working Group agreed that integration must be seen as a two way process which places certain duties and obligations on refugees and on the host society at both national and community level in order to create an environment in the host society which welcomes refugees as people who have something to contribute to society.

The emphasis of integration policy should be on supporting initiatives which enable the preservation of the ethnic, cultural and religious identity of the individual and at the same time remove barriers which affect refugees' ability to access mainstream services.

The following definition of integration was adopted:

"Integration means the ability to participate to the extent that a person needs and wishes in all of the major components of society, without having to relinquish his or her own cultural identity".

EXISTING SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN IRELAND

- 2.1 RIGHTS OF REFUGEES IN IRELAND - THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK
- 2.2 MEETING THE BASIC NEEDS OF REFUGEES
- 2.3 SPECIAL INTERVENTION MEASURES
- 2.4 CONCLUSIONS

chapter two

equality



existing services available to refugees in ireland

2.1 Rights of refugees in Ireland - the legal framework

2.1.1 International Conventions

The 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol provides the foundation for the system of protection for refugees. The 1951 Convention had its origins in the refugee situation that arose from the Second World War. With the passage of time and the emergence of new refugee situations, there was a need to make the provisions of the 1951 Convention applicable to those new refugees. The resulting measure was the Protocol signed in New York which entered into force in 1967. Ireland acceded to the 1951 Convention on 29 November, 1956 and to the Protocol on 6 November, 1968.

The 1951 Convention sets out the social, civil and economic rights of people in need of international protection, including :

- right of employment and self-employment (articles 17, 18, 24)
- welfare issues relating to housing (article 21)
- right to public education (article 22)
- social welfare (article 24)
- right to free movement (article 26).

In a range of service areas, the Convention stipulates that refugees should be treated on a basis "not less favourable" than that accorded to nationals.

Many other prominent international instruments on human rights have been ratified by Ireland, including :

- the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (plus optional protocols)
- the Convention on the Rights of the Child
- the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and,
- the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

2.1.2 Irish legislation

In Ireland, the Refugee Act, 1996, as amended by Section 11 of the Immigration Act, 1999 is the principal statutory instrument defining the entitlements of refugees. Section 3 of the Refugee Act, 1996 sets out the rights of persons granted refugee status in Ireland. The rights granted under the Act mirror those set out in the UN Convention. Section 3 provides that refugees shall :

- (i) be entitled to seek and to enter employment, to carry on any business, trade or profession and to have access to education and training in the State in the like manner and to the like extent in all respects as an Irish citizen;
- (ii) be entitled to receive the same medical care and services and social welfare entitlements as those to which Irish citizens are entitled;

- (iii) have the same rights of travel in or to or from the State as an Irish citizen;
- (iv) have the same freedom to practise his or her religion and to the religious education of his or her child as an Irish citizen;
- (v) have access to the courts to the same extent as an Irish citizen;
- (vi) have the right to form and be a member of associations and trade unions.

Refugees are advised of these rights when they are notified that they have been granted refugee status.

The Refugee Act, 1996 provides that Programme refugees and those admitted under family reunification shall be entitled to the same rights and privileges as those granted to Convention refugees under Section 3 of the Act.

The rights of persons granted temporary leave to remain are broadly similar to those granted to Convention refugees.

Other relevant legislation includes the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and the new Equal Status Bill which prohibit discrimination on a number of grounds in both the work and non-work environment. These are discussed further in Chapter 3.

2.2 Meeting the basic needs of refugees

- Education

No distinction is made between refugees and asylum seekers in relation to attendance at primary and post-primary school. Both groups are catered for and their numbers are taken into account in the allocation of teaching resources and the provision of accommodation. A survey carried out in September 1998 revealed that non-national pupils from 104 countries were attending 288 schools at primary level. The total number of these pupils at that time was 1,641. This figure has increased considerably since then through :

- (i) the family reunification programme for Programme refugees
- (ii) the increase in the number of asylum seekers in the country
- (iii) the arrival of the Kosovars.

Apart from the increase in the number of teachers appointed to cater for these pupils in mainstream classes, further additional teachers are sanctioned for schools catering for large numbers of pupils to provide intensive English language training for them so that they can benefit from the normal curriculum.

existing services available to refugees in ireland

In post-primary schools where the numbers of enrolled non-national pupils with language difficulties is small, the Department will consider the payment of a grant to the school authorities to enable them to arrange locally for the provision and payment of some extra teaching hours for these pupils.

All non-national pupils are included in the total enrolment of a school for the purpose of capitation grants and they can apply for free books and other grants on the same basis as Irish pupils.

In relation to third level education, refugee students are entitled to avail of such education on the same basis as Irish students. Their position in relation to grants and qualification for entry is also the same.

Adult Education : English language training is available to refugees to enable them to participate fully in Irish society. The Refugee Language Support Unit, which is funded by the Department of Education and Science has been established to co-ordinate arrangements for English language training.

- Training

Refugees, provided they meet the eligibility criteria, have the same entitlements to participation on FÁS courses and schemes as Irish citizens. FÁS also offers a job placement service which attempts to match prospective employers and employees.

- Welfare support and assistance

Any person who is resident in the State, regardless of nationality, is entitled to social welfare payments on the same basis as an Irish national if a means test is satisfied. The Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs is responsible for the provision of welfare assistance to refugees in accordance with the provisions of the Social Welfare Acts.

- Housing

Refugees are eligible for local authority housing. The letting of houses by local authorities is governed by statutory provisions which require that applicants be accepted and placed on the housing list, if assessed as being in need of housing and unable to provide it from their own resources. Refugees, most of whom rent private accommodation may qualify for a rent supplement under the Supplementary Welfare Allowance scheme.

- Health care

Refugees are entitled to the same level of health care as Irish citizens. The Health Boards undertake a wide range of services including provision of medical entitlements under the General Medical Services Scheme, health screening services, general hospital and community health services. The Health Boards also act on an agency basis to ensure that all persons eligible receive their legal entitlements, including income maintenance, rent supplements and other entitlements under the provisions of the Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme.



- Naturalisation and Citizenship

Article 34 of the 1951 UN Convention provides that the contracting parties shall as far as possible facilitate the naturalisation of refugees. In Ireland the normal five years residency requirement can be waived at the Minister's discretion. In the case of Convention refugees, it has been the practice to approve applications for naturalisation made after at least three years residence.

Persons granted leave to remain may acquire citizenship after a period of five years residence in the State, in accordance with the provisions of the Nationality and Citizenship Act, 1956, as amended in 1986.

- Family Reunification

Section 18 of the Refugee Act, 1996 provides for family reunification for persons granted refugee status. Although this Section of the Act is not yet in force, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform applies its provisions in its scheme of family reunification.

The Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform proposes to follow the policy of Section 18 also in respect of family reunification in the case of persons granted leave to remain, having been in the asylum process, who will be living in our community for the long term.

The European Commission is expected to make proposals to the Council of Ministers shortly under Title IV of the EC Treaty on the admission of third country nationals for the purpose of family reunion for persons who have permission to reside in a Member State. Under a Protocol to the Amsterdam Treaty, Ireland does not take part in Title IV measures but can opt in to such measures. It will be for the Government to decide in due course if Ireland should exercise its option of participating in the adoption of this measure.

- Voting rights

Allowing refugees to stand for and vote in local elections can enhance the two way process of integration by involving refugees and the host society on an equal basis. In Ireland, non-EU citizens may vote at local elections, provided they are at least 18 years of age on the day the register comes into force and are resident at an address in the State on 1st September in the year preceding the coming into force of the register. Local authorities, as the registration authorities, are responsible for compiling a register of electors each year. Of course, those who have acquired Irish citizenship may vote at every election and referendum.

2.3 Special intervention measures

State services are administered to refugees in the same way as services to Irish people. However, there is a need for special intervention measures to address the potential disadvantages faced by refugees. The following paragraphs set out the intervention measures which have been taken to date by the State, either directly or in partnership with NGOs. Some of the projects undertaken by NGOs to advance the process of integration are also outlined.

existing services available to refugees in ireland

2.3.1 English language training and education

The Department of Education and Science has put in place a number of measures to facilitate non-nationals in improving their English language skills. In many areas these measures involve a partnership arrangement with other agencies.

While the main focus of intervention measures had initially been directed at Programme refugees, a number of initiatives have been taken by the Department to address the issue of English language tuition for non-nationals in general:

- A Working Group was established by the Minister for Education and Science in 1998 to investigate the situation with regard to non-nationals in primary schools. The Minister received the report of this Working Group and sanctioned the appointment of 15 teachers to cater specifically for the needs of non-nationals with English language deficits. These teachers are working with non-nationals in 21 schools. The question of what help can be given to schools with smaller numbers of non English speaking non-nationals is under consideration at present.
- During the Summers of 1997 and 1998, intensive English language tuition was offered to Programme refugee pupils who were about to enter second level education and those who had completed transition year.
- Over the past three years, mother tongue and cultural classes have been provided on Saturday mornings for the children of Programme refugees. This provision has been organised by the Refugee Agency and funded mainly by the Department of Education and Science.
- More recently, following a research initiative by the Department and the Refugee Agency, the Department has established a Refugee Language Support Unit under the aegis of Trinity College as a two year pilot project. The function of the unit is to co-ordinate the provision of language support for refugees admitted to Ireland. The unit will work closely with the Refugee Agency, the Department of Education and Science, the private language schools that provide English language classes for adult refugees, FÁS and the Centre for Language and Communications Studies, Trinity College Dublin which has an ongoing programme of research and development in this area.

The main tasks of the Refugee Language Support Unit are:

- (a) to establish and maintain a database on the language experience of non-nationals and to track their language training progress
- (b) to develop benchmarks of English language competence for non-national pupils at two levels in primary schools and for post-primary pupils at the end of their first year and after Junior Certificate
- (c) to prepare appropriate language tests for adults so that suitable language training will be provided to facilitate their placement in employment or in mainstream vocational / FÁS training
- (d) to develop suitable English language training programmes for the various categories of non-nationals

- (e) to develop appropriate language teaching materials and to identify sources of suitable existing materials
 - (f) to advise the Department of Education and Science on matters relating to English language provision to non-nationals when requested
 - (g) to facilitate the training of teachers of adult refugees where necessary.
- During the Summer of 1999, the Department organised six-week summer courses in English for all Kosovar refugee pupils between 4 and 15 years of age. Parallel to these courses the Refugee Language Support Unit organised, with the support of the Department, intensive English language courses for adult Kosovar refugees at each of the ten centres where they are living. Since then the Department has sanctioned the appointment of additional teachers to cater for the extra Kosovar pupils at primary and post-primary level. It has also sanctioned the appointment of a further 15 special resource teachers to provide intensive English language training for primary pupils to enable them to access the normal school programme.

2.3.2 Psychological Services

The Eastern Health Board put in place a dedicated psychological service for Bosnian refugees in 1992. The service is delivered by Irish psychologists and trained Serbo-Croat lay counsellors. The service includes :

- psychological evaluation of the mental health of the refugees
- individual family and group psychotherapy
- consultation and support to staff in other agencies working with the refugees
- participation in the development and delivery of training courses for agencies working with the refugees
- research and evaluation.

In 1998, funds were provided by the Department of Health and Children for the development, by the Eastern Health Board, of a psychological service for asylum seekers with particular emphasis on those who have been exposed to extreme violence. Psychological services for Convention refugees and persons granted leave to remain are provided on the same basis as for Irish citizens.

