

Immigrant Council of Ireland

  
A Social Innovations Ireland Initiative

# VOICES OF IMMIGRANTS

THE CHALLENGES OF INCLUSION

*kelleherassociates*

Written by: Patricia Kelleher and Carmel Kelleher  
kelleherassociates  
Allihies, Beara  
Co. Cork, Ireland

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2 St. Andrew Street  
Dublin 2, Ireland  
Tel: 01 704 0200  
Email: info@immigrantcouncil.ie  
Website: www.immigrantcouncil.ie

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### **About the Authors**

Patricia Kelleher (Ph.D.) and Carmel Kelleher (M. Soc. Sc.), sociologists, established kelleherassociates in 1987. kelleherassociates specialise in the areas of evaluation research, poverty and social exclusion, women's issues, rural development, community consultation and social planning, and the relationship between the state and voluntary organisations.

kelleherassociates have co-authored several publications including *Left Out on Their Own* (2000); *Going the Extra Mile* (2000); *Safety and Sanctions* (1999); *Making the Links* (1995); *The Voluntary Sector and the State* (1993); *Dublin Communities in Action* (1992); *Focus on Hostels: Patterns of Hostel Use in Dublin* (1992), and *To Scheme or Not to Scheme* (1986).

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## FOREWORD

This study makes challenging reading for policy makers and practitioners and indeed for all of us living on the island of Ireland. It calls us to face the realities with which immigration presents us, while it also identifies serious deficiencies in our immigration system. It shows that our immigration system is not working in the interest of immigrants or of Irish society in general, and that immigrants' human rights are being violated on a daily basis in Ireland.

This study is about people. It gives a voice to twenty-two immigrants and their families who have come to Ireland. They tell us what it was like to leave their homelands and come to live and work here. The testimonies of the migrants give evidence to their courage and willingness to brave difficult conditions in their search to find a better life for themselves and their families. It is difficult not to be touched by the similarities of the human stories of immigrants coming to Ireland today, and those of Irish emigrants in our recent history. Their stories tell us what needs to change in our society if we are to recognise new, more complex, and diverse realities.

Ireland's immigration policy is market-driven and seeks to attract temporary workers in particular to fill skills and labour shortages. There is little concern for the human needs and rights of individuals and their families whose needs often come last in the unwieldy legal and economic process. While much of the debate concerning immigrants has focused on asylum seekers and refugees who come to Ireland to seek protection, this study is about the wider population of immigrants who come to Ireland to benefit our economy and who are very much needed here. It is vital that we now accept our responsibility and our obligations and that we regard immigrants as people, not just as economic units or disposable resources.

We cannot run away from some plain truths – that immigration is here to stay, that migrant workers bring huge economic and cultural benefits, that international migration is now a global phenomenon, that labour migration is big business, and that racism is an everyday experience of immigrants in Ireland.

Ireland now has a unique opportunity to learn from other immigration countries around the globe. We can learn from their mistakes, as well as adopting their positive models of good practice. Migration and interculturalism are identified in the *Sustaining Progress: Social Partnership Agreement 2003-2005* as two issues to be specifically addressed, and promise of reform is reiterated throughout many government documents.

This research was commissioned by the Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI), an independent non-governmental body (NGO), and we believe that it is relevant not only to politicians and those working in the statutory sector, but also to NGOs who play an important role in service provision, as well as the general public. The ICI also believes that defined funding schemes should be put in place by the government to fund services provided by the NGO sector. We consider the development of intercultural competencies, and the promotion of integration and inclusion of members of ethnic minority groups to be a challenge for all organisations — governmental and non-governmental.

The ICI calls on the government to implement the main recommendations of this study. The principle of ‘permanence’ should underpin Irish immigration policy and all immigrants should be seen as potentially permanent members of our society. It also calls for a national forum on immigration to be set up to put immigration at centre stage of public debate and enable all voices concerned about the issue to be heard, and for a Minister of State for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs to be established in the Department of the Taoiseach. The establishment of such a ministry would drive a clear, robust, high-level cross-departmental process to co-ordinate and integrate the roles and activities of the various government departments and agencies. Such a ministry would put in place an effectively-managed, ethical, and comprehensive immigration policy within a strategic long-term approach. It would ensure that an integrated, transparent, rights-based policy for immigrants would be implemented, and would give a clear picture to Irish society of the positive role of immigration in the development of our society and economy.

Stanislaus Kennedy RSC  
Executive Chair

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Patricia Kelleher (Ph.D.)

Carmel Kelleher (M. Soc. Sc.)



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of this study is to give a voice to immigrants<sup>1</sup> and their families. It also seeks to inform public opinion as well as governmental and non-governmental policies and strategies that affect immigrants.

### ***Globalisation and International Migration***

In an increasingly interdependent and globalised world, international migration has grown in volume and significance, and has increased the diversity of the populations of more and more countries.

Awareness of the increasing numbers of women in contemporary migration, and the specific issues faced by women, has grown and has led authors to develop the concept of the ‘feminisation of migration’.

As the Irish economy grew in the 1990s, Ireland was one of the last EU countries to reach its migration turning point, which it did in 1996. At this time, Ireland moved from being a country of emigration to becoming a country of immigration, where immigration was encouraged to fill skill shortages. Immigrant workers are concentrated in low- and semi-skilled jobs that Irish workers are increasingly unwilling to do. They are also employed in the higher-skilled occupations where there is a shortage of workers. There is concern that, in the absence of compliance with labour legislation by some employers, wages in some sectors are being depressed. However, there is no evidence that immigrants are displacing Irish workers in the workforce to any significant extent (Ruhs 2003). In fact, without migrant workers current levels of economic activity would not be sustainable. Indeed, as the report of the Enterprise Strategy Group (2004) puts it:

*As the available indigenous sources of labour supply are reducing, there will be an on-going requirement for significant immigration of workers and particularly those with higher-level qualifications to support enterprise development.*

### ***International Immigration Policy***

Immigration policy is a contested political subject. Issues relating to who can get into the developed industrialised world, and on what terms, are keenly debated internationally (Castles and Miller 2003). Some authors such as Harris (2002) are challenging the restrictive nature of the border controls of the more developed countries.

Immigration systems in the United States, Canada, and Australia are seen as the most advanced (Castles and Miller 2003). The immigration system in the United States is demand-driven, where employers choose most of the immigrants for economic reasons, and a job offer is essential. The United States also has a lottery-based programme that is not skills-based, for which people from most countries worldwide are eligible to apply provided they have second-level education. Once immigrant workers are permitted to enter the country, many of them, depending on their type of visa, are allowed to remain permanently. Immigration approaches in Canada and Australia are based primarily on quota and points systems that select immigrants on the basis of their employability,

1 The focus of this study is on non-EEA (European Economic Area) workers. The EEA comprises the EU member states as well as Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. Switzerland has a similar status to the EEA countries.

and their potential for integration into the receiving country. Canada also provides that any person born in their country is entitled to apply for citizenship, and in Australia a child acquires citizenship if one of its parents is either an Australian citizen or a permanent resident.

In contrast to the permanent settlement approach adopted by these countries, the central continental European countries traditionally accepted only temporary workers that were needed for the economy, and in the 1970s they moved towards reducing labour immigration from non-European countries to a minimum, although family reunification continued. The need to move away from these restrictive policies is now recognised by the EU Commission. Current policies are not in keeping with the needs of the European economy where there is a decreasing labour supply, and a population that is reducing in size as well as becoming older.

### ***Irish Government Policy on Immigration***

Ireland's immigration policy is market-driven and seeks to attract temporary workers to fill skills and labour shortages. However, the long-term presence of temporary workers, although not recognised officially, is becoming a feature of the Irish immigration system. Ruhs (2003) calculates that an increasing proportion of 'temporary' immigrant workers in Ireland is opting to renew their residency status and remain in Ireland.

The need to update legislation relating to immigration and residency is recognised by the Irish Government. At present, Ireland is out of line with other EU countries in that you must be here for ten years before you can apply for permission to remain without condition as to time. However, this is not a guaranteed right, as indefinite leave to remain is granted on a discretionary basis. Secure permanent residence in Ireland, that does not require a person to change their citizenship, should be granted as a matter of right and should be available after a shorter period of time. Clear criteria regarding a person's entitlement to citizenship also need to be specified as currently citizenship is granted at the 'absolute' discretion of the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

### ***Who Was Interviewed***

Immigrant workers come to Ireland for economic reasons, to improve their life chances, and to escape extreme poverty. In Ireland, migrant workers from Eastern Europe and Asia can earn a multiple of what they can earn in their home countries. Workers also leave their country for political reasons: fleeing persecution, war, indiscriminate killings, conflict, oppressive regimes, and disregard for human rights. Economic, political, and personal reasons are not clear-cut and frequently overlap.

The testimonies of the twenty-two immigrants interviewed for this study give evidence to their courage and their willingness to brave difficult conditions in their search to find work and a better life for themselves and their families.

The immigrants interviewed come from a diverse range of countries worldwide with different histories, cultures, and local languages. Both men and women were interviewed, as were people from different class backgrounds, different religious affiliations, and different legal status. The people interviewed included workers

on work permits,<sup>2</sup> workers with working visas/work authorisations, people with no recognised residence, an *au pair* student, as well as refugees, and people who have been granted leave to remain and work in Ireland.

### **Summary of Recommendations**

This section summarises the recommendations based on this research. For further details, see Chapter 6, Recommendations.

1. **Immigration policy:** The principle of ‘permanence’ should underpin Irish immigration policy and all immigrants should be seen as potentially permanent members of our society and provided with equal rights to Irish people. If this principle were recognised, newcomers to Ireland would be seen as ‘us’, and not ‘them’. As long as immigrants are here, they should expect to be treated in the same way as Irish citizens in all respects, with the exception of a small number of formal political privileges of citizenship itself.

Guaranteed, secure permanent residence, that does not require a person to change their citizenship, should be granted as a matter of right in Ireland. Clear criteria regarding a person’s entitlement to citizenship also need to be specified as currently citizenship is granted on a discretionary basis.

2. **Cross-departmental mechanism:** A Ministry of State for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs should be established in the Department of the Taoiseach. This ministry would have responsibility for driving a robust, high-level cross-departmental process that would co-ordinate the work of all departments and agencies that have a brief in this area. Currently, several government departments have a brief in relation to immigration and social inclusion policies with little or no co-ordination between them and there is a need for them to work more closely together.
3. **Public debate:** There is need for a public debate on diversity, on the role of immigration in Irish society, and on the changing nature of Irish national identity. The government should establish a national forum to facilitate this debate, and ensure that this forum becomes a key mechanism for defining the principles and procedures that will form the backbone of a comprehensive immigration policy.

The proposed national forum on immigration should represent a broad range of interests including social partners as well as governmental and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Ethnic minority communities should also be facilitated to participate. The forum should clarify the role of immigration in Ireland, the rights and responsibilities of immigrants, and the rights and responsibilities of the receiving society. It should also address procedural issues covering reception, integration, administration and enforcement, learning from other countries which have a history of immigration. The debate should include a discussion on how to underpin immigration policy with a human rights based approach.

Finally, it should also be possible to address concerns of the receiving society by addressing the need to develop a consensus-based approach to core values as well as an agenda for diversity. To enhance this public debate, there is a need for research to be undertaken on the economic, social, and cultural contribution of immigrants, without whom current economic policy would not be sustainable.

2 The legal term for ‘work permits’ is ‘employment permits’, but they are commonly referred to as work permits in Government documentation and this term is therefore used throughout this report.

4. **Family life:** The right to a family life and to family reunification are fundamental human rights and should be recognised by the government as they play an important role in the inclusion of migrants into receiving societies. Government policy should be changed to ensure that family members of all legal migrants have the right to immediate family reunion, and spouses and partners should be given the right to work immediately.
5. **Work:** The right to work in Ireland should be underpinned by the principle of ‘permanence’ which recognises that workers can become permanent members of society if they so wish. One way in which this principle could be implemented would be entitling any person who is legally resident in Ireland for three years to apply for permanent residency. In the meantime, the current system whereby work permits are held by the employer, needs to be changed to a system where all forms of permission to work are issued to the employee.

There is a need to provide ‘interim permits’ for immigrants who have lost work permits through no fault of their own, for example in cases where the employer fails to renew the work permit before the time of its expiration. This would prevent immigrants from becoming undocumented, and give them time to re-establish themselves without the threat of deportation.
6. **Education:** Immigrants and their families should be entitled to the same access to education and training as Irish people. Measures need to be taken to ensure the inclusion of immigrant children within the school environment, and school material, including the core curriculum, should reflect the lifestyles and cultures of minority ethnic groups. Also, third-level education should be available to children of immigrants at the same cost as it is to Irish children.
7. **Accommodation:** Migrant workers should be entitled to equal access to housing, to have their housing needs assessed, and to be listed on local authority housing lists.
8. **Women:** All spouses and partners of immigrants should have the automatic right to work irrespective of the type of permission to work held by the immigrant. A person who leaves a spouse because of domestic violence should be granted independent status as a matter of right, and be entitled to work and to apply for local authority housing and other benefits on similar terms to EEA workers.
9. **Social inclusion measures:** Social inclusion measures for immigrants need to accompany a progressive immigration policy to ensure that migrant workers have basic rights and are seen as potentially permanent members of our society. Equality of representation and participation for members of migrant groups should be promoted at all levels of society.
10. **Resourcing the community and voluntary sector:** A designated funding line to fund advocacy, support, and information for immigrant organisations needs to be implemented in recognition of the important role of information and advocacy for immigrant groups. Ethnic minority-led groups should also be resourced and strengthened to carry out this role.
11. **Racism:** Existing legal protection against assault, incitement, verbal abuse and the dissemination of material motivated by racism, should be strengthened in the way it is promoted and implemented. The long-promised review of the ineffectual *Prevention of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989* should now be completed and new legislation put in place as a matter of urgency.

12. **Policies, protocols, and training:** Relevant national and regional, statutory and non-statutory agencies should have written policies, protocols and procedures in place that are practical and sensitive to issues relating to cultural diversity and antidiscrimination.
13. **Increasing the knowledge base of Irish people:** It can be frustrating and hurtful for immigrants that Irish people lack knowledge of the rich cultural heritages, histories and civilisations of their home countries. There is a need to highlight the importance of Irish people supporting world policies and programmes based on human rights principles, which aid the development of the home countries of immigrants and promote real transfer of resources from industrialised to less-industrialised countries.
14. **Redressing data deficits:** The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment should collate work permit data, and working visa/work authorisation data by a broad range of variables. In addition, the department should record all work-related complaints by immigrant workers. Also, all published data on immigration should be disaggregated by gender, race, and nationality.
15. **Research and monitoring:** A broad range of research on the experiences of immigrants in Ireland needs to be undertaken. Moreover, the extent to which issues of concern to ethnic minorities and immigrants are prioritised within the government departments and agencies, local authorities and NGOs should be monitored and assessed.



# INTRODUCTION

*Focus and Scope of this Study*





## INTRODUCTION

Immigration is now a feature of Irish society and is a feature that is here to stay. Immigrant workers come to the developed industrial world where they are needed to sustain economic growth. Remarkable changes emanating from immigration pose new challenges and opportunities to the Irish people and to immigrants.

People who leave their home country often incur large debts and are cut off from traditional family supports, social supports, and familiar surroundings. The majority of non-EEA nationals<sup>3</sup> working in Ireland have temporary status only. These workers experience instability, have limited rights, and face the threat of deportation if their jobs are terminated or if their permits are not renewed. Coming to terms with a new culture can be unsettling and difficult to deal with.

Ireland is undergoing a ‘transformation of uncertainty’ (Daly 2003). It is experiencing rapid economic and cultural changes where old symbols of national identity — rural Ireland, Catholicism, and the traditional family structure — are fragmenting. Over the last decade, as immigration has increased, the changing nature of Irish national identity has been accompanied by increasing ethnic and religious diversity. Irish identity is being reconfigured to reflect the changing view of what it is to be Irish.

### *Focus and Scope of this Study*

The aim of this study is to give a voice to immigrants and their families in order to inform public opinion as well as governmental and non-governmental policies and strategies.

In order to understand the broader dimensions of immigration, including the policy context, the study:

- a. is set within the framework of globalisation and international migration
- b. includes in-depth discussions with twenty-two immigrants that explore:
  - their reasons for coming to Ireland
  - what it is like to work away from home
  - issues relating to family and community
  - issues of concern to women
  - their work experience
  - their experience of racism and the attitudes of the Irish towards immigrants
- c. documents examples of international immigration policies and the different approaches to immigration in other countries
- d. documents Irish government policy on immigration, and the role of government departments and agencies
- e. includes a review of Irish emigration and immigration trends so that lessons can be drawn from the Irish experience of emigration
- f. summarises Irish research on immigrant workers in Ireland

3 The EEA comprises the EU member states, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. Switzerland has a similar status to the EEA countries. The focus of this study is on non-EEA workers.

There is a significant body of literature that emphasises that while the immigrant population has many common experiences and is distinct in many ways from the host population, migrant groups are differentiated both within and between themselves. Migrant groups have specific histories, cultures and local languages. They are also differentiated internally along such variables as gender, class, religion, education, and legal status.

### ***Profile of Persons Interviewed***

In order to access a broad range of interviewees, several voluntary organisations assisted the researchers in making contact with migrants.<sup>4</sup> Personal contacts were also used.<sup>5</sup> In general, interviews were difficult to arrange. Many people who were contacted were reluctant to be interviewed, as they were uncertain and uneasy about their situation, and nervous about giving information despite the fact that confidentiality was guaranteed.

