

# Opened Doors

TRANSITION TO THE FUTURE



Research into Challenges of former Separated  
Children Seeking Asylum who have been granted  
Refugee Status or Leave to Remain



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Children Seeking Asylum who have been granted  
Refugee Status or Leave to Remain**

**By Itayi Viriri**

**April 2010**



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- The Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council’s Social Inclusion Unit for providing funding for the printing of this report;
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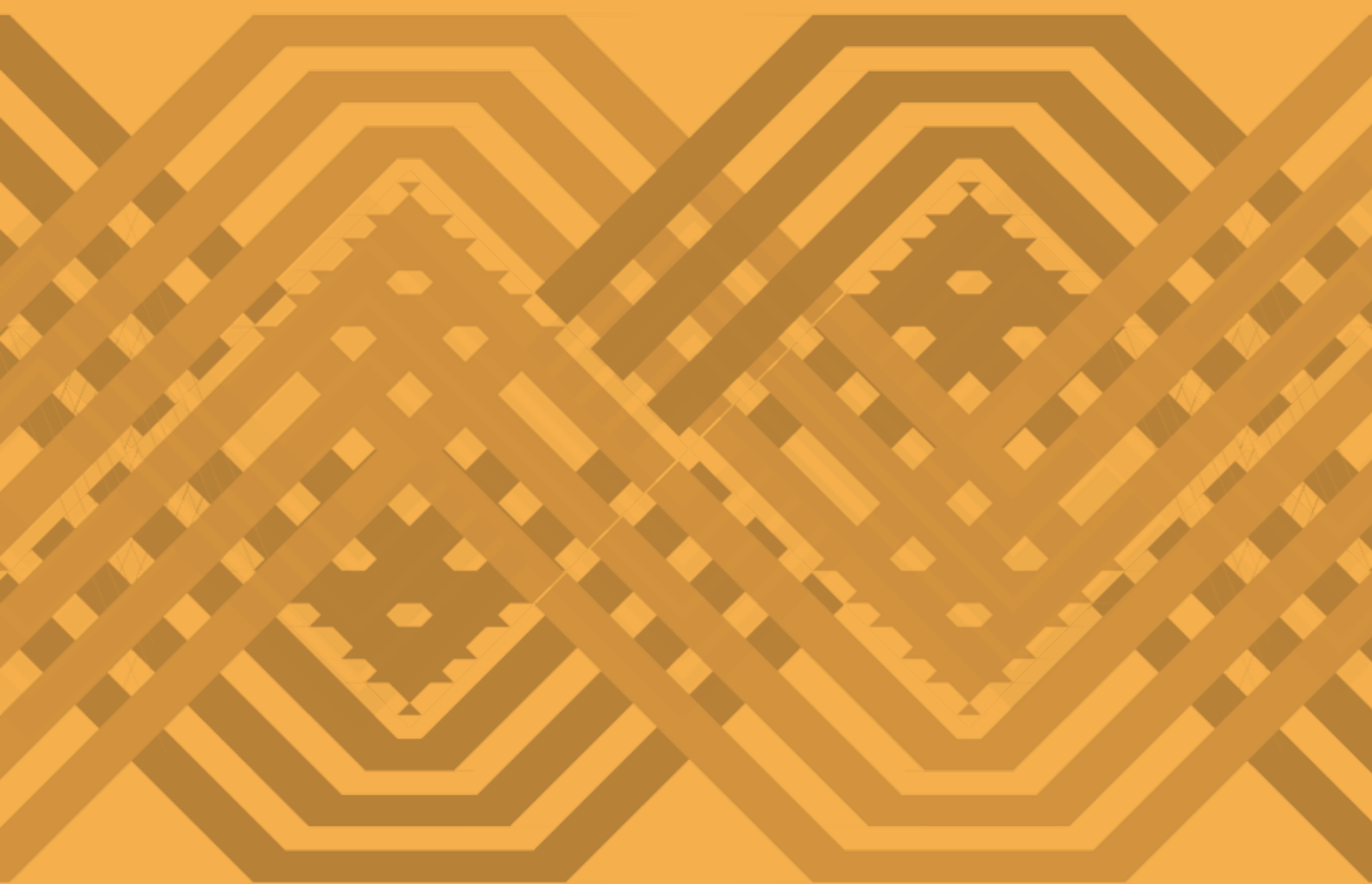
Finally, this research would not have been at all possible without the enthusiastic participation of the young people who completed the survey and participated in the focus groups. The DRP and this researcher would like to express their sincere gratitude for the young people’s much valued participation and contribution.

## Acronyms

AOMs	-	Aged Out Minors
DJELR	-	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
DLCTC	-	Dún Laoghaire Community Training Centre
DRP	-	Dún Laoghaire Refugee Project
FÁS	-	National Training and Employment Authority
HSE	-	Health Services Executive
IRC	-	Irish Refugee Council
PLC	-	Post Leaving Certificate
PLUS	-	Please Let Us Stay campaign
RIA	-	Reception and Integration Agency
SSP	-	Southside Partnership
SCSA	-	Separated Children Seeking Asylum
TSP	-	Transition Supports Project
VTOS	-	Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme



# Foreword



Since its foundation in 2001, the Dún Laoghaire Refugee Project (DRP) volunteers have come to know over 300 young people under the age of 18 who have come to Ireland seeking asylum. They came without family, many traumatised by events experienced in their countries of birth. The group covered by this research spent many years living in hostels awaiting a decision on whether they could remain in Ireland or whether they would be deported.

On getting refugee or leave to remain status they were required to move out of the hostels and the majority moved to private rented accommodation. This posed a set of new challenges which were noted by the DRP during the past number of years. In 2009 the opportunity arose to document these challenges from the perspective of the young people themselves.

We would like to thank the Combat Poverty Agency (now a part of the Department of Social and Family Affairs) for providing the funding, the Egalitarian World Initiative (EWI) in University College Dublin for facilitation, and the researcher Itayi Viriri for an informative and very useful final document.

Since its inception the DRP has endeavoured to respond to the needs of this group as articulated by themselves. "Opened Doors" will enable us to continue this process.

The findings of the research are very informative. Amongst these are:

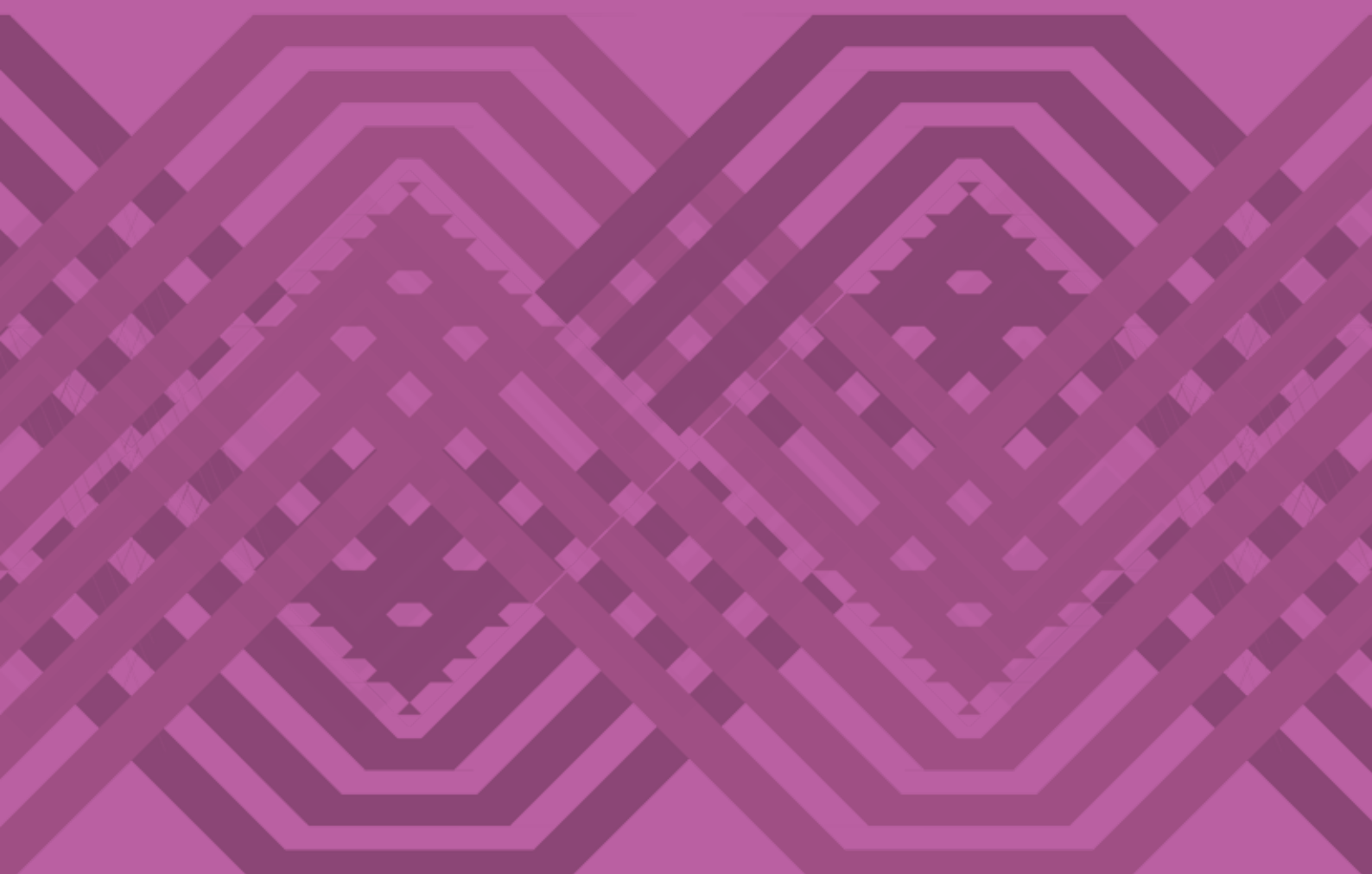
- The perceived level of racism experienced by the group is very high; the DRP would like to see a national reporting mechanism where this can be monitored.
- The respondents to the questionnaire, numbering 60, speak a total of 35 languages (excluding English);
- 83% of the respondents have achieved Leaving Certificate with the overall national average being 87%.

A surprisingly small number of respondents said they experienced depression when living in the hostels. The DRP volunteers feel, from their experience, that the percentage is significantly higher. A future research piece on this subject is recommended.

Finally my sincere thanks to all those who completed the questionnaire and who participated in the two focus groups. We look forward to celebrating your successes in the years ahead.

Mary King, DRP Chairperson, April 2010

# Executive Summary



## Introduction

This research was funded by the Combat Poverty Agency<sup>1</sup> and supported by the Egalitarian World Initiative in the Equality Studies Centre, University College Dublin. Undertaken on behalf of the Dún Laoghaire Refugee Project (DRP), the research set out to document and highlight the challenges and difficulties faced by former separated children seeking asylum (SCSA) and SCSA who turned 18 (commonly referred to as aged out minors or AOMs) who have been granted refugee or leave to remain status in Ireland.

## Research aims

The research aims to inform the work of the DRP, other NGOs and service providers to augment their capacities for enhanced service delivery to SCSA /AOMs who have been granted refugee status or leave to remain. This research also supports the DRP's aims of alerting service providers from across the board who have not yet identified this group as being vulnerable and in need of coordinated service provision. With the unprecedented numbers of AOMs getting residency up to the end of 2009, the DRP has identified this study as being very essential at this point in time.

## Rationale for research

When SCSA arrive in Ireland, they are put into the care of the Health Services Executive, East Coast Area. They are accommodated in hostels without professional childcare workers and with limited supervision (Phillips, 2006). On reaching 18 years, they are required to move to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform's Reception and Integration Agency's direct provision facilities, which are fully catered arrangements but with no integral supports. Until recently all former SCSA were guaranteed accommodation in one of four dedicated direct provision centres in Dublin. These AOMs no longer have integral supports and any such supports are provided through the voluntary sector. As a result of this significant change in their circumstances,

these young people may experience a range of difficulties, which may include:

- The absence of family and stable support networks;
- Loss of support and friendships in moving from HSE care to the Department of Justice system;
- Uncertain living arrangements and difficulties of adjustment to culture of living in Direct Provision (DP),
- Unplanned pregnancy;
- Vulnerability to prostitution and trafficking;
- Lack of follow up social care on turning 18;
- Lack of access to school and after school activities;
- Language barriers and literacy;
- Racism and discrimination;
- Lack of information and knowledge of appropriate services.

## Policy context: Rights and entitlements

Asylum applicants who receive refugee status have similar rights to Irish citizens and are exempt from the habitual residence tests when applying for social welfare payments (King, 2008). Once SCSA or AOMs are granted status, some of the most important rights and entitlements they seek include access to employment, the right to access third level education and making a family reunification application.

## Research design and methodology

The DRP has a register of around 250 SCSA and AOMs and on any given week, an average of 30 attend the drop-in service each Monday evening to receive various supports from DRP volunteers. This register has been compiled over a period of three years and is consistent and one of the most accurate available on this particular cohort. As of October 2009, when the needs analysis survey for this study was conducted, 95 SCSA and AOMs who attend the Drop-In Centre had been granted residency.

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<sup>1</sup> The Combat Poverty Agency has been integrated with the Office for Social Inclusion to form the Social Inclusion Division within the Department of Social and Family Affairs.

All of the 95 were invited to participate in the study by email, phone and through face-to-face contact in the DRP's drop-in service and 60 responded by completing an online questionnaire. This represents a very good response rate of 65 percent (Hamilton, 2003). There were no special ethical issues to come up in relation to the group's participation and the respondents were all debriefed at the end of the study. The study followed the University College Dublin's Human Research Ethical guidelines.

## DRP History and Background

Established in 2001, the DRP, a registered Charity provides supports to the large numbers of young people seeking asylum who were accommodated in hostels located in Dún Laoghaire town. From its inception, the aim of the DRP has been to 'befriend, advise and support asylum seekers/refugees in our area', particularly focusing on their 'education, social and integration needs' (DRP Annual Report, 2002).

From the outset, all people involved with the DRP have been volunteers. The group does not rent any office space, as its policy is that all activities are undertaken on a voluntary basis. Since its inception, the DRP has worked to respond to the needs of separated children seeking asylum in a number of ways, including:

- Education and training (both through the direct provision of language and literacy courses and through encouraging people to register for and attend formal educational courses);
- Providing friendship and support through social, recreational and cultural activities;
- Advocating on behalf of asylum seekers with the relevant authorities on issues such as welfare, health, the asylum determination process, prison visits and other legal matters;
- Networking with governmental and non-governmental organizations and groups dealing with the issue of asylum; and
- Encouraging integration through celebrating the achievements of people seeking asylum and raising awareness about their situation. (King, 2008)

With the assistance of Southside Partnership and the Dún Laoghaire Community Training Centre (DLCTC) on York Road, which offered the use of its premises on Monday evenings commencing in June 2005, the DRP began operating a 'Drop-In Centre' for young asylum seekers/those with residency, which offers them a place to socialize with their peers, discuss with DRP volunteers any concerns or problems they want to raise, and get information through talks and activities.

## RESULTS OF SURVEY

### Profile of respondents

The 60 study respondents, who responded, were all former separated children who sought asylum in Ireland and were granted refugee or leave to remain status on humanitarian grounds or on the basis of being a parent of an Irish-born child. In terms of gender breakdown, 55% were male and 45% were female. They ranged in age from 18 to 25 years old. Mirroring overall asylum application figures in Ireland, most of the SCSA applicants came from Nigeria and in this study 38 percent of the respondents were from that country, followed by Angola with 16 percent. All the respondents were from Africa, which reflects the continent of origin of SCSA and AOMs who attend the DRP drop-in centre. More than two thirds of the respondents arrived in Ireland aged 16 or 17 years, with the youngest arriving at the age of 13.

Whilst only 12 of the 60 respondents were granted residency up to the end of 2005, there was a significant increase in the recognition rate from 2006 to October 2009, with 60 percent of this cohort being granted residency in 2008 and 2009.

### Access to accommodation

Once they are granted residency, AOMs are normally given a few weeks to find their own, mostly rented, accommodation and vacate the direct provision centre or hostel. Almost half (28) of the respondents said they had found accommodation mainly through accommodation websites or local newspapers. Some also sought assistance from the DRP and from friends who were already in private rented accommodation.

A quarter said they initially shared with friends until they found their own place. The majority of the respondents were not in paid employment at the time of being granted residency and just over half were in receipt of rent allowance at the time the survey was conducted.

## **Education**

The results of the survey show that there is a high Leaving Certificate completion rate amongst the respondents (83%) which compares very favourably with the national completion rate of 86 percent (School Leavers Survey Report, 2007). Upon completion of the Leaving Certificate, a large majority (86%) were interested in pursuing third level education and of the 60 respondents, 43 were engaged in some form of further or higher education at the time this study was carried out. Of the 40 percent who are enrolled in some form of further or higher education almost half (46%) said they paid their own fees (by working during the day and attending evening courses), 28 percent get their funding from the DRP, 26 percent from other sources, such as faith based organisations and non governmental organisations and 10 percent from scholarships, bursaries and college access programmes. Whilst the majority of respondents who were accessing some form of Post Leaving Certificate education were enrolled in colleges of further or higher education, there was a small number enrolled in degree programmes at some of the major Irish universities and one in the United Kingdom. Even though just over a quarter said they spoke little or no English when they arrived in Ireland, 71 percent now considered their level of English language literacy to be very good. Furthermore and notably, all respondents spoke at least three languages including English.

## **Employment**

At the time of the survey (October 2009), 17 respondents said they were currently in employment, with 12 of 17 in full time employment. Another 34 (64%) said they had been looking for work in the last 6 months, without success. However, 45 percent of all respondents stated that they were not registered with FAS or the local employment service. In fact only 45 percent said they

would consider pursuing skills training/apprenticeships through FAS and had not considered skills/vocational training as a viable option. Over half of the respondents said they were in receipt of a social welfare payment and 25 said they were registered with FAS.

## **Health**

Most of the respondents (55) were generally satisfied with their current state of personal health, with 53 (88%) saying that they did not have any long term health issues. Almost two thirds (65%) were in possession of a medical card and 45 (75%) were registered with their local general practitioner.