2.3.3 The Refugee Agency

The Refugee Agency, which was established in 1991 for the resettlement of Programme refugees, operates under the aegis of the Department of Foreign Affairs. The Refugee Agency is responsible for the resettlement of Programme refugees who have been admitted to Ireland by Government in response to crisis situations.

Until recently, the Department was also involved through the Refugee Agency in the family reunification schemes for Programme refugees. Family reunification for all refugees, including Programme refugees is now administered through the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

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The Refugee Agency is managed by a Board which comprises an independent chairperson and representatives of those government departments most involved with refugee issues (Foreign Affairs; Justice, Equality and Law Reform; Health and Children; Social, Community and Family Affairs; Education and Science; Enterprise, Trade and Employment; and Environment and Local Government). The UNHCR and a number of independent members have observer status on the Board. All Board members are appointed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Agency is funded solely by way of Grant-in-Aid from the Department of Foreign Affairs and is staffed by a Director, a resettlement team and administrative/secretarial staff.

Since its establishment, the Refugee Agency has been responsible for the integration of Programme refugees into Ireland. Its role is to co-ordinate arrangements for the admission, reception and resettlement of these refugees. In practice, the work of the Agency is mainly concerned with Bosnian and Vietnamese refugees. More recently, the Refugee Agency has played a key role in the implementation of the Kosovar refugee programme.

The Refugee Agency is active in facilitating the integration of Programme refugees into Irish society. This includes English language classes, counselling, help in finding accommodation, vocational training, employment, assistance in forming self-help groups and ongoing support to these groups. The Refugee Agency has been a catalyst for a number of initiatives aimed at facilitating integration, such as the ZENA project, the Refugee Language Support Unit, the Bosnian Community Development Project, the Clann Housing Association and the "A Part of Ireland Now" initiative. The Agency is also involved in assisting in the resettlement of newly arrived family members of Programme refugees admitted as part of the family reunification scheme.

2.3.4 The Bosnian Community Development Project

The Bosnian Community Development Project is sponsored by FÁS through the Community Employment Scheme and the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs through the Community Development Programme. The project has approximately six participants, only one of whom is not a Bosnian. The main activities of the project are:

- maintaining an information / resource centre
- promoting cultural and social activities
- developing activities for specific groups, such as the elderly and the young
- developing employment opportunities.

2.3.5 Zena Project

This project was promoted by the Bosnian Community Development Project and the Refugee Agency. Funding for the project was sourced from the Women's Education Initiative of the Department of Education, with assistance from the European Social Fund.

The project has four main objectives:

- to train a number of key outreach workers to act as facilitators between refugee women and the service providers and encourage and promote access to education by refugee women.

- to link with the existing community groups in local areas of Dublin
- to conduct a survey and to respond to the barriers and needs identified in the survey
- to develop access strategies for refugee women to education.

The Zena Project has carried out a survey on the barriers and needs of Bosnian refugee women. This initiative was funded by the Department of Education and Science with assistance from the European Social Fund and FÁS.

2.3.6 Interact Ireland

This is a partnership between the Refugee Agency, FÁS, the Refugee Language Support Unit and the Irish Refugee Council. The partnership is currently being expanded to include employers organisations and trade unions. The aim of the project is to promote the integration of refugees into Irish society by assisting refugees in accessing training and employment. The project is supported by the Integra strand of the European Union Human Resources Employment Initiative and by FÁS Community Services, Dublin North.

2.3.7 Clann Housing Association

Clann Housing Association was established in June 1998 by the Refugee Agency in association with Focus Ireland, ARASI, Interact Ireland, the Bosnian Community Development Project, the Vietnamese Irish Association, the Mercy Family Centre and private individuals within the refugee community. Its aim is to investigate and respond to the housing needs of refugees in Ireland through the provision of secure and affordable housing.

2.3.8 Access Ireland

The Access Ireland Project operates under the Irish Refugee Council. This project was granted funding from the European Union budget line on integration of refugees (B3-4113) and also from FÁS.

The objectives of Access Ireland are to :

- highlight the positive contributions of refugees and the values of multiculturalism in Irish society
- improve access to health and social welfare services for refugees
- promote greater understanding of refugee needs and intercultural awareness amongst social and health care providers
- develop training materials to promote good anti-discriminatory practice amongst service providers
- promote the development of refugee community initiatives.

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2.4 Conclusions

Measures have been taken by the State, in the past, to facilitate the integration of refugees, particularly Programme refugees. Evaluation of these measures has been limited and to date, there are just two reports which contain solid information on the resettlement of refugees in Ireland. Although, these reports relate only to the resettlement of Programme refugees, their conclusions can inform the development of an integration strategy.

The report of the survey of the Bosnian and Vietnamese communities, published in June 1998 reveals that by 1997, integration initiatives for Programme refugees had only been partially successful in terms of numbers in full-time employment, development of language skills, participation in education and training and social interaction.

The report by the Zena Project in October 1999 of a survey on the barriers and needs of Bosnian refugee women with regard to education, employment and social inclusion, also reveals that a large proportion of respondents were not satisfied with their ability to communicate in the English language, that there was an extremely low proportion participating in education or working outside the home and that a significant percentage did not have regular contact with Irish people in their area.

Undoubtedly, the Refugee Agency has been instrumental in the development of a number of important measures for the integration of Programme refugees. However, all mainstream service providers must play their part in facilitating the integration of refugees and the Refugee Agency may have been hindered in achieving its objectives because it has had to rely on informal relations with mainstream service providers, rather than formalised structures. Although all relevant government departments are represented on the Board of the Agency, the Board has not had sufficient influence to ensure the co-operation of all service providers. The ability to ensure the co-operation of all service providers is key to the successful and cohesive development and implementation of measures to facilitate integration across all sectors. Consequently this is an important factor in considering the appropriate organisational structure for the continued development of integration policy and the co-ordination of its implementation.

The Department of Education and Science has taken a number of measures to facilitate the education of refugees and other non-nationals, including the provision of additional teaching resources and the development of the Refugee Language Support Unit. However, the resources allocated to schools and the Refugee Language Support Unit need to be reviewed, in view of the increasing numbers of non-nationals.

The Working Group recognises and welcomes the various initiatives undertaken by NGOs and community groups to help refugees overcome barriers to integration into Irish society and to help create greater public awareness of the needs of refugees. However, while these projects have made a valuable contribution, a lack of overall co-ordination of the various programmes has resulted in fragmented integration measures across different sectors. The goodwill and the enthusiasm which exists among NGOs and the wider community must be harnessed and given direction to achieve maximum benefit both for refugees and society.

In the absence of a co-ordinated national policy on integration for all refugees, the measures taken by the State to facilitate integration have been fragmented and lacking in co-ordination and have had limited impact. In considering future structures for the implementation of Government integration policy, the view of the Working Group is that there must be cohesion in delivery of services and the Government's commitment to integration must be clearly grounded in Government policy and driven by central Government.

ISSUES FOR INTEGRATION - THE ROLE OF IRISH SOCIETY

- 3.1 ACCEPTANCE BY IRISH SOCIETY
- 3.2 MEASURES TAKEN TO COMBAT RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION IN IRELAND
- 3.3 COMBATING RACISM IN EUROPE
- 3.4 A TOLERANT INCLUSIVE SOCIETY IN THE FUTURE

chapter three

inclusiveness

3

issues for integration - the role of irish society

It has already been stated that integration is a two way process that places an obligation on refugees and on society. The creation of an environment which recognises refugees as persons who have something to contribute to society has a key role to play in integration. This Chapter examines the role of Irish society in the integration process.

3.1 Acceptance by Irish society

A tolerant, inclusive society is a prerequisite for the successful integration of refugees. Unless Irish society recognises that the effect of increased immigration to this country is diversity which must be accommodated, integration will not happen. Furthermore, while there may be sympathy for refugees among the general public, there is a belief that they are a dependent population, and the contribution that they can make to society is not usually understood or appreciated. Acceptance of refugees by the host community and a general sense of being made welcome play an important part in helping refugees to establish a new life in the community. When refugees are allowed to rebuild their lives, they can enrich the society around them. Promoting such a society is also linked to the fight against racism and discrimination.

In Ireland, many people still do not encounter people from other cultures in their everyday lives. However, the number of people from different ethnic backgrounds living in Ireland is likely to continue to increase and Ireland will become increasingly multicultural as time goes on.

The Government, the UNHCR and other observers have expressed concern about incidents of racism in Ireland and although in this regard Ireland may be no different to many other societies, this does not relieve us of the responsibility of taking steps to eliminate racism. The report of the survey of the Vietnamese and Bosnian refugee communities in Ireland revealed that 32% of Vietnamese participants and 10% of Bosnian participants had experienced racial abuse. The predominant form of abuse reported by the Vietnamese was verbal while Bosnian participants experienced both verbal and, sometimes, physical abuse.

In recent times, media reports have also drawn attention to racist attacks and intolerance directed against ethnic minority groups including asylum seekers and refugees.

3.2 Measures taken to combat racism and discrimination in Ireland

In December, 1997, Dáil Eireann unanimously passed an All Party motion on racial discrimination affirming the right of everyone to live free of violence, discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin or membership of the Traveller community. The motion condemned sentiments and manifestations of racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism as inimical to respect for the dignity of all human beings and particularly stated that it deplored hostile statements or acts directed against those from other countries seeking refuge in the State. The motion also stated that the Dáil supports all appropriate efforts to promote harmonious relations between different groups characterised by reference to race and related factors.

The Irish Government has taken a number of steps to combat racism and intolerance including the introduction of equality legislation and the establishment of the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism.

- Legislation to prevent discrimination

Legislation has a key role to play in protecting refugees from racism which can be caused by discrimination in a work and non-work environment.

The Employment Equality Act, 1998 outlaws discrimination on nine distinct grounds. The grounds are - gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community. The ground of race, as defined in the Act, includes those discriminated against because they are of different race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins.

The Equal Status Bill gives protection against discrimination in a non-workplace environment. Furthermore, it enables Ireland to ratify the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination. It is the Government's intention to proceed with ratification of the Convention once the legislation is in place. The Equal Status Bill deals with discrimination, on the same grounds as the Employment Equality Act, 1998, in the provision of goods and services, accommodation, disposal of premises and education. All services which are generally available to the public will be covered, including facilities for refreshment and entertainment, credit facilities and transport services. The Bill is now before the Oireachtas with a view to enactment in early 2000.

A new infrastructure has been put in place to underpin employment equality and equal status law. The infrastructure consists of two new bodies, the Equality Authority, which will replace the existing Employment Equality Agency, and the Office of the Director of Equality Investigations. The Equality Authority will be responsible for adjudicating on cases under both Acts.

The Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act, 1989 made it an offence to incite hatred against any group of persons in the State or elsewhere on account of their race, colour, nationality, religion, ethnic or national origins, membership of the Traveller community or sexual orientation.

- National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism

This Committee was established by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform in July 1998, with the objective of providing a structure to develop programmes and actions aimed at developing an integrated approach against racism and towards interculturalism and to advise the Government on matters relating to racism.

The Committee is a partnership of NGOs, State agencies, social partners and representatives of government departments. The Committee has been provided with accommodation and facilities and an allocation of £90,000 to fund its programme of activities in 1999, by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. This funding will increase to £150,000 in the year 2000.