Twenty-two people were interviewed for the study. Interviewees include a broad range of people in terms of legal status (work permit; working visa/work authorisation; dependent spouse; student; no recognised residence), gender, countries/continents, and employment sectors.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the Ruhama Project, Dublin provided a case study of a woman who was trafficked.

On average, interviews lasted one-and-a-half hours. In situations where the interviewee had difficulty with English, interviews took longer and in one situation a friend of the interviewee volunteered as an interpreter. Interviews were held in the homes of the participants, the homes of the researchers, the workplace of participants and in hotels/restaurants.

To preserve confidentiality, names of participants and personal details that would identify individuals have been changed. Twelve men and ten women were interviewed for the study. People interviewed came from three continents and nineteen different countries (two interviewees came from South Africa, and three were from Tanzania).

Eastern Europe	Africa	Asia and Middle East
Latvia	Democratic Republic of the Congo (DCR)	Bangladesh
Lithuania	Morocco	Iran
Moldova	Nigeria	Pakistan
Poland	South Africa (2)	Russian Federation
Romania	Tanzania (3)	Syria
Turkey	Zimbabwe	Philippines
		India
6	9	7

**Table 1: Nationality of the people interviewed for this study**

4 These included the Immigrant Council of Ireland, Doras Luimní, Cross Care, Women's Aid, Community Technical Aid (CTA), and the Ruhama Project.

5 The 'snowball' technique, whereby interviewees refer others for interview, was avoided.

6 The concerns of asylum seekers are not the main subject of the present research as they are dealt with extensively in other reports: (Watt 1998; McCarthy 1999; O'Sullivan 1997; Comhlámh 2001; Collins 2001; Faughnan and Woods 2000; Faughnan 2002).

Six of the people interviewed came to Ireland prior to the year 2000, and sixteen came between 2000 and 2002. People who participated in the study had a broad range of legal status. Half had either a work permit or a working visa/work authorisation.

Legal Status	Total
Work permit	7
Working visa/work authorisation	4
Dependent spouse	1
Leave to remain	3
Refugee status	2
No recognised residence	4
Student	1
Total	22

**Table 2: Legal status of the people interviewed for this study**

Nine of the twenty-two people interviewed defined themselves as Muslim.

Religion	Number
Muslim	9
Christian	6
No religion	5
No information	2
Total	22

**Table 3: Religion of the people interviewed for this study**

Seventeen of the twenty-two people are employed in a broad range of sectors<sup>7</sup> including medical/nursing, computing, cleaning, catering, building, retail, agriculture, and a student working in a domestic household. Of the remaining five people, two people are in full-time education/training, two women who left a domestic violence situation are dependent on social welfare, and one migrant worker is in receipt of social welfare.

Twelve people are living in Dublin city and six are living in cities outside of Dublin (Limerick, Waterford and Cork). Four interviewees are living in rural areas in the west of Ireland.

This study is a follow-on study to the important study by MacÉinrí with Walley (2003), commissioned by the Immigrant Council of Ireland. See Appendix A for an outline of Irish research on immigrant workers.

<sup>7</sup> The seventeen includes one student who works as an *au pair*.

## ***How this Report is Organised***

This report is organised as follows:

<b>Section</b>	<b>Description</b>
Chapter 1	provides an introduction
Chapter 2	documents the discussions and debates relating to globalisation and migration in order to locate the experiences of immigrants in Ireland and Irish immigration/integration policy in an international context; this is discussed further in Appendix B, which outlines theories relating to migration
Chapter 3	outlines trends in Irish migration, both emigration and immigration
Chapter 4	gives voice to the personal experiences and stories of migrants
Chapter 5	examines the Irish policy framework, and data available on immigrant workers in Ireland
Chapter 6	outlines the recommendations of the research
Appendix A	documents Irish research on immigrant workers
Appendix B	outlines theories relating to migration

**Table 4: How this report is organised**

# INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

*Contemporary Migration*

*Approaches to Immigration*





## INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

### *Contemporary Migration*

With the rise of the global corporation<sup>8</sup> in the 1950s and 1960s, the world economy became increasingly globalised and interdependent. The global corporation brought with it the organisational and technological capabilities to manage production as an integrated unit across the world (Barnet and Müller 1974; Chandler 1977). In this increasingly interdependent and globalised world, migration became a key dynamic and international migration grew in volume and significance (Castles and Miller 2003).<sup>9</sup> People wishing to migrate found it easier to travel because transport became easier to access.

### *Globalisation*

Globalisation emphasises deregulation and the decrease in artificial barriers of production and distribution leading to closer integration of the economies of the world and the emergence of a global civil society (Stiglitz 2003). It implies not only the liberalisation of trade, but of capital and knowledge. Intensification of migration movements has accompanied accelerated globalisation.

Exclusion from the globalised economy can mean devastating societal and economic underdevelopment, and inclusion on unfavourable terms can also lead to very negative consequences. From the late 1950s onwards Ireland became integrated into the global economy and Irish governments have been highly successful in attracting global corporations and foreign direct investment (FDI) into Ireland. However, not all groups in Irish society benefited equally from the economic and social transformation of Irish society at this time. The differential impact, which FDI has had on different groups in Irish society is addressed by several authors (Breen 1990; Kelleher 1987; O'Malley 1983).

### *Benefits Unequally Distributed*

Wade (2003) argues that as globalisation is structured at present, the benefits are unequally distributed. Joseph Stiglitz (2003), who was Chief Economist of the World Bank and was awarded the 2001 Nobel Prize in Economics, argues that the current system of global governance is heavily biased against developing countries.

Institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and World Trade Organisation (WTO) are dominated by rich countries that impose agreements and policies that are often detrimental to the interests of the population of less-industrialised countries. Industrialised countries maintain barriers to entry when it is in their interest. This has led to increased poverty in some countries, the depletion of essential services, more insecurity, and the undermining of the democratic process.<sup>10</sup>

8 The term 'global corporation' as opposed to 'multinational corporation' is used by many authors to indicate that management and stock ownership is still held by families and interests in the developed world.

9 The number of people settled outside of their home country remains small — 150 million out of 6 billion worldwide.

10 Stiglitz (2003) argues, that the IMF induced developing countries to liberalise their capital markets and this aggravated the financial crises in 1997 in Asia, most notably in Thailand, Korea and Indonesia. He is also critical of the United States Treasury in regard to its policies of enforcing debt repayments and accused the United States Government of hypocrisy in protecting its own industries and workers, but imposing open regimes on less-industrialised countries.

### **Accountability Deficit**

Increasing worldwide inequality and poverty, and the accountability deficit, demand new egalitarian and democratic institutional structures for social justice (Held and Koenig-Archibugi 2003). Stiglitz (2003) suggests that the range of interests represented in the decision-making process in such bodies as the IMF and the World Bank should be broadened, that voting power should be less skewed, that transparency of decision making should be increased, and that surveillance on issues relating to human rights and employment and working conditions should be extended (Stiglitz 2003).

### **Border Control**

Some theorists, such as Harris (2002), argue that in an internationalised economy it does not make sense to have open borders for the movement of commodities and capital and to erect border controls, at a growing cost, to keep all but a selected few out of the developed world. As borders become more tightly controlled and increasingly militarised and fortified, people take even greater risks. Between 1993 and 1997, it is estimated that 1,600 people died on the border between the United States and Mexico, and the official figure for the number of people who died on borders trying to enter the EU in the last decade is 2000 (Harris 2002).

The fifteen undocumented immigrants who were discovered in a 40-foot metal freight container in Waterford city, Ireland in December 2001 illustrate the fatal consequences for some migrants. Eight people (four adults and four children) died due to a lack of oxygen. The immigrants were under the impression that they were making a three-hour journey from Belgium to Dover, England. Instead, they were in a container for over 100 hours. The migrants being smuggled were from Turkey, Albania and Algeria. This story is one of many accounts of people who try to cross borders without having the relevant papers.

Because of efforts to prevent people from crossing borders and to make it a criminal offence to leave a country without proper documentation, it is becoming more difficult for people to flee persecution. Harris (2002) argues that as more resources go into controlling borders to detect undocumented immigrants, there are fewer resources available to identify and detect the trafficking and smuggling of people, many of whom become victims to the international slave trade. In an article entitled "21st Century Slaves", Cockburn (2003) estimates that there are 27 million men, women and children in the world who are enslaved. There are currently 100,000 to 150,000 slaves in the United States.

Perhaps the worst conditions of all undocumented workers are reserved for those who are smuggled and trafficked for the purpose of prostitution, or other forms of sexual exploitation. Some of those who are trafficked, including children, are moved on between traffickers, and traded as slaves in prostitution or objects of pornographic films.

### **Ethical Globalisation**

Many in the antiglobalisation movement recognise that the movement towards globalisation cannot be reversed, and seek a role in constructing a new global order and making the new structures more accountable. For some, 'new globalisation' is replacing 'antiglobalisation'.<sup>11</sup> They argue in favour of 'ethical

11 The French term used is 'altermondialisation' or 'another kind of globalisation'

globalisation', which is a value-based global system in which non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civic networks, as advocates, can play a central role in engaging with global corporations and multilateral organisations.

The ethical critique of globalisation focuses on the consequences of globalisation and the need to address the issue of sustainable development in less-industrialised countries, altering the terms of trade between North and South, restricting the international weapons trade, and changing world financial systems so that real transfer of resources from the industrialised to the less-industrialised countries can happen. According to this critique, assistance programmes should be based on human rights, environmental protection, ecological sustainability and social equity criteria (Castles and Miller 2003).

The antiglobalisation movement has led to significant results such as debt reduction for some of the most highly-indebted countries, and codes of conduct being adopted by global corporations that promote the United Nations (UN) principles of social justice.

### ***Global Migration***

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) estimates that between 1965 and 2000, the number of migrants in the world doubled from 75 million to 150 million. These figures do not include undocumented people. Migration is not a new phenomenon. From the 1600s onwards, labour migration played a central role in the development of industrialisation, colonisation/decolonisation, and the development of a capitalist world market. In fact, these processes would not have been possible without international migration, which often involved violence and coercion.

Castles and Miller (2003) posit several features of contemporary migration. These include globalisation, feminisation and politicisation.

### ***Globalisation of Migration***

As globalisation intensifies, globalisation of migration increases with a tendency for more and more countries to be crucially affected by migratory movements, from a diverse number of regions. A variety of explanations have been put forward to explain migration movements (see Appendix B).

### ***Feminisation***

In the past, most labour migration and many refugee movements were predominantly male, and women were, in many cases, only dealt with under the category of family reunification. Today, women account for the majority of migrants in some countries. In the Philippines, for example, women account for two-thirds of emigrants (Salazar Parrenas 2003). Many are mothers and leave their children in their home country to be cared for by extended family and other relatives, as they in turn earn money to send back in emigrant remittances. In this section, feminisation is discussed under patriarchy, care deficit, and trafficking and prostitution.

### ***Patriarchy***

Awareness of the increasing volume and the specificity of the situation of women in contemporary migration has grown. Immigrant women face specific challenges and are often particularly vulnerable. Patriarchy and gender discrimination underpin the societal structures of both the industrial world and of less-developed countries. When migrant women come to the developed industrial

world, they may experience the pornographic industry and the ‘objectification of women’ in the western media as degrading and undermining.

In many of the home countries of migrant women, cultural traditions and practices are in breach of basic human rights obligations, and women can experience severe penalties when they transgress norms relating to culturally prescribed gender roles, such as refusing to get involved in arranged marriages, having a child outside of wedlock, developing a lesbian relationship, deserting a spouse, or being abandoned or rejected by a spouse.

Conversely, many cultures and traditions may not be understood in modern industrial societies and many women may experience denigration when they adhere to cultural norms such as wearing customary clothes, for example, African women wearing colourful African attire or Muslim women wearing a headscarf. Also, migrant women may use traditional and herbal medicine and have different childcare and maternity practices, and different ways of preparing food/baby food, to those of their receiving country.

Many women emigrate as dependants of their spouses. This can mean that they do not have residency/immigration rights as individuals, or the right to work. This places them in a dependent position in relation to their spouses.

### ***Care Deficit***

The role of migrant nanny, maid, carer and cleaning woman in easing the ‘care deficit’ in rich countries has been given specific attention, as has the growth of the sex industry (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003). The demand for domestic workers who undertake cleaning and caring work has been rising steadily in the more developed world, and migrant women are now to the forefront in undertaking this work.

This has led to the concept of the ‘globalisation of domestic work’. Many of the women involved are undocumented migrants. The undocumented migrant is in a vulnerable position and finds it difficult to refuse work she may find demeaning. A recent EU survey of migrant workers found that the conditions of the domestic worker were ones of exploitation and abuse (Healy 2003). The average working day was seventeen hours long, and the average weekly wage was €163.

The increase in demand for care work has been attributed to the increasing number of women entering the workforce in the developed world, the rise in divorce and separation, and the decline of the extended family. It has also been suggested that many couples employ a domestic worker once they have children, thereby averting gender and generational conflict over domestic work (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003).

### ***Trafficking and Prostitution***

Worldwide, the sex industry generates billions of dollars each year and is considered to be the third largest source of profits from organised crime, after drugs and arms. According to Europol, 40 million women were involved in prostitution internationally in 2001, over 60 per cent of whom were migrant women (Bales 2003).

The United Nations estimate that two million women and children are trafficked each year, 500,000 of whom are trafficked into Western Europe. Women and children who are victims of war and forced displacement are particularly

vulnerable, and many are forced into sex slavery by combatant forces, or sold to international gangs.<sup>12</sup>

Bales (2003) estimates that in Thailand, a country of 60 million people, half a million to a million women are involved in prostitution, and one in twenty are enslaved. Many women from Laos and Burma also fall into the hands of Thai slave traders.

There are no reliable estimates of the number of women trafficked into and through Ireland and there is a need for research in this area. The Ruhama Project, Dublin has provided support and assistance to fifteen women in Ireland who were trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Not all of these women were trafficked into Ireland. A small number fled to Ireland to escape traffickers in other countries. Staff of Ruhama are aware of a further seventy non-national women engaged in prostitution, and suspects that some of these women were brought to Ireland under false pretences.

Ruhama have called for the closure of lap-dancing clubs because their experience indicates that there is an inevitable link between lap-dancing and prostitution. Operation Gladiator in 2002 and Operation Quest in 2003 were launched under the *Illegal Immigrant Trafficking Act 2000*. The high-profile raids, with over 100 people arrested, brought the dangers involved for women to public notice.

### **Politicisation**

Domestic and international politics are increasingly affected by international migration. Issues relating to immigration, and the inclusion of immigrants in receiving societies, are now keenly debated.

### **Immigration Policy**

Immigration policy is concerned with who should be allowed into the 'developed world' and under what conditions.

The *Treaty of Amsterdam*, which came into force in May 1999, and the subsequent European Council meeting at Tampere, Finland in October 1999, provided the basis for a common EU immigration policy that is being developed. In June 2003, the European Commission published a communication, *Immigration, Integration and Employment*. The Commission is arguing that the restrictive approach to economic migrants, as practised in the majority of EU countries, is not in keeping with the needs of the EU economy. The decreasing labour supply problem, and demographic projections indicate that Europe's population is diminishing in size as well as becoming older. The Commission sees the need to develop policy in regard to integration, and sets out detailed proposals for supporting the development of integration policies for non-EU nationals in the EU.

The most comprehensive international convention relating to the rights of migrant workers is the *UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families*, 1990 that came into force in July 2003. Although twenty-one countries ratified the convention, not one country

12 Over the period 2001 to 2003, there were 2,792 unaccompanied children asylum seekers in Ireland (Department of Health and Children 2003; ORAC 2003; ECAHB 2004). In Ireland children less than fourteen years old are placed in residential units of the health boards, while children over fourteen are living in hostel-style accommodation. They receive €118 a week from the health board. Issues which have been highlighted relating to unaccompanied minors, include poor facilities, the need for additional social workers and the need for specific expertise in this area.

from the developed industrial world (including the member states of the EU) ratified it. The convention protects the civil and political rights of all migrant workers, both documented and undocumented. These include the right to life, the right to freedom from torture, and the right to freedom of expression. It provides further protection for documented migrant workers, including employment rights equal to those of nationals of the receiving country, equal rights to education and health services, and the right to family reunification. The global campaign for ratification of the 1990 convention on migrants' rights is an international campaign, comprised of sixteen leading international bodies. National ratification coalitions reflecting similar alliances have been established in twenty countries to pressurise governments to consider ratification of the convention as an important issue.<sup>13</sup>

Border controls, smuggling people, and trafficking people, particularly women and children, have received specific attention from the United Nations. In November 2000, the United Nations adopted the *International Convention against Transnational Crime*, and a *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Particularly Women and Children*. Ireland, along with 120 states, signed the convention and protocols. Legislative changes necessary before it can be ratified are currently being prepared.<sup>14</sup>

### **Social Inclusion**

The debate on social inclusion is concerned with the extent to which receiving societies facilitate immigrant participation in the economic, political and social life of their societies. Aleinikoff and Klusmeyer (2000) emphasise that solving the immigration-integration nexus is one of the major challenges of receiving societies.

At an EU level, the EU communication, Immigration, Integration and Employment, issued in June 2003, addresses issues relating to the social inclusion of immigrants. It calls on member states to increase their measures to include immigrants into social, cultural and civic life. The specific needs of second-generation migrants and women migrants are noted. Greater participation of immigrants in civic life should be supported and access to existing services should be mainstreamed.