## **Parenthood**

Fourteen respondents (23%) are parents, with four describing themselves as single parents and seven as full-time parents. Of the 14, eight are generally satisfied with the quality of childcare available to them, whilst three said they were not happy mainly citing cost and affordability as the main challenge. One participant asked for family planning support stating that they did not want to have another child as one was enough.

## **Main sources of supports**

The DRP was overwhelmingly identified by 52 respondents (86%) as one of their main sources of support, followed by friends (70%) and their church or mosque (38%).

## **Racism/discrimination**

Racism was identified by all respondents as one of the main challenges they faced and ultimately a key barrier to their integration. The results of the survey showed that 64% of the respondents said they had been racially abused in the month prior to their participation in the survey. There was some acknowledgement by two thirds of the respondents that the economic difficulties brought on by the recession had also resulted in hardened attitudes towards immigrants and that they felt acceptance levels were quite low compared to other Western European countries.

## Integration

There was an overwhelming recognition by 90 percent of the respondents that their success in making Ireland their home depended on how well they integrated into Irish society. There was general consensus that the prolonged period spent in direct provision by most respondents was seen as lost and wasted time, since state asylum policies did not encourage or promote integration for asylum seekers. Any efforts at integration were through their own efforts and those of support organisations such as the DRP. Interestingly, 71% believed that they were integrating well into Irish society and were reasonably satisfied with their integration prospects. However, more than half (33) of the respondents identified racism and discrimination as the biggest obstacle to their integration in Ireland.

## A SAMPLE OF OPEN ENDED COMMENTS FROM RESPONDENTS

### Education

*“Colleges should treat those with leave to remain the same as those with refugee status. It is very disappointing to be treated differently when we are in the same position. I would also really appreciate more supports with books and transport costs.”*

*“I am getting support with fees from an Irish charity and it was the DRP who got it for me and I am very grateful. When I graduate and I am working I would like to give something back to others following me.”*

### Racism

*“I have been verbally abused and one time, at night I thought I would be physically attacked at night whilst I was waiting for the bus. It is usually groups of young men who do this most of the time. Sometimes drunk men too, say nasty things.”*

*“I felt I was being discriminated against on my placement, mainly by my supervisor, who was very manipulative. It was so obvious*

*how differently she treated me from the other 5 in our group. I wanted to report her, but ultimately due to lack of evidence, I could not and in the end I went and got another placement which I enjoyed.”*

*“Yes, I have been racially abused but that’s normal. I guess every one like me will experience that.”*

*“I have experienced verbal racism, though I tend to ignore such things.”*

### Positive Experiences

*“Learning English has been a pleasant experience and now I am very proud that my English is very good. When I came here I did not speak any English at all, only Portuguese.”*

*“Seeing Irish people standing for the rights of people like us. It is really touching to see Irish people fight injustice like deportation and racism.”*

*“Becoming a mom in a free country where my child can grow up without the worries of back home.”*

*“Finishing university and graduating has been one of the most positives that have happened to me. When I first arrived in Ireland, I never dreamed someone like me would ever reach this point. I have always wished that my family were here to share the moment with me.”*

*“Making good Irish friends in high school made me feel normal, even though I was still living in the hostel. I felt like any other young person and I am still friends with most of my former school mates.”*

### Integration Prospects

*“I think immigrants should volunteer more, not only in their own communities but in Irish communities. It is a good way to meet Irish people.”*

*“I think integration in Ireland today is improving very well and I think it is important that children in school also become part*

*of the integration process. Hopefully that will get back to the Irish parents."*

*"No (lack of) racism would help integration. Actually, I think if integration works, then there will be less racism."*

*"I think I need an avenue where I can air my opinions and thoughts about life here without any judgement. Perhaps I need a priest or pastor for that."*

*"Be respectful of other people's culture, religion, beliefs and attitudes toward specific issues in society. This should not be one way but a two way process."*

*"If I continue to push forward and change the negative people and show that we can also do great things to support the country, that we are not just some strange aliens crashing the party."*

## **Social, Cultural and Community activities**

*"Celebrate different cultural days - learn about other cultures, music, food and activities."*

*"Access to youth clubs with similar minded young people where we can engage in various activities. Generally, the problem is that some young people do not have that many things to do."*

*"There is lack of social activities, it will be good if there were a lot of activities, the few activities needs money for transport, refreshment, food and so on."*

*"Besides the Nigerian community and church, I am not involved in anything much, so I think I need to get involved outside my own community and then maybe I will learn new things from others."*

*"I would like to integrate African and Irish communities through music, dance, food and interesting things."*

## **Personal Health**

*"I have eye and dental issues. However, because I received leave to remain while in third level education, my community welfare*

*officer advised me to defer the place for one year in order to be eligible for social welfare benefit. Being in third year, I could not take that advice. If I fall sick I am worried that I am not going to be able to afford looking after myself."*

*"Even though Irish people complain about the health system here, I am just happy to be in a country with a better health system compared to my country."*

*"I would like my GP to do more check ups and not give medicine only."*

*"I am very happy with my GP, who is very friendly and shows that he cares."*

## **General comments from respondents**

*"I want to thank all the DRP volunteers for the love they have shown us. I don't want to embarrass them but they are our parents."*

*"The government should make a policy that will enable the foreign nationals to feel welcomed in Ireland."*

*"I am very happy to be in Ireland and hope that NGO's like DRP will always be there for young asylum seekers. Thank you so much DRP"*

*"Recession should not be allowed to negatively affect unaccompanied minors or aged out minors."*

*"I am grateful to be living in a safe country like Ireland."*

*"I am glad that there are people and organisations like the DRP that have helped young people like me. I think without them, we would be in big trouble as young people."*

*"I wish family reunification was possible as I would like to locate my younger sisters and bring them here. I do not think they are safe wherever they are now."*

*"If am given the choice to do what I would like to do and I would be proud to pay my taxes to help this country to the best of my ability. At this point, I feel like Ireland is my home now."*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Dún Laoghaire Refugee Project

- DRP should extend more of its support services to those with residency now that more have status. The DRP has already started extending its work in this area.
- More information should be made available about FÁS, VTOS and PLC courses and also 'education' that these are also good avenues to employment.
- Access to employment supports including self marketing, curriculum vitae writing and interview techniques.
- Provision of information seminars about their rights and responsibilities as tenants.
- Programmes to encourage volunteerism amongst SCSA and AOMs, especially in these adverse economic times.
- Establish peer led networks to support those recently granted residency.
- Family planning, parenthood supports/ education should be made available. The DRP is already working with the Irish Family Planning Association and the African womens' advocacy and support group, AkiDWA to provide information sessions on these topics.
- Information on parenting supports in areas where the young people live.
- Continue Garda Get Wise programme with emphasis on how to deal with racist comments / incidents.

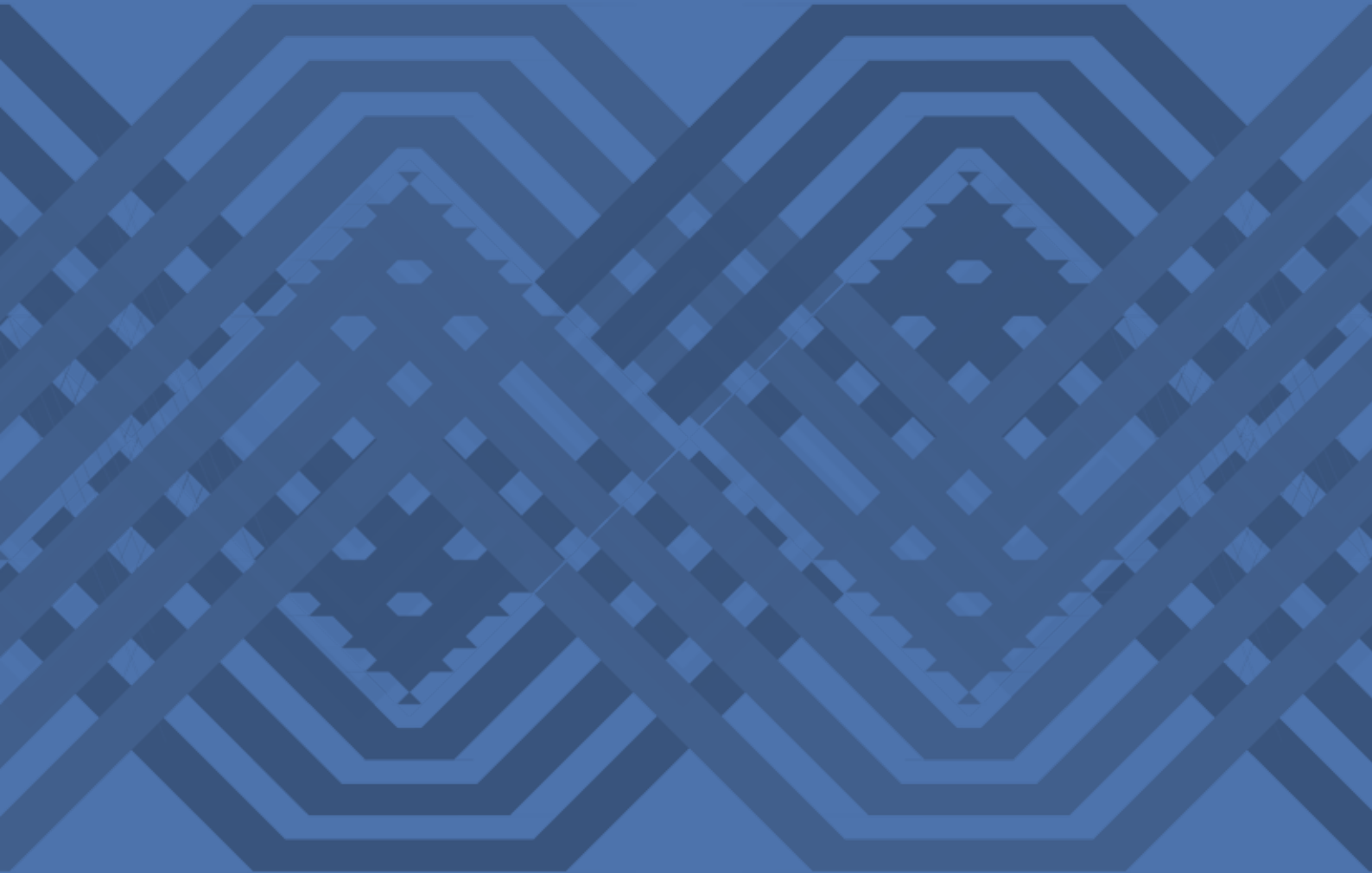
### Other Organisations - Statutory and Non-Statutory

- Those with leave to remain should be accorded the same access to third level education as refugees. This should involve all organisations working on behalf of asylum seekers in Ireland engaging fully with institutes of further and higher education and the Departments of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and Education and Science.
- The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform should be lobbied to ensure that those with leave to remain are granted the option of applying for a Geneva Convention travel document similar to that given to refugees.
- In-depth study on the psychological effects of institutionalisation as a result of prolonged stay in direct provision/HSE hostels for SCSA/AOMs should be carried out.
- The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform should be lobbied to grant indefinite or long-term residency for those granted leave to remain and remove the existing insecurity of annual renewals.





# PART ONE: Introduction



This research was funded by the Combat Poverty Agency<sup>2</sup> and supported by the Egalitarian World Initiative in the Equality Studies Centre, University College Dublin. Undertaken on behalf of the Dún Laoghaire Refugee Project (DRP), the research set out to document and highlight the challenges and difficulties faced by former separated children seeking asylum (SCSA) and SCSA who turned 18 (commonly referred to as aged out minors or AOMs) who have been granted refugee or leave to remain status in Ireland.

The research aims to inform the work of the DRP, other NGOs and service providers to augment their capacities for enhanced service delivery to SCSA /AOMs who have been granted refugee status or leave to remain. This research also supports the DRP's aims of alerting service providers from across the board who have not yet identified this group as being vulnerable and in need of coordinated service provision. With the unprecedented numbers of AOMs getting residency up to the end of 2009 (see Table 3), the DRP has identified this study as being very essential at this point in time.

## I. Rationale for research

When SCSA arrive in Ireland, they are put into the care of the Health Services Executive, East Coast Area. They are accommodated in hostels without professional childcare workers and with limited supervision (Phillips, 2006). On reaching 18 years, they are required to move to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform's Reception and Integration Agency's direct provision facilities, which are fully catered arrangements but with no integral supports. Until recently all former SCSA were guaranteed accommodation in one of four dedicated direct provision centres in Dublin.

These AOMs no longer have integral supports and any such supports are provided through the voluntary sector. As a result of this significant change in their circumstances, these young people may experience a range of difficulties, which may include:

- The absence of family and stable support networks;
- Loss of support and friendships in moving from HSE care to the Department of Justice system;
- Uncertain living arrangements and difficulties of adjustment to culture of living in Direct Provision (DP),
- Unplanned pregnancy;
- Vulnerability to prostitution and trafficking;
- Lack of follow up social care on turning 18;
- Lack of access to school and after school activities;
- Language barriers and literacy;
- Racism and discrimination;
- Lack of information and knowledge of appropriate services.

(Phillips, 2006)

The move from HSE care to DP centres is frequently problematic for AOMs resulting in loss of geographical familiarity, loss of supports (as the HSE no longer has a guardianship role) and reduced motivation, particularly when it comes to continuing in education. Generally, when granted refugee status or leave to remain, they are given a few weeks to vacate the DP centres and find private rented accommodation. Whilst they are extremely relieved to have been granted some form of status, the significant length of time the majority have spent in DP leaves them institutionalised, and many find it very challenging to move into independent living where they have to fend for themselves for the first time in their lives (Phillips, 2006).

Whilst research has previously been carried out on SCSA and AOMs still in the asylum process, no comprehensive research has been undertaken in Ireland with regard to challenges and difficulties faced by former SCSA who are granted refugee status or leave to remain. The possible reason for this could be the widely held assumption that once they are granted some form of status, everything falls into place and they can get on with their lives. However, this has proven not to be the case as this research reveals.

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<sup>2</sup> The Combat Poverty Agency has been integrated with the Office for Social Inclusion to form the Social Inclusion Division within the Department of Social and Family Affairs.

The majority of these young people come to Ireland at a very young age and become young adults in very challenging and difficult circumstances (see Fig 1). They grow up in contrived environments without parents or guardians and have to quickly adjust to their new found 'freedom' when granted residency (Phillips, 2006). This is when a whole new set of challenges confronts them and the aim of this study is to highlight this challenging transition to independent living.

## II. Policy context: Rights and entitlements

Asylum applicants who receive refugee status have similar rights to Irish citizens and are exempt from the habitual residence tests<sup>3</sup> when applying for social welfare payments (King, 2008). Once SCSA or AOMs are granted status, one of the most important rights and entitlements they seek is the right to access third level education and, in order to qualify for access to free fees for third level courses, they must have lived in an EU state for three years prior to their application.

Those with leave to remain in the state are entitled to work in Ireland, and to access social welfare entitlements. However, as King (2008) points out they must satisfy the habitual residency condition in order to access these latter entitlements. Additionally, they do not qualify for free fees for third level education, but can apply for a maintenance grant from their local authority. Only those who hold full refugee status and have resided in an EU state for at least three of the previous five years are eligible for free fees. Different fee rates apply across different colleges but in general, rates for students who are third country nationals are high.

For the majority of asylum seekers granted refugee status or leave to remain family reunification is one of the most important processes they embark on from the moment they are granted the status. For SCSA or AOMs,

who in many instances were separated from parents or guardians at a young age, often in unsatisfactory circumstances, it is even more imperative that they seek to be reunited with their families in the local jurisdiction, in a third country, and/or in their countries of origin.

Whilst SCSA, if granted refugee status, can apply for family reunification in Ireland and are then eligible for family reunification with their parents, they are not entitled to family reunification with their siblings, a situation which (Mooten, 2006) argues, is contrary to the promotion of family unity.

Mooten (2006) suggests that where it is not possible to reunite the child with her/his parents, it is important that she/he is offered the opportunity of being reunited with a family member with whom emotional dependence can be established – this can be a close family member or an 'emotional', rather than biological, 'relative'. This is a crucial point to keep in mind while dealing with family unity in Ireland, which restricts a child's reunification only to biological parents and does not include the concept of 'family unity' in current legislation. Family reunification legislation allows for discretionary reunification with dependent family members. In the Refugee Act (1996, as amended) the term 'dependent' is used to mean 'financial dependence' and implies the reunification of parents with their children, and/or a spouse with their husband or wife. The definition of dependent family members in Irish legislation works in favour of adults and discriminates against children who, self evidently, will not be able to prove that others depend on them financially. (Mooten, 2006).

Finally, the Separated Children in Europe Programme's Statement of Good Practice states that 'separated children seeking asylum or otherwise present in a European state sometimes have family member(s) in other European states. European states should positively and proactively facilitate family reunion for the child in the state where the child's best interests will be met in accordance with internationally agreed safeguards (Separated Children in Europe Programme, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Introduced in May 2004, the habitual residence test means that any applicant for social welfare support has to pass a test that considers the length and continuity of residence in Ireland or in any other particular (EU/EEA country?) and the applicant's main centre of interest amongst other conditions.

### III. Research design and methodology

The DRP has a register of around 250 SCSA and AOMs and on any given week, an average of 30 attend the drop-in service each Monday evening to receive various supports from DRP volunteers. This register has been compiled over a period of three years and is consistent and one of the most accurate available on this particular cohort. As of October 2009, when the needs analysis survey for this study was conducted, 95 SCSA and AOMs who attend the Drop-In Centre had been granted residency.

All of the 95 were invited to participate in the study by email, phone and through face-to-face contact in the DRP's drop-in service and 60 responded by completing an online questionnaire. This represents a very good response rate of 65 percent (Hamilton, 2003). There were no special ethical issues to come up in relation to the group's participation and the respondents were all debriefed at the end of the study. This study followed the University College Dublin's Human Research Ethical guidelines.

The questionnaire (see Appendix II) was divided into three sections, with the first section seeking demographic/personal information and designed to generate a comprehensive profile of the survey respondents by establishing: gender, age, nationality and current legal status. The second section sought information on the respondents' educational background, their educational and training needs. Finally, the third section sought information on their employment situation, access to welfare supports, health/medical situation, social and recreational and psychological supports and, lastly, their social integration prospects, challenges and expectations.