The Committee endeavours to promote a more participative and intercultural society which is inclusive of persons such as refugees, Travellers and minority ethnic groups in Ireland. The Committee's activities include organising anti-racism training modules for civil servants, administering a small grants fund to NGOs undertaking anti-racism / intercultural projects and participating on the Independent Monitoring Committee of the Refugee Legal Service. The Committee has a number of subcommittees, one of which deals exclusively with issues concerning refugees and asylum seekers.

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issues for integration - the role of irish society

The Committee co-ordinated and resourced the “True Colours” initiative, a two week programme of events focussing on the inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers, people of colour and ethnic minorities into Irish society.

- National Committee for Development Education

The National Committee for Development Education (NCDE) was established in 1994 under the auspices of Ireland Aid, the official overseas development co-operation programme. It aims to promote and support Development Education in all sectors of Irish society, in co-operation with other agencies and organisations.

Over the last number of years topics related to anti-racism, refugees and asylum seekers have increasingly been addressed by a number of Development Education organisations. NCDE provides funding to NGOs for education work carried out related to these topics and in terms of funding through education, NCDE is one of the largest fund providers in Ireland. Other fund providers include the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, the Department of Education and Science, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, the Department of Foreign Affairs and the European Union.

- A Part of Ireland Now

A Part of Ireland Now was established by the Refugee Agency in 1998 to promote a positive image of refugees through discussion and seminars with refugee speakers around the country in association with local development education and community groups, local schools and youth groups. It also trains and supports a panel of refugee speakers for work with groups. The initiative has an advisory committee which includes representatives of the Agency, the UNHCR, Interact Ireland, the Curriculum Development Unit (Department of Education), the Association of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Ireland (ARASI) and the Inner Cities Communities Organisations Network (ICON).

- NGOs

Initiatives by Government have been supplemented by NGOs who, as well as participating on the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism, have worked to devise strategies and programmes to improve and secure the situation of asylum seekers, refugees and other ethnic minorities in Ireland. For example, the National Federation of Campaigns Against Racism is an umbrella group of organisations campaigning against racism and for immigrants rights in Ireland and for the promotion of ethnic diversity as a positive development in Irish society. The Platform Against Racism is an independent initiative of NGOs working collectively to highlight and address the issue of racism in the island of Ireland. Another example of an NGO initiative is Sports Against Racism in Ireland (SARI) which promotes racial harmony through the use of football, sports and music to integrate ethnic minorities and inner city communities.

3.3 Combating racism in Europe

In designating 1997 as the Year Against Racism, the European Council recognised that racism and xenophobia are diametrically opposed to everything that Europe stands for in terms of democracy, tolerance and respect for human dignity and fundamental freedoms.

In Europe there are a number of other initiatives which have the potential to impact on racism. In particular, the Treaty of Amsterdam enables the European Union to take appropriate action to combat discrimination on the basis of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. The European Commission has

recently made proposals for anti-discrimination legislation, including a directive dealing specifically with discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin.

3.4 A tolerant inclusive society in the future

A critical component in the development of a tolerant inclusive society is the acceptance and involvement of Irish society in the integration of refugees. Indeed, the task of transforming the social environment in Ireland into a country which accepts refugees and integrates them into the community must be shared by the Government of Ireland and its people. Each citizen has a responsibility in the development of tolerance in society.

The Irish Government can play its part by stimulating and promoting a positive atmosphere and enacting legislation to ensure equal treatment of all people living in Ireland. Those in a position of influence, such as politicians, the media and religious organisations, as well as NGOs, community groups and refugees themselves, also have a central role in strengthening positive relations.

- Role of political leaders

There is a leadership role for politicians at national and local level in helping to create a greater climate of acceptance for persons from other backgrounds. Positive action has been taken by politicians, such as meetings with refugee communities and encouraging refugees to become involved in community life. Public representatives should also be encouraged to avoid adopting positions likely to raise tensions.

- Role of service providers

Refugees' perception of the host society will be shaped by their initial experience as asylum seekers. It is essential that service providers recognise and understand the cultural diversity of other people and that receiving refugees is part of our international humanitarian obligations. Service providers must also demonstrate awareness and sensitivity to people with different cultural backgrounds. General training in anti-racism and interculturalism needs to be complemented by training which is specific in relation to refugees.

The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform has provided and continues to provide extensive training for staff dealing with people who seek or who have been granted status in Ireland. In terms of mainstream services, the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs and the Health Boards have developed training programmes to raise awareness among its staff of cultural diversity and the needs of refugees. In relation to training of gardaí, all student and probationer gardaí receive instruction on race relations and associated problems as part of their two-year training. Specific training in working with refugees, including the use of refugee trainers, has been provided by the Refugee Agency to FÁS, social services, probation and welfare officers and, in the greater Dublin area, local authority housing officers.

- Role of the education system

In trying to spread an understanding of racial tolerance, special efforts must be made to develop in our young people, as the citizens of the future, a respect for the fundamental equality of all human beings.

Intercultural education at schools and colleges should aim to promote respect for difference, highlight the benefits of cultural diversity and prepare people to live in an increasingly diverse society.

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issues for integration - the role of irish society

While the importance of tolerance has always been emphasised in the Civics programme in both primary and post-primary schools, the revised curriculum for primary schools, which was introduced in September of this year, places an increased emphasis on tolerance and respect for others, especially those from a different cultural background. Examples of some of the headings under which the subject is treated include the following :

- developing an awareness and appreciation of the diversity of cultures and people in the local community and a recognition of their contributions and how differences can enrich the experiences of Irish children
- developing an awareness of other people in other places in the world
- emphasising the special responsibility of each individual in the community
- comparing and contrasting lifestyles in different countries and in different cultures within and outside Ireland
- examining the questions of discrimination against particular groups, racism, recognising stereotyping of any kind and exploring how it can be counteracted
- taking account of the views, feelings and opinions of others
- recognising how an individual action can affect the feelings and opinions of others
- exploring the area of respect, genuine communication, being just and fair when dealing with others, the role of assumption, rumour, fact and opinion when deciding about other people
- appreciating the diversity of people or groups within communities and the importance of mutual respect, empathy and understanding for living together in peace and harmony.

The programme for post-primary schools builds on and expands the work carried out in primary schools in relation to the whole area of tolerance and respect.

- Role of NGOs

NGOs continue to have a vital role to play in the development of a tolerant inclusive society. Local community groups, sports organisations, drama and music groups, as well as religious organisations etc. can assist refugees in integrating into the local community.

- Role of the media

The Irish media can play a key role in the development of a more diverse and tolerant society, by reporting the plight of refugees without prejudice or sensationalism and informing public opinion responsibly and in a balanced manner.

- Public awareness initiatives

Public opinion needs to be better informed to dispel any discrimination or prejudice. There should be an emphasis on respect for differences and diversity and on the positive contribution refugees can make to economic, social and cultural life. National public awareness initiatives can be developed through existing resources, such as the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism and the UNHCR Integration campaign. This should be complemented by refugee specific public education. The participation of refugees and refugee groups in these initiatives will enable them to highlight the contribution they can make to society and also involve them directly in the development of a tolerant inclusive society.

ISSUES FOR INTEGRATION - THE KEY PRACTICAL ISSUES

- 4.1 LANGUAGE SKILLS
- 4.2 EMPLOYMENT
- 4.3 TRAINING
- 4.4 RECOGNITION OF SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS
- 4.5 EDUCATION
- 4.6 ACCESSING MAINSTREAM SERVICES
- 4.7 HEALTH ISSUES
- 4.8 ACCOMMODATION
- 4.9 NATURALISATION AND CITIZENSHIP
- 4.10 FAMILY REUNIFICATION
- 4.11 CONCLUSIONS

chapter four

independence

4

4

issues for integration - the key practical issues

Although refugees have the same rights as Irish citizens, they may face difficulties in integrating into Irish society. There are a variety of reasons for this and it is important that impediments to integration are identified and intervention measures put in place to help refugees overcome them.

Refugees living in Ireland have effectively had to abandon their former life and start anew in a foreign country. There may be considerable differences between the culture and bureaucratic system in Ireland and that of their home country. They are faced with adapting to a different society and have to come to terms with a new language and culture. These difficulties can manifest themselves in many ways from knowing how to apply for certain services to understanding the cultural norms of Irish society.

Refugees may have suffered substantial financial losses, yet find that they cannot regain their economic independence because they cannot access employment. This could be due to a lack of fluency in the English language which not only affects refugees' chances of gaining employment, but can also make it more difficult to participate in education and training to bridge the gap between their skills and qualifications and those necessary for gaining employment in Ireland.

Refugees can also experience a sense of isolation for many reasons. This may include lack of contact with family members back home, a sense of not belonging to the community where they live and a general uncertainty about the future. Some sectors of the refugee population may be more vulnerable than others in this regard. For example, women who stay at home and single parents are faced with added difficulties as their ability to avail of language training, work or vocational training may be affected by family commitments or, perhaps, cultural factors. As a result they may not have the same opportunities for interaction as those who are working. They may also be faced with the problem of availability of childcare facilities.

Of course, a person may choose not to integrate for a variety of reasons including cultural factors and this can be particularly difficult to overcome.

This Chapter looks at the main practical issues which are facing refugees in integrating into Irish society.

4.1 Language skills

Perhaps the greatest difficulty facing refugees is that of living in a society that speaks an unfamiliar language. For refugees in Ireland who cannot communicate in English, all other tasks become more difficult or impossible. Such people may have difficulty improving their skills and entering gainful employment, and in accessing essential services such as housing, social welfare and health services.

The Report on the survey of the Vietnamese and Bosnian refugee communities in Ireland pointed out that adequate English language skills facilitate several aspects of resettlement. Language skills mean that refugees are more likely to be employed, to interact with Irish people, to socialise, to feel that they belong to the community in which they live and to enjoy better mental health.

The lack of English language skills can also hinder refugees' attempts to learn about the new culture, make contacts and interact with the Irish community.

The absence of a satisfactory knowledge of the English language can also influence refugees' ability to obtain employment. Furthermore, to qualify for unemployment assistance refugees must be capable of, available for and

genuinely seeking work. They may not, in some instances, be considered capable of certain jobs without adequate English language skills.

To address the lack of English language skills among refugees the Department of Education and Science makes provision to enable refugees attend intensive English language courses. This is organised by the Refugee Language Support Unit in Trinity College on behalf of the Department.

4.2 Employment

Employment is a key factor in terms of facilitating integration. It provides a regular income and economic independence, security, status and opportunities for interaction with people from the host community and for social integration. Employment brings many benefits including improved income and lifestyle, an increased sense of belonging to the community, better interaction with people outside their own communities and allows refugees to contribute to society.

Once refugees' basic economic needs are met, they will look for recognition and advancement. A good job determines a person's quality of life, affects their self-esteem and gains them recognition in the wider community. Settled refugees have the same levels of hope and personal aspiration as people in general.

Poor English language skills have previously been identified as affecting refugees' prospects of entering gainful employment. Other barriers to entering gainful employment include lack of knowledge of the labour market and skills requirements, lack of recognised skills or qualifications and discrimination. Of course, refugees may not be able to work for a variety of other reasons including, age, disability etc..

4.3 Training

Employment prospects can be enhanced through vocational training and participation in training and employment schemes run by FÁS, the National Training and Employment Authority.

Vocational training for some refugees may provide an introduction to a trade or profession which will ultimately facilitate the integration of those persons. In other cases training will be needed to enable refugees to develop their skills to enable them to reach their full potential and so ease the transition from unemployment to work. In some cases training may also be necessary to reinforce or update previous skills.