### **Racism**

Tackling racism is fundamental to facilitating the participation and inclusion of immigrants in receiving societies. Racism can be defined as the process whereby social groups categorise other groups as different or inferior, on the basis of phenotypical (skin colour, hair, features) or cultural traits. Racism involves the use of economic, social or political power, with the purpose of legitimating the exclusion of the group so defined. Institutional and structural racism exists where laws, policies and administrative practices exclude or discriminate against particular groups, or where there are poor outcomes as a result of lack of appropriate positive discrimination measures.

13 Other important conventions of relevance to immigration policy that Ireland has ratified include the *UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (CERD); *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR); the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR).

14 Also important is the *UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women* (CEDAW) which entered into force in September 1981 and prohibits all forms of discrimination against women. Ireland ratified CEDAW in 1985. Article 6 provides that "state parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women". An optional protocol to CEDAW on the right to petition was adopted in 1999. This gives individual women the right to complain to the CEDAW regarding violation of their rights under the convention.

The *UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (CERD) and the EU race equality directive provide an important framework to combat racism.

Castle and Miller (2003) argue that the lack of immigrant rights in a society increases the marginalisation of the immigrant population. This marginalisation of immigrants in turn fuels racism and ethnic tensions and brings into focus the importance of providing a framework for the empowerment and participation of immigrants in receiving societies.

### **Approaches to Immigration**

Castles and Miller (2003) distinguish between different approaches to immigrants taken by the classic countries of immigration, colonial empires, and other European countries such as Germany, Austria, and Switzerland.

Within these approaches, countries can have different *immigration policies* in relation to whom they let into the country, and on what terms people are allowed in. A distinction is made between employer or market-led policies, policies based on quota systems, and policies that deny the need for permanent workers and only admit temporary workers.

Countries also have different policies on social inclusion, that is, the extent to which receiving societies facilitate immigrant participation in the economic, political and social life of their societies. Zappala and Castles (2000) outline three models of social inclusion of immigrants: *pluralism* which gives immigrants equal rights in all spheres of society, while also encouraging cultural diversity; *assimilation* whereby immigrants are required to undertake a one-sided process of adaptation, and *differential exclusion* whereby immigrants are denied access to important rights in society.

### **Classic Countries of Immigration**

The United States, Canada and Australia, are the ‘classic countries of immigration’ and their current populations are the result of histories of large-scale immigration.<sup>15</sup> These countries have, for the most part, ‘managed’ policies of immigration. They perceive immigrants as future permanent citizens and encourage family reunification.<sup>16</sup>

### **Immigration Policy**

Within the ‘classic countries of immigration’, countries differ in the systems used to attract immigrant workers. The immigration systems in Canada and Australia are primarily based on quota and points systems that select immigrants on the basis of their potential for employability and integration in the receiving country.

The immigration system in the United States is demand-driven, where employers choose most of the immigrants for economic reasons, and a job offer is essential. The United States also has a lottery-based programme, which is not skills-based and for which people from most countries worldwide are eligible to apply, provided they have second-level education. Once immigrant workers are permitted to enter the country they are allowed to remain permanently (Castles and Miller 2003; Zappala and Castles 2000).

15 Sweden, despite a very different historical background, has followed similar policies to these three countries.

16 However, not all immigrants were welcome in these three countries. People from Asia were excluded until the 1960s. Also, nation building in these countries did not include native populations, such as the Native Americans and the Indigenous Australians (Aboriginal people and Torres Islanders) who were dispossessed and marginalised as the ‘white man’ expanded into their territories.

### **Social Inclusion Measures**

Australia and Canada, promote policies of cultural diversity and multiculturalism that were introduced into both countries in the early 1970s. This was further strengthened in Canada in 1988 when Canada became the first country to enshrine multiculturalism in its constitution.

The United States has strong traditions of immigrant assimilation. However, it has also been influenced by the debates on race and ethnicity stimulated by the Civil Rights Movement and the women's movement. Policies relating to multiculturalism and diversity have not been formalised, for the most part, and resources have not been provided for immigrant services or diversity programmes. In the terms of Zappala and Castles (2000), the United States policies are closer to *assimilationist* policies than the multicultural policies of Canada and Australia.

In addition to adopting multicultural policies, over a twenty-year period, Australia developed the notion of equal rights, permitting equality of rights for all Australians, irrespective of their origins. 'Mainstreaming' and equal access were adopted as principles for restructuring services, which implied that all government agencies should be aware of the needs of the various groups within the population, and government agencies should plan their services accordingly.

In both countries, multiculturalism was portrayed as a system of rights linked to citizenship, that required measures from the government to combat the discrimination and social disadvantage of minorities. All permanent residents were entitled to citizenship, and citizens could retain dual citizenship. In the terms used by Zappala and Castles (2000), Canada and Australia are *pluralist* in character.

### **Colonial Empires**

Colonial countries such as the United Kingdom, France and the Netherlands, that had expansive empires, permitted the entry of emigrants from former colonies. After the Second World War, there was increased migration from former colonies and permanent residence and family reunification were generally permitted.

Immigration to the United Kingdom from the Caribbean, South Asia, and West Africa started after 1945. Most came in response to labour demand. However with the downturn in the economy, restrictions on immigrants were introduced in the early 1960s. By the early 1980s, the population from the former colonies in the Caribbean, South Asia and Africa amounted to 1.5 million. Most enjoyed formal citizen rights, although this no longer applies since the *Nationality Act* 1981, (Castle and Miller 2003).

Since 2000, a series of measures were implemented to make it easier and quicker for employers to obtain a work permit for a wider range of jobs and the period for which the permit can be awarded increased from four to five years. One of the significant shifts in UK policy since 2000 is the recognition that policy on entry controls cannot be seen in isolation from policy on the integration of migrants and social cohesion. According to Spencer (2002), it is now recognised that policy in the past failed to sufficiently consider the impact of policies on different ethnic groups, and that this had the unintended consequences of generating segregation in housing and education and in some areas, riots and disturbances.

France experienced large-scale immigration from its former colonies in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia and from the West African colonies of Senegal, Mali and Mauritania. In the terms used by Zappala and Castles (2000), France is *assimilationist* in character.

### ***Germany, Austria and Switzerland***

Countries such as Germany, Austria and Switzerland modelled their policies on the ‘guestworker’ system in operation after the Second World War. Such countries tried to prevent family reunification, were reluctant to grant secure residency status, and had highly restrictive naturalisation rules. Permanent settlement was not encouraged. The concept underpinning such policies was that migrant workers could be recruited as temporary workers, utilised, and sent back again as employers required (Castles and Miller 2003). Although substantial numbers of immigrants remained, pluralism was not promoted and immigrants tended to become ‘marginalised ethnic minorities’. In the terms used by Zappala and Castles (2000), this model is a *differential exclusionist* model in character.

Over the last five years, there is evidence of a shift in the approach and there is now an acknowledgement that for demographic and economic reasons, migrant workers are required and that Germany is in fact a country of immigration. The public debates have widened to include the need to acknowledge the contribution of immigrants to German society.



## IRISH MIGRATION

*Irish Emigration*

*Irish Immigration*

*New Expressions of Ethnic Diversity in Ireland*





## IRISH MIGRATION

Emigration has traditionally been a constant feature of Irish society (MacRaidl 1995). In the period 1871 to 1961, the average annual net-emigration from Ireland consistently exceeded the natural increase in the Irish population, that consequently shrank from about 4.4 million in 1861 to 2.8 million in 1961. Net emigration was particularly high between 1871 and 1926, after the Second World War (1951 to 1961) and in the 1980s.

Even as late as the decade leading up to 1989, nearly half a million people emigrated from Ireland (MacEinrí with Walley 2003). Of the 50,000 people who left Ireland each year during this period, 70 per cent were under twenty-five years (National Economic and Social Council 1991). Emigration in the 1980s was concentrated among the educated middle classes who were searching for a higher standard of living than Ireland could provide at the time, and the unskilled who were forced to migrate. The stable working class was the least migratory.

### *Irish Emigration*

There is a substantial body of literature on the out-migration experience of emigrants from Ireland (see Appendix A). Research has focused on the different groups of Irish, which included seasonal agricultural workers, labourers in the building industry, women workers, and Irish factory workers.

Many highly-skilled professional and business people emigrated from Ireland. After several generations, many of the less well-off achieved upward mobility and rose to powerful positions, both in the United States and in the United Kingdom. They are a major resource, both to their adopted countries and to Ireland.

### *Poverty*

Stories, however, of the unskilled Irish are characterised by poverty and deprivation, and for many poverty persisted over several generations. Many experienced trauma and loss as a result of being cut off from their cultural roots. Ethnic segregation and hostility resulted in their social exclusion, and all of these factors made it difficult for them to integrate into receiving societies. A substantial number failed to integrate and were pushed towards the margins of society, experienced homelessness, welfare dependency, and a disproportionate number were found in the prison population (Department of Foreign Affairs 2002).

The Report of the Task Force on Emigration (Department of Foreign Affairs 2002) has addressed issues relating to the Irish poor in Britain. It recognises that the capacity of the Irish voluntary sector in the United Kingdom needs to be increased so that voluntary agencies can play a more effective role in promoting improved access to culturally sensitive mainstream services for the vulnerable Irish. It recommends that €18 million be invested in outreach and support services for the Irish in Britain. This should be increased to €34 million in 2005. As of now, no action has been taken to implement the central recommendations of the Report.

### *Remittances*

Emigrant workers, many of whom were unskilled workers and earned little money, managed to send money home. This helped to prevent starvation and eviction for many families in the nineteenth century, supplemented subsistence agriculture, and helped to improve living standards in Ireland up to the 1980s.

The contribution of emigrants to the Irish economy is reflected in the significant proportion of Gross National Product (GNP) made up of emigrants' remittances. It is estimated that €4.4 million per annum was sent back to Ireland in remittances in the 1950s and 1960s.

### ***Diaspora***

Today, while we do not know how many people entitled to Irish citizenship live outside Ireland, approximately three million people outside the country carry Irish passports, 1.2 million of whom were born in Ireland (Department of Foreign Affairs 2002). Our concept of the Irish nation was broadened to embrace the Irish abroad as a result of the change in Article 2 of the Irish Constitution following on from the Good Friday Agreement. This has increased our awareness of the Irish abroad, and particularly of the Irish in Britain, some of whom have been marginalised. Apart from the 1.2 million Irish-citizen and the further 1.8 million people living abroad who hold Irish passports, a far larger group claim Irish ancestry. While this is difficult to quantify, a figure of 70 million is often put forward.

### ***Similarities***

It is difficult not to be struck by the similarity between the lives of first- and second-generation Irish emigrants and the lives of immigrants who are migrating to Western Europe today. Many people from these ethnic groups exist on low incomes, live in poor conditions, and face racism, just as Irish migrants did.

### ***Irish Immigration***

#### ***Celtic Tiger***

Between 1994 and 2002, Ireland's GDP rose, on average, by 8 per cent per annum and the labour market grew by 4.5 per cent. As a direct result of this growth, emigration was reduced to an historical low, and the unemployment rate declined from 16 per cent in 1994 to 3.7 per cent in 2001 (Davy Stockbrokers 1999-2003). This booming economy, referred to as the 'Celtic Tiger', attracted a large number of women into the labour force who had not been in it before. This led one economist to rename the economic boom, the 'Celtic Tigress' (O'Connell 1996).

#### ***Migration Turning Point***

As the economy grew in the 1990s, Ireland was one of the last EU countries to reach its migration turning point. It did this in 1996. Portugal, Spain and Italy reached their turning points in 1993, 1991 and 1998 respectively (Ruhs 2003). Similar trends took place in Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic in the late 1990s.

Having absorbed underused Irish labour in the first few years of the Celtic Tiger, the economy continued to experience labour shortages in many sectors in the late 1990s. In order to mobilise sufficient labour for sustainable economic growth, Ireland pursued an active policy of encouraging immigration, and Irish state agencies established a programme to promote Ireland as a work destination abroad.

Between 1996 and 2002, the population in Ireland increased from 3.6 million to 3.9 million people (Central Statistics Office 2003). Immigration reached 66,900<sup>17</sup>

17 Net immigration for the period was 41,300.

in the twelve-month period leading up to April 2002. Approximately one-third of immigrants were Irish nationals, one-third were nationals from the EU or the United States of America (USA), and one-third came from outside the EU and the USA (McWilliams 2003).

### ***Irish Experience***

Ireland's experience of immigration is relatively new. Unlike many other EU countries, it has no colonial past or a tradition of integrating people from its colonies. However, Ireland has a history of two centuries of emigration. It can learn from the successes and failures of its emigrants on how best to assist the integration of foreign immigrants into Irish society. The marginalisation of significant numbers of the Irish emigrant population in the United Kingdom illustrates the importance of extending respect, providing access to culturally appropriate mainstream services, and empowering immigrant organisations.

Ireland's development experience in third-world countries can also help Irish people to understand that immigration policy in the developed world needs to become part of international aid and development policies.

### ***New Expressions of Ethnic Diversity in Ireland***

#### ***Traditional Minority Ethnic Groups***

Ethnic and cultural diversity is not a new phenomenon in Ireland. The Traveller community, which has a population of approximately 25,000, is the largest indigenous ethnic minority group in Ireland. Jewish, Muslim, Chinese, and Italian communities have long been established in Ireland. De Tona (2003) tells us that the Italian community has its own journal, its own Catholic Mass in Italian, and several recreational clubs. A large proportion of the Italians living in Dublin originates from the same geographical area between Rome and Naples.

In the late nineteenth century, Jews emigrated from Eastern Europe and settled in Dublin and other Irish cities. Although Jewish people are visible in Irish economic and political life (three Jewish TDs in the early 1990s), anti-Semitism has been part of Irish society throughout the twentieth century (Lentin 2002; Goldstone 2002).

#### ***New Ethnic Groups***

There are many examples of new ethnic groups and communities emerging among the more recent immigrants (Conroy and Taguinod 2003). These groups are manifest in the development of churches, choirs, sports activities, food stores, restaurants, professional associations, community associations, national pageants, and pre-school and primary schools organised along ethnic lines. The Islamic Centre in Clonskeagh in South Dublin has its own mosque, national school, and assembly hall. The Indian community has recently established its own Sikh Temple in Dublin.

*Metro Eireann*, a multicultural newspaper gives expression to the diverse cultural landscape developing in Ireland. *Nasha Gazeta* is a newspaper published twice monthly for the Russian-speaking community in Ireland. The newspaper also runs an information and resource centre for the Russian-speaking community where immigrants can get information in their mother language, and have access to Russian books and films. *Africans Magazine* gives voice to the emerging African societies in Ireland and promotes African culture, music, religion, and African

organisations in Ireland. *Friday Times* is a fortnightly magazine that serves the population of 25,000 Muslims who live in Ireland. It also seeks to inform the general Irish population of issues affecting Irish Muslims.

The vibrancy of the Filipino and Chinese communities is particularly apparent. The Chinese community hosted the Dublin Chinatown Festival to celebrate the Year of the Monkey in January 2004. Visitors experienced a fusion of Irish and Asian culture.

African organisations are developing in Ireland, and African women are empowering themselves through *AkiDwa* (Sisters of Africa). Founded in 2001, *AkiDwa* is a networking, advocacy and training forum, that focuses on development education, racial and cultural understanding, human rights, and influencing policy from a gender perspective.

The local and European elections in June 2004 provided opportunities to develop positive actions around diversity, and the issues concerning minority ethnic groups. The elections, and the fact that non-nationals could register to vote and run for office in the local elections, provided important indications of the degree to which issues relating to diversity are becoming part of the mainstream political agenda.

### ***Numbers of non-EEA Nationals***

Although there is no data on the ethnic origins of people living in Ireland, there are approximately 160 different nationalities represented by the people living in Ireland, and the number of people of non-EEA nationality registered in the state was 116,588 in 2002.<sup>18</sup>

Data from the 2002 census indicates that six per cent of the population living in Ireland is non-Irish. This includes 23,105 people from European countries other than Ireland; 21,779 Asians;<sup>19</sup> 20,981 Africans;<sup>20</sup> and 11,384 from the US living in Ireland (Central Statistics Office 2002).

Ruhs (2003) estimates that the non-EU population makes up approximately 2.3 per cent of the Irish labour force.

### ***Lack of Integration***

A disturbing finding from Irish research is the difficulties which immigrants are experiencing in integrating into the workplace (Conroy and Brennan 2003; Redmond and Butler 2003), the school (Keogh and Whyte 2003), the community (Guerin 2003; Stavrou 2003), and local voluntary and community organisations (Rourke 2003).

18 The Immigration Section of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Visa Office of the Department of Foreign Affairs quoted in *kNOW Racism: The National Anti-Racism Awareness Programme Pack 2002*.

19 This is made up of: 5,766 Chinese; 3,742 Filipinos; 2,881 Pakistanis; 2,462 Indians; 1,647 Malaysians; and 4,768 other.

20 This is made up of 5,766 Nigerians, 4,113 South Africans and 7,613 other.

## VOICES OF IMMIGRANT WORKERS

*Reasons for Coming to Ireland*

*Starting Life in Ireland*

*Settling in Ireland*

*The Experience of Women*

*Accommodation*

*Language and Education*

*Prejudice and Racism*

*Perceptions of Immigrants*

*Work*

*Poverty*





## VOICES OF IMMIGRANT WORKERS

In an increasingly interdependent and globalised world, many immigrant workers come to Ireland from countries that are economically excluded or marginalised within the global economy. In Ireland many immigrant workers can earn a multiple of what they can earn in their home country.

People also leave their country for political reasons: fleeing persecution, war, indiscriminate killings, conflict, oppressive regimes, and disregard for human rights. Economic, political, and personal reasons are not clear-cut and frequently overlap.