The questionnaire was designed by the researcher and made available on [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) with the option of completing a paper based questionnaire also being offered to respondents who did not have immediate access to the internet. The survey was initially piloted with five AOMs and two service providers to test its veracity, with the necessary minor changes made to the final version.

The results of the survey were further supplemented by responses to semi-structured qualitative interviews in two focus groups, with a total of 18 participants which were held to discuss key issues emerging from the survey.

### IV. History and background of DRP

Established in 2001, the DRP, a registered Charity provides supports to the large numbers of young people seeking asylum who were accommodated in hostels located in Dún Laoghaire town. From its inception, the aim of the DRP has been to 'befriend, advise and support asylum seekers/refugees in our area', particularly focusing on their 'education, social and integration needs' (DRP Annual Report, 2002).

From the outset, all people involved with the DRP have been volunteers. The group does not rent any office space, as its policy is that all activities are undertaken on a voluntary basis. Since its inception, the DRP has worked to respond to the needs of separated children seeking asylum in a number of ways, including:

- Education and training (both through the direct provision of language and literacy courses and through encouraging people to register for and attend formal educational courses);
- Providing friendship and support through social, recreational and cultural activities;
- Advocating on behalf of asylum seekers with the relevant authorities on issues such as welfare, health, the asylum determination process, prison visits and other legal matters;
- Networking with governmental and non-governmental organizations and groups dealing with the issue of asylum; and
- Encouraging integration through celebrating the achievements of people seeking asylum and raising awareness about their situation. (King, 2008)

The DRP's activities have, from the start, been characterized by the amount of work it does with SCSA and AOMs. This came about in part as a result of the profile of people seeking asylum who were accommodated in the area. While adults and families lived in

the accommodation centres, a noteworthy feature was the large number of SCSA in Dún Laoghaire (DRP Annual Report, 2006). For example, in 2002, of the approximately 220 asylum seekers living in the Old School House Hostel and Sandycove House Hostel, 140 were SCSA (DRP Annual Report, 2002).

Initially, the DRP focused on providing the young asylum seekers with support in accessing second level education. This included liaising with secondary schools in the area to facilitate enrolment, liaising with Youthreach courses, providing literacy and language classes, and identifying suitable third level courses for people over the age of 18. The DRP made weekly visits to the accommodation centres, which enabled volunteers to meet people face-to-face and respond to the issues that were raised.

All asylum accommodation centres in the Dún Laoghaire area were closed by April 2006 (King, 2008). Whilst the absence of hostels in Dún Laoghaire meant that the DRP no longer had any direct contact with recently arrived SCSA, the DRP Committee decided to focus their activities on the young 'graduates' of the Dún Laoghaire hostels now living in several hostels in the greater Dublin area (King, 2008). It was considered important that another venue be sourced in which this outreach work could be continued (DRP Annual Report, 2006).

## **V. DRP Drop-in Centre**

With the assistance of Southside Partnership and the Dún Laoghaire Community Training Centre (DLCTC) on York Road, which offered the use of its premises on Monday evenings commencing in June 2005, the DRP began operating a 'Drop-In Centre' for young asylum seekers/those with residency, which offers them a place to socialize with their peers, discuss with DRP volunteers any concerns or problems they want to raise, and get information through talks and activities (King, 2008).

The Centre began to operate on a weekly basis in June 2005, and has continued to be open for two hours every Monday evening to the present. Besides the information clinics, volunteers also additionally arrange events that aim to generally build participants' confidence. This is often done

through working with other local organisations such as Southside Partnership, the Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology and the Garda Síochána, who are very supportive and have been very actively involved since the inception of the Drop-in Centre (DRP Annual Report, 2007). The willingness and openness of other organisations to become involved in the Centre's work demonstrates the success of the project at the community level.

Since its establishment, the Centre has had the broad aim of providing a venue for young asylum seekers where they can relax, socialise, access information and advice, and plan social and cultural activities. As identified in previous studies, the target group face a set of particular issues, which include the fact that they have to go through the asylum application process without the support of their families or customary social networks (DRP Annual Report, 2008).

A major change that has taken place since the Centre's inception is in the educational needs of respondents. Many have moved from second-level into third-level education, with the result that more funding is required to support them in education, as the vast majority of respondents are not entitled to access free fees for third-level education either because they have not yet been granted residency, or they have been granted leave to remain which does not entitle them to the free fees scheme. The DRP uses the Centre to provide this financial support for young people, and to offer access to career guidance and assistance with enrolling in courses. Two educational programmes were run through the Centre in 2007: the Gardai's "Get Wise" programme, and a digital media training course (DRP Annual Report, 2008). In 2009, a short course on sexual reproductive health with the Irish Family Planning Association and AkiDWA, the African women's organisation was provided. (DRP Annual Report, 2009).

## **VI. Literature Review**

Whilst research has in recent years been carried out on the needs of, and challenges faced by, separated children going through the asylum process, virtually no stand alone research has

been carried out with SCSA/AOM who have been granted residency. The literature review for this study therefore mainly outlines these previous studies which generally researched the challenges of the asylum process of SCSA and the wider implications of attaining refugee status after considerable time spent in direct provision.

Several reports (the Office of the Ombudsman for Children, 2009; Joyce & Quinn, 2009; Mooten, 2006; Philips, 2006; McCrea, 2005; Conroy & Fitzgerald, 2005 and MacNeice & Almirall, 1999) all highlight the challenging circumstances that SCSA find themselves in when they arrive in Ireland. This research focuses on the specific needs of SCSA/AOMs who have been granted some form of status as opposed to those who are still in the asylum process.

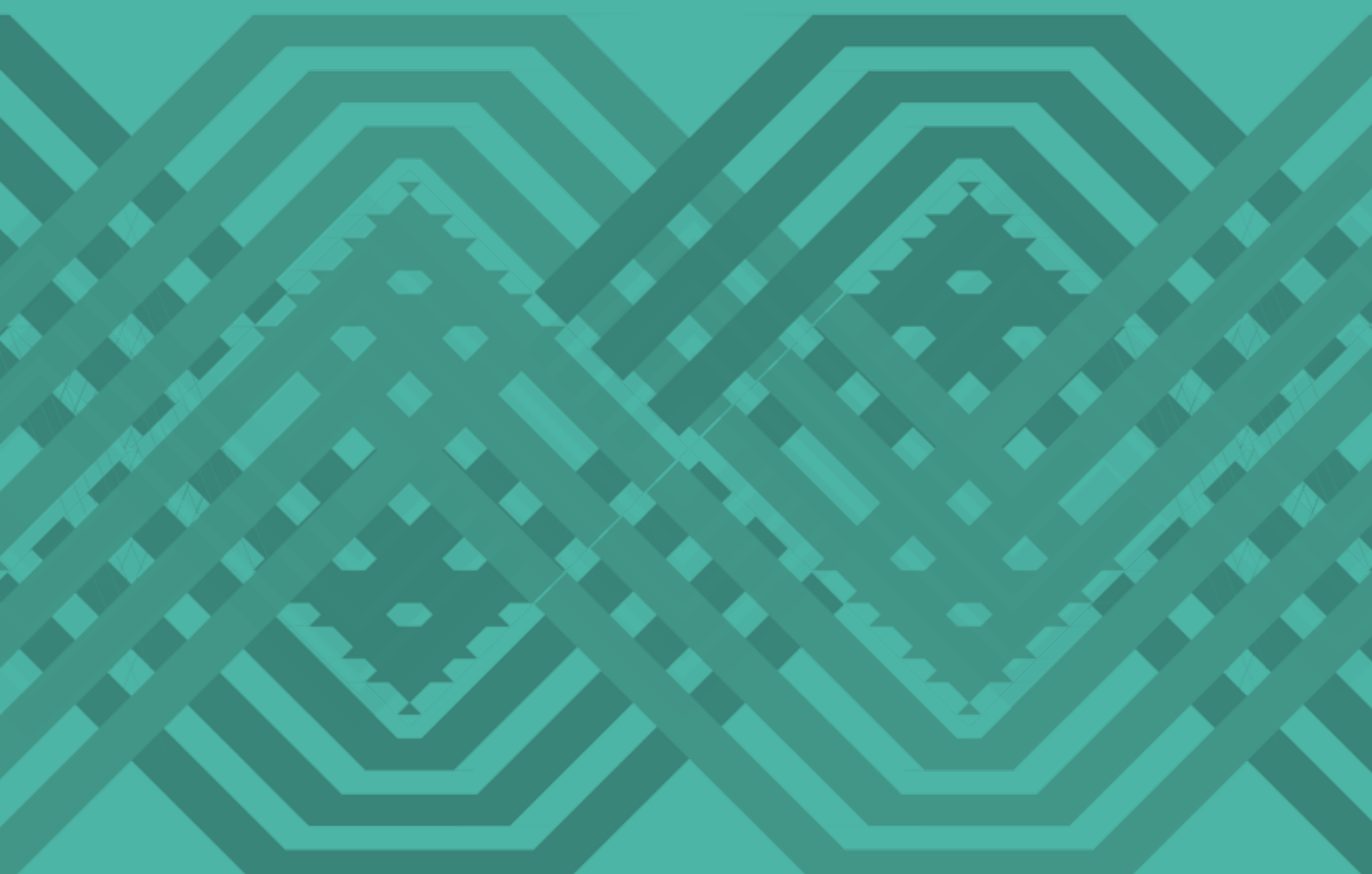
This study also takes a needs-based approach, highlighting issues pertinent to SCSA/AOMs such as access to further/higher education, family reunification, access to employment and training, private rented accommodation, access to travel documents, access to citizenship/naturalization, pregnancy, access to health, integration and experience of racism amongst others.

A study by Feldman, Frese and Yousif (2002) analysed the participation of refugees and asylum-seekers in research and development-based initiatives noting that no research had up until then explored the potential role of the youth work sector in relation to the integration of separated children. A key consideration when undertaking the research therefore was whether or not to include separated children themselves in the research process. The importance of incorporating their perspectives was balanced by recognition of the danger of “over-researching” these young people (Feldman et al, 2002).

It was also necessary to take account of the fact that it may be some time before separated children see the benefits of any recommendations arising from the research. A key recommendation arising from Feldman et al’s (2002) research was that separated children should be consulted in the planning, implementation and evaluation of any youth work programme in which they are involved, something which the DRP started practising from the launch of the Drop-in Centre (DRP Annual Report, 2007).



# PART TWO: Results of Survey



## I. Demographics of Study Participants

The 60 study respondents, who responded, were all former separated children who sought asylum in Ireland and were granted refugee or leave to remain status on humanitarian grounds or on the basis of being a parent of an Irish-born child. In terms of gender breakdown, 55% were male and 45% were female. They ranged in age from 18 to 25 years old.

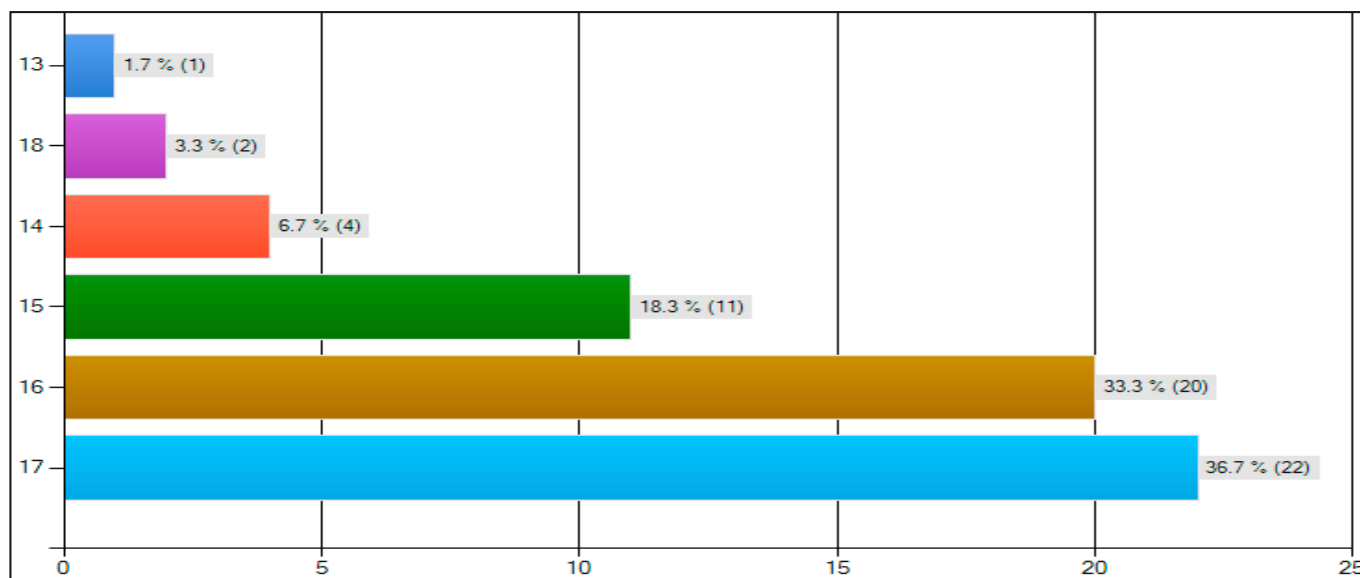
Not surprisingly, almost all of the respondents (98%) were resident in the greater Dublin area. This is mainly a consequence of SCSA being generally housed in the Dublin area during the asylum process and the majority continue to reside in the area after they are granted residency.

At the time of the study, almost two thirds (38) of the respondents had been in Ireland for more than six years, with two having arrived in the year 2000 (See Table 1).

**Table 1:** Year of arrival in Ireland

Year	N	%
2000	2	3.3
2000	2	3.3
2001	6	10
2002	8	13.3
2003	22	36.6
2004	8	13.6
2005	7	11.6
2006	5	8.3
2007	2	3.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

**Figure 1:** Age on arrival



Mirroring overall asylum application figures in Ireland, most of the SCSA applicants came from Nigeria and in this study 38 percent (28) of the respondents were from that country, followed by Angola with 16 percent (10).

As Table 2 shows, all the respondents were from Africa, which reflects the continent of origin of SCSA and AOMs who attend the DRP drop-in centre.

**Table 2:** Country of Origin

Country	N	%
Angola	10	16.7
Burundi	2	3.3
Cameroon	1	1.7
DR Congo	2	3.3
Eritrea	2	3.3
Ethiopia	1	1.7
Ghana	1	1.7
Guinea	2	3.3
Ivory Coast	1	1.7
Kenya	3	5.0
Liberia	1	1.7
Nigeria	23	38.3
Rwanda	1	1.7
Sierra Leone	1	1.7
Somalia	4	6.6
Sudan	1	1.7
Uganda	2	3.3
Zimbabwe	2	3.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

More than two thirds of the respondents arrived in Ireland aged 16 or 17 years, with the youngest arriving at the age of 13 (Fig. 1).

Whilst only 12 of the 60 respondents were granted residency up to the end of 2005, there was a significant increase in the recognition rate from 2006 to October 2009, with 60 percent (36) of this cohort being granted residency in 2008 and 2009 (Table 3).

For comparative purposes, Fig. 2 shows the total applications from SCSA and the recognition rates from 2004 up to June 2009.

**Table 3:** Year granted Residency

Year	N	%
2003	1	1.7
2004	1	1.7
2005	10	16.7
2006	5	8.3
2007	7	11.6
2008	18	30
2009	18	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

**Figure 2:** Recognition Rates for Separated Children Seeking Asylum 2004-June 2009

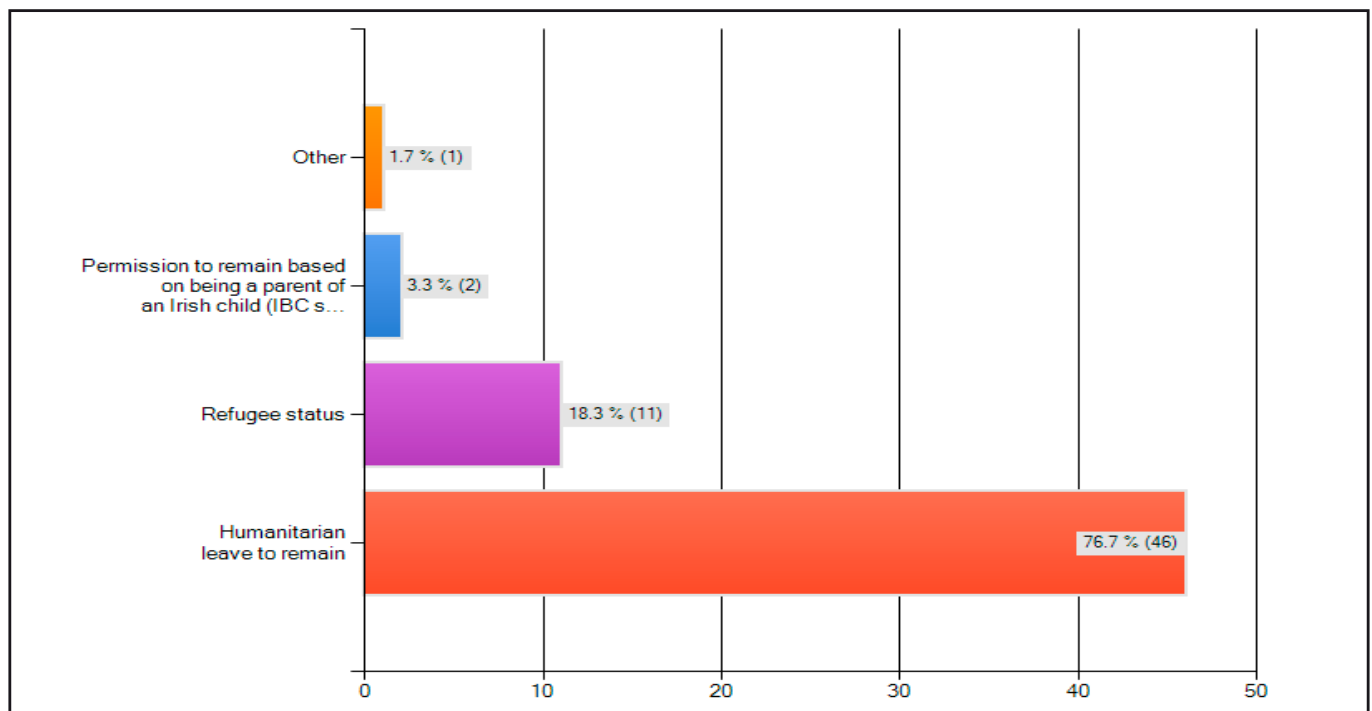
Applications for Asylum from Unaccompanied Minors 2004-2009 (up to the end of June 2009)						
Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total	128	131	131	94	98	29

Recommendations to grant Refugee Status to Unaccompanied Minors at first Instance and Appeal Stage 2004-2009 (up to the end of June 2009)						
Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total	92	75	41	30	17	5

Source: Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner ([www.orac.ie](http://www.orac.ie))

Please note however that Fig. 2 does not include the leave to remain status, which three quarters of the respondents were granted (See Fig. 3). Only 11 respondents were granted full refugee status either at the first application stage or at appeal. The other 49 respondents were granted leave to remain on humanitarian grounds or based on being a parent of an Irish born child.