Of course, the language barrier can also hinder participation in training programmes. Training projects, such as those developed by Interact Ireland and FÁS which combine language support and prevocational training, enable participants to access mainstream training courses and employment. Statistical information on refugees who have participated in programmes supported by FÁS is at Appendix 3.

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issues for integration - the key practical issues

4.4 Recognition of skills and qualifications

Some refugees may have held professional or technical qualifications in their own country and the issue of the recognition of these qualifications will clearly be an important matter for them.

The Working Group considered recognition of overseas qualifications and noted that it was fraught with difficulty having regard to the fact that a substantial number of refugees arrive in Ireland without any documentation and this exacerbates the difficulties in verifying qualifications. The Working Group noted that there is no specific co-ordinated scheme in place for assessing or recognising skills and overseas qualifications and that this could result in many refugees remaining unemployed or working in jobs where they are underemployed. This problem is probably less acute for refugees with professional qualifications as the relevant professional body may be in a position to verify the person's qualifications.

The European Council for Refugees and Exiles has recommended that a system of recognition of previous experience and qualifications of refugees be set up at European level. In the meantime, the expertise of the Chambers of Commerce in Ireland, employer organisations, the Civil Service and Local Appointments Commissions, professional bodies as well as the National Qualifications Authority could be utilised to develop systems for assessing existing skills and qualifications.

4.5 Education

Education is an important vehicle which facilitates integration. Equal opportunities in education are essential to prevent under-achievement, which can disadvantage refugees and be passed on to subsequent generations. Preventative action in the early years can be more cost-effective than dealing with the social and economic costs of accumulated disadvantages which might arise in adult life. Education enhances refugees' confidence and ability to access the labour market. It can help to bridge the gap between the qualifications brought to this country and the entry requirements for further education in Ireland.

Schooling is an essential part of the integration process of refugee children. The school plays a key role as a learning centre and as a place of formal and informal socialisation for refugee children in a new environment. It is at school that children develop social relations with those from their own and other backgrounds.

4.6 Accessing mainstream services

While mainstream services such as housing, social welfare, health care and other public services are equally available to Irish citizens and refugees, they are not always equally accessible. A lack of knowledge about Irish society and the system that operates in Ireland, as well as language difficulties can hinder refugees in availing of their rights and of course, participating in education, training and employment. There is a need to bridge this gap, so that mainstream services are equally accessible to refugees.

Furthermore, in the delivery of these services the providers must take account of the cultural diversity of refugees, their difficulties with language and any lack of knowledge of Irish society. As discussed in Chapter 3, training is vital for the providers of essential services to enable staff to understand cultural differences.

The difficulties in accessing mainstream services can also be addressed, in part, through the availability of leaflets on key services and entitlements in a language which refugees understand. Some organisations already follow this approach. For example, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform currently makes its information leaflet for asylum seekers and the document which sets out the procedures for processing an asylum claim available in 21 languages. Similar initiatives have been undertaken by other organisations, the most notable being the Lord Mayor's initiative "Many Peoples - One City" which is a booklet that provides information on housing, welfare, and health care for refugees and asylum seekers in 7 languages. Its aim is to promote cultural diversity and to welcome asylum seekers and refugees to the city of Dublin and it has been developed in partnership by Dublin Corporation and the Eastern Health Board.

4.7 Health Issues

The report of the survey of the Vietnamese and Bosnian refugee communities in Ireland suggests that the health needs of refugees are dependant both on the experiences they had prior to coming to Ireland and on the situation in which they are now living. Research shows that those with higher levels of psychological distress tend to seek treatment for physical complaints more frequently than those with good mental health.

The report concluded that the physical health concerns of Programme refugees do not appear to differ substantially from that of the general Irish population. While medical evacuees had a higher level of health service utilisation than other categories of refugees there was no evidence that their physical health problems were impinging on their mental health. The Department of Psychology of the Eastern Health Board, in their submission to the Working Group pointed out that the mental health status of refugees can be linked to many issues including social isolation and chronic loneliness, poor English language skills, employment status and delays in determining their status in this country.

It is clear, therefore, that good mental health is linked to many of the issues for integration which have been discussed in this Chapter. Nevertheless, there may be psychologically and emotionally vulnerable groups who will require psychological services. These include older people, unaccompanied young children and young adults, victims of extreme violence, and people with pre-existing mental health problems. The need for the provision of additional resources for these groups, and for other emerging client groups, should be monitored.

It is also important in the delivery of all healthcare services to refugees, that, where possible, interpretation services are available, and that medical staff have the appropriate skills and understanding of cultural differences to assist people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds.

4.8 Accommodation

Similar to Irish citizens, refugees may obtain housing by means of owner occupation, renting private accommodation or applying for social housing provided by local authorities or from the voluntary sector. Refugees who are accommodated in social housing may face problems of acceptance, particularly if it is perceived that they have been allocated accommodation ahead of Irish nationals.

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issues for integration - the key practical issues

The pressure on both affordable housing for purchase and social housing in Ireland is a problem for nationals and non-nationals alike. The issue of segregation also affects refugees, as well as other marginalised groups in our community.

The location of accommodation can have a significant influence on the resettlement of refugees. At the present time, the vast majority of asylum seekers who arrive in Ireland are accommodated in Dublin and it would appear when people are granted refugee status, they generally remain in the Dublin area. The recent decision to disperse asylum seekers around the country may encourage those granted refugee status or leave to remain to stay in these areas, especially if appropriate support networks are put in place.

4.9 Naturalisation and Citizenship

The acquisition of citizenship is generally regarded as one of the key measures to facilitate the integration of refugees in the host society. ECRE, in its policy development discussion paper, describes it as the "most potent measure of integration". By granting citizenship, the refugee's membership of society is acknowledged and this can be crucial to successful resettlement. The survey of Programme refugees noted that refugees who had made the decision to remain in Ireland appeared to be more securely settled here and experienced fewer psychological problems. In addition, it helped them to feel much more part of the community in which they lived.

Ireland's favourable provisions for the granting of citizenship to refugees, including the waiving of fees have been recognised by the UNHCR as being in line with the spirit of the Geneva Convention.

Persons granted leave to remain may acquire citizenship after a period of 5 years residence in the State. However, for some of those granted leave to remain, acquiring citizenship may not be the ideal method of securing their status in this country. This is because some countries require their citizens to relinquish citizenship should they acquire citizenship elsewhere. In Ireland, persons can be granted leave to remain without condition as to time.

4.10 Family reunification

Family reunification has been documented in various studies on integration as being an important element of resettlement for refugees. It also plays a part in easing the sense of isolation which refugees can experience especially in the absence of peer support from others of their own nationality.

The importance of family reunification has been stressed in a number of international instruments, including the Universal Declaration on Human Rights of 1948 and the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. These identified the family as a natural and fundamental unit of society entitled to protection by society and the State. In accordance with this principle, which is also well established in our own Constitution, the Government has made provision for family reunification.

4.11 Conclusions

The State must ensure that appropriate steps are taken to remove barriers to the integration and participation of refugees in society to the extent to which they desire. The State must meet the essential needs of refugees to the same extent as Irish citizens, while also facilitating the resettlement of refugees through specific interventions, where necessary.

It can be seen that many of the practical issues facing refugees are interdependent and are also central to successful integration. For example, the prospects of gaining employment can be hindered by poor language skills, which in turn can affect a person's ability to participate in training and education.

It is clear that refugees have special needs which must be met during the initial part of integration so that they can avail of mainstream services. The provision of a referral and information service would ensure that, at the vital initial stages of integration, refugees are assisted in accessing mainstream services. Such a service would also facilitate evaluation of refugees' specific needs and provide them with guidance and advice on accessing language and skills training and entering gainful employment. Furthermore, information on key services must be available in a language which refugees can understand.

There may be other issues which refugees have to deal with on a daily basis which have not been identified here and cannot be identified without developing a profile of refugees in Ireland. For example, are the past experiences and traumas of refugees impacting on their well being and their life in Ireland? If so, to what extent? Have refugees been refused jobs or promotions on discriminatory grounds? How do they interact with the local community? Are refugees living in urban areas facing different problems from those in suburban or rural areas? What are the special needs of vulnerable refugees? Do they wish to stay in Ireland? These questions can only be answered by the refugees themselves and, although certain issues can be addressed immediately, there is a clear need for further research before comprehensive measures can be developed to counteract the difficulties encountered by refugees.

INTEGRATION POLICY IN OTHER EU MEMBER STATES

5.1 NETHERLANDS

5.2 SWEDEN

5.3 FINLAND

5.4 DENMARK

5.5 DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

5.6 CONCLUSIONS

chapter five

empowerment

5

integration policy in other eu member states

The integration of refugees in European countries is subject to considerable variations in national practice, reflecting differences in approaches to social welfare and protection, as well as differences in national perceptions of what is a desirable social order. In some countries the goal of resettlement is assimilation rather than endorsing acceptance and embracing cultural diversity.

However, in other countries, such as the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland and Denmark, the emphasis is on the empowerment of refugees, enabling them to participate in society without relinquishing their own identity. In these countries a commitment to multi-culturalism underpins refugee integration policy and programmes. The integration policy of these countries is discussed in further detail below.

5.1 Netherlands

In the Netherlands, the Directorate for the co-ordination of Integration policy for minorities at the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations has overall responsibility for integration policy.

The aim of the Integration of Newcomers Act (WIN), 1998 is to promote the independence of newcomers by means of an integration programme. The newcomer is required to apply for an integration inquiry, the results of which may oblige the newcomer to participate in an integration programme. This programme comprises training in the Dutch language, as well as social and vocational orientation. In addition, social counselling and general programme coaching is provided. WIN also provides for referral to the labour exchange or follow-up training courses, as appropriate. Each programme is tailored to the individual needs of each refugee.

It is compulsory for all refugees to participate in an integration programme. A financial sanction such as a reduction in welfare benefits can be imposed if refugees fail to comply with the programme. Of course, sanctions are not the point of the integration programmes and are regarded as a last resort in cases where refugees cannot be induced to follow the integration programme properly. The programme lasts for a period of 18 months.

Under WIN, the municipalities bear primary responsibility for implementation of the integration policy for newcomers. Funding for the programme comes from central Government and the amount per newcomer is determined on the basis of the average costs involved in an integration programme. The same amount is paid to the municipality regardless of whether the refugee participates in the full programme or a limited programme, due to exemptions. At the end of each year the municipalities are required to account for the use of the funds and their performance is determined according to the decision taken after the integration inquiry and on the basis of the certificates issued by the educational institutes in respect of the refugee.

5.2 Sweden

Over the last few decades immigration has transformed Sweden into a country characterised by cultural and ethnic diversity. At the same time, new and complex social issues emerged - high unemployment rate, growing alienation, lack of involvement in the Swedish community and increased segregation among those members of society with an immigrant background. Ethnic discrimination and a growing "them and us" mentality was also discernible. In 1998, the Government adopted a new policy, which is enshrined in legislation and which was developed on the premise that a new attitude was needed whereby integration would be perceived to be a mutual, creative and stimulating process of change that embraces the whole community and not a process implying one-side adjustment on the part of immigrants. The objectives of integration policy in Sweden are to achieve equal rights and opportunities for

everyone; social cohesion based on diversity; and social development characterised by mutual respect and tolerance in which every person should participate and share a sense of commitment.