Migrants interviewed for the study are from a diverse range of countries worldwide with different histories, cultures, and linguistic groups. They also differ along such variables as gender, class, religion, education and legal status.

The twenty-two migrant workers interviewed include workers on work permits, working visas, work authorisations, someone with refugee status, someone with no recognised residence, a student/*au pair*, a student, as well as workers who have been granted leave to remain<sup>21</sup> and work in Ireland. The names and some personal details of interviewees have been changed to protect their identity.

**Table 5: Summary of status of the people interviewed in this study**

Name	Nationality	Current Legal Status	Work Status	Location of Residence
1 Abraham	Tanzania	Leave to remain	Storeman	Dublin
2 Adam	India	No legal status. Had work permit status	Unemployed	Dublin
3 Ahmed	Bangladesh	Work permit	Waiter	Dublin
4 Andrew	South Africa	Work authorisation	Computer specialist	City outside Dublin
5 Angela	Philippines	Work permit	Cleaner	City outside Dublin
6 Deniz	Turkey	Leave to remain	Café worker	City outside Dublin
7 Eric	South Africa	Work permit	Supermarket assistant	Dublin

21 'Leave to remain' is granted to an individual whose personal circumstances do not fully meet the criteria for refugee status stipulated in the *Geneva Convention 1951*, but whom the relevant authorities decide should be allowed to remain in the receiving society on humanitarian and/or other grounds. The criteria used to grant leave to remain are not stipulated in the legislation. As a consequence, the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform is obliged to have regard to certain matters that are set out in the provisions of Section 3 of the *Immigration Act 1999*. However, the minister retains an absolute discretion as to whether to grant leave to remain in any individual case.

8	Esther	Zimbabwe	Working visa	Nurse	Dublin
9	Florica	Romania	Application for Leave to remain (parent of Irish born child)	Social welfare	Dublin
10	Furaha	Tanzania	Working visa	Nurse	Dublin
11	Gatis	Moldova	Work permit	Worker in agricultural sector	Dublin
12	Maria	Poland	Student	Student/ <i>au pair</i>	Dublin
13	Matthew	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Refugee	Worker in security firm	City outside Dublin
14	Mehmet	Pakistan	Refugee	Student in education/ training	City outside Dublin
15	Mohammed	Morocco	Undocumented	Café worker	West of Ireland
16	Natalia	Lithuania	Work permit	Worker in vegetable growing industry	West of Ireland
17	Nyla	Syria	Dependent spouse	Family in receipt of social welfare	West of Ireland
18	Reyad	Iran	Refugee	Student in education/ training	City outside Dublin
19	Sandra	Nigeria	Working visa	Nurse	Dublin
20	Tatiana	Russian Federation	Work permit	Worker in vegetable growing industry	West of Ireland

21	Tomeck	Latvia	Work permit	Building sector	Dublin
22	Zahra	Tanzania	No status Had dependent residency status	In receipt of supplementary welfare	Dublin

**Table 5: Summary of status of the people interviewed in this study**

In addition the Ruhama Project, Dublin, provided a composite case study of a woman who was trafficked, based on case studies of a number of women.

This study aims to give a voice to immigrants to explore their reasons for coming to Ireland, what it is like to work away from home, issues relating to family and community, specific concerns of women, work experience, experience of racism and attitudes of the Irish towards immigrants.

The testimonies of the migrant workers interviewed provide evidence of their courage and their willingness to brave difficult conditions in their search to find work and a better life for themselves and their families.

## ***Reasons for Coming to Ireland***

### ***Economic Motives***

Economic motives are predominant for some people. Examples from interviewees are Tomeck from Latvia, Natalia from Lithuania, Gatis from Moldova, Tatiana from the Russia Federation, Angela from the Philippines, and Mohammed from Morocco. Five of these six interviewees entered Ireland with work permits, while one person is an undocumented worker. All were attracted by the fact that the potential income that workers can earn in Ireland is a multiple of what most workers can earn in their home country.

In 1991, **Latvia, Lithuania and Moldova** reestablished independence from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Latvia and Lithuania are located on the Baltic Sea, while Moldova, which is one of the least industrialised countries in Europe, is a tiny country sandwiched between the Ukraine and Romania. There is a severe recession in all three countries as their economies ‘collapsed’ after the collapse of the USSR. The transition to a market economy, with the liberalisation and privatisation of the economy, contrary to expectations, has led to a drop in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), a lowering of incomes, and an increase in poverty. Hundreds of thousands left these countries to work in Western Europe as construction workers, supermarket attendants, maids/nannies, and farm labourers. Many women, as in Mara’s case (outlined in section 4.4) have been trafficked for the sex industry.

The people of each of these three countries have been victim to many brutal international wars. Latvia and Lithuania were taken over by the Soviet Union in the early 1940s. In 1944 they were invaded by the German army and their countries were subsequently reconquered by the Red Army. During this period, hundreds of thousands of people were massacred.<sup>22</sup>

22 Sources of information on the countries referred to in this chapter include the Encyclopaedia Britannica, the website of the US Library of Congress (Country Studies), Amnesty International websites, and the *CIA World Factbook*.

**Tomeck**

*Tomeck (from Latvia) is in his late forties, and heard about Ireland from friends who had worked in Ireland. His friends made contact with an employer in the agricultural sector who applied for a work permit for him. Tomeck, who has a wife and three children in Latvia, came to Ireland on his own to earn money to save and reinvest in his business at home, which had failed due to the recession. He is now working in the building industry. He has little English. Tomeck feels that he shares the view of other Latvians that it is possible to earn several times more money in Ireland than in other EU countries.*

**Natalia**

*Natalia (from Lithuania) is a single mother and lives in the west of Ireland with her seven-year-old daughter. She is a trained teacher. She came to Ireland on a work permit to work in the vegetable growing industry. She heard about the job through a friend from Lithuania who was already working in the industry. She feels that she and her daughter will have a much better life in Ireland, and she intends to remain in Ireland.*

**Gatis**

*Gatis (from Moldova) is in his late twenties and works as an agricultural worker in Ireland. He intends to settle in Ireland and since coming to Ireland his wife has joined him.*

*Both his parents are retired and live on a small pension in Moldova. He is the youngest of four children, all of whom have emigrated. Many of his friends would like to leave Moldova because of low wages and poverty. Gatis's experience is that:*

*In Moldova, you could work hard in building work with no machines to mix concrete and only get €2 or €3 a day or €60 for a month. You could not live on this and could not buy goods for example a TV. As well as the lack of job opportunities there is a lot of corruption at all levels.*

*The paradox for people like Gatis is that as the barriers that prevented Eastern Europeans from leaving their country have been removed, EU borders are being fortified and strengthened.*

**Tatiana**

*Tatiana (from the Russian Federation) is in her mid-forties. In 2001 she came to live in the west of Ireland with her teenage son. Like Natalia, she is working in the vegetable growing industry. She is very happy in Ireland and intends to remain here.*

*Tatiana heard about work opportunities in Ireland through an employment agency in Moscow who advertised for workers for supermarkets, fast food outlets, and the agricultural sector. Prior to coming to Ireland Tatiana worked in Moscow, as a secretary, for very little wages. The only other employment available to her in Russia was in the state sector where wages are low. It is her opinion that with the exception of a few very wealthy people, most people in Russia have very little money. There is also a lot of crime and corruption. She saw no future for herself or her son in Russia.*

The route to Ireland is not always a direct one as the stories of Angela and Mohammed illustrate.

Angela is from the **Philippines**. The Philippines are in the western Pacific Ocean and consist of 7,000 islands, the vast majority of which are uninhabited. It has a population of 85 million people. Over 90 per cent of the population are Christian, with over 80 per cent Catholic. It is the only predominantly Christian country in Asia. Five per cent are Muslim. There are eighty-seven local languages and Filipino and English are the two official languages of the country. In fact, the Philippines is the third largest English-speaking country in the world. A high proportion of people in the Philippines have finished elementary education and there is a high literacy rate of 96 per cent.

One of the main obstacles to development is its \$50 billion debt, to the World Bank and transnational banks, which accounts for 35 per cent of annual government spending. Although the country is rich in agricultural and mineral resources and has substantial amounts of chrome, copper, and gold, for historical reasons the economy has not been developed for the benefit of the majority of its population. Large mining foreign companies control much of these resources and serious human rights violations are occurring (Walsh 2003).

Angela from the Philippines came to Ireland via Malaysia:

*Angela, who is in her mid-thirties, is from a remote rural village in the Philippines where there is extreme poverty and few employment opportunities available to her.*

Angela

*Prior to coming to Ireland, Angela worked in Malaysia. A recruitment agency in Malaysia organised a work permit for her to work with a cleaning firm. Angela was interested in coming to Ireland, as she is proficient in English. She travelled to Ireland alone. She has been in Ireland for one-and-a-half years. She intends to remain in Ireland for the medium term.*

*Angela dreams of being able to return to the Philippines one day, and buying a small plot of land. Since the land reform policies, which were enacted in the 1980s, it is now possible for landless rural families to buy land. Angela could make a living from rearing pigs and poultry.*

Mohammed, from Morocco, came to Ireland via South Africa and England:

*Mohammed (from Morocco) who is in his mid-thirties was living and working in South Africa prior to coming to Ireland. He left South Africa because his wages were very low and he felt he could earn more money in Europe. He came to Ireland from England where he had friends who informed him that he could earn good money in Ireland. His intention was that if he could find well-paid employment, his wife and child would join him and that they would settle in Ireland. He is working as an undocumented worker in a café in the west of Ireland.*

Mohammed

### **Reunification with Spouse**

Both Zahra and Nyla came to reunite with their spouses:

*Until 2001, Zahra worked in a third-level college in Tanzania. She comes from a wealthy family. She is highly qualified. Her husband, who had been working in Ireland in the financial services sector on a two-year working visa, decided that she should join him and Zahra came to Ireland as a spouse of a worker on a working visa.*

Zahra

**Nyla**

*Nyla is in her mid-thirties and is from Syria. She came to Ireland fifteen years ago as a spouse of a migrant worker who was working in the agricultural sector in the west of Ireland. She and her husband heard about the opportunities in Ireland through a relative who was already working in Ireland. They have two Irish-citizen children. Nyla loves Ireland and in particular the town where she lives. Her children are Irish and are happy here, and the family intends to stay here in the long term.*

### **Students**

There is no information on the number of students who come to Ireland each year. Students must obtain a formal letter of acceptance from the school or college where they intend to study, and confirmation of fees paid. They can work full time in paid employment during their vacations, and for up to twenty hours per week during their study term.

Several interviewees, including staff of a support project that provides advice and support for immigrants and an employer who employs students, stated that in their experience many schools are schools in name only, and have very poor facilities. Many students register to get into the country and have little contact with schools. Staff of the support project reported that students in China pay between €300 and €1000 to agencies in China to organise visas. In one situation the student reported that no classes were available.

In 1999/2000 there were 7,413 third-level students from 120 countries engaged in full-time education in Irish universities and colleges (Kenny 2003b). Students need to prove that they have the resources to cover their living expenses.

**Maria**

*Maria is a twenty-one-year-old student from Poland. She has finished her undergraduate degree and intends to do further study. She came to Ireland for a six-month period to learn English. She is registered with a recognised English language school. The school organised an au pair placement for her with a wealthy family that lives in a large house in an affluent suburb of south Dublin. Her duties, as outlined to her, are to work thirty-five hours per week. This involves minding two very young children and helping with light housework. Her host family provides her accommodation and food. She is paid €70 per week.*

**Adam**

*Adam (from India) came to Ireland to study computer science in 1999. He completed his undergraduate training and then studied for a postgraduate qualification in IT. When he finished his studies, the company with which he was placed for student work experience successfully applied for a work permit for him. His intention was to remain and settle in Ireland. However, the company he was working for has closed and he has been made redundant. His future in Ireland is uncertain.*

### **Political Motives**

People leave their country for political reasons, such as civil wars, indiscriminate killings, conflict, lack of democracy, and disregard for human rights. For many, life had become very dangerous and they left in emergency conditions.

Matthew left his country for political reasons. He is from the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**. The country is in a deep crisis. It is estimated that between three and five million people have died since the civil war began five years ago, with the majority dying from malnutrition. Tens of thousands of women and children have been systematically raped and subjected to other forms of sexual violence. Hundreds of thousands have been driven from their homes into neighbouring countries and up to two million people have been internally displaced, including 400,000 children, many of whom are orphaned and have no homes. The DCR has 10,000 child soldiers, making up 15 per cent of newly recruited soldiers. Many children become soldiers after they have been orphaned. Many others are conscripted against their will, without the knowledge of their families.

*Matthew who has refugee status does not talk in detail about what led him to leave the Democratic Republic of the Congo, (DRC formerly Zaire) where he worked as a lawyer. Matthew had been involved in the opposition movement and was a member of the Campaign for Democracy in the Congo (CDC). With two other political activists, he fled the Congo in 2000. They crossed the Congo River to Brazzaville, the capital of the neighbouring Republic of the Congo. From there, with the help of a Catholic priest, their journey to Ireland was arranged. Many more from the CDC have been forced into exile.*

**Matthew**

Reyad also left his country for political reasons. He is from **Iran**. With the Islamic revolution, the Shiite cleric, the Ayatollah Khomeini was named the supreme leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Control is maintained in Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran) through arbitrary detention, torture, disappearance and summary trials. Hundreds of political prisoners have been executed, frequently in public. Judicial punishments of flogging and stoning continue to be imposed. The judiciary is not independent and judges have to meet strict political and religious qualifications. Special courts try political and religious cases. Freedom of expression and association has been severely restricted and human rights abuses are greatly affected.

*After the Islamic Revolution, which overthrew the Shah of Iran (formerly Persia) in 1979, life for Reyad's family became very difficult.*

*Reyad who is in his late thirties is from a family that was once very wealthy. With the Islamic Revolution of 1979, not only was the family wealth confiscated, but also family members were severely tortured. Reyad was a member of the opposition movement. He was arrested, thrown into jail, and tortured. He has permanent injuries as a result of the torture he experienced.*

*On release from jail, Reyad knew that he had to get out of the country or else he would meet the same fate as members of his family who were killed. He was smuggled to Turkey and stayed in Istanbul for one month. He left his wife and young child in Iran. He was given a passport and boarded a plane, expecting to land in London.*

*Reyad was terrified when he found that he had arrived in Shannon Airport, Ireland. Although Reyad speaks six languages, he had very little English. He thought that he was in another war-zone. He was taken in by the garda and pleaded with them not to send him back to Iran. After sixteen months in Ireland, he was granted refugee status. They made an application through the Irish embassy in Iran for his wife and child to come to Ireland.*

**Reyad**

Deniz is a Turkish Kurd and left his country for political reasons. The Turkish Government in **Turkey** have restricted Kurds from promoting their own culture and speaking their own language. The Kurdish language was outlawed until 1991. Until 2003, it remained illegal to teach Kurdish in the schools and also the Kurdish language could not be broadcast on radio or television. Cultural expression is curtailed and Kurds are forbidden to wear Kurdish costumes, discouraged from singing Kurdish songs and are prohibited from organising politically.

The treatment of the Kurdish community by the Turkish State is seen by human rights organisations as a major violation of human rights. During the war between Kurdish revolutionary factions and the Turkish army (1984-1999), some 30,000 people were killed. The great majority of these were Kurdish civilians. Human Rights Watch has documented how soldiers, often at gunpoint evicted the civilian population from their homes, and over four thousand villages were burned. Several million people were forced to leave their homes.

Complaints regarding the treatment of Kurds have been filed before the European Human Rights Commission and European Court of Human Rights. Because of its human rights record the European Union delayed approval of Turkey's entry into the European Union.

### Deniz

*Deniz in his mid-twenties is a Turkish Kurd who was persecuted and discriminated against on the grounds of his ethnic identity and political involvement. He had been taken into custody by the Turkish police and beaten. He feared for his life.*

*From the perspective of Deniz, Kurds have been treated as second-class citizens:*

*Kurds are nothing in Turkey. If you don't talk Turkish, you are no good. They know that you are a Kurd by your accent.*

*When Deniz was smuggled out of Turkey in 1998, he was informed that he was to travel to England. However, when he got off the boat from mainland Europe, he discovered that he was in Ireland. When he realised that the Irish people spoke English, he made a decision to apply to remain in Ireland:*

*I thought I was going to England. I did not know anything about Ireland. When I found that they were speaking English in Ireland, I wanted to stay.*

*Deniz arrived in Ireland alone. Deniz has leave to remain on humanitarian grounds and would like to remain in Ireland.*

In none of the three cases outlined above did individuals have legal documentation on entering Ireland, because they left their own countries under emergency conditions.

### **Coercion**

Women and children who are trafficked endure the most horrendous conditions as the case of Mara (outlined in the section on trafficking below) illustrates.

### **Combination of Reasons**

Esther, Andrew, Eric and Furaha, all from the African continent, came to Ireland for a combination of reasons.

Esther is from **Zimbabwe** (formerly Southern Rhodesia). Zimbabwe was colonised by Britain for three-quarters of a century and then experienced fifteen years of white minority rule, during which a brutal apartheid system was in operation. When black nationalists took power, people were hopeful for a better way of life. However, for over twenty years, the country has been ruled by one party and it has descended into deep economic and political crisis where there is now widespread poverty, food shortages, and abuses of human rights.

There are increasing punitive measures being imposed against those that oppose the state. Widespread human rights violations are evident, including the denial of the right to free speech and free association and people live in a climate of fear. People in the opposition movement are subjected to harassment, arbitrary arrests and ill-treatment. According to the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, there were over 1,046 reported cases of torture and at least 58 politically motivated deaths in 2002.