**Figure 3:** Legal Status Granted



## II. Access to accommodation

Once they are granted residency, AOMs are normally given a few weeks to find their own, mostly rented, accommodation and vacate the direct provision centre or hostel. Almost half (28) of the respondents said they had found accommodation mainly through the daft.ie website or the Evening Herald newspaper.

Some also sought assistance from the DRP and from friends who were already in private rented accommodation. A quarter said they initially shared with friends until they found their own place. The majority of the respondents were not in paid employment at the time of being granted residency and just over half (31) were in receipt of rent allowance at the time the survey was conducted.

When it came to the quality of accommodation, a quarter were not happy stating overcrowded living conditions, insecurity of tenure, limited furnishings, deposits being arbitrarily withheld and no lease agreements or rent books as some of the main reasons behind their dissatisfaction. However, even though such a significant number were not happy about their rented accommodation, more than two thirds (41) of all the respondents were actually unaware of their rights as tenants under the Residential Tenancies Act 2004 or of the

existence of Threshold, the housing organisation, to which they could turn for assistance.

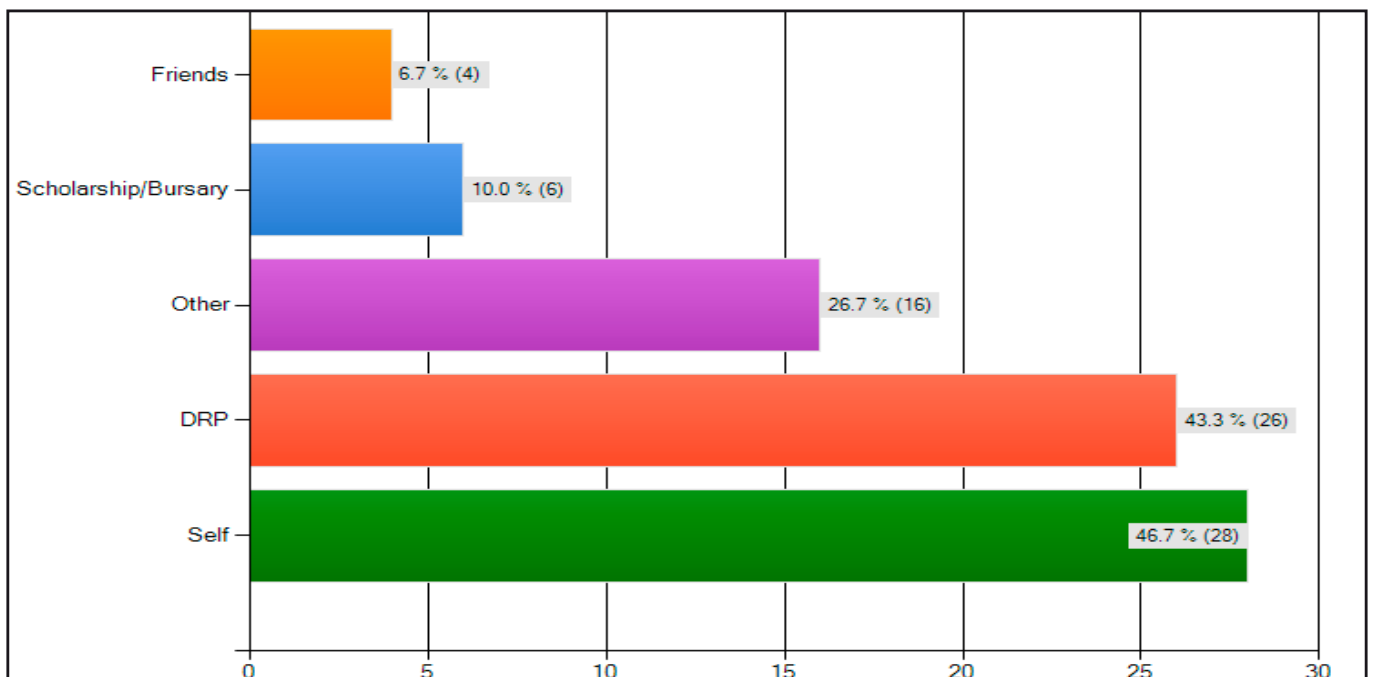
## III. Education

The results of the survey show that there is a high Leaving Certificate completion rate amongst the respondents (83%) which compares very favourably with the national completion rate of 86 percent (School Leavers Survey Report, 2007). Upon completion of the Leaving Certificate, a large majority (86%) were interested in pursuing third level education and of the 60 respondents, 43 were engaged in some form of further or higher education at the time this study was carried out (See Table 4).

Funding was identified by all respondents as the single biggest obstacle to accessing third level education, especially since the majority (see Fig. 3) of respondents were granted leave to remain status, which meant they were not eligible for EU fees.

Of the 40 percent who are enrolled in some form of further or higher education almost half (46%) said they paid their own fees (by working during the day and attending evening courses), 28 percent get their funding from the DRP, 26 percent from other sources, such as faith based organisations and non governmental organisations and 10

**Figure 4:** Sources of funding for further or higher education



percent from scholarships, bursaries and college access programmes (Fig. 4).

Whilst the majority of respondents who were accessing some form of Post Leaving Certificate education were enrolled in colleges of further or higher education, there was a small number enrolled in degree programmes at some of the major Irish universities and one in the United Kingdom.

**Table 4:** Institution where respondents are accessing further or higher education

Name of institution of further/higher learning	Number of students
Dún Laoghaire College of Further Education	6
Institute of Technology - Tallaght	6
University of Dublin, Trinity College	4
Colaiste Dhulaigh College of Further Education	3
Senior College Dún Laoghaire	3
Marino College	3
Dublin Business School	2
Killester College	2
FAS (National Training and Employment Authority)	2
University College Dublin	1
Dublin City University	1
Dublin Institute of Technology	1
Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme - Leixlip	1
National Maritime College of Ireland	1
Swansea Metropolitan University	1
Crumlin College of Further Education	1
Plunkett College Whitehall	1
Dundalk Institute of Technology	1
Margaret Aylward College	1
Dundrum College	1
Sallynoggin College of Further Education	1

Four respondents were enrolled at the University of Dublin, Trinity College, one each at the University College Dublin, Dublin City University,

Dublin Institute of Technology and Swansea Metropolitan University (see Table 4 for full list).

Even though just over a quarter said they spoke little or no English when they arrived in Ireland, 71 percent now considered their level of English language literacy to be very good, with most of the respondents attributing this achievement to the extra tuition and supports they had received in their respective secondary schools.

Furthermore and notably, all respondents spoke at least three languages including English.

**Table 5:** List of languages spoken by respondents

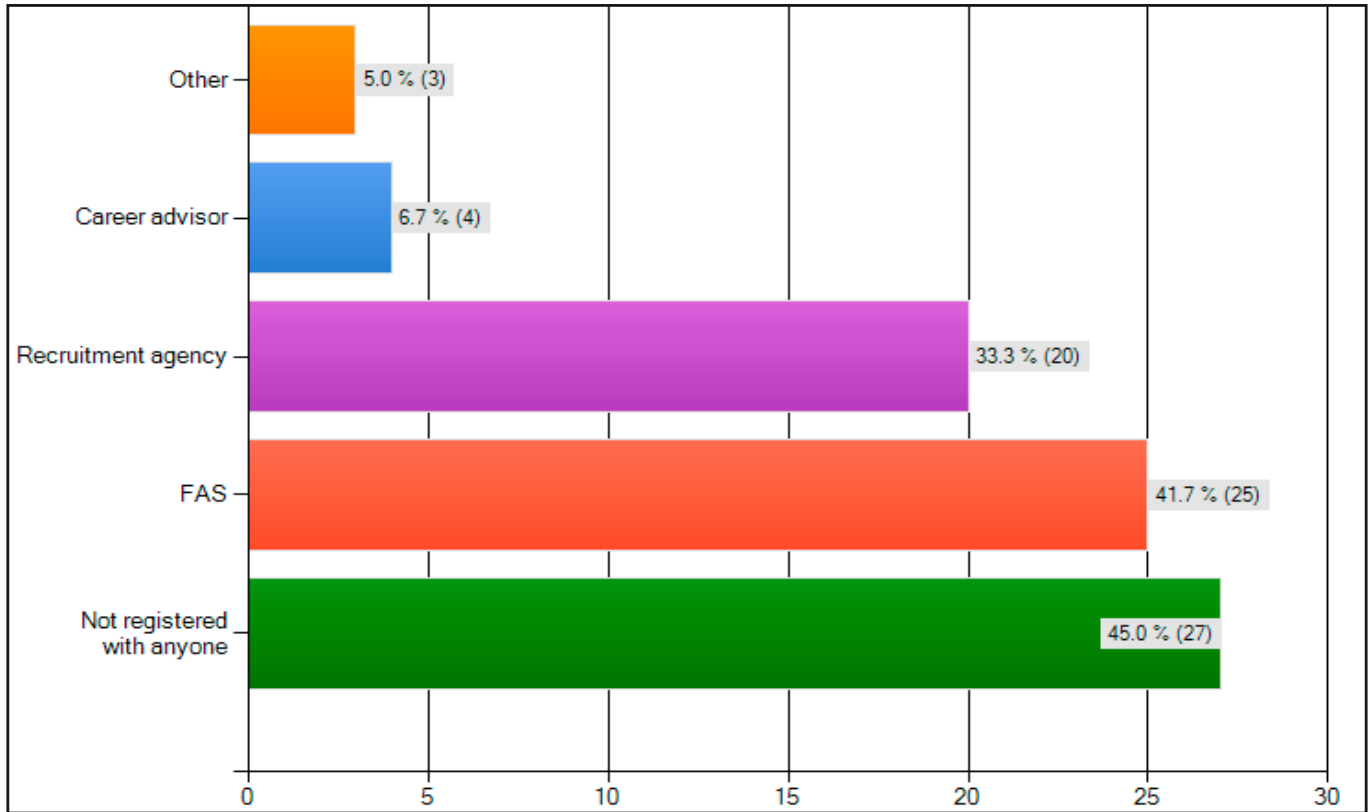
Aja	Kikongo
Akan	Kikuyu
Amharic	Kinyarwanda
Arabic	Kirundi
Bajuni	Lingala
Buganda	Luganda
Chichewa	Malinke
English	Mwaghavul
Ewe	Ndebele
Fiote	Portuguese
Foulah	Shona
French	Somali
German	Soussou
Hausa	Spanish
Igbo	Swahili
Ikwerre	Tigrinya
Isan	Yoruba
Isoko	Zulu

#### IV. Employment

At the time of the survey (October 2009), 17 respondents said they were currently in employment, with 12 of 17 in full time employment. Another 34 (64%) said they had been looking for work in the last 6 months, without success. However, 45 percent of all respondents stated that they were not registered with FAS or the local employment service (see Fig 5).

In fact only 45 percent said they would consider pursuing skills training/apprenticeships through FAS and had not considered skills/vocational training as a viable option (See discussion section for reasons).

**Figure 5:** Registered for employment opportunities



Over half (31) of the respondents said they were in receipt of a social welfare payment and 25 said they were registered with FAS.

Just over half (22) of 43 respondents who were job hunting said they would take any job they could find. Others were more specific, seeking part-time or weekend jobs to help cover their tuition fees. Specific jobs sought included mechanical engineering, information technology, interior design, marketing/bilingual customer service, banking, accounting, general healthcare, community work and computer technician amongst other occupations.

The 17 respondents who were in employment were mainly employed in the services and healthcare sectors and some of the well known employers included the Ritz Carlton Hotel, Citi Group, Microsoft, Vodafone, Lionbridge and Eircom. Notably, of the 17 respondents in employment, only five (18%) were female and as a result, 19 (70%) of the 31 respondents in receipt of a social welfare payment were female.

**V. Health**

Most of the respondents (55) were generally satisfied with their current state of personal

health (Fig. 6), with 53 (88%) saying that they did not have any long term health issues.

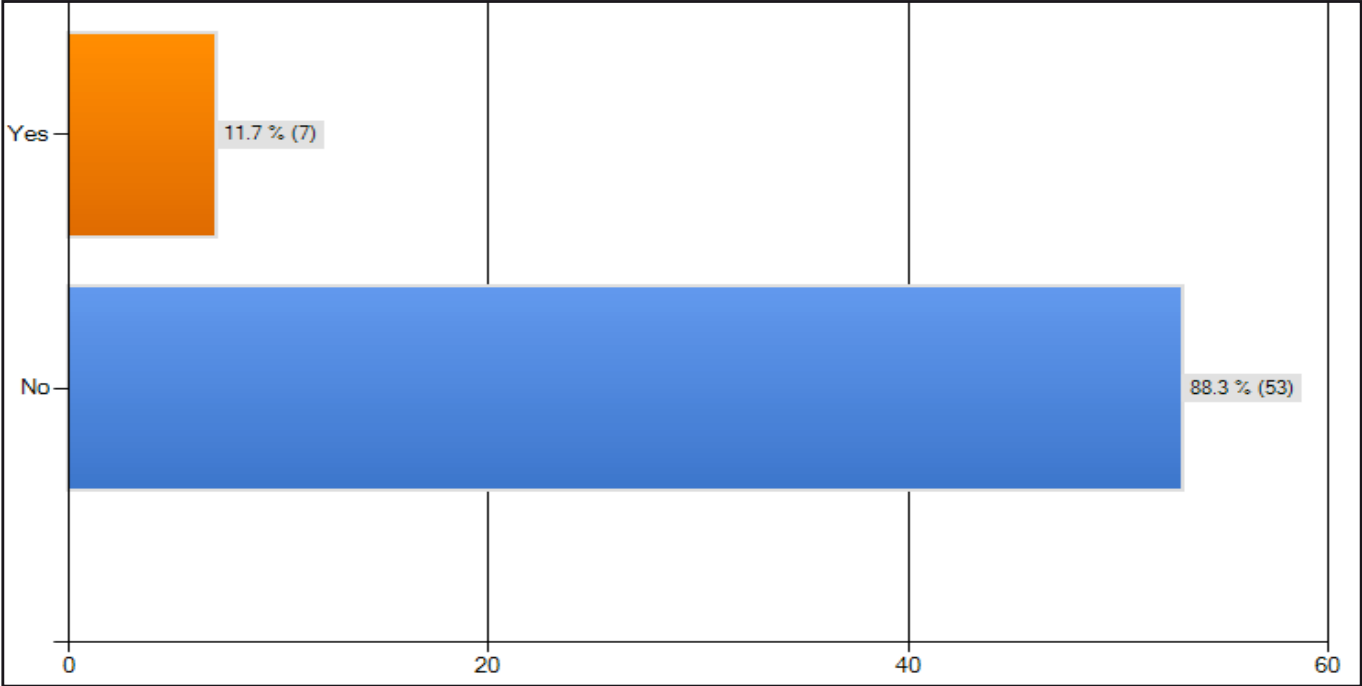
Almost two thirds (65%) were in possession of a medical card and 45 (75%) were registered with their local general practitioner.

Forty-two respondents (70%) said they were largely satisfied with their GP service although the most common complaint was that some (22%) thought that their GP did not listen to them as much as they expected or that they did not believe they were given enough time (by the GP) to explain their medical situation.

Most notably, five respondents said they had long term health issues with two currently receiving psychological supports in the Dublin area and 12 percent (7) said they had suffered from depression during their time in direct provision but had not sought any professional help at the time.

With 21 respondents not eligible for a medical card (Fig. 7), one respondent explained his predicament as a result of this: *“I have eye and dental issues. However, because I received leave to remain status while in third level education, my community welfare officer advised me to defer the place for one year in order to be eligible for a social welfare payment and a medical card.*

**Figure 6:** Do you have long term health problems?



*Being in third year and having already invested so much in my education, I could not take that advice. However, if I fall sick I am worried that I am not going to be able to afford looking after myself."*

One respondent, a Muslim, preferred to have a female GP look after her.