A new authority, the National Integration Office, was established with responsibility for implementing integration policy objectives and ensuring that the new approach to integration had an impact on different sectors of society.

Under the Swedish refugee integration programme, the municipalities continue to be responsible for the care of refugees on an individual basis. The integration programme appears to be broadly similar to the Dutch programme in that the Swedish Immigration Board concludes agreements with the municipalities on reception of refugees and certain other aliens, and it is the municipalities' responsibility to ensure that they receive a satisfactory introduction to Swedish society. This is facilitated through individual plans which are agreed between the municipalities and the refugees themselves, in collaboration with other State agencies. Under the programme, the municipalities aim to give each refugee housing, financial support and a working knowledge of the Swedish language and culture to facilitate the refugee's participation in working and social life. The new authority has been charged with reviewing the introductory programme for refugees in Sweden and informing the municipalities of its findings.

The only Government Department with a specific programme for refugees is the Education Department. Under the Education Act, municipalities must, within three months of settlement, offer to refugees an opportunity to participate in a course entitled "Swedish Instruction for Immigrants". As well as the obligation to learn Swedish as a second language, all children in Sweden have a right to instruction in their "mother tongue".

During the introduction phase of the integration programme, municipalities can offer introduction allowances to refugees who take part in resettlement programmes. The allowance is equivalent to a wage, rather than social allowances. A condition for the granting of such allowances is that the refugee complies with the introduction plan established by the municipality in consultation with him/her. Not all municipalities apply the new introduction programme.

The new policy also places an onus on Government and municipal authorities to ensure that information about the refugee community reaches every member of the population and places responsibility for preventing and counteracting racism, xenophobia and ethnic discrimination with the National Integration Office.

5.3 Finland

Finland's stated goal is to offer refugees and other immigrants a possibility to live and participate in Finnish society, as equal members. In the early stages, the authorities will support the refugee by developing integration plans, providing education, interpretation and training and career guidance in starting a new life. Later, however, refugees are expected to act independently in society.

Although a strong support system has always been available to guide refugees and to assist them in furthering their education and professional skills, the generous Finnish social security system created a certain passiveness on the part of refugees. In addition, the long term unemployment problem in Finland resulted in relatively high unemployment rates among refugees.

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A Commission, consisting of politicians, civil servants and interest groups was established to examine the integration of refugees into Finnish society. The Commission recommended that an integration model be developed, whereby an integration allowance would be linked to an immigrant's integration plan and the realisation of that plan. The integration plan can consist of studying the Finnish language, initiation into society, surveying professional skills and developing plans to further education, skills and employment. The recommendations of the Commission in this regard were put into practice at the start of 1999 and were incorporated into Finnish legislation on 1 May, 1999.

In Finland, there is effectively a three tier strategy to developing and implementing integration policy.

The Ministry of Labour is responsible for developing and implementing policy regarding the integration of refugees into society. It seeks to implement the policy by entering into agreements with municipalities to accept refugees.

Municipalities, which are responsible for accommodating and looking after refugees, are obliged to develop an integration programme of their own or together with neighbouring municipalities. The programme defines the aims and measures, resources and co-operation issues relating to the integration of immigrants. Each municipality's integration programme is formulated with immigrants, civic organisations and those of employees and employers in addition to other local sectors. The integration programme concerns every immigrant.

The elected Council in each municipality decides whether to accept refugees for resettlement and decides on the numbers to be accepted over a number of years. The Ministry of Labour advises the Council of the obligations and responsibilities it will be taking on and outlines the economic benefits to the region and to the municipality itself, particularly the increased funding and staffing. The municipality receives financial support in respect of each refugee for 3 years after their reception into the municipality, regardless of whether the refugee needs to avail of the municipality's services. The aim of the compensation system is to stimulate and steer municipalities to implement policies that promote integration, to prevent displacement and to stimulate immigrants to initiate activities. The subsidy system and the level of compensation have been used to create a positive atmosphere for reception in municipalities. If the municipality fails to draw up an Integration Programme the level of compensation can be reduced by up to 40%.

In 1988, only 7 municipalities out of the total of 460 had received refugees. By 1992, this had increased to 70 and in 1997, 130 municipalities received refugees.

Integration plans for individuals and families. An integration plan for individuals and families includes the measures (e.g. language instruction, daily routines, drawing up of a plan for studies or employment, practical training, vocational training and social contacts) that contribute to the integration of the immigrants, command of their own life and co-ordination of the new and their own culture. After the immigrants have committed themselves to the plan, their subsistence will be secured by an income-bound integration support.

The Integration Plan has to be made at the latest when the applicant has been unemployed for five months or has been granted a living allowance for that period. If the immigrant fails to pursue the realisation of the plan, the integration allowance will be suppressed, and the basic living allowance, which is equivalent to the living allowance for Finnish citizens is granted instead. This is lower than the integration allowance.

Evaluation and monitoring system. The Ministry of Labour will evaluate the results of the first year of operation of the new Integration programme at the end of 1999. A database and tracking system on the plans and progress is maintained at local level.

5.4 Denmark

In the past the programme for integration of refugees in Denmark took the form of a dual approach involving the Danish Refugee Council and the local authority or municipality. The Danish Refugee Council is a private humanitarian umbrella organisation for 12 non-governmental voluntary agencies in Denmark.

In the first eighteen months, the programme was administered by the Danish Refugee Council. After this period had elapsed, all responsibility for refugees' integration was transferred from the Danish Refugee Council to local authorities who had to use their own resources to support refugees and to provide them with welfare benefits if refugees were unemployed.

Under a new Integration Law which came into effect on 1 January, 1999, responsibility for the organisation and administration of refugee integration programme activities has been transferred from the Danish Refugee Council to local government.

It is understood that settlement quotas have been set for the 14 counties and 276 municipalities across Denmark. The municipalities are required to find accommodation for refugees within three months from the time of their arrival in their area and refugees are restricted as to where they can reside during the integration period.

The programme is available for a period of three years and consists of 30 hours of weekly tuition in vocational and educational activities as well as Danish language classes and culture. An allowance is paid to refugees who participate in the programme which is at a lower rate than that paid to Danish nationals in similar circumstances. Refugees who do not participate in the programme are liable to a fine which may take the form of a reduction in level of welfare benefit.

The Danish Refugee Council is still very involved in the integration of refugees and the success of Denmark's integration policy can be partly attributed to the fact that the Danish State Sector and the Non-governmental sector work very closely together in this regard.

5.5 Developments in the European Union

The European Commission, in recognition of the increasing concern about the perception of the refugee phenomenon and about the integration of refugees, has allocated EURO 10 million per annum since 1997 to implement a number of pilot measures to promote the integration of refugees.

The programme commenced with a series of pilot actions in 1997 designed to support and supplement action taken by and within the Member States. Access Ireland was successful in obtaining funding under this budget line. A full evaluation of these pilot measures is currently being carried out by external consultants and the results are expected in the near future.

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More recently, the European Commission has announced that it intends to create a “European Refugee Fund”. This will be a permanent fund which will target three specific areas - setting up reception facilities for asylum seekers newly arrived in the Union, initiatives designed to facilitate integration and measures to help voluntary returnees.

5.6 Conclusions

One of the most notable points about the countries discussed above is that, although they have all had policies and special programmes in place to facilitate the integration of refugees for a number of years, they have all instituted reviews of their integration policies in recent years. These reviews have resulted in the introduction of individual integration programmes and other measures aimed at promoting tolerant inclusive societies. These policies have been enshrined in legislation.

In developing a comprehensive strategy for integration in Ireland, the experience of other EU Member States and the models adopted by these States to facilitate integration must be considered.

It is clear that there are certain elements of the integration models outlined above which could be adopted by Ireland, in particular :

- a co-ordinated approach to reception and integration

In the countries discussed above, where relatively large numbers of Quota refugees¹, as well as, asylum seekers arrive on an annual basis, a co-ordinated approach to the reception and integration of all refugees is adopted. In general, the needs of both groups are regarded as being similar, although, of course, differences will arise in terms of the extent that support services are provided.

In relation to integration of persons granted refugee status or leave to remain, there is a centralised co-ordinated approach to the development, implementation and monitoring of integration policy, while support services are delivered at local level by municipalities.

- integration programmes

The development of integration programmes on an individual basis means that each programme is tailored to the needs of individual refugees'. A key feature of the programmes is that they operate within specific time frames ranging from 12 months to 3 years. The objective is to offer support at the initial stages, so that, in the medium and long term, refugees can act independently in society.

The individual integration programmes place an onus on refugees to commit to integrating. In some countries there are financial incentives for participating, in others there are sanctions for not doing so.

The Working Group recognises the benefits of these models and believes that there are many elements which could be adopted in formulating an integration model for Ireland.

1 Some countries receive Quota refugees on an annual basis. These are chosen from among those persons granted refugee status by the UNHCR.

INTEGRATION POLICY IN THE FUTURE

- 6.1 OBJECTIVES OF INTEGRATION POLICY
- 6.2 ISSUES FOR INTEGRATION
- 6.3 INTERVENTION MEASURES
- 6.4 A CO-ORDINATED APPROACH TO INTEGRATION
- 6.5 CONCLUSIONS

a two way
process

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integration policy in the future

Integration means the ability to participate in Irish society to the extent that a person needs, and wishes in all of the major components of society without having to relinquish his or her own cultural identity.

In this Chapter, the principal objectives of integration policy in Ireland are identified and the importance of a co-ordinated approach to the implementation of integration policy is discussed.

In considering the issues for integration and the intervention measures necessary to assist refugees to overcome barriers to integration, the Working Group has been able to draw on international experience, as well as ECRE's report, submissions from the UNHCR, and the experience of State bodies and NGOs in Ireland. However, despite the fact that there are over 100 nationalities represented in the asylum process in Ireland, the only tangible information on the specific needs of refugees living in Ireland is in relation to the Bosnian and Vietnamese Communities. Effective integration policy can only be developed and implemented on the basis of complete information and there is a need for research into the particular needs of refugees in the ever-changing social and economic climate in Ireland today. There is a need to carry out an analysis of what is currently being done at all levels to meet the needs of all refugees and to evaluate the opportunities to utilise existing structures, including State services, NGOs and community groups, to promote the integration of refugees. Complete information will facilitate the development of a comprehensive strategy for the future.

6.1 Objectives of integration policy

Integration is a two way process that places a real obligation on both society and the individual refugee. From the refugee's perspective, integration requires a willingness to adapt to the lifestyle of Irish society without abandoning or being expected to abandon one's own cultural identity. From the point of view of Irish society, it requires a willingness to accept refugees on the basis of equality and to take action to facilitate access to services, resources and decision-making processes in parity with Irish nationals. Integration policy must be framed to prepare individuals to function in Irish society and also create a social environment which is positive and welcoming to refugees.

The benefits of successful integration will be evident through the increased contribution and participation of refugees in society. Afforded the appropriate support and opportunities, refugees will be enabled to demonstrate their talent, skills, enthusiasm and culture and to contribute to the social fabric of Ireland.

There are over 100 nationalities represented in the asylum process. Integration policy must take account of these diverse groups of people. The approach to the implementation of integration policy must be sufficiently flexible to cope with changes in the numbers and origins of refugees without in any way diminishing the quality of service provided to them by our institutions and social services.

Integration policy must aim to empower refugees to act independently in Irish society as soon as possible. Integration activities should seek to enable refugees to use their own skills, knowledge and qualifications to represent themselves and achieve self-sufficiency. Refugees for their part must be encouraged to recognise that integration is a two way process to which they need to be committed and in which they have an intrinsic role to play.