*Until 2000, Esther, who is in her mid-thirties, worked as a nurse in Zimbabwe. She was in the opposition movement (The Movement for Democratic Change), and the political situation was difficult for her. Esther made arrangements to come to Ireland to work as a nurse through a recruitment agency. Esther has one child and is in Ireland on a working visa. She would like to stay in Ireland.*

**Esther**

*With the transition from white majority rule to democracy in South Africa, the Mandela-led government promoted positive discrimination policies in favour of black and coloured people, which aimed to redress decades of injustice during white majority rule. Andrew and his family who are white South Africans support these policies. However, due to difficulties in the postapartheid era they made a decision to leave South Africa. Originally, Andrew and his family intended to emigrate to England where Andrew was entitled to residency on the basis of his British ancestry. His decision to come to Ireland was the result of a seminar organised by an Irish state agency that promoted Ireland as a destination. As a result of this seminar, Andrew arranged to come to Ireland on a work authorisation. Andrew had worked in the computer industry and he travelled to Ireland. His wife and one of his children joined him there after a number of months. Andrew and his family intend to stay in Ireland.*

**Andrew**

*Eric, like Andrew, is a white South African. He is in his mid-twenties and came to Ireland because of the lack of employment opportunities for white South Africans. He agrees with the positive discrimination policies of the South African Government:*

**Eric**

Black people should get preference after all the years of oppression.

*Eric considered emigrating to England, but was informed that he would have to have £4,000 sterling. This was not a requirement for entry to Ireland. As a result of an advertisement in the newspaper, he made contact with two recruitment agencies; one was Irish and one South African who organised his employment in Ireland. He is in Ireland on a work permit. Originally Eric came to Ireland with the intention of settling here. However, because he is working in a job that is at*

*a lower-skill level than that he applied to work in, and because he has difficulty finding an employer who would apply for a work permit in the area he is skilled in, he is likely to return home.*

### **Furaha**

*Furaha (from Tanzania) has a working visa. She came to Ireland because she wanted better opportunities to earn a living than she could have in her own country, which is very poor economically:*

*Ireland is very advanced. Everything in my country is impoverished. There is poor equipment in the hospitals. Everything is resterilised and reused.*

*She also wanted more independence as a woman than she could achieve in her own country.*

The examples outlined above illustrate that migrants enter Ireland under different legal status, for example as workers with work permits, working visas or work authorisations, as students, as asylum seekers or as undocumented workers.

### **Starting Life in Ireland**

Starting life in a new country is not easy and the immigrants interviewed for this study face many challenges adapting to life in Ireland.

### **Working Away from Spouse and Children**

The presence of family members can reduce the negative consequences of immigration, such as dislocation, loneliness and homesickness. However, living with one's family is not an option for many workers because it is too expensive to support the family in Ireland due to the high cost of living, including the high cost of accommodation. The fact that there are restrictions on the right of spouses to work contributes to the difficulties encountered:

### **Tomeck**

*Tomeck (from Latvia) is in Ireland for nearly five years. His wife and three teenage children are in Latvia. He misses his family and would like them to be with him in Ireland. At present, Tomeck is sharing a house with seven other people and is paying €75 a week in rent. He could not afford the accommodation costs for the family, particularly when his wife would not have been permitted to work during this time. His primary aim is to earn enough money so that he can return home and own his business once again. He wants to give his children the opportunities he did not have. Tomeck visits his family several times each year.*

Undocumented workers tend not to be able to leave the country and visit their family, as they would find it difficult to re-enter Ireland:

### **Mohammed**

*Mohammed (from Morocco), who travelled to Ireland from South Africa via England, is an undocumented worker. He was under the impression that he would be able to get a work permit when he arrived in Ireland and would find well-paid employment. When settled, he intended to bring his wife and child, who are in South Africa, to Ireland. He has been in Ireland for nearly two years and has been afraid to leave the country for fear of not being allowed back in. He works in low-paid café*

*work in the west of Ireland. Living in an isolated rural area is very difficult for him. He has been unable to save money. Making phone calls from the public phone in the village where he lives is very expensive and he can only afford to phone his wife every two weeks. He also finds the Irish accent very hard to understand, particularly the Irish rural accent.*

*He is heartbroken without his wife and daughter. He is now disillusioned and has decided to return to South Africa. He has booked his flight and is counting the days until he will see his family again.*

### **Working Away from Extended Family**

Migrant workers talked about the feelings of loneliness, homesickness, and the heartbreak involved in being separated from their extended family in their home country.

*Angela (from the Philippines) misses her family and the way of life in the rural Philippines. She feels lonely and isolated in Ireland. She has only visited her family once in the past two years.*

**Angela**

In addition to living away from their extended family, migrant workers, even when they are in Ireland for extended periods, can encounter many difficulties getting permission to have their relatives visit them in Ireland.

### **Family Reunification**

Several participants in the study made the point that the Irish immigration system is based on labour market needs and does not take account of the needs of individuals or families. The system sets out to attract individuals and only minimally addresses family issues.

Persons granted leave to remain on humanitarian and/or other grounds, or migrant workers have no statutory rights to family reunification. The Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform has absolute discretion to grant family reunification on an individual basis. Decisions are discretionary and made on a case-by-case basis.

The following cases illustrate the difficulties migrant workers can encounter when attempting to have their children come to Ireland to live with them:

*Abraham (from Tanzania) has resided in Ireland for four years. He is married to an Irish woman with whom he has two children. He also has a ten year-old daughter in Tanzania whose mother (Abraham's ex-wife) is deceased. His ten-year-old daughter has been refused permission to join Abraham and his Irish wife and his Irish family. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform informed Abraham that he should go to Tanzania and live with his daughter. This is not feasible for him or his family. It is a source of great distress to both Abraham and his wife. Abraham's wife is of the opinion that as long as Abraham's daughter is in Tanzania and unable to join him that he can never be happy. His distress affects the whole family.*

**Abraham**

## Sandra

*Sandra (from Nigeria) is separated from her two children and misses them terribly. She works as a nurse. Her plan was to buy a house, settle in Ireland and bring her two children to Ireland. When Sandra left Nigeria, her children were being cared for by her extended family. Sandra was unaware that she would have difficulties getting permission for her two children to join her in Ireland.*

*Sandra loves her work. She has succeeded in taking out a mortgage and buying a house. She has health insurance for her two children, aged eighteen-and-a-half and twelve years, and has applied to have them join her in Ireland.*

*It took eighteen months before Sandra received a reply from the visa section of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. The department has queried the right of her eldest child to reside in Ireland, because he is six months over eighteen years of age, the maximum age at which one is normally permitted to reunite with one's family. Sandra has replied to this query and is awaiting an answer. Although Sandra's youngest child could join her in Ireland, she is unwilling to separate her children from each other. In a period of two-and-a-half years, she has travelled back to Nigeria four times to see her children. Sandra states:*

*In my culture, parents are responsible for their children until they are twenty-one years old. Irish policies are subjecting children to the loss of parents. It is against the family. Policies are antifamily. They are breaking up families. It is against the Irish Constitution. This creates trauma for the parent. The children suffer the loss of a parent. I would be a much more effective worker if I had my children with me. A spouse can reunite, but not children over eighteen years. This is ironic. There is need for much better policies that would look after our needs. The immediate family should be allowed to come regardless of age. There is little balance between the needs of the economy and the needs of immigrants.*

Experiences of migrants point to the importance of immediate family members, such as adult children and children of previous marriages, being allowed to join immigrant workers in Ireland.

## Settling in Ireland

There is evidence that 'chain migration' is evolving among the 'new immigrants' and that some migrant workers come to Ireland, where they already have family. When immigrants have friends in Ireland, they are in a better position to settle here. Many migrants also enjoy the higher standard of living which Ireland has to offer and appreciate being away from the poverty they experienced in their home country.

## Natalia

*Natalia (from Lithuania) came to the west of Ireland because her sister and brother-in-law were already working there. Fifteen of the twenty workers in her place of employment are from Eastern European countries. The language spoken at work is Russian. She immediately liked the work environment and felt supported by her colleagues and her family. She found it easy to settle in Ireland.*

*Natalia was relieved to be away from poverty, to have good accommodation, and a much higher standard of living than she did in her home country of Lithuania. She likes the town in the west of Ireland where she lives, finds Irish people very friendly, and the winters are much less cold than in Lithuania.*

*Gatis (from Moldova) chose Ireland because his sister-in-law and her husband were already living and working in Ireland. Until his wife joined him, more than a year after he came to Ireland, he lived and worked on a farm. At weekends he visited his sister-in-law. It would have been lonely for him in the countryside if he did not have his sister-in-law to visit at weekends. His sister-in-law also helped him to get accommodation when his wife came to Ireland to live.*

Gatis

*Tomeck (from Latvia) has exceptionally good friends from the Baltic states and some Irish friends. One friend helped him to get a job. His employer is extremely good. When he was sick, his employer advised him to remain in bed and arranged to have medication delivered to him.*

Tomeck

Although people like Sandra came to Ireland alone, she particularly likes her work situation where she feels valued and respected:

*Sandra (from Nigeria) liked Ireland immediately, adapted well to her work situation as a nurse, and found the accommodation provided by the hospital extremely comfortable. Her initial experiences were blighted, however, by the difficulties she encountered getting permission to bring her children to live with her in Ireland. She feels that Ireland is a good place to bring up children and intends to settle in Ireland if the difficulties regarding her children can be resolved. If her children are not allowed to come to Ireland to live with her, it is likely that she will decide to settle in England where conditions regarding children are less restrictive. She is getting advice and assistance from an advocacy and support agency that provides assistance to immigrants.*

Sandra

For people fleeing from persecution the initial experience was one of relief to live in a 'free' country.

*Reyad (from Iran) says:*

I was grateful to be alive, that was my first thought.

Reyad

*Deniz (from Turkey) found that the weather was difficult and Irish people were hostile to refugees. But I thought:*

I am free. I can walk the streets.

*Deniz was later to encounter major difficulties with the Turkish embassy in Dublin. For five years he had a precarious legal status. He was excluded from the formal labour market and the threat of deportation was ever present. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform did not recognise the identity card which Deniz holds and required a passport. He feels that his attempts to secure a passport or identity card from the Turkish embassy were thwarted. The staff told him that they lost his file. He is frustrated and feels that he is experiencing discrimination from the embassy in Dublin just as he did when he lived as a Kurd in Turkey:*

Deniz

I am in no man's land at present. It is very difficult. It's the not knowing that is most difficult. The embassy is not co-operating.

*He has however, since been granted leave to remain in Ireland with the right to work.*

Voluntary organisations, advocacy groups and support networks can be a particularly important forum through which migrants develop friendships:

**Andrew**

*Andrew (from South Africa) originally found it difficult to meet with Irish people. However, he joined a Rotary Club and has now made a number of good friends.*

**Sandra**

*Sandra (from Nigeria) has Irish friends she made through work, and she also made African friends through activities organised by voluntary organisations.*

**Matthew**

*Matthew (from the Democratic Republic of the Congo) has made friends through his political involvement in seeking support for democracy in the Congo. He also received a lot of support and made a lot of contacts through an advocacy and support agency that was established to assist immigrants.*

This raises the issue of the need to provide resources to build the capacity of minority ethnic groups so that these groups can provide support for individuals, and facilities where ethnic groups can express their culture and develop links with Irish society. There is also a need to provide resources to advocacy and support groups who assist immigrants.

### ***Difficulties Settling Down***

The degree to which people settle in Ireland depends on a variety of factors, such as having opportunities to make friends and having access to non-exploitative work. Immigrants from warmer climates can also find the weather in Ireland cold and hard to cope with.

**Mohammed**

*Mohammed (from Morocco) works in a café in a small rural community. He is very isolated and has virtually no support or anyone he can call on for help. At the time of the interview it was the season of Ramadan and there was no public transport to the Mosque, which is fifteen miles away.*

**Adam**

*Adam (from India) finds it very difficult to make friends. He only made two friends that he met while he was a student. He feels that:*

*Irish people don't mix with you. They live in small groups that are difficult to break into.*

**Angela**

*Angela (from the Philippines) came to Ireland on her own two years ago. She lives outside of Dublin and shares accommodation with three other Filipino workers:*

*Ireland was different than I thought it would be. People have no time to talk to you. I have only one Irish friend. Irish people want you to go to the pub and I don't like pubs. I feel lonely and stressed sometimes. The weather is very difficult for me.*

*Angela feels that it is difficult for people who do not have children, and are not part of pub culture to make friends. She is not attracted to pub culture and finds going out very expensive. She would like a place where she and other Filipino people could meet at least once a week to socialise, maybe cook meals, and have cultural evenings. If there were such a facility she would have something to look forward to.*

## The Experience of Women

An increasing debate in the women's movement in many developing countries is the extent to which civil rights and freedoms, common in most western democracies, are appropriate to the way of life in developing countries. In some countries women who do not conform to the traditional norms of forced or arranged marriages, or women who desert their husbands, can be considered to be betraying family honour and can face severe penalties. Women who have children outside of wedlock can face strong sanctions. In countries that enforce strict Islamic law they can be put to death by stoning (Holland 2004).

On the other hand, western culture has been criticised for the 'objectification' of women and for its vast pornographic industry, which degrades women.

### Understanding Difference

Many Islamic women are proud to wear the *hijab* or traditional head covering. They see it as a way of expressing their independence and rejection of western values that for them demean and devalue women:

*For Nyla (from Syria) wearing the 'scarf' is part of her religious faith. She explained:*

**Nyla**

Muslim women wear the 'scarf' and cover their arms and legs. They don't make physical contact with men who are not family members. For example, they are not permitted to give a male friend a hug or a friendly kiss on the cheek. These observances are often misunderstood as meaning that Muslim women are not liberated. They are extended to implying that Muslim women are not free to socialise or to go out to work outside the home. Muslim women feel there is implied criticism in questions such as "why do you wear the scarf?"

*It is Nyla's experience that because of Muslim women's observance of no physical contact between men and women, some men don't know whether or not to talk to Muslim women. There is need for greater dialogue and understanding between Muslims (some of whom are Irish Muslims) and the broader Irish community.*

*Furaha (from Tanzania) feels that Irish people have little understanding of Muslim women and their religion. She feels that she is a modern woman. But because she wears a scarf to illustrate that she is a Muslim and that she is committed to certain values she is constantly asked "why do you wear a scarf?". Furaha does not feel that there is an incompatibility between being a Muslim and a modern woman. She, like Nyla, sees the need for greater dialogue and understanding between people from different cultures and religions.*

**Furaha**

Notwithstanding this debate, some immigrant women who come from developing societies experience a degree of independence unimagined in the countries they leave behind:

*It is the experience of Sandra (from Nigeria) that in Ireland women are much freer. They are free to make choices and to express themselves. Women can go out and socialise without being with a man.*

**Sandra**

### **Furaha**

*Furaha (from Tanzania) is a Muslim woman who, as her statement above illustrates, is committed to the values of the Muslim faith, is attracted by the fact that women are much more independent in Ireland than they are in her home country of Tanzania. In her country she feels that women's voices are not heard:*

Women are ruled by men. They are told what to wear and what they can do.

*Furaha is impressed by what she perceives to be the independence of Irish women. Her observation is that:*

Women in Ireland know what they want. They can have a car, a mortgage and children and they do not need the permission of men.

### **Right of Spouse to Work**

In Ireland, spouses of workers on work permits do not have the right to work. However, changes introduced in February 2004 by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment gave spouses of certain categories of non-EEA workers permission to work in Ireland. The new arrangements cover the spouses of workers on working visas and work authorisations, and certain researchers and academics.

Spouses who do not benefit from these new arrangements often remain in the home country because families cannot afford to live in Ireland on one income. In these situations women often bear the responsibility of rearing children on their own in the home country. Tomeck's situation illustrates how Irish immigration regulations negatively affects women and children:

### **Tomeck**

*Tomeck (from Latvia) and his wife made a decision that she and her teenage children would not join him in Ireland. They could not afford the high costs of rearing a family in Ireland (particularly of rent and education) given that his wife would not be granted permission to work. This is extremely difficult for Tomeck and his wife and children. He is extremely lonely without them and his wife has the responsibility of rearing teenage children on her own.*

The fact that spouses of people on work permits do not have permission to work, has social and economic consequences for migrant families who live in Ireland:

### **Andrew**

*Andrew (from South Africa) has a work authorisation. Before their arrival, both he and his wife were informed at a seminar held by an Irish state agency that she would be permitted to take up employment when they came as a family to Ireland. This was not the case when they arrived, although the policy with regard to spouses of people on work authorisations has since changed. The inaccurate information they were given at the time affected them both economically and socially. Andrew's wife was isolated in the home, cut off from a career, and prevented from achieving economic independence. At the time of this research, Andrew felt strongly that Irish policy should be changed to take account of the needs of the family as well as the need of the economy for workers. He is pleased that his wife can now seek work on the basis of his status.*

*Zahra (from Tanzania) came to Ireland as a dependent spouse. She is not entitled to work. She is now separated from her husband and lives in the family home with her two children. Zahra has a postgraduate qualification in international law. She would like employment related to her qualifications that would give her sufficient income to support herself and her children. Apart from the poverty she is experiencing from not working, she is isolated in the home and has little opportunity to make friends, develop her considerable skills, and become part of the society.*

Zahra

Not being permitted to work affects a person's chances of making friends, achieving independence, using their skills, and contributing to society, and thus integrating in their new country. Isolation of a spouse in the home has implications for the social and mental well-being of immigrant families and means that reunited families may experience the classic poverty trap of those dependent on a single low income trying to survive in a new society.