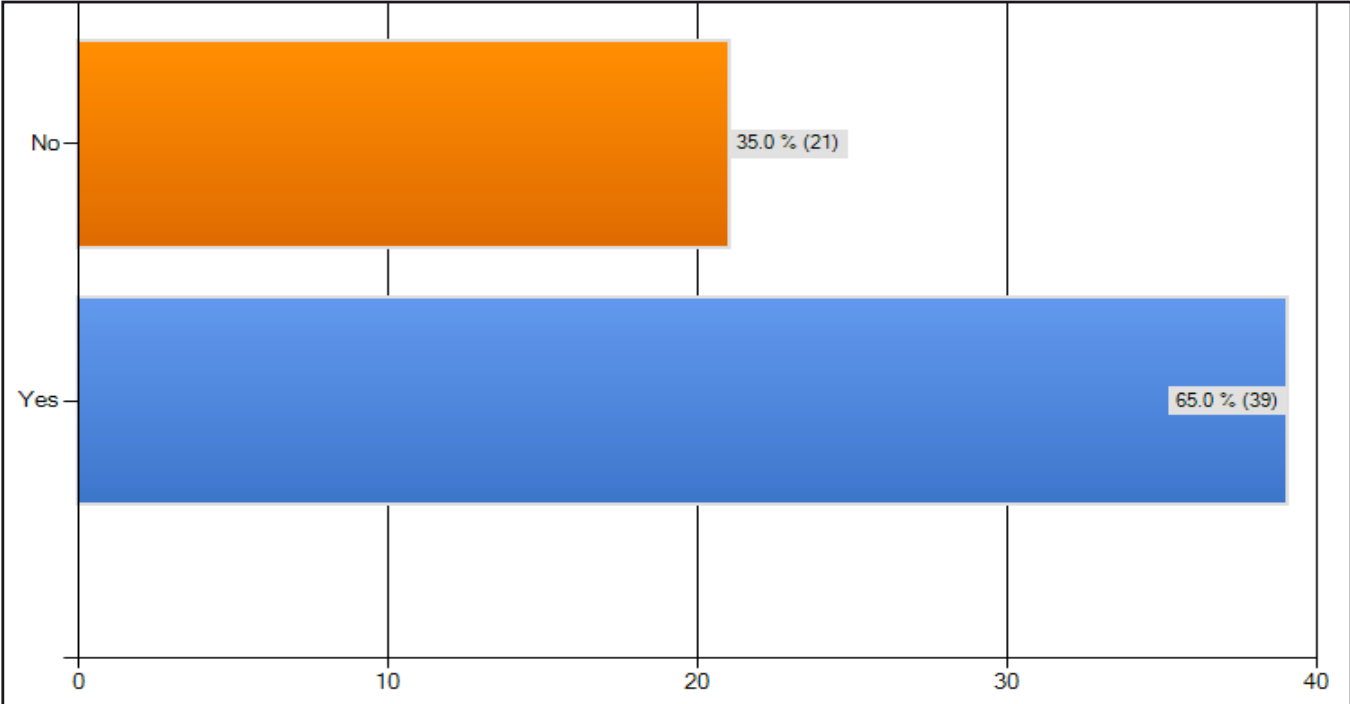
Another participant put everything in perspective by saying: *"Even though Irish people complain about the health system here, I am just*

*happy to be in a country with a much better health system compared to my country."*

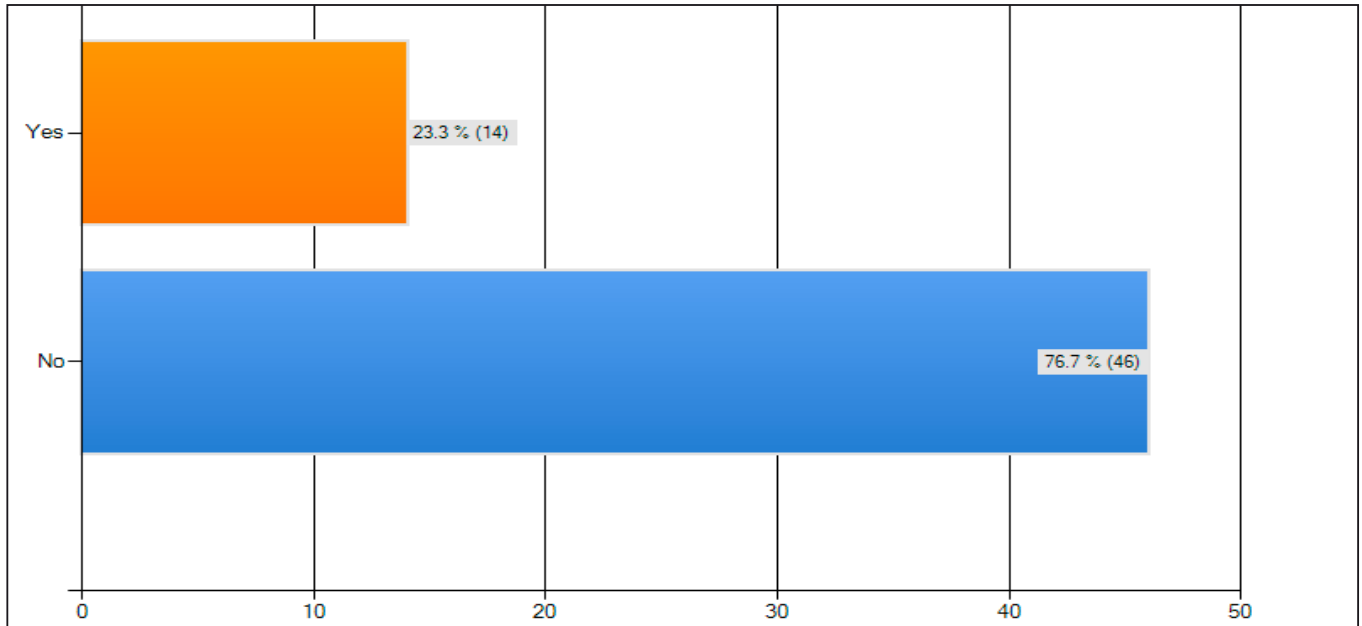
**VI. Parenthood**

Fourteen respondents (23%) are parents, with four describing themselves as single parents and seven as full-time parents (Fig. 8). Of the 14, eight are generally satisfied with the quality of childcare available to them, whilst

**Figure 7:** In possession of a Medical card



**Figure 8:** Parenthood



three said they were not happy mainly citing cost and affordability as the main challenge.

One participant asked for family planning support stating that they did not want to have another child as one was enough.

Three respondents said they felt that they would have benefitted significantly from general supports around parenthood. Half of the 14 respondents were not in employment and were not accessing further or higher education as they said they found it very difficult to go to work or study and also afford childcare.

When asked what were the biggest challenges they faced as young parents more than half

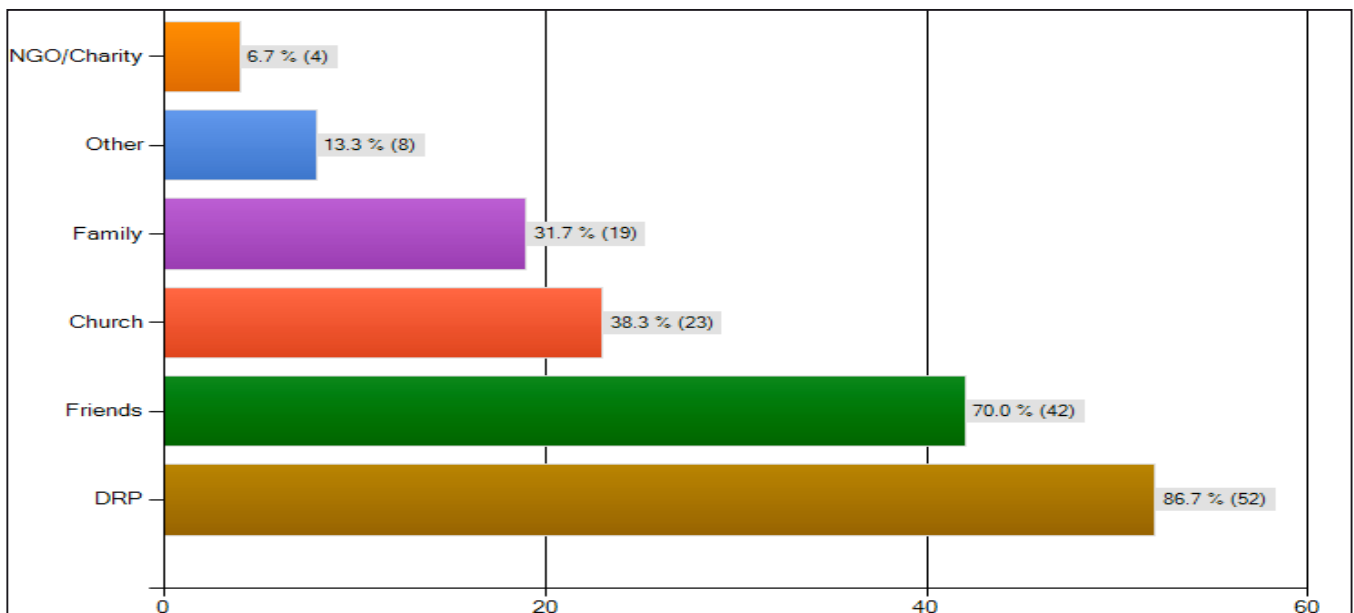
(9) of the 14 respondents who were parents said it was accessing affordable childcare. Six of the 14 respondents said they had not been prepared for parenthood.

**VII. Main Sources of Support**

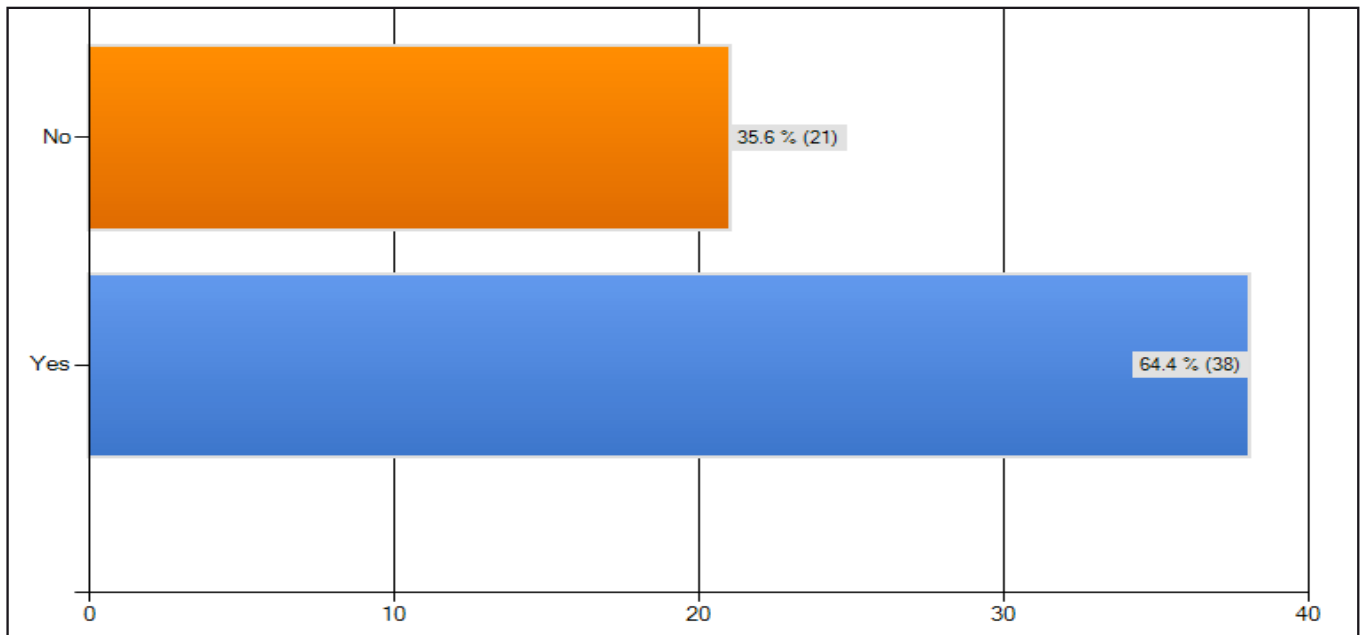
The DRP was overwhelmingly identified by 52 respondents (86%) as one of their main sources of support, followed by friends (70%) and their church or mosque (38%).

Other sources of support included family (mainly siblings or other family members who had joined them in Ireland), school or college networks and various non-governmental organisations (Fig. 9).

**Figure 9:** Main sources of support



**Figure 10:** Experienced racism in the month prior to survey



### VIII. Racism and discrimination

Racism was identified by all respondents as one of the main challenges they faced and ultimately a key barrier to their integration. The results of the survey showed that 64% of the respondents said they had been racially abused in the month<sup>4</sup> prior to their participation in the survey (Fig. 10).

There was some acknowledgement by two thirds of the respondents that the economic difficulties brought on by the recession had also resulted in hardened attitudes towards immigrants and that they felt acceptance levels were quite low compared to other Western European countries. This is outlined further in the Discussion section.

### IX. Integration

Besides access to education and employment, respondents in this study said integration was one of the most significant aspects to consider once they were granted residency. There was an overwhelming recognition (90%) that their success in making Ireland their home depended on how well they integrated into Irish society.

There was general consensus that the prolonged period spent in direct provision by most respondents was seen as lost and wasted time as state asylum policies did not encourage or promote integration for asylum seekers and any

efforts at integration were through their own efforts and those of support organisation such as the DRP (see Integration comments, Appendix I).

Attaining Irish citizenship was identified by nearly all respondents as the best way of integrating into Irish society and 45 (75%) said they would apply for citizenship as soon as they met the residency criteria. This suggested that most of the respondents did not feel entirely secure even though they had been granted residency.

Eleven respondents had applied for naturalisation and one of the respondents who was granted residency much earlier than the rest of the cohort, had already been granted Irish citizenship at the time of participation in this study.

It is interesting to note that 71% believed that they were integrating well into Irish society and were reasonably satisfied with their integration prospects (see Integration comments, Appendix I). However, more than half (33) of the respondents identified racism and discrimination as the biggest obstacle to their integration in Ireland.

Recognising that active participation in their local communities was an essential component in achieving successful integration, most of the respondents listed activities they have undertaken to try and foster better understanding with their Irish neighbours. These included participation in cultural events which showcased their culture, music, dance, food and art. The DRP drop-in centre was also consistently cited as an

<sup>4</sup> A specific timeframe was deliberately chosen instead of an open timeframe to ensure uniformity and not skew the results.

important aspect of their integration process and at least a quarter said it provided them with one of their main sources of socialisation.

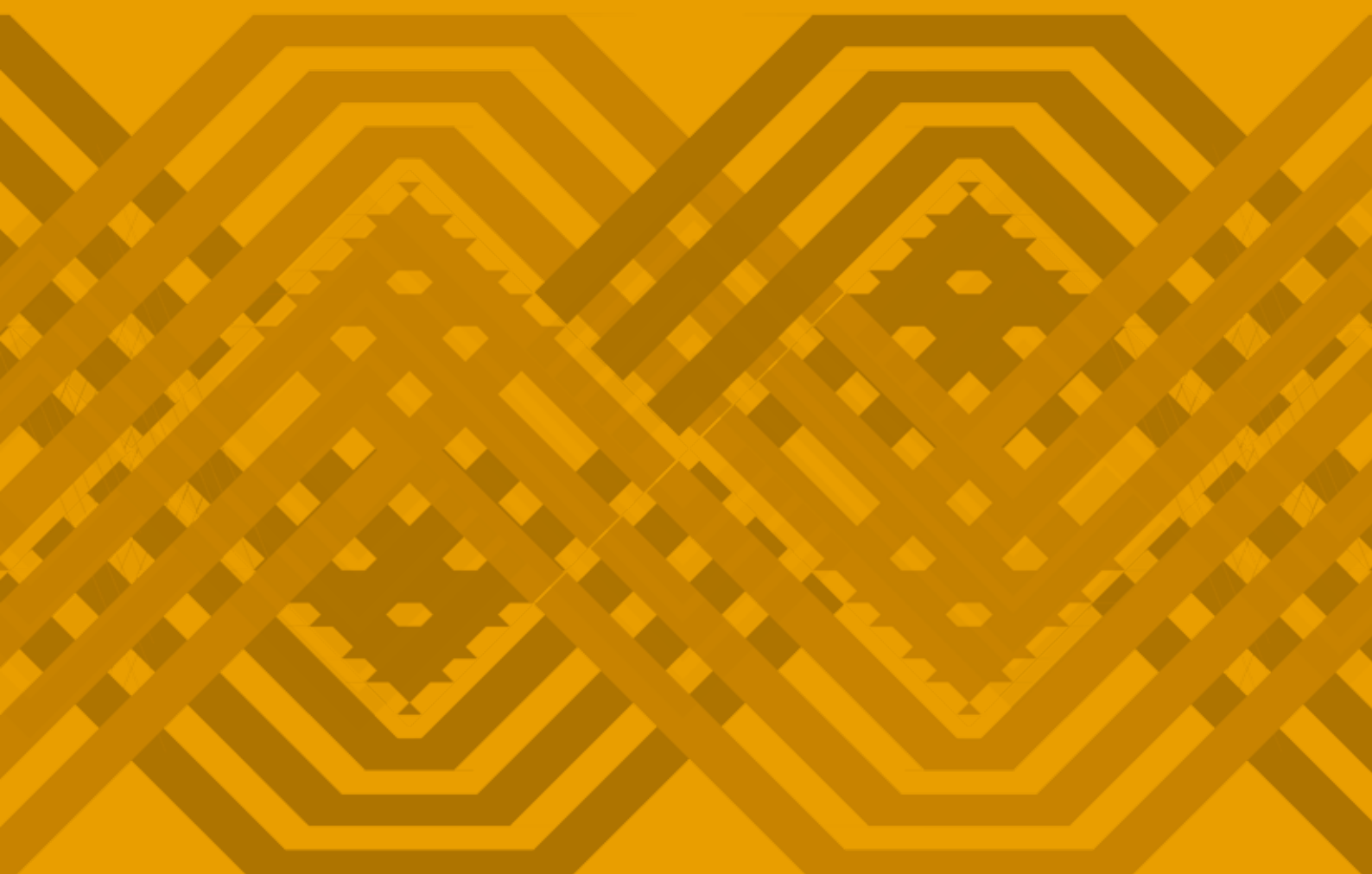
Some of the respondents said they were engaged in the following activities as a way of sharing their cultures and also learning more about Irish society:

- Trinity Access Programme ambassador and a member of the History Society in Trinity College;
- Playing in a mainly Irish Indoor soccer team;
- Member of a Burundian Traditional Drumming Group that plays at major festivals around the country;
- Participation in a music band and singing in a popular multicultural gospel choir;
- Active member of a book club;
- Member of the Calypso theatre/drama group;
- Volunteer with a Sunday School youth club at church and also a member of the Kenya Irish Society which holds some events throughout the year;
- Representing the Somali community at various events across Ireland to try and showcase some positive things about the country.



# PART THREE:

## Discussion



To ensure that this research clearly articulates the needs of the respondents the discussion section specifically focuses on the feedback from two focus groups sessions attended by a total of 18 participants, which were held to discuss key issues emerging from the survey such as:

- The transition from asylum seeker to refugee/leave to remain status;
- Education and vocational training needs;
- Welfare, medical/health and psychological service provision;
- Social integration prospects and opportunities;
- Institutionalisation (effects of lengthy stay in direct provision centres).