At the same time Irish people need to bear in mind that refugees who come to Ireland have to build a new life in a new country and to come to terms with a new culture and, in most cases, a new language. It must be recognised that refugees have special needs which must be met during the initial part of integration in order to enable them to avail, on an equal basis, of mainstream services generally available to the Irish population.

The objectives of integration policy must be to :

- ensure equal rights and opportunities for everyone lawfully resident (subject to the provisions of the law) in the State, regardless of ethnic and cultural background
- create opportunities that enable individuals to be economically active, participate in society in all respects and access mainstream services as early as possible
- support initiatives which encourage the preservation of the ethnic-cultural and religious identity of all individuals
- promote the development of a tolerant inclusive society in Ireland in which everyone, irrespective of background, can participate and share a sense of commitment.

6.2 Issues for integration

The issues in integration have been discussed in detail in chapters 3 and 4. The key issues are :

- acceptance by Irish society
- ability to communicate in the English language
- employment
- training
- education
- access to mainstream services
- accommodation
- residence status
- native culture
- social inclusion.

6.3 Intervention measures

The Working Group has identified a multiplicity of measures which are necessary to facilitate the integration process. They are :

- (1) promoting a tolerant inclusive society
- (2) provision of English language training
- (3) assistance in entering gainful employment

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- (4) meeting education needs
- (5) ensuring ease of access to mainstream services
- (6) meeting accommodation needs
- (7) supporting refugees in maintaining native culture
- (8) involving refugees in the integration process
- (9) facilitating the acquisition of nationality and citizenship
- (10) encouraging political participation by refugees
- (11) providing for family reunification
- (12) supporting voluntary repatriation and resettlement.

6.3.1 promoting a tolerant inclusive society

The development of a tolerant inclusive society has been identified in this report as a key prerequisite to the successful integration of refugees. While there are a number of projects for increasing public awareness in relation to refugees, these are small scale projects and cannot hope to address the situation nationally. The Working Group believes that considerable work needs to be done towards developing a tolerant inclusive society. The Working Group believes that there is a need for public awareness, at national and local level, to dispel discrimination and prejudice by:

- creating a better understanding in Irish society of refugees and their reasons for seeking a new home in a foreign country,
- promoting respect for differences and diversity, and
- developing awareness of the positive contribution refugees can make to economic, social and cultural life.

A tolerant inclusive society must be developed through a multi-faceted approach :

- 1) political leadership should take a public and active role in creating a climate of acceptance. There is a particular onus on Government and political leaders to lead the development of a tolerant inclusive society.
- 2) greater public awareness should be developed through the dissemination of information to the public at large to dispel discrimination and prejudice. There should be an emphasis on respect for differences and diversity and on the positive contribution refugees can make to economic, social and cultural life. National public awareness can be developed through existing resources, such as the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism and the UNHCR Integration campaign. Refugee specific education and awareness should also be further developed.
- 3) the education system can be a powerful tool in the process of adaptation and social integration and must be harnessed to disseminate information to teachers and pupils. The education component of the UNHCR integration campaign provides a suitable starting point in this regard.

The revised curriculum for Primary Schools places considerable emphasis on the entire area of tolerance, fair play and anti-discrimination and on the importance of acceptance and understanding of other peoples and other cultures. The programme for post-primary schools builds on and expands the work carried out in primary schools in relation to the whole area of tolerance and respect. Intercultural education at schools and colleges should also aim to highlight the benefits of cultural diversity and prepare people to live in an increasingly diverse society and economy.

- 4) NGOs and religious organisations should be encouraged to develop opportunities for different groups in local communities to learn about others and to interact with them.
- 5) the media can have a valuable role in the socio-cultural integration of refugees, by disseminating information on refugees in a positive manner.
- 6) social interaction and the encouragement of initiatives by community groups, sports organisations and other voluntary groups can promote racial harmony through the active involvement of people of different cultures in their organisations.
- 7) refugee groups should be encouraged to use their resources and skills to promote and represent themselves.
- 8) eliminating discrimination - the new Equality Authority will have an important role to play in working towards the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity both in the workplace and in other areas, following the enactment of the Equal Status Bill, 1999.

6.3.2 provision of English language training

Overcoming the language barrier has been identified as critical to successful integration. Without the ability to communicate in English, all other tasks, such as improving skills, accessing public services and entering gainful employment, become more difficult or impossible.

Recent measures and initiatives to provide language training must be continued and additional resources must be provided as necessary. Consideration must also be given to the fact that some refugees may not be able to participate in formal language classes. In cases where people cannot leave the home because of lack of childcare facilities etc., language training could be provided at community level and the skills of refugees and voluntary groups can be utilised to develop initiatives in this area. Radio programmes, such as the recent RTE programmes for the Kosovar refugees, which included language training modules, could be developed.

6.3.3 assistance in entering gainful employment

Employment is a crucial area to consider in terms of facilitating integration. It allows refugees to participate in and contribute to the economy and to support their families independently and it creates a positive image of refugees as active, contributing members of society. It also provides security, status and opportunities for interaction with others in the community.

Measures to assist refugees to enter gainful employment must include :

- training

Refugees must be supported in developing / furthering their skills and qualifications to ease the transition from unemployment to entering the labour market. Special pre-vocational training, such as courses comprising language training and orientation and guidance, must be available to those who need it. Access to public vocational training must also be supported.

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- evaluation of qualifications

A system of assessing and recognising existing skills, qualifications and the experience of refugees must be established in co-operation with the National Qualifications Authority, Chambers of Commerce, employers groups, FÁS etc..

- creating awareness among employers of the benefits of a diverse workforce

Recruiting from a diverse population brings new perspectives, experience, language skills, links with and understanding of the countries of origin into the workforce. These attributes are particularly important for employers competing in ethnically and culturally diverse markets in Europe and globally. Information must be disseminated to employers to familiarise them with refugees, their skills and their potential as employees. Employers must be encouraged to create a positive working environment for a diverse workforce by adopting codes of anti-discrimination practice. Employers should also develop awareness among management and staff of diverse cultures with the objective of helping to change attitudes and behaviour. Staff associations and trade unions should also be encouraged to take positive action to create awareness and to eliminate racism in the workplace.

- employment in the public and voluntary sector

The public service and the voluntary sector must be at the forefront in terms of creating equal opportunities and recruiting a diverse workforce. As well as ensuring that refugees are aware that jobs in the public sector are equally open to them, their skills can be utilised in the provision of services to refugees, such as interpretation, language training and mother tongue and cultural classes.

- encouraging refugees to set up their own business

Business development opportunities are equally available to refugees. Awareness must be created of the financial support, business advice and training in business skills available from FÁS and Forbairt.

6.3.4 meeting education needs

Equal opportunities in education are essential to prevent under-achievement which can disadvantage refugees.

For adults, steps must be taken to ensure that special education needs are met as early as possible in the initial phase of integration to enable them to bridge the gap between the skills and experience brought to this country and the entry requirements for further mainstream education in Ireland.

For children, schooling is an essential part of the integration process and their integration into the mainstream school system must be facilitated through the provision of English language instruction to enable children to overcome the disadvantage of lack of fluency. The Department of Education and Science has already provided additional teaching resources. This must, however, be reviewed in light of the increasing number of non-national children in our schools and further additional resources provided as necessary.

6.3.5 ensuring ease of access to mainstream services

State services should continue to be administered in the same manner and to the same standard as services to Irish people are administered. While mainstream services such as social welfare, health care, housing and other public services are equally available to Irish citizens and refugees, they are not always equally accessible.

The Working Group has clearly identified that before refugees can avail of mainstream services it is first important to evaluate their ability to move directly to these services. Although Programme refugees, through the Refugee Agency, have received this type of support, other refugees have not had this advantage.

Access to mainstream services can be facilitated through :

- the provision of support at initial stages of integration

There is a need to provide support at the initial stages of integration, to ensure that refugees have the opportunity to overcome the language barrier and to participate in training and enter gainful employment - all of which have been identified as key issues in integration. This support should not duplicate the work of mainstream service providers or NGOs, but should act as a Referral Service for refugees and should also have the resources to evaluate the needs of refugees on an individual basis.

- comprehensive information and interpretation services

A comprehensive information service, as well as the provision of interpretation and translation services, and essential information leaflets in different languages, will also improve access for all to public services.

- training of service providers

Mainstream services need to take account of the diversity and the needs of refugees. In recent years there has been great emphasis on the importance of providing a quality customer service. It is very important to ensure that a quality customer service is also provided to those of different ethnic backgrounds and culture.

The Public Service must lead the way by training and educating staff to recognise and understand the cultural diversity of other people and to be sensitive to religious and cultural differences. This is particularly important for those in healthcare, education and welfare who are dealing directly with refugees.

6.3.6 meeting accommodation needs

Refugees should be made aware of their rights and obligations in relation to both the private and public housing sectors. As discussed in Chapter 4, sourcing accommodation, whether through owner occupation, the private rented sector or public sector housing is difficult for many people in Ireland, because of the acute shortage of housing of all tenures. The issues of social integration in housing in Ireland is also one which affects both refugees and other marginalised groups in our community. Government policy over the past number of years has been to counteract social segregation. Work on this issue is ongoing and, in the future, marginalised groups in our community will benefit from progress made. The integration of refugees should be integral to developments in this area.

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Refugees may be faced with discriminatory practices when seeking accommodation. This can be addressed through public awareness and especially, the enactment of the Equal Status Bill which will provide legal remedy against discriminatory practice.

The location of accommodation can have a significant influence on the resettlement of refugees. The dispersal of asylum seekers will probably lead to more refugees living in locations around the country in the future. The Directorate for Asylum Seekers Services is currently developing systems and structures for a planned and orderly dispersal of asylum seekers. This will include consultation at local level and preparation of the host communities, with a view to ensuring that appropriate support networks are in place. The Directorate should bear in mind that dispersal policy will influence the resettlement and social inclusion of those who are granted refugee status or leave to remain in the future.

6.3.7 supporting refugees in maintaining native culture

Integration policy must ensure that refugees are aware that they can maintain their own cultural identity and religion, while conforming with the laws of the host society. Therefore, an environment must be created whereby refugees are enabled to maintain and develop their own culture and practise their religion. Initiatives which facilitate this must be supported, where possible.

6.3.8 involving refugees in integration

It is important that refugees commit to integrating into society and they must be encouraged to become involved in intervention measures to facilitate integration. In particular, refugees and refugee groups must be involved in promoting their own culture and must be encouraged to participate in their local community and to use their own resources and skills to promote themselves.

6.3.9 facilitating the acquisition of nationality and citizenship

Acquiring citizenship is a means of facilitating integration for those who have been granted residence permits of a permanent nature. The UNHCR has recognised that the current provisions for granting citizenship are in line with Article 34 of the 1951 Geneva Convention which stipulates that the Contracting State shall, as far as possible, facilitate the naturalisation of refugees. This favourable policy should be continued.

6.3.10 encouraging political participation by refugees

Political participation is important because it encourages a sense of belonging and participation in national life. Refugees should be made aware that they can join a political party and participate in the decision making process by standing for and voting in local elections.

6.3.11 providing for family reunification

The separation of refugee families invariably leads to considerable hardship and may indeed be the cause of serious obstacles to refugees' integration in a new society. The provisions of Section 18 of the Refugee Act, 1996 are currently being used as guidance in family reunification decisions. Resources have been made available to provide a quality service in this area and processing times are low.