Experiences of migrant workers point to the importance of allowing spouses of all immigrants to work, regardless of the type of permission they hold. It also raises the issue of the importance of providing supports for immigrants who are isolated in the home with weak support networks.

### **Domestic Violence**

Women who migrate with spouses who are working on work permits are not permitted to work. This affects their economic integration into the society and increases their isolation in the home. These factors, combined with their unfamiliarity with their new environment, increase their dependence on the spouse and their vulnerability in situations of domestic violence. The cases of Zahra and Florica outlined below illustrate the difficulties of immigrant women who experience domestic violence.

*Life for Zahra (from Tanzania) in Ireland is difficult and contrasts significantly with her well-off lifestyle in Africa. Because of domestic violence abuse she is now separated from her husband who works in the financial services sector. She and her two children spent six months in a women's refuge. She appreciates very much the shelter and friendship which it provided for her. She feels isolated, and this isolation is reinforced by the fact that she is not allowed to work. Even if she was granted leave to remain and was allowed to work, her education and work experience are not recognised in Ireland.*

Zahra

*Zahra is in a precarious situation. Because she is separated from her husband she does not have a legal status in Ireland. She does not have much money and is dependent on the state and her friends for support.*

*Zahra would like to remain in Ireland with the right to work so that she can support herself and her two children. She would like to get training that is specifically related to her needs and qualifications, and to enter the workforce at a level where she could earn sufficient income and use her qualifications.*

Zahra's case illustrates the need for current Irish policy and its implementation to state clearly that a woman who experiences domestic violence, and who enters the country as a dependent spouse should not be deported and, once in Ireland, should have her status recognised independently of her spouse. The support available from other services such as health boards also needs to be clarified.

## Florica

When Florica (from Romania) was eight months pregnant, her partner became violent towards her. The violence, which included physical violence, continued after her baby was born. She had no access to their joint savings, which her partner controlled, or to the passport of her child. The physical violence escalated and her situation became intolerable. She made a decision to leave her partner. She had few supports. It was difficult for Florica as a parent of a young child to get accommodation. Eventually, a sympathetic estate agent persuaded a landlady to rent her accommodation in a one-bedroom self-contained apartment.

Over the last few years, Florica has been before the family court on numerous occasions in relation to maintenance from her ex-partner and his access to their child. A maintenance order was made by the court for €50 per week to be paid by her ex-partner. This was not complied with. Florica is critical of the fact that her case is continuously adjourned. In addition, there are no crèche or childcare facilities and no places for children to play in the family court. Negotiating stairways with a buggy when making applications is difficult. This absence of facilities puts additional stress on mothers who are already anxious waiting for their case to be heard.

Florica continued to be followed, threatened, and photographed by her ex-partner after she had left him. She reported the harassment to the gardaí but did not feel believed until she brought an Irish man with her to help her put her case. She was ineligible to apply for a court order for protection from the family court, as she had not been living with her partner during the previous twelve months. Her only option was to press criminal charges for breach of the peace in the criminal court. Because Florica was a witness for the prosecution she was not entitled to be represented in court. A barrister represented her ex-partner. As a result of rules governing breach of the peace, her ex-partner was only charged with one incident of breach of the peace. In court, Florica was not permitted to outline the full case of harassment. Florica is critical of this procedure, as it does not allow for the fact that domestic violence is a pattern of coercive control. The outcome of the court case was that an order was not made against her ex-partner preventing him from harassing her.

As Florica's trauma continues, she has few supports in Ireland. She has one friend who has given her continual support, and the support worker from the non-governmental organisation has provided her with invaluable assistance. Florica would like to return home to Romania. However, she is unable to do so until she gets permission from the family law court to take her child out of Ireland.

Florica is forced to remain in Ireland although she lacks a clear legal status. She has not received a reply from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform in relation to her application for residency as a parent of an Irish-citizen child, which she made over two years ago.

## Trafficking

The following account, provided by the Ruhama Project, Dublin is not one woman's story. The facts are true. They are taken from the stories of a number of women. Mara does not exist. From the perspective of Ruhama she personifies the experience of women who have been trafficked into Ireland:

*Mara was an attractive young woman of nineteen years of age when she was trafficked from Moldova. Because of the lack of job opportunities in her home country, she decided to travel abroad in search of work. She had been told of great opportunities in Western Europe and so when she was offered a job in a bar she was delighted to accept. However Mara was deceived. She was bought and sold by traffickers at least three times. She travelled by bus, boat, car, truck and plane, passing through Albania, Italy, France, and England, and eventually arrived in Ireland.*

Mara

*Switching cars and modes of transport so often, being locked in houses and constantly guarded by the traffickers, she was completely disoriented and unable to even try to escape. She was imprisoned, subjected to beatings, starvation, and rape. If she was unco-operative, her family at home was threatened and she was told she would be passed on to more dangerous owners.*

*Eventually, after arriving in Ireland, her passport and papers were taken from her and destroyed. She was passed over to a Russian man who put her into a brothel. She was told she would now be a prostitute. She would do exactly as she was told or her family in Moldova would be killed. She got food and shelter, and had to work all day and sometimes late into the night. She could not refuse to do anything she was asked to do by the men who frequented the brothel. She was constantly monitored.*

*Three months later she found she was pregnant. She was told she was of no use now and was free to go. She was left with nothing, no money, no place to stay, no contacts and hardly any English. Mara was warned she could trust no one and if she told her story, her family would be in danger and would be told she was now working in prostitution.*

If a woman like Mara is very lucky she may be introduced to a service like the Ruhama Project, Dublin, sometimes through word of mouth. Workers try to build a relationship of trust with her and she may very gradually begin to reveal some of her story. She may be too afraid to testify against her traffickers. She will be supported as she tries to rebuild her life. Usually she will be too afraid to return home for fear of her traffickers, or because of the shame she feels because of what she has experienced. She will also be supported as she applies for legal status in Ireland. As a woman who has been trafficked, she does not fit into the category of refugee or asylum seeker. She has very different issues and problems than those of a refugee or an asylum seeker. As Ireland has no safe houses, support systems, or legislation that she can easily resort to, Mara continues to be vulnerable and at risk.

### **Supports for Women**

Women often experience depression as a result of isolation in the home. It is important that women do not remain isolated and have opportunities to meet women who have similar cultural values, that they identify their own needs, and engage in dialogue with Irish women and the broader Irish society:

*Nyla (from Syria) made the point that because of the lack of understanding of difference Muslim women often feel shy about joining local groups and classes, for example, English language classes or computer classes. It is thus important that Muslim women have a place in the community to meet to share their experiences, develop their skills and confidence, and participate in decisions that affect them and their communities.*

Nyla

## Furaha

*Furaha (from Tanzania) expressed a similar opinion to that of Nyla. She made the point that immigrant women from different ethnic groups need a place where they can meet to express their culture and identify their needs. Ideally there should be a centre like a drop-in where there is a crèche and where English classes, computer classes, and other classes such as personal development and meditation are available.*

The life experiences of women from different cultures need to be understood and validated. For this to happen, there is need to resource initiatives such as women's networks, mentoring programmes, language classes, and retraining programmes for immigrant women. This is important in order to facilitate their engagement in Irish society, and to encourage expression and dialogue regarding the concerns of minority ethnic groups.

## Accommodation

### Private Rented Sector

Migrants on work permits tend to be in low-paid work and finding good-quality, affordable accommodation can be difficult. Even when they are in Ireland for a number of years, they are unlikely to be in a position to negotiate a mortgage to buy a house or an apartment, and may experience specific forms of discrimination from financial institutions as a result of their migrant status. Accommodation in the private rented sector tends to be basic, of poor quality, and expensive, and many share houses with other migrants to reduce the burden of paying very high rent:

## Tomeck

*Tomeck (from Latvia) pays €75 a week for one small room in a house that he shares with seven other people. He feels that the house is overcrowded and that the rent for his room is expensive.*

## Ahmed

*Before coming to Dublin, Ahmed (from Bangladesh) lived in a one-bedroom apartment in a town in the south-east of Ireland. The apartment was in very poor condition, for example the sofa was broken, the rug in the living room was filthy, the washing machine was not working, and a ring of the cooker was broken. He gave four weeks notice to the letting agent who said that the deposit would be returned to him from the head office of the company. Nine months later his deposit has not been returned to him despite making a special trip from Dublin to the office of the letting agent. He was told that the person that was dealing with his case has left the agency. Ahmed is now taking a case to the small claims court.*

*When he came to Dublin, he found accommodation in the south inner city. It was infested with mice, the walls were damp, and the place was dirty. He then moved to an apartment in the north inner city. The rent is €200 per week. Part of the ceiling in the apartment collapsed two weeks ago and it has not been fixed since. He has very little choice because he cannot move until he gets his deposit back. He needs the money for a new deposit and one month's advance rent before he can move, and this comes to about €1,000.*

*Gatis (from Moldova) is paying €150 per week for a one-bedroom apartment in a house where there are thirteen other apartments mostly occupied by foreign nationals. Prior to getting his present employment, his weekly income was €285 out of which he paid €150 in rent. Gatis intends to apply for citizenship in over a year's time when he will be five years in Ireland. He is confident that, with his skills, if he gets citizenship that he will be able to earn enough income to get a mortgage and buy a house. He makes the point that immigrants on work permits are in low-paid work, for the most part, and have no guarantee of long-term employment, which makes it impossible to afford good-quality family accommodation, or to get a mortgage to buy a house.*

**Gatis**

*Angela (from the Philippines) shares an apartment with three other women migrants. It is one of several apartments in the house, which is located in an inner city area. In general the house is in need of modernisation and decoration, and the accommodation she describes as "very basic". Angela pays €180 per month rent. She was relieved to get this accommodation close to where she works and at a low rent. Prior to getting this accommodation, she was renting a room and paying €375 per month. Her monthly wage is €1034 per month.*

**Angela**

### **Good-quality Private Rented Family Accommodation**

One interviewee found good-quality accommodation in a town in the west of Ireland:

*Natalia (from Lithuania) came to a town in the west of Ireland because members of her family had already found employment there. She shares a four-bedroom house with her relatives that is spacious and is in very good condition. They had no difficulty accessing this accommodation, which they found through an advertisement in the local newspaper. The rent for the house is €160 per week.*

**Natalia**

### **Private Ownership**

Migrant workers with working visas or work authorisations tend to be in higher-skilled, higher-paid employment than migrant workers on work permits. With higher pay, they tend to have better-quality accommodation in the private rented sector. In some cases, they purchase their own house:

*Sandra (from Nigeria) is employed as a nurse on a working visa. When she arrived in Ireland good accommodation was arranged for her in the hospital where she was employed. She was then able to negotiate a mortgage and has purchased a house in County Dublin. Despite the fact that she has been successful in taking out a mortgage and has a home of her own, she still feels insecure as her work is temporary.*

**Sandra**

**Andrew**

*Similar to Sandra (from Nigeria), Andrew (from South Africa) who works in the computer industry has a relatively good salary and has been able to get a mortgage to buy a house. However, it is difficult to meet the cost of mortgage repayments and other living expenses on one salary. Since February 2004, restrictions on his wife accessing work have been eased and she is now seeking work; if she is successful they will reduce their financial difficulties.*

### **Accommodation Provided by the Employer**

Some of the migrant workers interviewed are accommodated in houses owned by the employer:

**Mohammed**

*Mohammed (from Morocco) lives in a small room attached to the café in which he works. It is very sparse, has a minimum amount of equipment, is icy-cold in the winter and only has one small gas heater, which gives out fumes. He has no bathroom and shares an outside toilet.*

**Eric**

*When Eric (from South Africa) took up employment, his employer accommodated him in a house with a number of workers from Eastern Europe who had very little English. He found living in the house difficult, as his housemates could not speak English. He felt excluded and made a decision to return to South Africa. His employer arranged for him to move to another house that he shares with English-speaking workers. Eric made the point that it is very difficult to live in such close proximity with a group of people who have a different culture and speak their own language.*

### **Language and Education**

Being proficient in the official language of the receiving country is an important factor for the economic and social inclusion of immigrants. Conversely, inability to speak the official language of a country can be a contributory factor to poverty. Language emerged as a key issue for the majority of participants. Competence in the English language ranged from complete fluency to virtually no ability to speak English:

**Deniz**

*Without the language you are nothing. You have no chance of getting on. When Deniz (from Turkey) arrived in Ireland, there were no free English language classes. He is of the opinion that immigrants need access to free English classes.*

**Natalia**

*Natalia (from Lithuania) works with twenty other workers, fifteen of whom are from Eastern European countries. She lives with members of her extended family. The language spoken in the workplace is Russian and Lithuanian is spoken in the home. Although she has been in Ireland for over two years, she has practically no English. Because there is no guarantee of work, she works as many hours as are offered to her, which often involves a ten- to twelve-hour day. Given her work schedule, it is difficult for her to make a commitment to attend regular language classes.*

Although Tomeck (from Latvia) speaks some English, he finds the Irish accent difficult, particularly when people speak fast. His experience is that other Latvians also find English difficult and often struggle to understand, and to be understood. They are often the objects of ridicule in the work place. He has heard Irish workers say to Latvians "would you stop speaking pigeon English". Many Latvians he knows work long hours on low pay, and are too tired and exhausted to learn English.

Tomeck

Furaha (from Tanzania) has good spoken and written English. However, she is studying for her qualifications in midwifery, and she considers that her academic English is not good enough. She has had one-to-one adult learning tuition and her tutor reads over and edits her assignments with her before she submits them to the college. She finds this support invaluable.

Furaha

Reyad (from Iran) and Matthew (from the Democratic Republic of the Congo) both recognise that in order to progress economically they need to be proficient in English and have recognised educational qualifications:

Since arriving in Ireland four years ago, Reyad has learned English and has passed Maths, Economics and English in the Leaving Certificate. He has also passed the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL). Reyad is studying computers and engineering in a third-level college. His wife is attending a local Vocational Education Committee (VEC) course. He was helped and encouraged to study and acquire qualifications by an NGO that was established to provide support to immigrants.

Reyad

When Matthew (from the Democratic Republic of the Congo) arrived in Ireland, he had few words of English because French was the official language of the Congo. In the Congo, he worked as a lawyer. He realised that he would not be able to take up work in the area of law unless he was proficient in the English language and had recognised qualifications.

Matthew

There were no English classes available to Matthew and he travelled a fifty-mile round-trip each week to a Vocational Training Opportunity Scheme (VTOS) course. He also has the National Certificate in Computing. He intends to attend evening classes to study law in a third-level college. Like Reyad, he was encouraged and supported to study by an NGO that was established to provide support for immigrants.

A striking feature of the immigrant population is the multilingualistic ability of immigrants:

- Mohammed (from Morocco) speaks Arabic, English, French, Spanish and Italian
  - Tomeck (from Latvia) speaks Latvian, English, Russian and Bellarussian
  - Gatis (from Moldova) speaks Russian, Ukrainian, Romanian and French
- Immigrants from ex-colonies of Great Britain, speak fluent English in addition to their native languages.

## Access to Third-level Education

Immigrant workers, even when they are committed to remaining in Ireland in the long term, are treated like non-resident foreign nationals in many areas. The case of Andrew illustrates the high cost of third-level education for children of immigrant workers:

### Andrew

*Andrew (from South Africa) who came to Ireland as a result of a promotion by an Irish state agency was told that third-level education for his daughter would not be any more expensive than it is in South Africa which is approximately €2,000 per annum. When he came to Ireland, he found that this was not true. He is now paying the full fees paid by foreign students, which amounts to approximately €12,000. He feels that this is unjust given that he is part of the Irish workforce, has skills that the Irish economy needs, and is committed to staying in Ireland. He feels that this is an example of unfriendly policies in relation to migrant workers and their families.*

## Prejudice and Racism

Several books on racism have been published recently in Ireland (MacLachlan and O'Connell, Eds 2000; Farrell and Watt, Eds, 2001; Lentin and McVeigh, Eds, 2002; Fanning 2002; Garner 2004).<sup>23</sup> Racism is a form of discrimination directed against racial minorities. It involves the use of economic, social or political power for the purpose of legitimating such exclusion. Boucher (2000) makes the important point that racism results in the exclusion of black and ethnic minority groups to the benefit of majority group members.

One of the few large-scale surveys is that commissioned by kNOw Racism and undertaken in September 2003 by Irish Market Surveys (see Appendix A). The author concluded that there is a significant amount of mistaken or exaggerated perceptions of why immigrants come to Ireland. There is a tendency to deny the legitimacy of immigrants, and to exaggerate the benefits immigrants receive. Also Irish people do not perceive a multicultural society as something positive.

In the present study, apart from two white South Africans and two workers from Eastern Europe, all interviewees reported that they experienced disrespect and lack of sensitivity because of their difference. On the streets and in public places hostility took the form of avoidance, verbal abuse, stalking, obstructing, stone-throwing, egg-throwing, damage to property, and other forms of harassment. The following quotes illustrate the range of negative behaviour experienced by immigrants:

When your name is different, people treat you differently. When your colour is different, people try to avoid you. People will not sit beside you in the bus unless there is no other seat vacant. Because of the bad experiences I have had I now always ask people if it is o.k. to sit on a seat beside them before I sit down.

Although we are living in a 'good' area, last week two eggs were thrown at our window. Weeks before stones were thrown. We did not report it to the gardaí as we did not know who the people were.