## **I. Personal circumstances**

Once SCSA/AOMs (as is the case with all other asylum applicants) are granted refugee status or leave to remain, they are required to register with the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB), bringing with them the original letter declaring their refugee or leave to remain status. Whilst this process is relatively straightforward for those granted refugee status, there have been some difficulties for those granted leave to remain as they are now required by the GNIB to register using their national passports.

This has presented significant challenges for individuals from the following countries – Angola, Cote d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Rwanda and Somalia – who have faced difficulties in securing passports mainly due to the fact there are no consular services in Ireland for those countries. This creates a situation whereby the individual is forced to travel to another European city where their country has an embassy (in most instances, London, Paris or Brussels). Furthermore, travel documents and in some cases, re-entry visas are required to travel to these countries, providing another obstacle.

One of the embassies not represented in Ireland has in the recent past brought their consular services over to Dublin, usually for a day, to cater for their nationals living here. However, the general feedback during the focus groups was that these consular visits took place infrequently and that the service provided was

quite limited as the passports, in most instances, still had to be issued from the country of origin, hence it took a considerable amount of time.

The main recommendation that emerged from the focus groups was that those with leave to remain should be given the option of applying for a Geneva Convention travel document similar to that given to refugees.

## **II. Education**

The desire to continue with their education was significantly stronger after they were granted residency. This was mainly attributed to the misplaced expectation that residency would bring with it easy access to third level education. Unfortunately, the majority of AOMs are granted leave to remain on humanitarian grounds, which does not afford them the same rights as refugees to access third level education under the free fees scheme.

Applying for local authority maintenance grants also raises another challenge for those granted leave to remain, with the main obstacle being the terminology used. Previously, there was clear differentiation made between various forms of leave to remain, denoting whether this status was granted on humanitarian grounds, for being a parent of an Irish born child, or on other general immigration-related grounds.

The respondents pointed out that at present, the temporary nature of leave to remain status – generally renewable after a year to three years – left many service providers, including third level institutes, wary about the long term residency prospects of holders of such status.

Social welfare rules pertaining to access to education were a cause for concern as the respondents did not feel they encouraged people to aspire to further education and instead pulled them further into a life of dependency on the state.

## **III. Skills Training**

One of the significant findings from this research was the perception held by SCSA/AOMs of the Employment and Training Authority (FÁS). Out of the 60 survey respondents, only

27 (45%) were interested in pursuing skills training or an apprenticeship through FÁS. This apparent lack of interest in pursuing trade based training or enrolling with FÁS, was explained in more detail during the focus groups.

The first key reason given for this was that vocational, skills or apprenticeship training was culturally not seen as a valuable way to pursue further education by the survey respondents. As one participant put it: *“Back home in Africa, only those who are not seen as clever and did not do well at school ended up going for skills training whereas going to university was everyone’s main target. It is only in Ireland where people get good well paying jobs being a plumber or welder.”*

Another participant added that it was time for a culture change where people did not think that the only way to progress was to go to university or college and that apprenticeship or skills training offered great opportunities. *“Not everyone can go to university and sometimes you go there and you come out with a degree that does not get you employed immediately or gets you good pay.”*

Generally, it was agreed in the focus groups that the other reason why skills training was not high on the list of most SCSA/AOMs with residency was the perception that FÁS was not promoted in their communities. *“We get the idea that maybe FÁS is for Irish people only and that people like us are not supposed to apply,”* suggested one participant, adding that he was speaking from experience as someone who had tried to register with the training authority two years ago but had not heard from anyone since.

Another option that had largely been ignored by the AOMs with status and were aged over 21 were the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) courses run by the 33 Vocational Education Committees throughout Ireland. However, a participant who had tried to enrol for a VTOS course was turned down as the relevant social welfare officer did not deem time spent in the asylum process as meeting the eligibility criteria, which includes time spent in receipt of unemployment assistance or unemployment benefit, or signing for credits for at least six months. However, according to current information on the Citizens Information Board website (as of

January 2010), time spent in Direct Provision does count towards the qualifying period.

#### IV. Employment

With nearly two thirds of the 60 survey respondents being granted residency during 2008 and 2009, the adverse economic situation in Ireland significantly hindered their prospects of getting a job. Having watched some of their friends and counterparts who were granted residency during the Celtic Tiger ‘boom’ literally walk straight into jobs, the reality for this cohort has been altogether different with only 17 (28.3%) in employment at the time this survey was conducted.

Apart from the adverse economic conditions affecting the employment market, the focus group participants also noted that lack of qualifications and experience also lessened their employability. *“Most of us came here as children and many of us are only in our early 20s and therefore are still starting out, but the recession has made it difficult for us to find jobs that normally people like us would have taken in supermarkets, the Centras, you know. Now you have Irish people also desperate to get those same jobs too.”*

Making reference to the much publicised ESRI (2009) report on discrimination, one participant, who was one of the few in the cohort who was granted residency more than 3 years ago, suggested that apart from the recession, prejudice also played a significant part in their lack of opportunities. *“I know we are talking about the recession now, but even during the ‘Celtic Tiger’ it was not easy for someone like me to get a job, even though I was no longer an asylum seeker. I think that report in the news (ESRI, 2009) is very correct that some companies look at the name and maybe throw away the CV. I went to secondary school here, I think I speak quite good English, even a little Irish and have diplomas from an Irish college, but I still have not got a job. I am lucky, at least I got a scholarship and I am back in college to study for a degree, otherwise I would be so frustrated with all this. I am hopeful that when I finish I will get the job that matches my qualifications.”*

The focus groups also identified their lack of knowledge of the job market in Ireland as another reason they were finding employment a challenge. Most respondents agreed that coming from Africa, there was a different culture towards recruitment and people back home behaved differently in interviews to here. *"We need to learn about how to write a good CV, how to prepare and behave during job interviews. For example, we tend to look down when talking to someone in authority, whereas here it is seen as if you are hiding something."* Another participant added that they did not readily make use of career advisors in school or in college as they should have and that this could have helped them a great deal later on.

## **V. Family Reunification**

The general consensus amongst the respondents, especially during the focus groups was that the family reunification process in Ireland was an arduous, lengthy and sometimes costly process in which success was not guaranteed.

Having come to Ireland as children, most respondents in the groups felt that having siblings or other older family members joining them in Ireland would significantly improve their quality of life and their general well being.

It was suggested that much more advocacy and campaigning work needs to be done in this area by the various organisations working with and on behalf of SCSA/AOMs with status.

## **VI. Social integration**

All focus group participants unanimously agreed that social integration was necessary for their continued residence in Ireland. Without integration, they were likely to retreat into their own communities, something which everyone agreed, would create further divisions in society. One participant noted that this was already happening with certain parts of Dublin already having large concentrations of certain nationalities and ethnic groups. *"I think it is human nature to have solidarity with people who look, think, behave and live like you, but I think because we came here to a totally different country and culture, I*

*think we should try and learn more about our hosts and not hide away from them. Both sides would benefit a lot if we lived together and learnt from one another. It is one sure way of tackling discrimination and prejudice when you get to know people personally."*

However, another person countered by pointing out that sometimes the only option available to someone who had just been granted residency was to go and live in these areas where there are already other people from their country of origin or ethnic group. *"Sometimes, it is only about where you can afford to stay. Remember, as an asylum seeker you have no income except €19.10 and when you get residency you come out of the hostel and the only place you can afford is what the social welfare officer will pay rent allowance for or whatever your job can let you afford. So in the end, you end up sharing with people from your country or you go to the cheapest accommodation available."*

## **VII. Racism**

Racism was unanimously identified by the respondents as one of the main challenges they faced and ultimately a key barrier to their integration. The survey showed that 64 percent of the respondents said they had been racially abused in the month prior to their participation in the survey.

The focus group respondents described what they saw as the slow process of acceptance by some parts of Irish society of the demographic changes the country had gone through in the last decade or so. This was articulated by one participant who said: *"Sometimes, I see people still staring at me, as if black people have only just arrived here and sometimes this stare makes me feel uncomfortable. Thankfully, Dublin has become a bit more comfortable but certain parts like here in Dún Laoghaire you still feel that people look at you in certain way. Look, it is difficult to explain. I mean you know when someone is looking at you in nice way or bad way."* The participant added that integration would only really start happening when people like her felt comfortable walking the streets without feeling that she was being judged for what she looked like.

There was some acknowledgement that the economic difficulties brought on by the recession had also resulted in hardened attitudes towards immigrants and that they felt acceptance levels were quite low compared to other Western European countries.

One participant compared the situation in Ireland to that on the continent: *“Some of us have travelled to other countries, like the UK, France, Belgium and Holland where no-one even notices you because black people are part of the society. Acceptance levels of people with a darker skin colour are still low in Ireland and I actually think that racism in this country is now becoming systematic, moving from the obvious to subtle. That is where we are going now.”*

There was acknowledgement by some of the respondents in the focus groups that some situations were quickly classified as racist when they were perhaps not really so. They stated that some of it could just be misunderstandings which could take place even with people from the same ethnic background, but could be magnified by cultural or ethnic differences. One participant even suggested that some people may also use the

race card where they themselves may be in the wrong and use racism as their “get out” clause.

As one participant put it: *“Some of us sometimes focus too much on racism and all the negative stuff. Yes, it is out there and it happens, but we should also focus on the positive things that happen between people from different ethnic backgrounds. Some of us have made very good friendships with Irish people and people from other European countries. Some of us even have white partners. That is very positive and we need to look at that too.”*

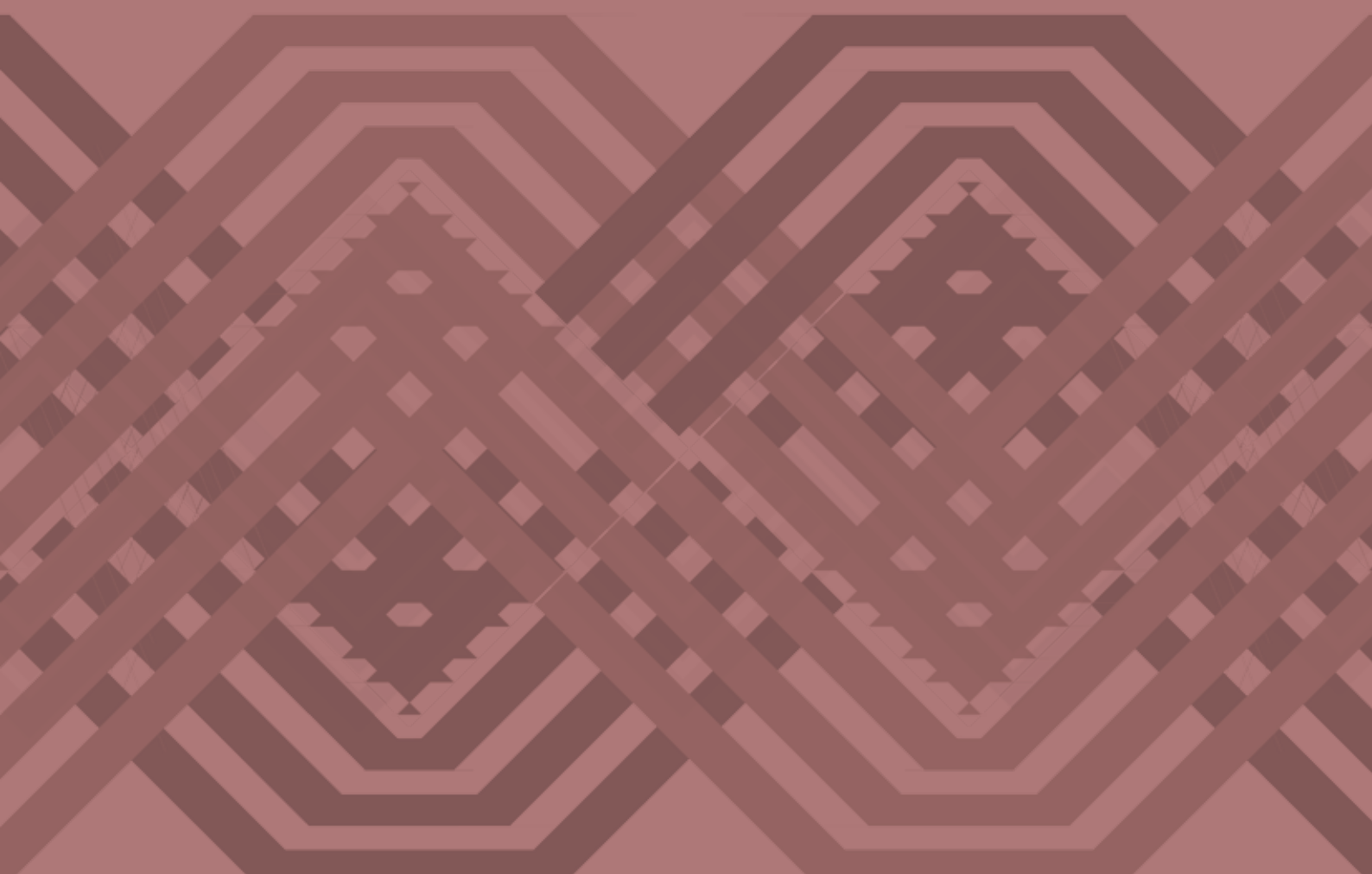
Another participant added that she was aware of Africans who did not want to integrate into Irish society and that some of their attitudes could easily be seen as racist. *“There are some people who do not want to conform to Irish culture, even though they say they are going to live here for a long time. I think that when people come to live in another country, they should try their best to appreciate their hosts and try and get on well with them.”*





# PART FOUR:

# Recommendations



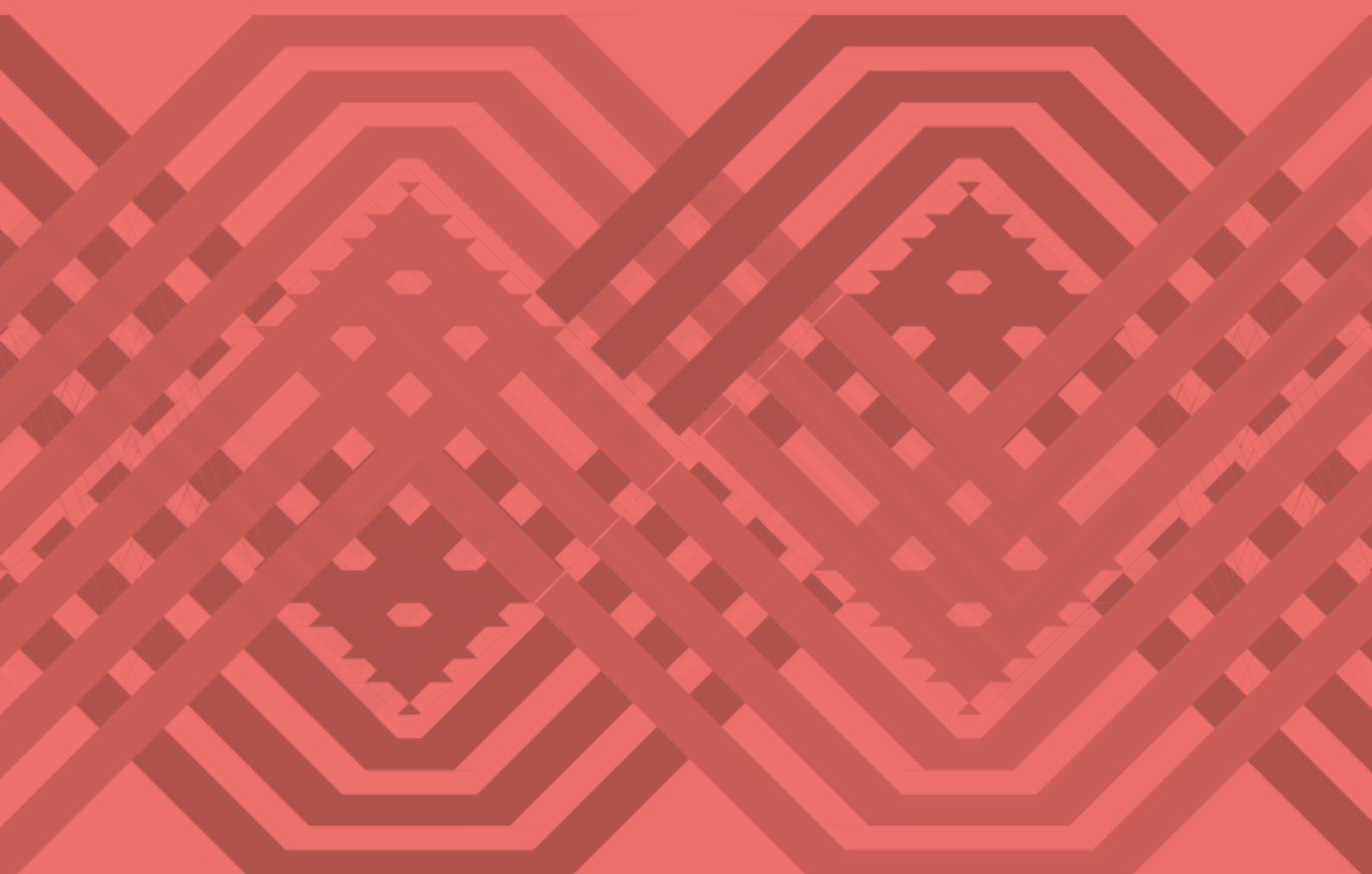
## **Dún Laoghaire Refugee Project**

- DRP should extend more of its support services to those with residency now that more have status. The DRP has already started extending its work in this area.
- More information should be made available about FÁS, VTOS and PLC courses and also 'education' that these are also good avenues to employment.
- Access to employment supports including self marketing, curriculum vitae writing and interview techniques.
- Provision of information seminars about their rights and responsibilities as tenants.
- Programmes to encourage volunteerism amongst SCSA and AOMs, especially in these adverse economic times.
- Establish peer led networks to support those recently granted residency.
- Family planning, parenthood supports/ education should be made available. The DRP is already working with the Irish Family Planning Association and the African womens' advocacy and support group, AkiDWA to provide information sessions on these topics.
- Information on parenting supports in areas where the young people live.
- Continue Garda Get Wise programme with emphasis on how to deal with racist comments / incidents.