6.3.12 supporting voluntary repatriation and resettlement

In addition to supporting local integration, the UNHCR promotes voluntary repatriation and resettlement as durable solutions for refugees and Ireland must also recognise and support those who wish to repatriate to their home countries, provided of course it is safe to do so. While this may not be directly linked to integration, it does provide viable choices for refugees which can contribute to their overall welfare.

6.4 A co-ordinated approach to integration

The Working Group believes that in future the needs of all refugees, i.e. Convention refugees, Programme refugees, those granted leave to remain and those admitted under family reunification programmes, should be met through one comprehensive integration service.

Furthermore, integration of refugees will only be achieved through co-ordinated effort across the entire national spectrum of State and voluntary organisations along with publicly welcoming attitudes on the part of Irish people generally. The existing fragmentation and lack of co-ordination of services must be addressed. The Government's commitment to integration must be clearly grounded in government policy and there is a need for a central co-ordinated approach to the development and implementation of national integration policy.

The Working Group also believes that any comprehensive policy framework on integration must include a capacity to respond to crisis situations, such as the recent Kosovo crisis, which can result in relatively large numbers of refugees arriving in Ireland within a short period of time.

In other countries, where relatively large numbers of Quota refugees, as well as asylum seekers, arrive on an annual basis, a co-ordinated approach to the reception of asylum seekers and integration of refugees is adopted. In general, the needs of all groups are regarded as being similar, although, of course, differences will arise in terms of the extent that support services are provided. Responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of integration policy is centralised while support services are delivered at local level. The differing individual needs of refugees are met through the development of integration programmes on an individual basis.

While the Working Group was established to examine the integration of refugees, many of the NGOs in their submissions to the Working Group emphasised the key role that the immediate reception experience of asylum seekers plays in shaping the success or otherwise of the overall integration process for those eventually granted refugee status or leave to remain. In this regard, the Interdepartmental Committee on Guidelines on the procedures for the reception of asylum applicants in its report dated January, 1996 recognised that most asylum seekers arrive in Ireland with no understanding of the Irish system and may be disoriented on their arrival. It stated that they should not be left to their own devices in accessing the services and assistance available to them. That report also emphasised the need for a person or body to co-ordinate assistance to asylum seekers.

For these reasons, and because it would be more economically advantageous and efficient in terms of building up expertise and avoiding duplication of services, logic would seem to dictate that, in the future, the responsibility for co-ordinating the reception of asylum seekers and the integration of refugees should be vested in a single organisation and similarly, that services to both groups should be delivered in the same manner. The Working Group believes that this is an option which must be given serious consideration.

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6.5 Conclusions

The Working Group has identified the principal objectives of integration policy in Ireland and agreed on the importance of a co-ordinated approach to the implementation of integration policy. The general issues for integration and the type of actions and measures necessary to address them have also been identified. The Working Group believes that:

(i) the appropriate organisation structure for developing integration policy and co-ordinating the implementation of integration measures must be decided upon by the Government within the overall framework of structures for asylum and immigration. In finalising the appropriate organisational structure on integration, it should be noted that:

- there is a need for cohesion across all service providers.
- the successful development and implementation of integration measures is wholly dependent on full co-operation across existing mainstream service providers, as well as NGOs and other voluntary groups and therefore, any co-ordinating organisation must have the appropriate authority.
- although the rights of asylum seekers and refugees are different, efficiencies can be achieved by adopting a co-ordinated approach to both the reception of asylum seekers and the integration of refugees, as has been done in other EU Member States.
- the future role of the Refugee Agency must be considered within the overall structures.

(ii) a comprehensive strategy for implementing integration policy in Ireland must be developed. This, of course, should not be static but should be revised and further developed as necessary.

The strategy must focus on:

- the development of a co-ordinated approach to the implementation of national integration policy.
- the most effective, economic and efficient means of providing support services to refugees at the initial stages of their integration.
- the most appropriate model for integration in Ireland. Bearing in mind that integration policy should aim to empower refugees to act independently in Irish society as soon as possible, integration programmes which can be tailored to the specific needs of individual refugees in this country should be evaluated and developed, if appropriate. Consideration should be given to the duration of these programmes and whether compulsory or voluntary participation is appropriate, having regard to the experience of other EU Member States.
- planning for the implementation of the intervention measures identified in this report and the identification of additional intervention measures necessary on the basis of complete information.

This strategy must be developed on the basis of complete information on (i) the specific needs of refugees in the Irish context and (ii) the scope to maximise existing resources, including State services and voluntary organisations, to provide the necessary services.

The development of the strategy should be within the remit of the organisation charged with responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of integration policy.

Without pre-empting what may be recommended on the basis of more detailed information, the Working Group has identified a number of clear needs which ought to be addressed immediately. These include the introduction of further measures to promote a tolerant inclusive society, the provision of referral and information services by existing service providers and the conduct of research.

The experience gained in the provision of the referral and information services, together with the completion of research, will inform the development of a comprehensive strategy for integration. In particular, it will help identify the most appropriate model for integration in Ireland. The nature and extent of additional support services required and whether these services should be provided by the State, directly or indirectly through agencies, in partnership with other organisations, or by existing voluntary organisations with support from the Government, will be identified on the basis of complete information.

To inform the ongoing development of integration policy, a system of maintaining centralised information on refugees must be developed. The collating of relevant statistical data relating to areas such as employment status, earnings capacity, language skills and participation in social and cultural activities will be necessary to monitor and critically assess the quality and effectiveness of refugee integration programmes on a continuous basis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 RECOMMENDATION 1 - IDENTIFY AN ORGANISATION STRUCTURE FOR CO-ORDINATING AND IMPLEMENTING INTEGRATION POLICY
- 7.2 RECOMMENDATION 2 - RAISE PUBLIC AWARENESS
- 7.3 RECOMMENDATION 3 - MAKE MAINSTREAM SERVICES MORE ACCESSIBLE
- 7.4 RECOMMENDATION 4 - CONDUCT RESEARCH

commitment

7 recommendations

The recommendations of the Working Group are predicated on the view that there is a clear need for:

- (i) a structure to develop and implement integration measures in a co-ordinated and cohesive manner
- (ii) some immediate action to facilitate access to mainstream services and to raise public awareness.

The Working Group's first recommendation is that an organisational structure be put in place to co-ordinate the development and implementation of integration policy across the entire spectrum of the State and voluntary sector. This is key to the implementation of successful integration measures and will ensure that such measures are developed and implemented in a cohesive and co-ordinated fashion.

In this report the Working Group has identified, in general terms, the issues for integration and Chapter 6 details a multiplicity of intervention measures to facilitate integration. One of the first tasks of the organisation responsible for co-ordinating integration will be to assess the most effective means of implementing these intervention measures, in co-operation with the appropriate service providers.

The Working Group's second and third recommendations concern a number of clear needs which can be addressed immediately and set out interim measures which the Working Group consider necessary to raise public awareness and to enhance existing mainstream services.

The fourth recommendation is that research be conducted which will provide information on the current integration needs of refugees and on the existing resources and initiatives at all levels in society. As well as identifying opportunities to more efficiently use existing resources, the results of the research will facilitate the development of a comprehensive strategy for integration in Ireland.

In view of the stated Government policy that all appropriate assistance should be given to facilitate the integration into Irish society of refugees, it is important that the research be carried out as a matter of priority and the Working Group recommends that the research be completed and a comprehensive strategy for integration finalised within a period of eight months. The responsibility for finalising the strategy should be vested in the organisation responsible for co-ordinating and implementing integration policy.

7.1 Recommendation 1 • Identify an organisational structure for co-ordinating and implementing integration policy

The Government has been investing resources in integration measures for a number of years, but these measures have been fragmented and lacking in co-ordination and so have had limited impact.

To facilitate the development of cohesive and co-ordinated integration measures, an organisational structure with appropriate power and authority must be put in place. This organisation must be able to rely on the full co-operation of other government departments and agencies, and work with NGOs and community and voluntary groups on the development of integration measures. Cohesion in the allocation of State resources to facilitate the integration of refugees will ensure that measures are developed in a co-ordinated manner with no overlap to ensure maximum impact. This organisation should also be responsible for channelling all funding for NGO initiatives. This will eliminate the adhoc nature of allocating funds and facilitate more efficient allocation of State resources, as well as simplifying the procedures for NGOs applying for funding. This organisation should also continuously monitor integration policy and measure and conduct research.

The terms of reference of the organisation charged with the responsibility of co-ordinating the implementation of integration measures should include :

- Developing and implementing a comprehensive strategy for integration in Ireland, including examining the effectiveness of individual integration programmes
- Ongoing development of policy for integration
- Developing initiatives in partnership with NGOs and other voluntary groups
- Co-ordinating the allocation of State funds to NGOs and voluntary groups for the development of integration measures, public awareness and training for service providers
- Assessing opportunities to obtain EU funding and advising NGOs on methods of obtaining funding
- Monitoring and research.

7.2 Recommendation 2 • Raise public awareness

The Working Group recommends that the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism should have a central role in co-ordinating public awareness initiatives and in disseminating information on anti-racism issues and respect for cultural diversity generally. This should be complemented by refugee specific public education and training through organisations directly involved with refugees under the overall co-ordination body for integration.

The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism, the National Committee for Development Education and A Part of Ireland Now have already taken a number of initiatives, in co-operation with NGOs who have been active in this field. Steps must now be taken to involve local community and voluntary groups in initiatives to ensure that awareness spreads to as wide an audience as possible.

The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism should undertake a full evaluation of how public opinion and debate can be better informed, so that emotionalism is replaced by facts and anti-racist sentiments are replaced by balanced comments. The evaluation should include an examination of the resources necessary to achieve this.

An educational and awareness programme may be developed by utilising existing resources, such as the recently launched UNHCR public awareness campaign and involving refugees themselves in promoting awareness. Information to educate and create awareness can be disseminated to the public effectively and efficiently through existing channels, such as the media, religious organisations, business organisations, trade unions and NGOs.

As outlined in the previous Chapter, a tolerant inclusive society must be developed through a multifaceted approach. A system of monitoring and reviewing steps taken by State Institutions and NGOs must be put in place.

The Education system must be harnessed to the maximum extent to disseminate information. The continued development and strengthening of inter-cultural awareness education on curricula at all levels is recommended.

7 recommendations

Of course, political and civic leaders must lead the way at both national and local level in creating a greater climate of acceptance for persons from other backgrounds. The media should report in a responsible manner on issues related to refugees and asylum seekers.

7.3 Recommendation 3 • Make mainstream services more accessible

The Working Group recommends that the following interim measures to make mainstream services more accessible should be implemented immediately :

- (i) Referral Services for language and skills training and employment
- (ii) comprehensive Information Service to provide guidance and advice on accessing mainstream services
- (iii) provision of essential information leaflets in a number of languages
- (iv) provision of interpretation services
- (v) training programmes for key service providers.

7.3.1 Referral Services for language and skills training and employment

These Referral Services will provide guidance and advice based on an assessment of the needs of refugees on an individual basis. In addition, the experience gained by the Referral Services will be useful in developing a comprehensive strategy for integration.