23 See Appendix A.

Most of the Irish are very friendly. We are very friendly with our neighbours. Some do not understand. When I arrived everyone was looking at me. I had stones thrown at my forehead.

The windows in my house were broken. I could not go after the attackers, as I had to protect my children who were in the house at the time and were afraid.

Many are made to feel uneasy and disrespected when seeking employment:

One person reported that when he phoned in reply to a job application, the person who answered the phone when he heard his accent said "fucking foreigner" and put down the phone.

Another person that phoned in reply to a job application was told that the vacancy was filled. He did not believe what he was told and strongly suspected that he was refused an interview because of his accent. His wife who is Irish subsequently phoned and she was offered an interview.

One man reported that he went into a bar to apply for a job that was advertised on a poster on the shop window:

When I asked about the job the manager just looked at me and said "we don't have any jobs here".

### **Children**

Given the prejudice and racism which adults can experience it is not surprising that children of immigrants, when their appearance is different, also experience intolerance and racism. The following are examples of some of the comments made to children of immigrants:

Your skin is the colour of shit.

Bin Laden's son

Go back to where you came from. (In this case the children being abused were born in Ireland.)

The spouse of one interviewee is resigned to the fact that she will have to cope with racism all her life:

*She feels that as her children grow up they will experience racist remarks and behaviour. She also made the point that because she is educated and can make representations to the authorities she feels that she will be further victimised if those in authority cannot make an appropriate response. She is of the opinion that there is need for antiracist training for all teachers and professionals dealing with immigrants and their children.*

## ***Coping with Racism and Effects of Racism***

Immigrants cope with racist remarks in a number of ways:

Some try to ignore it:

When a person insults me on the street or in the supermarket, I just walk away. I do not think too much about it. That would get you down.

Immigrants find that over time the experience of racism can lead to depression and affect one's psychological well-being as the following examples illustrate:

I experience racism almost every day. I can't take it any longer. Comments like "The Americans are looking for you" (reference to 9/11). are made. Also, it is difficult to understand the Irish accent. When I ask people to repeat what they say, they become angry and start laughing. You have to take all of this and try to ignore it.

There was a lot of hostility against foreign people coming into the country. In these situations you become helpless and it is difficult to know whom to trust.

One person interviewed made the point that children and adults that come from a country in which the residents are predominantly black and have never experienced racism find it difficult to cope with racial discrimination. People who have lived in a multicultural society such as Britain have more coping strategies. There is need for self-help groups for adults and children to help them to cope with racism.

## ***Reporting Racism***

Reporting incidences of aggression does not always lead to redress. When a parent complained to the school authorities regarding racist remarks experienced by her children she felt that the complaint was not dealt with. The response she got was:

Everyone gets picked on.

The same parent complained to the gardaí about the behaviour of boys who attacked her son:

The boys were interviewed and no action taken in relation to them.

One person reported racist remarks and attacks twenty to thirty times to the garda and says that he did not get justice and "would not go near them again".

### **Political Leadership**

The point was made that there is need for unambiguous leadership at the highest political levels to combat racism:

Very few politicians are publicly working to eliminate racism. How many TDs have tried to create an awareness of racism? The most influential people can help to bring about change.

There is need for political leadership and at the highest level. If your Taoiseach came out with statements on television on human rights, it would help enormously. There is also need for antiracist training for politicians and top administrators.

The point was made repeatedly that politicians need to be seen to welcome immigrants, respect diversity, and acknowledge the contribution of immigrants to Ireland as well as condemning any form of racism or disrespect for people.

### **Perceptions of Immigrants**

#### **Perceived as Welfare Spongers**

Immigrants attribute some of the intolerance they experience to the fact that many Irish people think that immigrants are taking advantage of the government welfare system:

Irish people think all black people are on welfare and getting what they are not entitled to.

When I came to Ireland I was pushed to the wall with negative experiences and attacked at my home. People thought I was on welfare. I have bought my own home. Yet, people think that we are getting benefits that should go to Irish people. I am still seen as a foreigner. People think that you get everything free.

### **Lack of Knowledge**

Many immigrants attribute racism to the lack of knowledge that Irish people have of other cultures. Irish people are also seen to be ignorant of the fact that many immigrants are highly educated and speak numerous languages:

*The experience of Mohammed (from Morocco) is that Irish people have little knowledge of countries outside of Europe. He says:*

Irish people ask me where my country is. They don't know much about Africa or my culture and they misunderstand my religion. At the age of fourteen, I knew about European history. The Irish don't know about Islam or about Muslims. If someone was educated they would not react the way they do. Many local people (in the community he lives in) have little education. When a person is drunk, they can be very hurtful. They (Irish people) think not only are you different, but you are stupid as well.

**Mohammed**

**Sandra** *In the experience of Sandra (Nigeria):*

Many Irish people don't realise that there are countries outside of the West where English is the spoken language so you get comments like "your English is very good."

**Angela** *Angela (from the Philippines) feels that many Irish people are afraid of foreigners, particularly if they appear vulnerable. When she fled from her employer because of unjust treatment she spent three days looking for someone to help her. It was her experience that:*

People (Irish people) if they don't know you, think that foreigners who ask for help are bad people.

**Eric** *Eric (from South Africa) heard an Eastern European worker who worked with him in a supermarket ask a customer to move his car that was blocking the car park. The customer who was Irish said "who does he think he is, a foreigner in this country? I will move it when I bloody well like." This, he feels is typical of the way Eastern European workers are treated by some Irish people.*

**Abraham** *Abraham (from Tanzania) feels that Irish people feel threatened by black people. It is his experience that Irish people feel that black people are not to be trusted. He reported that when he was in a shopping centre buying winter clothes:*

The security man was trailing me; they think every black man is a thief.

Comments like the following were not uncommon:

Why did you come to our country?

Why did you not stay in your own country?

You are taking Irish people's jobs.

All black people are on welfare and are better treated than Irish citizens.

## **Work**

Immigrant workers, particularly workers on work permits, students and workers with no recognised residence are vulnerable to exploitation. Many immigrant workers work long hours in physically demanding work, have poor working conditions, get lower wages than their Irish counterparts and in some situations have tax deducted by employers who do not pay tax and/or are not registered for tax. Many experience downward mobility and work in jobs far below their skill level and qualifications. They undertake unskilled work which Irish workers are no longer willing to perform.

### **Inaccurate Information**

For documented workers, employment contracts in general are agreed prior to coming to Ireland. In some situations the job described in the contract is very different from the actual job the worker gets when they come to Ireland:

*Eric (from South Africa) worked as a stock controller in South Africa. He came to Ireland as a result of contacting a recruitment agency. The employment specified on his work permit was trainee manager. The work allocated to him in Ireland is as an unskilled assistant in a supermarket:*

*In South Africa I was checking stock, I would not be allowed to do this here.*

**Eric**

Many workers are provided with limited, and in some cases inaccurate, information regarding restrictions imposed on migrants and their families:

*Andrew (from South Africa) came to Ireland on a work authorisation as a result of a promotion seminar organised by an Irish state agency in South Africa. At the seminar he was provided with misinformation on a number of issues. He was told that his wife would have the automatic right to work and could apply for a work permit in Ireland but this was not the case at the time of their arrival. He was also informed that education fees for his daughter would be a fraction of what they turned out to be.*

**Andrew**

*Sandra (from Nigeria) has a working visa. Her experience is that recruitment agencies operate on a commission and thus exaggerate the benefits of emigration:*

The agencies will do anything to get you in. They tell you of lucrative things. They tell you that you do not have to worry. When you arrive in the new country, you get no support from the agency and things can be very different than what you expected. Ireland is more expensive than I thought it would be. Also I did not think that there would be any problems bringing my children to Ireland.

*Sandra has not succeeded in getting permission for her eighteen-and-a-half-year-old son who is dependent on her to reside with her in Ireland. This situation is outlined above under family reunification.*

**Sandra**

### **Low Pay, Long Hours, and Poor Working Conditions**

Many migrant workers work long hours for low pay in poor working conditions.

*When Angela (from the Philippines) first arrived in Ireland she worked with a cleaning company. She was paid €85 a week for the first three weeks as money was deducted for emergency tax and for living accommodation. Although her wages increased, she was never paid the minimum wage. She recounted how she was closely supervised and always watched while she carried out her job as a cleaner. Her supervisor would say, "faster, time-up, you are very slow". Also, she had to work in a number of different workplaces throughout the city. She felt that she was good at her work and could not understand why "people were so unkind". Eventually because of unjust treatment, she fled from her employer. She spent three days looking for someone to help her. She feared deportation because her residency permit was running out. Eventually she received help from the priests of the Catholic Church who applied for a work permit for her.*

**Angela**

### **Mohammed**

*Mohammed (from Morocco), who is an undocumented worker, works in a café and is only paid a fraction of the minimum wage, often as low as €4 an hour. He feels that because he does not have a work permit, employers can give him whatever they choose in cash and also deduct emergency tax that they do not pay to the government. He feels that he has little option but to take whatever work he can get. In his present employment, not only does he work long hours but also the hours he works are unsocial. He works in the café until 2 a.m. at which time he is required to clear the restaurant and clean the kitchen, including a heavy-duty cooker and oven. He feels that Irish workers would not work in such conditions.*

### **Tomeck**

*When Tomeck (from Latvia) first came to Ireland he worked in the vegetable growing industry where he worked six days a week and never got the minimum wage. Eventually he got work in the building industry where he is:*

*Well-paid, making brilliant money, getting overtime and has bought a lot of tools to bring home.*

### **Gatis**

*Gatis (from Moldova) received very low wages when he first came to Ireland. He lived and worked on a farm in the south east of Ireland and only earned €150 per week for a five-day week. He worked from 6 a.m. until 7 p.m. He was not asked to work on weekends, as his employer would not pay him overtime. When his wife joined him after he was a year in Ireland he rented an apartment and his wages increased to €228 per week. He has now found a new employer, is earning good wages, and is optimistic about his future in Ireland.*

### **Deniz**

*Deniz (from Turkey) has been granted leave to remain in Ireland. He has worked in restaurants and cafés. It is his experience that migrant workers working in small restaurants and cafés rarely get paid the minimum wage. Many workers get less than €4 an hour.*

### **Maria**

*A language school arranged au pair work for a six-month period for Maria (from Poland). The Irish family live in a detached house in a wealthy Dublin suburb. Maria's duties as outlined to her were that she would work thirty-five hours per week taking care of two very young children, while also doing some light housework, such as helping to prepare dinner. The family provided her with accommodation and food, and she was paid €70 per week.*

*Maria worked more than thirty-five hours per week. As well as food preparation, she was required to Hoover and clean the entire house, which included three bathrooms and five bedrooms. Her employers made very little effort to speak English to her and she feels that she did not make as much progress as she expected to make.*

*Maria discussed her heavy workload with the administrator of the language school who organised the au pair work. The administrator advised*

her to speak directly with the family. This was difficult due to the personal nature of her relationship with her employers, and the fact that she lived in their house. When she raised the issue of her workload, it created tension between her and her employers. They felt that she was ungrateful and her workload was not reduced. She has made a decision to complete her six months, as it was too difficult to organise an alternative placement. She feels that there is need for an organisation in Ireland which would affiliate to the European organisation that looks after the interests of au pair students. Maria is returning to Poland shortly but intends to return to Ireland for a further six months. She will not seek employment as an au pair and expects to get work in a restaurant.

### **Unauthorised Tax Deductions**

Angela and Mohammed not only experienced poor working conditions but also had tax deducted by their employers which was not paid to the Revenue Commissioners.

*As is indicated above, the employment conditions of Angela (from the Philippines) were not good. Her first employer, who was not registered with the Revenue Commissioners, was deducting tax that he was not paying to the state.*

**Angela**

Although Mohammed is an undocumented worker, the employer deducted tax and PRSI from his weekly earnings.

*Mohammed (from Morocco) who works in a small café in the west of Ireland is on emergency tax for a number of months. He is certain that:*

**Mohammed**

The boss is not paying tax at all and that it (tax which is deducted) goes into his (the boss) pocket.

### **Lack of Knowledge of the Work Permit System**

Many workers on work permits lack knowledge of the procedures governing the work permit, including procedures for granting the permit, renewing the permit, and changing employers.<sup>24</sup>

*Friends told Mohammed (from Morocco) that it would be easy for him to get well-paid work in Ireland. He is also falsely under the impression that his employer can apply for a work permit for him even though he is an undocumented worker living in Ireland. He works long hours in poor working conditions in a small café. He feels that:*

**Mohammed**

Without a work permit, you have got no rights.

*Mohammed is of the opinion that what is preventing his employer getting a work permit is that the system is complex and slow.*

<sup>24</sup> Work permits are applied for by the employer, who then continues to hold the permit throughout its duration, and generally the permit has to be obtained before the worker enters Ireland. Employers can apply to have the permit renewed and if a worker wishes to change employers, the new employer has to have the new permit before the worker can take up the job.

**Tomeck**

*Tomeck (from Latvia), although satisfied with his present employment and conditions of work, is of the opinion that because his work permit has been renewed that he owns the permit and that he is now free to move from job to job. This is not the case due to the current nature of the work permit system.*

### **Work Permit Held by Employers**

The fact that employers hold the work permit can leave workers open to exploitation:

**Angela**

*Angela's first employer in the cleaning industry was not registered for tax purposes. Also, he did not want her to register with the gardaí (Garda National Immigration Bureau) and refused to provide her with a copy of the work permit in order for her to register. When she could no longer endure the working conditions and left, she was without a work permit and was in a position where she was unlikely to be able to find legal work. She feels strongly that the employee should hold the work permit because employees are open to exploitation in cases of unscrupulous employers.*

### **Time Limited Nature of Visas and Work Permits**

The temporary nature of all forms of permission to work in Ireland is unsettling. It makes it difficult for workers to settle down, find a home and plan a career, and is seen as an obstacle to promotion and training opportunities:

**Furaha**

*Furaha (from Tanzania) who is a midwife has a working visa. It can be stressful waiting for the working visa to be renewed:*

Every time you re-apply for renewal you do not know for sure that you will get it. It is difficult to settle and make a long-term commitment.

**Sandra**

*As Sandra (from Nigeria) sees it, as she is dependent on her employer to renew her contract:*

You cannot make any trouble. You work extra hard to please your employer and if subjected to unfairness you cannot complain. You are very dependent on your employer. If you break the contract, it would get around. A long-term contract would give you more career options and more bargaining power with employers.

*In her opinion working visas and work authorisations should be granted for a period of five years:*

I have palpitations when the visa is coming to an end wondering if it will be re-issued. It is difficult to plan with a short-term visa, for example, there is a degree course starting which will be for three years, which I have difficulty making a decision about. I ask myself, will I be here in three years?

Temporary work contracts can mean that it is difficult to get promotion in the job:

**Sandra**

*Sandra (from Nigeria) came to Ireland in 2000. She feels that getting promotion is difficult and poses the question:*

Who is going to promote you if they do not know if you will be in the job in twelve months from now?

### Difficulties Getting a New Work Permit

Adam's new employer is having great difficulty getting a work permit for Adam (from India). This is despite the fact that Adam is in Ireland legally since 1999 and has skills that are needed by the Irish economy. His residency permit has run out and he is, strictly speaking, in the country illegally because the right of residence is effectively linked to possession of a valid work permit.

*Adam (from India) is a highly qualified IT specialist. He came to Ireland to study computer science in 1999. He completed his undergraduate degree and also has a postgraduate qualification. A company, with which he was placed as a student for work experience, offered him employment and successfully applied for a work permit for him. In his second year with the company, it closed down and he was made redundant. This was shortly before his work permit was due for renewal. He found employment with another company doing a similar type of work. The company applied for a work permit and advertised the job with FÁS, but found no suitable candidate. FÁS has now informed the employer that he should place advertisements in the newspapers. Both Adam and the employer are extremely frustrated. The employer feels that he has met the requirements to advertise with FÁS, and that the extra requirement to place newspaper advertisements is unjust. Adam feels that it is unfair that there is no clear way he can get permission to work in Ireland despite the fact that he has been in Ireland since 1999. He has a good record as a student and as a worker, has invested a lot of time, money and energy in Ireland, and has a clear commitment to live and work in Ireland.*

Adam

The difficulty of getting an employer to apply for work permits can make it difficult for workers to change jobs and can restrict labour mobility:

*Eric (from South Africa) would like to change his job and to get work commensurate with his qualifications. When he applies for jobs his experience is that many employers do not want the responsibility and "hassle" involved in employing people who are on the work permit scheme.*

Eric

Employers don't want to know when they hear that I am on a work permit. They don't want the trouble of applying for a Permit.

### Recognition of Foreign Qualifications

The qualifications of migrant workers are often not recognised, resulting in qualified workers taking up unskilled work. There is no clear system through which migrants can have their foreign qualifications recognised.