## **Other Organisations - Statutory and Non-Statutory**

- Those with leave to remain should be accorded the same access to third level education as refugees. This should involve all organisations working on behalf of asylum seekers in Ireland engaging fully with institutes of further and higher education and the Departments of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and Education and Science.
- The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform should be lobbied to ensure that those with leave to remain are granted the option of applying for a Geneva Convention travel document similar to that given to refugees.
- In-depth study on the psychological effects of institutionalisation as a result of prolonged stay in direct provision/HSE hostels for SCSA/ AOMs should be carried out.
- The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform should be lobbied to grant indefinite or long-term residency for those granted leave to remain and remove the existing insecurity of annual renewals.

# PART FIVE: Conclusion



This research sought to address the UCD Equality Studies Centre's Egalitarian World Initiative objectives of promoting greater understanding of and concern for equality within Ireland, and internationally, by highlighting the situation of what has largely been, until very recently, a hidden group of young people who require all the support they can get as they progress into adulthood and independent living.

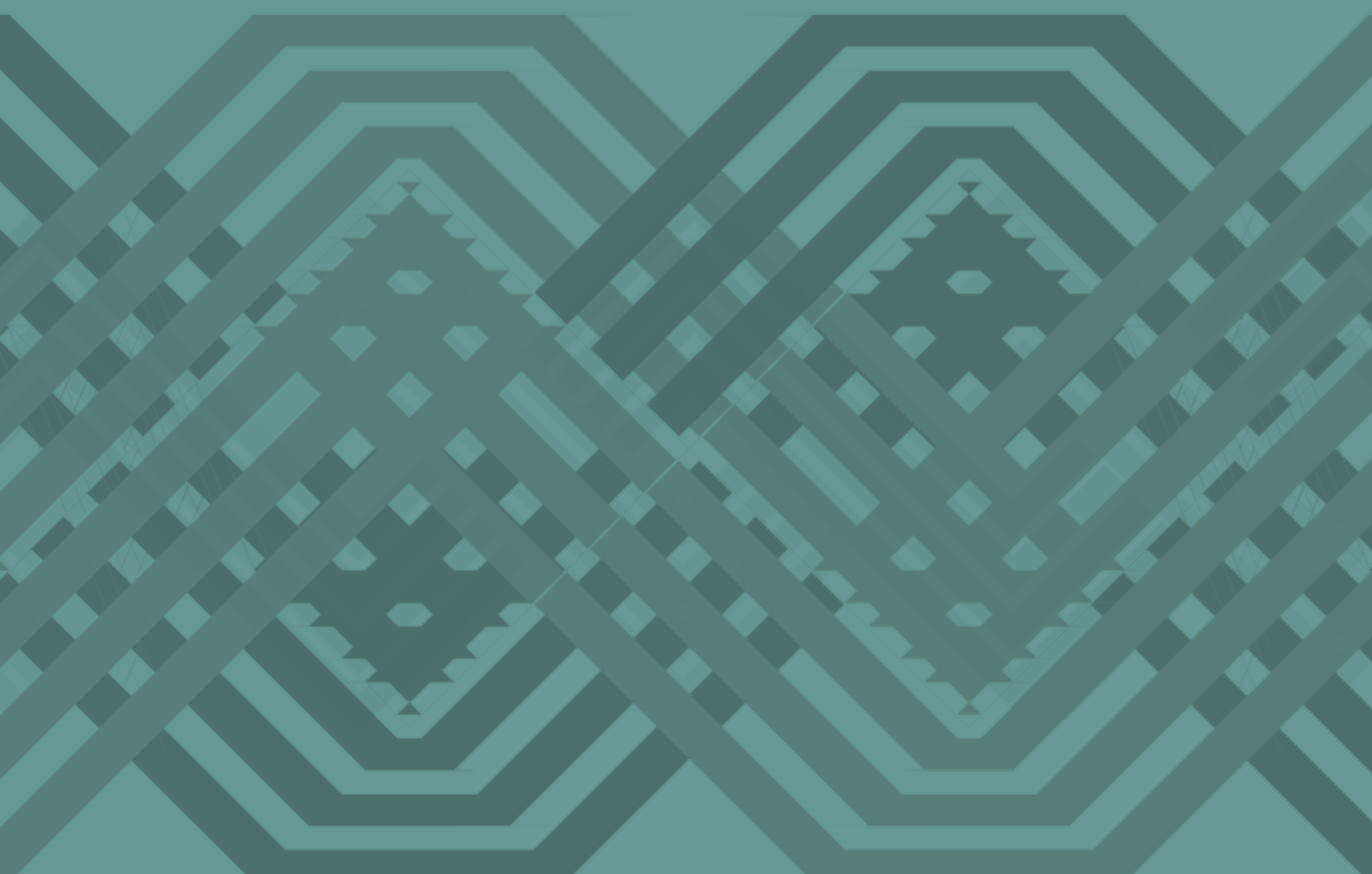
The DRP's commitment to social justice, human rights and equality is a perfect fit with the EWI's aims and objectives. This research brings into focus the significant work carried out by the DRP and the active civic participation of the SCSAs and AOMs, especially those granted some form of status, and this will provide the EWI with valuable information on the challenges faced by these vulnerable young people's integration into Irish society – information which up to the present has not been readily available.

This study benefited from the principles espoused by the EWI of deep democracy, love, care, solidarity, amongst many others. This certainly helped in adequately articulating the needs of SCSA/AOMs granted residency. Ultimately, the purpose of this research is to ensure that the needs of these young people are catered for and that they are enabled and supported in their integration prospects in Ireland.

As the DRP's work with this cohort has shown and as this study reveals, the young people have shown tremendous capacity, despite the odds stacked against them, for civil society engagement and have even participated at some level in public policy dialogue, both of which are key areas of interest for the EWI.



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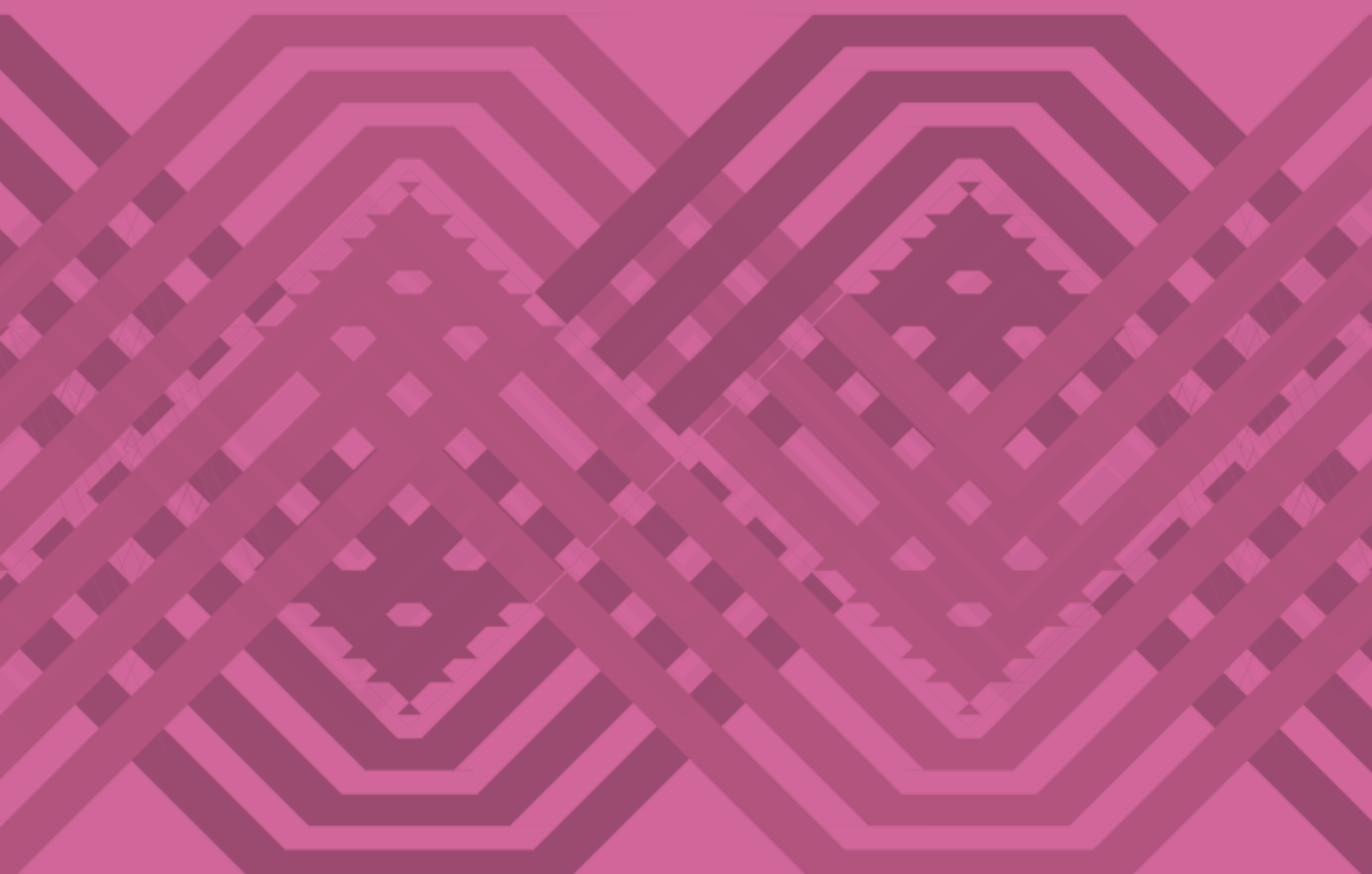
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# APPENDIX 1:

## General Comments from Study Participants



## I. Education

The following are some general comments by study participants on accessing further education:

*"It would be great if there were more intercultural activities and facilities within the college to assist people like me."*

*"I wish I could get the financial support to help with tuition, accommodation and transportation... even if it is a loan which I can pay off when I start working."*

*"I am training at the National Maritime College and I have been facing difficulties in finding work experience on a ship in Ireland as a cadet. I need sea time to qualify as an officer."*

*"I am very happy because I graduated from college last year and I am working for a big international company now. Education is the key to progressing here in Ireland."*

*"Colleges should treat those with leave to remain the same as those with refugee status. It is very disappointing to be treated differently when we are in the same position. I would also really appreciate more supports with books and transport costs."*

*"I have been accepted to do a degree but I am struggling to get the fees required. The rules should be changed for those of us with leave to remain and not treat us differently from refugees."*

*"I am currently interested in gaining work experience and would also like to improve my English even further."*

*"I would like to go on to a bigger college and get a good degree. I am currently doing a diploma and I aim to progress to a university."*

*"I am getting support with fees from an Irish charity and it was the DRP who got it for me and I am very grateful. When I graduate and I am working I would like to give something back to others following me."*

*"I just need to continue with English classes and improve for college."*

## II. Racism

The following are some of the responses to the question whether study participants had been victims of racism (and in what form) in the month prior to their participation in this study:

*"Verbal abuse, name calling generally. I had eggs thrown at me."*

*"I felt I was being discriminated against on my placement, mainly by my supervisor, who was very manipulative. It was so obvious how differently she treated me from the other 5 in our group. I wanted to report her, but ultimately due to lack of evidence, I could not and in the end I went and got another placement which I enjoyed."*

*"Yes, I have been racially abused but that's normal. I guess every one like me will experience that."*

*"I have been called all sorts of not very nice names, which I even hate repeating now because it is not worth it."*

*"I have been verbally abused and one time, at night I thought I would be physically attacked at night whilst I was waiting for the bus. It is usually groups of young men who do this most of the time. Sometimes drunk men too, say nasty things."*

*"I have experienced verbal racism, though I tend to ignore such things."*

*"Sometimes, it is racist name calling, but not too much."*

*"On the street, being called the N word."*

*"Just some old drunk calling us names."*

*"I don't want to comment but there is been a lot in so many ways."*

*"I was stoned by this little boy for no reason at all."*

*"Name calling ... and felt really left out in school and many other things that I won't go into, but every thing is in the past now and I don't think about it much now."*

*"One day, not long ago, I was walking with my friend and the Irish women call us monkeys."*

*"People calling me ugly names."*

*"They called me a monkey."*

*"I have been a victim of discrimination based on race."*

*"Name calling and threats usually. I live in a tough area with lots of anti-social behaviour. I hope to move soon."*

*"In my former school and outside, at the bus stop, walking in the street and so on."*

*"Yes, I have been abused at different times, like in the bus or standing in the post office queue."*

*"Nigger, Go Back To Your Country."*

*"Definitely. During job hunt and sport activities."*

*"Name calling and threats of physical violence."*

*"Many times, people call me names (black monkey)."*

*"Racism is always there, you just learn to live with it."*

*"Racist abuse from young men, mainly. Thankfully I have not been attacked physically. I think it is a bit more now maybe because of recession."*

*"Just a little verbal abuse from drunk people, but I have learnt to ignore such things. As long as I am not beaten up just because I have a different skin colour, I think I can handle it."*

*"When I arrive in Ireland, some old people give me a dirty look and call me names. At my job, some customers will recognise me from the voice and they will prefer to talk to an Irish agent. One day, a customer refused to make payment with her laser card because I was a foreign person. I get called names by rude customers like monkey, bitch. Thankfully, I have left that job now."*

*"I was waiting for bus number 7 and there was a white person waiting with me. The bus came and it was full, but the bus driver told the other*

*guy to get on and left me there. I was really so angry that I took the number plate and then went to complain to Dublin Bus office. They said they would look into it but I am not sure they did, but I am still glad I complained. Things like this should not be allowed to happen."*

### III. Positive Experiences

Study participants were asked to state some positive things that they had experienced since they came to Ireland. The following are some of their responses:

*"Getting my status, graduating from college and getting my qualification."*

*"Learning English has been a pleasant experience and now I am very proud that my English is very good. When I came here I did not speak any English at all, only Portuguese."*

*"The kindness of many Irish people and the hospitality that I have received from some very good Samaritans has made my life in Ireland very positive. Without their support I would not be where I am now."*

*"Seeing Irish people standing for the rights of people like us. It is really touching to see Irish people fight injustice like deportation and racism."*

*"Becoming a mom in a free country where my child can grow up without the worries of back home."*

*"Meeting some very good people, who have a kind word and are very supportive. Whenever I have any bad experiences, I always remember those people and I feel much better."*

*"Finishing university and graduating has been one of the most positives that have happened to me. When I first arrived in Ireland, I never dreamed someone like me would ever reach this point. I have always wished that my family were here to share the moment with me."*

*"Making good Irish friends in high school made me feel normal, even though I was still living in the hostel. I felt like any other*

*young person and I am still friends with most of my former school mates."*

*"I am very grateful of the help that I got from many people through my asylum case. The process is very tough and difficult especially for a young person. Meeting the DRP is one of my most positive experiences."*

*"My positive experiences mainly are because of the DRP and other kind people that have helped me when I first came to Ireland."*

*"Some people are really nice, warm and welcoming."*

*"The people here are nice and have been very helpful and supportive."*

*"The good people around me have made my time in Ireland very positive."*

*"The work that the DRP does for us is a positive experience which makes it easier for us to adjust to life in Ireland. They helped us get to where we are now."*

*"Meeting DRP volunteers in the Old School House was the best thing that could have happened to me when I arrived here as a 15 year-old."*

*"I always say to people that even though there have been some sad times, I can safely say that more positive things have happened to me, especially the fact that I now have residency and I am in college, I am healthy and have people who care for me around me."*

*"The most positive thing for me is that I am in a safe place and I have good people around me."*

*"My English is very good now and that is very positive."*

*"Living with people from all walks of life and different cultures, getting to know them, is a great experience to me."*

*"Meeting people that believe in me and give me confidence when I'm down."*

*"There are so many positive things about being in a country where young people have*

*opportunities and they can go to school and have opportunities to work and make a good life."*

*"For some reason, I always look forward to St Patrick's day and enjoy how great Irish people can be."*

*"Some good people like the DRP and my friends."*

*"Being given the chance to integrate into the society/community is a very positive experience. There was no chance of integration when I was living in the hostel."*

*"Going to college is one of the best things that has happened to me."*

*"The people that I have met and have helped me to adapt to this country."*

*"I come from an African country where there are very few white people and I had never in my life thought I could have white friends. Now I do and it is really good for me to have friends from so many different cultural backgrounds. I learn a lot from them and I think they may also learn from me."*

*"My education, security and standard of living are all absolutely great compared to living in Africa."*

*"Looking out for myself and being able to work and study."*

*"I have got a lot of help from Irish people, especially from the DRP who helped me get into a third level course at the Dún Laoghaire College for Further Education."*

*"There are so many positive experiences for me. The main one is that I now have residency after waiting for more than 6 years. The fact that I am going to college and that I have people who help and support me are the other good things in my life."*

*"Meeting some nice and helpful people in Dún Laoghaire who supported me to be where I am now, with status."*

*"Having the security that I have now."*

*"One the best days of my life was when I got the letter telling me I had been granted residency. I thought it was a mistake and had to ask a friend to also read the letter to confirm that it was true."*

*"Being granted leave to remain."*

*"Working with the DRP"*

*"Most people that I have met like the DRP volunteers have been very supportive and I couldn't have survived without them."*

*"It was the positive people who supported me when I was an asylum seeker and I lived in the hostel that helped me keep myself hopeful that one day I would get residency. I was very young when I came to Ireland and these people showed me a lot of kindness and helped me."*

*"I have met some wonderful and supportive people. The DRP and people at church have made it easier to live here."*

*"Making new friends here has been a very good experience. Before I came to Ireland I had never had any friends who were from other cultures and were a different colour."*

*"I have had so many positive experiences that they overshadow the negative ones that I have also faced. I have a good job and I have good health, good friends and some of my family members have joined me here."*

#### **IV. Integration Prospects**

Study participants were asked to state what they thought would enhance their successful integration into Irish society. The following are some of the their responses:

*"Getting a job would greatly improve my chances of integration, but getting a job is difficult for someone like me, even before the recession. Also College fees are a barrier to accessing college education which is another good way of getting integrated into Irish society."*

*"To be supported to achieve my dreams and potential so that I can pay back Irish hospitality."*