- Language assessment

It is clear from the submissions received and from the experience gained by the Refugee Agency and the Department of Education and Science that refugees would benefit from a process which involved language assessment at a central point. The language needs assessment will result in referral for appropriate language training. The provision of language training is the responsibility of the Department of Education and Science and the Refugee Language Support Unit. As the Refugee Language Support Unit has the remit for co-ordinating and monitoring the provision of language support for refugees admitted to Ireland, it is recommended that this service be provided by that Unit. This will facilitate the Refugee Language Support Unit in making contact with its clients and fulfilling its remit. If necessary, the Refugee Language Support Unit should be provided with additional resources to provide this service.

- Skills training assessments

Assessment of each individual's skills and training needs will assist refugees in enrolling in suitable training courses and identifying employment opportunities. As FÁS is the State Agency with responsibility for employment and training, it is the view of the Working Group that it is best placed to provide this service.

In view of the key role that both the Department of Education and Science and FÁS have in the provision of special intervention measures for refugees, it is recommended that consideration be given to establishing separate units within these organisations to deal with all aspects of their responsibility in relation to the education and training of refugees.

7.3.2 Information Service to provide guidance and advice on accessing mainstream services

A comprehensive information service will assist refugees in accessing mainstream services. On an interim basis, the information services currently available to asylum seekers could be supplemented to cover all the relevant areas for refugees. In the longer term the organisation responsible for co-ordinating integration measures, must examine the most effective means of providing a comprehensive information service.

7.3.3 Provision of essential information leaflets in a number of languages

The Working Group recommends that essential information on the rights and obligations of refugees should be available to refugees in languages they understand. The Departments of Social, Community and Family Affairs; Education and Science; Health and Children; Enterprise, Trade and Employment and Environment and Local Government can each produce comprehensive information packs on their own services which can be translated into the following languages :

Albanian
Arabic
Chinese
French
Portuguese
Romanian
Russian
Serb Croat
Vietnamese

The cost of translating information will be between £80 and £120 per 1,000 words for each of the above languages and it is estimated that it will cost in the region of £30,000 to translate comprehensive information packs into the languages listed above. Additional costs, in relation to printing etc. will also be incurred.

It may become necessary to provide information in additional languages and this should be kept under review.

7.3.4 Interpretation service

The options for the development of a cost effective interpretation service, which would facilitate the availability of interpretation in both emergency and routine situations must be examined. The provision of this service through a central service accessible by phone and / or community based interpretation should be considered.

7 recommendations

7.3.5 Training programmes for key service providers

It is imperative that training programmes be introduced in all areas of the public service, and as a matter of priority in those areas which provide essential services to refugees. Some service providers have already developed training programmes for staff to raise their awareness of cultural diversity and the needs of refugees and these programmes should be evaluated to ascertain whether they need to be enhanced.

The cost of providing these training programmes should be met from existing training and development resources.

7.4 Recommendation 4 • Conduct research

7.4.1 Research project

The Working Group recommends that research be carried out in order to obtain information on the specific needs of refugees having regard to their differing backgrounds. The research must also identify how these needs are currently being met by existing services and obtain a complete inventory of organisations or groups, at all levels, which have, or might have, the capability to be involved in integration initiatives. It will also serve to compare the integration levels of Programme and other refugees. The purpose of the research is to inform the development of a comprehensive strategy for the implementation of integration policy.

The research should also include a survey of public attitudes to people from other cultures, this information will be useful in the continued development of a tolerant inclusive society.

7.4.2 Terms of reference

The research will focus on identifying :

- the particular needs of refugees based in Ireland and the adequacy of existing services at national and local level
- the role of State organisations and local voluntary, community and business organisations and their willingness, capacity and ability to assist in the integration process
- the attitudes and concerns of the Irish Public.

7.4.3 Scope

The research project will produce an analysis of refugees' needs by developing a profile of refugees in Ireland and particularly by assessing quantitative and qualitative factors which are generally used to measure integration levels, such as :

- employment status
- income levels
- housing
- language skills
- qualifications
- participation in education / training

- social interaction and involvement in the local community
- experience of racism / prejudice
- how society, including the existing service providers, whether State or voluntary organisations are meeting those needs
- the impediments encountered by service providers in meeting those needs
- public attitudes to refugees.

The research will seek to establish the factors behind issues and trends identified, such as those giving rise to unemployment or employment as the case may be, factors giving rise to low take up of education and training programmes, research on the health status and health needs of refugees and the impact of racism on the refugee population.

The research will also extend to examining the role of State organisations and local voluntary, community and business organisations in the catchment areas and their willingness, capacity and ability to assist in the integration process.

7.4.4 Representative sample

It is vital that the research is based on a representative sample of the refugee population and therefore, the Working Group recommends that it should :

- focus on three separate locations (i) Dublin inner city, (ii) Dublin suburban, and (iii) a rural/urban location
- include representatives of the entire client group i.e. Convention refugees, Programme refugees, those granted leave to remain and those admitted under family reunification programmes, and
- be representative of different nationalities, age-groups and vulnerable groups.

The research on existing service providers should include all the service providers at national level and locally within the locations identified above.

The research on the attitudes of the Irish public should be based on a representative sample of the population within the three catchment areas, together with a sample of a cross section of the entire population. Information obtained from these samples should prove useful in comparing the attitudes of those who have frequent contact with people from diverse backgrounds with those who do not encounter people from diverse backgrounds on a regular basis.

7.4.5 Research into integration in other EU Member States

From the Working Group's examination of integration policy in other EU Member States, it is clear that both the State and NGOs are involved in facilitating integration. It is the view of the Working Group, that the experiences of other EU Member States must be taken into account in developing a comprehensive strategy for integration in Ireland. The Working Group recommends that an indepth analysis be conducted on how the State sector and NGOs work together to facilitate integration in other Member States. This should also focus on the types of services provided by the State and NGOs both together and individually and assess their applicability in the Irish context.

7 recommendations

The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform can use existing contacts to obtain this information.

7.4.6 Timeframe

In order to facilitate the development of the strategy for integration within an eight month period, the Working Group recommends that the Research Project should have a timeframe of three to four months and that researchers be engaged to conduct the research. The research should be commissioned immediately either by the organisational structure put in place to co-ordinate the implementation of integration policy or by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

7.4.7 Cost

Research project

The researchers will be sourced through appropriate tender procedures. The exact costs cannot be determined until the tender process is completed and the Working Group believes that it would not be prudent to include an estimate which may adversely affect the tender process.

Research into integration in other EU Member States

As existing resources will be utilised, this will have limited cost implications.

- APPENDIX 1 ASYLUM STATISTICS 1992 TO 1999
- APPENDIX 2 MIGRATION STATISTICS 1992 TO 1998
- APPENDIX 3 INFORMATION ON FÁS PROJECT ACTIVITIES
IN RELATION TO REFUGEES
- APPENDIX 4 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

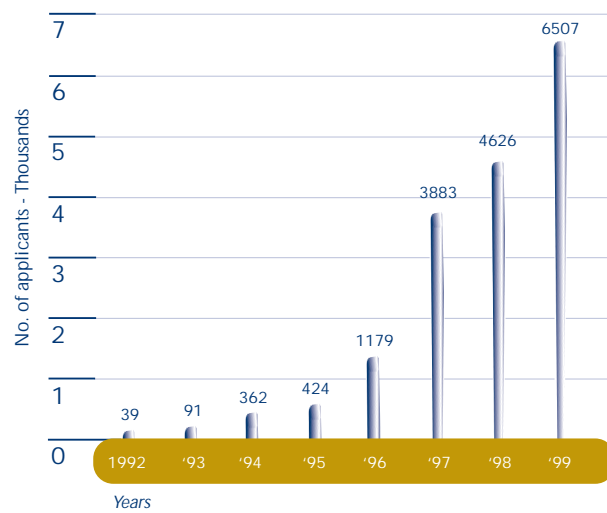
list of appendices

awareness

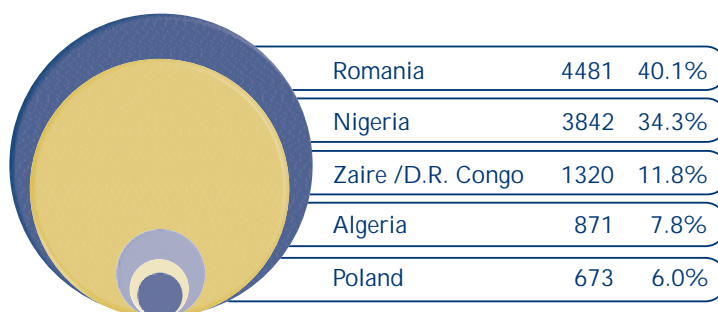
appendices

Appendix 1 - Asylum Statistics 1992 - 1999

Applications for Asylum in Ireland 1990 - 1999 (30/11)



Top Five Countries of Origin between 1992 - 1999 (30/11)



Asylum Seekers 1992 - 1999

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999 30/11
No. of applications	39	91	362	424	1,179	3,883	4,626	6,507
No. of applications withdrawn before decision	3	52	222	220	550	1,360	803	285
No. of withdrawn applications re-submitted to the asylum process	0	0	0	0	11	53	31	7
No. of applications transferred under Dublin Convention	0	0	0	0	0	15	15	1

Decisions taken on applications for Refugee Status 1994 - 1998*

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999 (30/11)
Granted refugee status at first stage	4	15	36	209	128	144
Granted refugee status at appeal stage	0	0	0	4	40	336
refused Refugee status - <i>of which</i>	27	43	32	304	1,202	4,484
- granted temporary leave to remain at first instance	(5)	(8)	(6)	(120)	0	0
- were found to be manifestly unfounded	0	0	0	0	(104)	(110)
- were deemed abandoned	0	0	0	0	(2)	(1,613)
- returned to first stage determination process following appeal of manifestly unfounded decision	0	0	0	0	(12)	
- granted temporary leave to remain following appeal	0	0	0	0	(27)	(35)
Total	31	58	68	517	1,370	4,964

* It should be noted that these decisions refer to the year in which the decisions were taken and NOT to the year in which the applications are lodged.

appendices

Appendix 2 - Migration Statistics 1992 - 1998

Year ending April	Out-Migration 000's	In-Migration 000's	Net migration 000's
1992	33.4	40.7	7.4
1993	35.1	34.7	-0.4
1994	34.8	30.1	-4.7
1995	33.1	31.2	-1.9
1996	31.2	39.2	8.0
1997	29.0	44.0	15.0
1998	21.2	44.0	22.8

Source: Central Statistics Office

Appendix 3 - Information on FÁS project activities in relation to refugees

The following are the total numbers of refugees who have participated in programmes supported by FÁS between March, 1997 and September, 1999.

Programme	Male	Female	Total
FÁS Baldoyle Pre-vocational training courses	54	24	78
Supported placements Language support in FÁS training and work placements	29	6	35
Vocational Outreach Language support in CERT, FÁS Community Employment and CR programmes	12	25	37
Advice/Information/ Language Testing Refugees who visited FÁS Baldoyle for language testing, career advice, support and referral where appropriate	81	15	96
Total	176	70	246

Apart from courses specifically for refugees, it is likely that refugees have participated on various other FÁS training courses including the Community Employment Scheme. FÁS does not, however, differentiate between participants and therefore, does not have a record of refugees who participated on these courses.

Appendix 4 - Acknowledgements

The Working Group wishes to acknowledge, with thanks, the contributions made by the following organisations :

THE UNHCR

The Refugee Agency

Eastern Health Board - Department of Psychology

National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism

Access Ireland Refugees Social integration Project

ARASI, Association of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Ireland

Jesuit Refugee Service

Vincentian Refugee Centre