*"I am well integrated. All my friends are Irish, so I am part of them."*

*"By making the work environment more culturally diverse by employing people from different ethnic backgrounds and cultures."*

*"Spending more time with the Irish people and learning about their way of life and culture."*

*"People should stop asking too many questions about who you are and why you are here and so on. It drives people away since I don't want to re-live or tell my story over and over again."*

*"Nothing much because Irish society is now my society."*

*"I think going out and doing things, being active in Irish society is good for me. Going to college, finding job, helping in community will help me integrate well."*

*"The main challenge is that the leave to remain status has limits when it comes to accessing third level education. I think that is a big barrier to integration and it should be changed so that we have the same rights as refugees."*

*"Getting involved in more activities from different countries, celebrating different cultures and activities is a good way to improve integration. But the host country has to be welcoming and give space to people like me to share with them our culture. I should also learn more about Ireland and its culture, if I am going to stay here."*

*"Make more access to opportunities available to foreigners in Ireland."*

*"People should not be treated badly in the hostels where they live before they get status. Just because they don't have the same rights as Irish people does not mean they should be treated badly."*

*"I think Ireland needs to be a more open minded society."*

*"More interaction between people from different backgrounds will improve integration."*

*"Regarding jobs, I think there should be a fairer system. I would also love to see non-Irish nationals working in the post office, banks, social welfare offices and government"*

*offices, even in immigration like in the UK. That balance is presently lacking in Irish society."*

*"More intercultural activities and good education for everyone so that we understand the other culture better."*

*"I am already integrated into the society. I am happy with my friends and trying my best to get a job, so that I can be productive too."*

*"I think immigrants should volunteer more, not only in their own communities but in Irish communities. It is a good way to meet Irish people."*

*"Better command of English language is very important."*

*"I think that once I finish my course and start working and start contributing to Irish society, that will help improve my integration."*

*"I think integration in Ireland today is improving very well and I think it is important that children in school also become part of the integration process. Hopefully that will get back to the Irish parents."*

*"Getting into college after PLC and getting a degree and then start working."*

*"Finishing my studies and getting a job will improve my integration in Irish society."*

*"Getting involved in the community through various positive activities."*

*"I think I need an avenue where I can air my opinions and thoughts about life here without any judgement. Perhaps I need a priest or pastor for that."*

*"Make it easy to apply for a medical card, make it fair to find jobs and I think we are paying too much to attend college."*

*"To assist me in my education so that I can get a good job and then make my contribution."*

*"Be respectful of other people's culture, religion, beliefs and attitudes toward specific issues in society. This should not be one way but a two way process."*

*"If I continue to push forward and change the negative people and show that we can also do great things to support the country, that we are not just some strange aliens crashing the party."*

*"I feel that even though I have lost about five years of my life in a hostel, not allowed to study or work, I still think that I have managed to integrate to the best of my ability because of the strong desire and will that I have."*

*"I would like to organise more outings or activities with Irish people about my culture and other cultures that have come to Ireland."*

*"Having access to facilities and more interaction with the Irish people without any biased feelings from them could help more people to integrate into this society."*

*"New communities should also start getting involved in 'Irish' activities and not just keeping to themselves. I feel a lot of immigrants still keep to themselves and do not get involved in Irish activities. Also Irish people should be brave and try the different food, music and activities that have come to their country. It would be fun."*

*"I'm generally happy with my integration in Ireland. I am very active, so I meet a lot of people - Irish, from other countries and I'm happy to be here."*

*"I am a shy person, not very outgoing. I would like to get out more as I think this will help me integrate more, but I am not sure where to start."*

*"No (lack of) racism would help integration. Actually, I think if integration works, then there will be less racism."*

## **V. Social, Cultural and Community activities**

Study participants were asked if anything could be done to improve their participation in social, cultural and community activities and the following are some of the responses:

*"Celebrate different cultural days - learn about other cultures, music, food and activities."*

*"Punctuality. On my part."*

*"Working after school makes everything much difficult!"*

*"Not much really, I think this is more about what I can do myself."*

*"So far it is good. I am involved in a few things already."*

*"Access to youth clubs with similar minded young people where we can engage in various activities. Generally, the problem is that some young people do not have that many things to do."*

*"I would like to be 100% involved, if I had the time and resources."*

*"There is lack of social activities, it will be good if there were a lot of activities, the few activities needs money for transport, refreshment, food and so on."*

*"I would like to participate in one of the sports club."*

*"Need more training in social/cultural/ community to be effective in helping the Guinean community of Ireland."*

*"Encourage volunteerism."*

*"Join a more advanced acting club."*

*"Find time to get involved."*

*"Finding something that suits me."*

*"I'm into coaching in soccer and it is difficult to get attached to a local team to assist."*

*"To have variety of things that can help young people self esteem and encourage education."*

*"I guess to feel welcome in places and not to be looked at as a stranger because I'm originally from a different country"*

*"Improve awareness of what is available culturally, socially and what is also free."*

*"Drinking and going out with friends."*

*"More cultural events where I can showcase my culture's food, music and traditions."*

*"I am very active and I'm already involved in a few things. I think it is about the effort someone makes to participate, rather than sitting at home."*

*"I need to be encouraged to go and be involved in my local community, but I don't know where to start."*

*"Help me get involved in different activities."*

*"I will take the chance to do anything that will help me get more experience, and help me integrate into Irish society and basically learn more about Ireland."*

*"Maybe access to further education and employment would help in this area."*

*"Besides the Nigerian community and church, I am not involved in anything much, so I think I need to get involved outside my own community and then maybe I will learn new things from others."*

*"Get more opportunities to share our Kenyan culture with Irish people."*

*"I would like to integrate African and Irish communities through music, dance, food and interesting things."*

## **VI. Comments about personal health**

*"I have eye and dental issues. However, because I received leave to remain while in third level education, my community welfare officer advised me to defer the place for one year in order to be eligible for social welfare benefit. Being in third year, I could not take that advice. If I fall sick I am worried that I am not going to be able to afford looking after myself."*

*"I prefer to have a female doctor look after me."*

*"I would like to get a medical card but I was told I do not qualify to get one."*

*"I am happy with my health and I hope I stay like that."*

*"I want to get another GP, maybe a woman GP who will listen to me."*

*"Even though Irish people complain about the health system here, I am just*

*happy to be in a country with a good health compared to my country."*

*"I would like my GP to do more check ups and not give medicine only."*

*"I am very happy with my GP, who is very friendly and shows that he cares."*

*"Yes, thank God, I'm happy with my health situation."*

*"I had to use the emergency service once and I thought the service was very poor. Now I know why Irish people always complain about it."*

*"I need a medical card, but maybe I don't qualify for one."*

*"I'm happy with my health."*

*"I would like to be registered with a GP and have a medical card, just in case. Otherwise I am fine right now."*

*"Doctors should have more time with patients and really help and not just give them pills."*

*"I know I need to lose weight and I have been trying all sorts of things."*

## **VII. General open-ended comments from study participants**

*"I need assistance in gaining employment in my field (ship crew member), I love to work on board ship in Ireland. Last time, I worked with Irish light, and after that I could not further my cadetship because many other shipping companies were not interested in employing someone with my passport and they only wanted Irish citizens."*

*"I want to thank all the DRP volunteers for the love they have shown us. I don't want to embarrass them but they are our parents."*

*"It is also difficult to be reunited with family and I hope I can get support for this."*

*"DRP is doing a great job in the interaction and integration of immigrants in Ireland and they should be highly commended."*

*"Just to say a big thank you to the DRP team, the DRP has been a blessing to me and many others."*

*"The government should make a policy that will enable the foreign nationals to feel welcomed in Ireland."*

*"I love this country, especially the weather. Thank you."*

*Please help me pass the message across that I am a single father and I want to continue with my education and get a good job so that I can make my contribution and look after my daughter.*

*"Just to say a very big thank you to the DRP. They have been a huge support to me since I came here 5 years ago."*

*"I appreciate your efforts with this survey, actually I have looked forward to something such as this so I could let people and the Irish government know how much I do appreciate the help and support you all have given to me in all my achievements thus far. I pray that God will reward each and everyone of you. Keep up your good work."*

*"Thank you to all the volunteers who are working in the DRP. I love and respect you all."*

*"I would like to say thanks to the DRP for all their help."*

*"I am very happy to be in Ireland and hope that NGO's like DRP will always be there for young asylum seekers. Thank you so much DRP"*

*"Just really thankful for all the advice, supports rendered to me by the DRP team. They have become my parent, even when I was a stranger to them."*

*"Recession should not be allowed to negatively affect unaccompanied minors or aged out minors."*

*"I am grateful to be living in a safe country like Ireland."*

*"I am happy living in Ireland."*

*"I am lucky that some family members have joined me in Ireland, so they support me."*

*"I am glad that there are people and organisations like the DRP that have helped young people like me. I think without them, we would be in big trouble as young people."*

*"I wish family reunification was possible as I would like to locate my younger sisters and bring them here. I do not think they are safe wherever they are now."*

*"I would like to thank the DRP. I know without them, things would be very difficult and hopeless."*

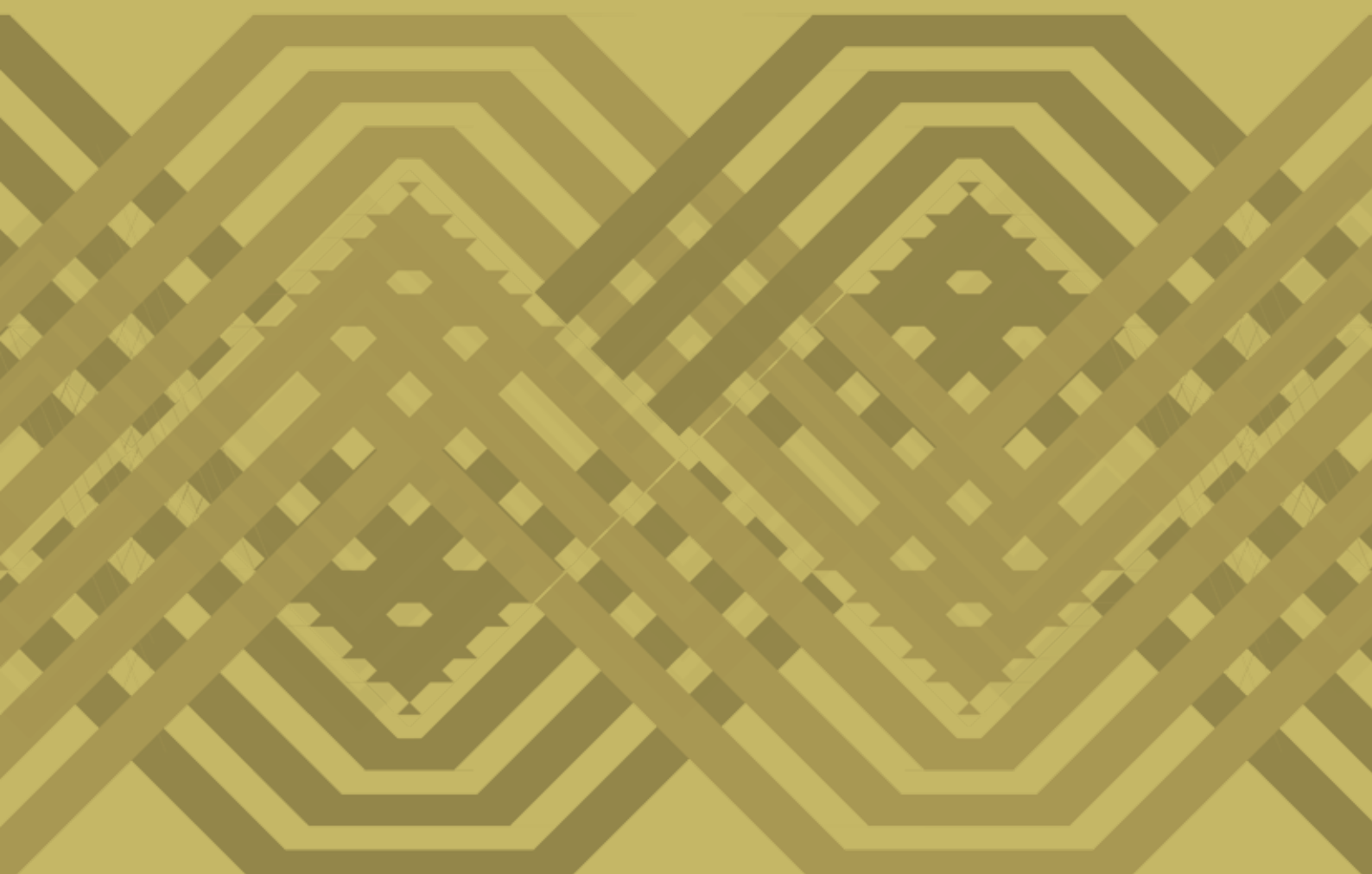
*"If am given the choice to do what I would like to do and I would be proud to pay my taxes to help this country to the best of my ability. At this point, I feel like Ireland is my home now."*





# Appendix II:

Survey on the Needs of  
Separated Children With Refugee  
or Leave to Remain status



The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information on the needs of separated children and 'aged out' minors who have been granted refugee status or permission to remain in Ireland. This research will gather useful information from respondents who have received support from the Dún Laoghaire Refugee Project (DRP) and help inform whether any supports are required and whether there are gaps in service provision that can realistically be addressed.

The questionnaire is confidential and it is anonymous, so please do not write your name on the form – all information will be summarized into statistics and general statements - no personal details that might identify anyone will be released to a third party. Participating in this research is voluntary, there will be no obligation on your part to participate, but we hope you will take time to participate.

You will be informed of the results of the research when it is completed and you will also be given an opportunity to discuss the results. A report will be published and you will also be invited to attend and participate in a seminar on the report in the University College Dublin's Equality Studies Centre in the School of Social Justice.

If you have any questions concerning this survey, please note that the researcher, Itayi Viriri, can be contacted at itayi.viriri@gmail.com or 0877622388.

## **A) Background Details**

Gender: Male  Female

Marital status: Single  Married

Separated/Divorced  Living with partner

When did you arrive in Ireland?

Month/Year \_\_\_\_\_

How old were you when you came to Ireland? \_\_\_\_\_

How old are you now? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your Country of origin? \_\_\_\_\_

When were you granted your status? \_\_\_\_\_Month/Year

What legal status were you granted? (Please choose one)

a) Refugee status

b) Humanitarian leave to remain

c) Permission to remain based on being a parent of an Irish child (IBC scheme)

d) Other. Please explain. Have you applied for citizenship (naturalisation)? Yes  No

Have you been granted citizenship? Yes  No

## **B) Education**

Are you attending secondary school? Yes  No

Have you completed your leaving certificate? Yes  No

Are you currently doing a PLC or other course? Yes  No

Name of College/Institution you are attending or have attended? \_\_\_\_\_

Who provides funding for your course?

Please tick all that apply.

Self  DRP  Friends

Scholarship/Bursary  Other

If other, please explain? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you interested in pursuing further education (a PLC course for example)? Yes  No

Are you interested in pursuing skills training or an apprenticeship (a FÁS course) for example? Yes  No

Are you interested in pursuing third level education at university or an institute of technology for example?) Yes  No

If you answered 'yes' to any of the last three questions, what course would you like to study or are you studying now? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your level of English language literacy? Very Good  Good  Fair  Poor

What languages do you speak? \_\_\_\_\_

Please tell us what (if any) changes should be made to improve your educational/training situation? \_\_\_\_\_

## **C) Employment**

Are you currently in paid employment? Yes  No

If yes, are you in Full time   
 or Part time employment  ?Not applicable

If you are in employment, what is  
 your job title/position? \_\_\_\_\_

Name of employer/organization? \_\_\_\_\_

If you are not in paid employment, are  
 you looking for work? Yes  No

If yes, what kind of work are you  
 looking for? \_\_\_\_\_

Is anyone assisting you with finding work?  
 Yes  No  If yes, who? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you registered with any of the following?

Please tick all that apply: FÁS

Recruitment agency  Career  
 advisor  Other

If other please explain? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you receiving social welfare/  
 rent allowance? Yes  No

## D) Social, Cultural and Community Activities

Are you involved in youth activities  
 (e.g. youth clubs, etc?) Yes  No

Do you play any sport regularly? Yes  No

If yes, which sports? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a volunteer? Yes  No

If yes, where do you volunteer? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you involved in a church? Yes  No

Are you involved in after school/college activities  
 (drama, study groups etc)? Yes  No

Are you involved in any other social/  
 cultural activities? Yes  No

If yes, please describe \_\_\_\_\_

What (if any) changes can be made to  
 improve your participation in social, cultural  
 and community activities? \_\_\_\_\_

## E) Integration

Have you experienced any significant form of  
 racism in the past month?

Yes  No  If yes, please describe \_\_\_\_\_

Can you name one or two positive experiences in  
 your life in the past month? Yes  No

If yes, please describe \_\_\_\_\_

What are your main forms of support and advice?

Please tick all that apply:

a) Friends  b) DRP  c) NGO/Charity

d) Family  e) Church  f) Other

If 'Other', please describe \_\_\_\_\_

Which of these is the most important source of  
 support for you?

a) Friends  b) DRP  c) NGO/Charity

d) Family  e) Church  f) Other

If 'Other', please describe \_\_\_\_\_

## F) Health/Medical

Do you have any long-term health  
 issues? Yes  No

Are you in receipt of a medical  
 card? Yes  No

Do you have a Doctor (GP)? Yes  No

If yes, are you happy with service you  
 receive from your GP? Yes  No

If you answered 'No' to the last question, why  
 are you not happy with your GP? \_\_\_\_\_

In general, are you happy with your  
 health situation? Yes  No

If you answered 'No', what are you  
 not happy with? \_\_\_\_\_

Please tell us what (if any) changes  
 should be made to improve your medical/  
 health situation? \_\_\_\_\_

### **G) For Parents only**

Do you have a child/children living in Ireland? Yes  No

Are you a single parent? Yes  No

Are you a full time parent? Yes  No

If 'No', who cares for your child/children? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you happy with the quality of care provided to your child/children? Yes  No

Please tell us what (if any) changes should be made to improve your situation as a parent? \_\_\_\_\_

### **H) General Comments**

Please tell us what you think will improve your integration into Irish society \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any other comments? \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you very much for your participation.