Mehmet failed to have his qualifications recognised:

*Mehmet (from Pakistan) who is a refugee is a qualified vet. His qualifications are not recognised in Ireland and he has not been able to gain acceptance as a mature student to requalify as a vet. The qualifications of his wife who is a trained teacher are also not recognised. She was a headmistress in a primary school prior to coming to Ireland. They both feel that the lack of recognised channels to have their qualifications recognised is unjust and unfair. The result is that they and their children live in poverty when they could be contributing to Irish society and be economically independent.*

Mehmet

Matthew (from the Democratic Republic of the Congo) and Tatiana (Russian Federation) are accessing education to get recognised qualifications:

**Matthew**

*Matthew (from the Democratic Republic of the Congo) worked as a lawyer in the Congo. He had a small amount of English when he first arrived in Ireland and his qualifications were not recognised in Ireland. He has since studied English for two years and is planning to study law to get a third-level qualification so that he can at sometime work in his chosen profession. In the meanwhile, he works for a security firm.*

**Tatiana**

*Tatiana (from the Russian Federation) works in the vegetable growing industry. She worked as a secretary in Russia. She has fluent English and is taking computer classes. She intends to update her skills and eventually to get citizenship and work that matches her qualifications.*

### **Downward Mobility**

Many migrant workers do not work in the same occupational sector as they did before coming to Ireland. They apply to work in jobs that are advertised by employment agencies in their home countries or hear about jobs from friends and relatives who are in Ireland. Many experience downward mobility and work in jobs that are far below their skill level and level of qualifications:

**Natalia**

*Natalia (from Lithuania) is an experienced qualified teacher. She is working in the vegetable growing industry on a work permit. She is not sure whether her qualifications are recognised in Ireland. She has very little English and her future here is uncertain.*

**Ahmed**

*Ahmed (from Bangladesh) has a science degree and is working as a waiter in a fast food restaurant.*

**Matthew**

*Matthew worked as a lawyer in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He now works with a security firm.*

**Abraham**

*Abraham (from Tanzania) is working as an unskilled night worker in a supermarket. He has a diploma in business studies and worked at managerial level in Tanzania. He is also unhappy that he was not considered for permanent jobs that were offered by the company to employees. He feels that this is because he is black and not from an EU accession country. He would like to be treated like EU workers as he has leave to remain and is entitled to work in Ireland.*

*Tomeck (from Latvia), who is employed on a work permit, is a skilled tradesman. When he arrived in Ireland, he worked in a vegetable-processing factory as an unskilled labourer. Eventually, through contact with other Latvians, he found an employer who applied for a work permit for him to work as a skilled worker in the building sector.*

**Tomeck**

## Poverty

Immigrants in temporary unskilled work are at risk of poverty. In this study, eighteen of the twenty-two people interviewed had completed second-level education and fourteen of these had a third-level qualification. Despite this high level of education, only seven were in well-paid employment. Nine were in low-paid employment and four of the nine were not getting the minimum wage, were not paid overtime rates, and had no holiday pay or holidays. Five people interviewed were not employed. Of these two were in full-time education/training, two were women who left domestic violence situations, and one other person was dependent on social welfare. One interviewee was a student who also worked as an *au pair*.

The following examples illustrate how poverty isolates people both socially and economically:

*Angela (from the Philippines) sends €300 per month to her mother. Her monthly earnings are €1034. The apartment that she shares with three other people costs her €180 per month, which she regards as a very cheap rent. Most of the rest of her money is spent on food, light and heating. She saves what she can for visits home. She rarely socialises or spends money on entertainment. She has not bought any clothes since she left the Philippines. Her friends and relatives in the Philippines give her clothes when she visits for holidays.*

**Angela**

*Since coming to Ireland over a year ago Mohammed (from Morocco) has never been paid even the minimum wage. He is living in poor-quality accommodation that is "icy cold" and which has only one gas heater that gives off fumes. He feels very isolated in a small community in the west of Ireland. He can only afford to phone his wife and family who are in South Africa once every two weeks. He recently discovered that there is a bus service to the local town once a week, mainly to facilitate older people do their weekly shopping. This, he says, is the highlight of the week for him.*

**Mohammed**

*The veterinary qualifications of Mehmet (from Pakistan) are not recognised in Ireland. Prior to coming to Ireland he was a highly-paid senior employee of an international company. He now feels he:*

**Mehmet**

*...is living like a sub-standard person. There are many basic items of furniture missing from my home. I have not bought new clothes for my family or myself since coming to Ireland.*

## ***Emigrants' Remittances***

The remittances sent home by emigrants make an important contribution to the income of extended families in the home countries of migrant workers. Kofi Annan the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in his address to the European Parliament, pointed out that migrants sent at least \$88 billion to developing countries in remittances during 2002 (Annan 2004). This is 54 per cent more than the \$57 billion those countries received in development aid. Irish emigrants sent back similar proportions in the middle decades of the last century. Many immigrants work long hours, and often have several jobs, to earn sufficient income to meet their needs and the needs of their families. The following are examples of the help migrant workers give to their families in their home countries:

### **Angela**

*Angela (from the Philippines) earns €1034 per month and sends €300 home to provide for her mother and niece who are dependent on her economically.*

It is estimated that 35 per cent of the Filipino population is sustained by remittances from migrant workers, the majority of whom work in contract jobs. Approximately two-thirds of Filipino migrant workers are women (Salazar Parrenas 2003). In 2002, the Filipino diaspora remitted 6 billion dollars making migrant workers one of the biggest sources of foreign exchange.

### **Tomeck**

*Tomeck (from Latvia) is happy with his present employment conditions and the rate of pay he receives. He is here to make money so he takes all the overtime and work he can get. He works at least six and often seven days per week. He sends €100 per week to his wife and has saved money to invest in a business in his home country. He also sends money to his parents who are living on a small pension equivalent to €70 per month.*

### **Gatis**

*Gatis (from Moldova) is the youngest of four children, all of whom have emigrated because of poverty and lack of employment. His parents live in a rural area on a very small pension. The money they receive from their children in emigrant's remittances makes a big difference to their lives.*

## IRISH POLICY CONTEXT

*Immigration Policy*

*Social Inclusion Programmes*

*Immigrant Workers in Ireland*





## IRISH POLICY CONTEXT

### *Immigration Policy*

The Irish immigration system is market-led and the majority of non-EEA nationals working in Ireland do so on temporary forms of permission to work, of which there are two main types. The work permit is issued to employers giving them permission to employ non-EEA nationals, and as such permits are non-transferable. The permit is issued for a maximum period of one year, is renewable, and where spouses are granted the right to join the worker, they do not have an automatic right to work. In 2003, 47,551 work permits were issued to employers.

The working visa/work authorisation scheme is restricted to specific skilled occupations that are in short supply, such as professionals and technicians in Information Technology (IT) and computing, professionals in construction, and registered nurses. The scheme was introduced in June 2000 to fast-track procedures for processing applications for high-skilled employment. Working visas/work authorisations are issued directly to the employee and, since February of 2004, spouses of workers under this scheme have an automatic right to work. The numbers of workers granted permission to work under this scheme was 3,749 in 2001, 2,610 in 2002, and 1,158 in 2003.<sup>25</sup>

Migrant workers also come to Ireland as international students (who have a right to work twenty hours per week or full-time during vacation periods) as self-employed people who have permission to run a business in Ireland, and as undocumented workers, among other categories. This study is also concerned with people who have leave to remain and work in Ireland.

Non-EEA nationals who have permission to work in Ireland require the permission of the Minister of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to reside in the state. Such a person must register with the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB), which was established in May 2000. The person is issued with a certificate of registration by the Registration Officer, that contains a photograph of the holder and states the duration of their permission to remain in Ireland, which usually coincides with the duration of their permission to work. It also contains a stamp, the number of which indicates the basis on which the certificate was provided. All non-EEA nationals are subject to immigration controls on arrival in the state. Immigration officers apply these controls on an occasional basis to persons arriving from within the Common Travel Area (CTA) between Ireland and Britain, and systematically to persons arriving from outside the CTA.

### ***Legislative Framework Relating to the Entry and Residence of Migrant Workers***

The basic Irish legislation governing the entry and residence of non-nationals in the Irish State dates back to the 1930s and 1940s. Incremental, piecemeal reform has been introduced over recent years.<sup>26</sup> Much of the recent legislation involves

25 The source of these figures (unpublished) is the Economic Migration Policy Unit of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

26 The principal Irish legislation is the *Aliens Act 1935* and the *Aliens Order 1946* as amended, together with regulations implementing the *EU Rights of Residence* directives that came into effect after Ireland joined the European Union in 1973. The *Immigration Act 1999* sets out the principles and procedures which govern the removal of non-nationals from the state; the *Illegal Immigrant (Trafficking) Act 2000* is concerned with the trafficking of human beings; the *Immigration Act 2003* is concerned with carrier sanctions for transporting undocumented immigrants; the *Employment Permits Act 2003* updates the legislation in relation to the employment permit system (an employment permit is the legal term for what is commonly-referred to as a work permit) including the imposition of sanctions on employers who do not comply with regulations and provision for access for workers from the EU accession states. The *Immigration Bill 2004* was introduced as an emergency measure when the High Court found parts of the *Immigration Act 1999* unconstitutional. The *Immigration Act 2004* updates the regulations concerning the entry of non-nationals into the state, and their registration.

penalising smugglers, imposing sanctions on employers and carriers, and updating procedures for removing non-nationals from the state. The framework is in need of reform.

### ***New Legislation on Immigration Promised***

The government has stated that it intends to introduce new immigration legislation. While several immigration acts have been passed since 1999, none has dealt in a comprehensive way with the Irish immigration policy and system. The *Action Programme of the Millennium (1999)* provided for the introduction of a new immigration bill. The *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (PPF)*, agreed between the social partners in 2000 provided for the establishment of an interdepartmental agency group on immigration policy. In May 2001, a public consultation on immigration policy was held. The outcome of the consultation was published by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (2002). In 2002, the government gave a further commitment in *Sustaining Progress*, which was agreed between the social partners, to develop an immigration policy and, in particular, to review the work permit system, and to introduce an antiracist intercultural programme at every level of the educational system. There is also a commitment to review the *Employment Agency Act 1971* that regulates the recruitment and placement of workers. As was articulated by many sectors during the constitutional amendment referendum debate, the time has come for a substantial public consideration of immigration and citizenship issues. This should be done before any comprehensive legislation is introduced.

### ***Citizenship***

The acquisition of citizenship is a key measure that facilitates integration, in that it acknowledges a person's membership of society. This is particularly important in Ireland which does not provide guaranteed long-term secure resident status for non-EEA nationals.

Traditionally, Irish citizenship was acquired in three main ways: a constitutional right to citizenship by birth in Ireland (*jus soli*); a legislative right by descent (*jus sanguinis*) and a legislative right to apply for naturalisation. Following an amendment to the Irish Constitution passed by referendum 11 June 2004, the absolute constitutional right to citizenship by birth for every child born on the island of Ireland has been removed. Now, only a child born to an Irish citizen or a person entitled to Irish citizenship remains absolutely entitled to citizenship. The right of all other children, born after 11 June 2004, who do not have an Irish-citizen parent, may be restricted by legislation. While no legislation has yet been enacted, the government proposed during the referendum debate that such legislation might only confer citizenship on those children of non-national parents where the parent had been lawfully resident in Ireland for three of the previous four years.

Migrants may apply for citizenship through naturalisation if they have been lawfully resident in Ireland for five of the previous nine years, including full-time residence for the year immediately before the application. There are reduced periods of residence required for a person applying as the spouse of an Irish citizen. Periods of residence as an asylum seeker or student do not count in the calculation of a lawful residence period. Applications for naturalisation are granted at the discretion of the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform. The criteria for assessment of an application are not published. There is no right of

appeal against refusal of citizenship. Applications currently take about eighteen months to process. An applicant may reapply if refused.

Thus from the moment that a non-national worker is registered as a permitted resident in Ireland, a period of at least six-and-a-half years will elapse before the worker can obtain any permanent or secure residency status. The migrant worker has no way of knowing whether an application for naturalisation will be granted until the result is actually sent to the applicant. This leads to insecurity and lack of impetus towards integration.

For some people, naturalisation as Irish citizens may not be an ideal method of securing their status in the receiving country. Their home country may not allow dual citizenship and they may be forced to choose between citizenship of their home country and Ireland. For personal or other reasons, they may not wish to change their citizenship of origin. From the Irish State's point of view, an application for citizenship merely to secure permanency does not enhance the notion of loyalty to the state.

During the debate leading up to the referendum on the constitutional amendment to Article 9, the Irish Human Rights Commission expressed its concern on the impact of the change on the fundamental human rights of children as articulated in the Irish Constitution and in international human rights law. It was worried about the lack of consultation which took place before the proposal was put to the people. Politicians in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland articulated similar concerns. Various sectors of society, including groups of lawyers, doctors, artists and many in the non-governmental sector campaigned against the referendum, complaining in particular about the lack of consultation and debate. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) argued that a change from citizenship as an incident of birth to ethnic citizenship would create two classes of children born in Ireland. The referendum also sent a negative message to recently-arrived immigrants. The NGOs also argued that European countries do not provide a good model for the successful inclusion of immigrants into receiving countries. The successful models in Canada and the United States provide for permanent admission and guaranteed citizenship to the children born there. It may be to these models that Ireland should aspire.

The change in the constitution may restrict the numbers of infants that obtain citizenship but many urgent issues remain to be resolved for non-nationals working in Ireland. There is a need to provide secure, permanent residence, that does not require a person to change nationality. At present it is possible to apply for permission to remain in Ireland without condition as to time once a person has been in the country for ten years but this is not an entitlement and is granted on a discretionary basis. Where a person does seek to acquire Irish citizenship, the application process should be clear, efficient, fair and transparent. An appeal process should be built into any such process.

### ***Social Inclusion Programmes***

The importance of social inclusion measures and of providing a supportive environment for immigrants to participate in receiving countries is now well recognised (Castles and Miller 2003; Tamis and Gavaki 2002; Aleinikoff and Klusmeyer 2000). The marginalisation of immigrants has serious implications for both immigrants and receiving societies. It can leave immigrants marginalised and isolated, and can fuel racism.

However, although Ireland has a strong equality framework, the temporary nature of all forms of permission to work, militates against the integration of workers and their families into the workplace. The Irish Government's policy relating to the social and civic inclusion of migrant workers is also underdeveloped.

### **National Anti-Poverty Programme**

While the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform has responsibility for immigration policy, the Department of Social and Community Affairs is responsible for issues relating to the social exclusion of migrants. One of the aims of the revised National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS), *Building an Inclusive Society (2002-2007)* is to address poverty and exclusion as it affects contemporary migrants and to tackle barriers to integration.<sup>27</sup>

The Irish *National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2003-2005*, in line with the government's responsibility as a participant in the *EU Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion (2002-2006)*, sets out the specific policy objective of developing and implementing a comprehensive policy for the integration of migrants with a view to combating their social exclusion and accommodating cultural diversity.<sup>28</sup>

The Equality Authority and the Combat Poverty Agency published *Poverty and Inequality: Applying an Equality Dimension to Poverty Proofing* in 2003 as a resource to poverty proof policies under NAPS. While race and not minority ethnic groups is listed in the equality legislation, NAPS includes both black and minority ethnic groups. However there is little information on the extent of poverty among black and minority ethnic groups, or on the impact of government policies and programmes on the poverty status of immigrants.

### **Education**

The Department of Education and Science have responsibility for developing an antiracism intercultural programme at every level of the education system. It is also to expand literacy and language training for adult minority linguistic groups.<sup>29</sup> The need to strengthen integration policy at all levels of the education system is clearly demonstrated in the Keogh and Whyte study (2003). Of necessity, this should include a revision of curriculum content to reflect the more diverse society in which we now live.

### **Racism**

The Irish Government has undertaken a number of steps to combat racism including the introduction of equality legislation and the establishment of the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI). The NCCRI is core-funded by the Department of Justice, Equality, and Law Reform. Its main role is to develop integration programmes to combat racism, and to act in a policy advisory role to the government. In May 2001, the NCCRI established a

27 The Combat Poverty Agency and the Office for Social Inclusion in the Department of Social and Family Affairs held a national consultation seminar in May 2003 to consult on the issue of poverty and social exclusion amongst minority ethnic groups. Issues raised in the consultation included the need for a rights-based approach, reform of the work permit system, training for service providers, and on-going initiatives to address racism (Department of Social and Family Affairs 2003).

28 Under the *Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion (2002-2006)*, several studies and action projects are being carried out on the integration of immigrants that contribute directly to improving our knowledge base and promoting an exchange of experience. Also, the EU Commission launched a number of pilot projects on the integration of migrants in 2003, the purpose of which was to transfer information and good practice models between member states. Immigration is incorporated into the priorities of the commission's framework programme for research and development, and into the commission's action plan, *Financing Research (2002-2006)*.

29 This commitment is given in *Sustaining Progress: Social Partnership Agreement 2003-2005*.

procedure for reporting racist incidents in Ireland, and the NCCRI produces a report every six months on incidences reported to them. The National Anti-Racism Awareness Programme, *kNOw Racism* (2001-2003) was a significant initiative. The budget over a three-year period was €5.7 million. The NCCRI also publish a journal entitled *Spectrum*.

The Equality Authority, in conjunction with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) and employer organisations, has undertaken a number of intercultural programmes in the workplace, including literacy and language training.

Ireland ratified the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (CERD) in December 2000. This convention obliges the government to ensure that all people regardless of race, colour, descent, nationality or ethnic origin have the right to equality before the law, and protection from harm. In line with its obligations under the convention, the Irish Government is to publish a national action plan against racism in early 2004. As part of this process, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform held a public consultation process between March 2002 and February 2003 and a summary of the key outcomes of the consultation process was published (National Action Plan Against Racism Steering Group 2003).

Only seven EU countries implemented the *EU Race Equality Directive* and Ireland, along with the remaining countries, failed to meet the deadline of July 2003 to transpose the *EU Race Equality Directive* into national legislation. When implemented in Ireland, the *EU Race Equality Directive* will further increase the scope and level of protection covered by the *Equal Status Act 2000* and the *Employment Equality Act 1998* (NCCRI 2003b).<sup>30</sup>

### ***The Local Development and Social Inclusion Programme***

The Local Development and Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP) is a series of measures funded under the National Development Plan (2000-2006) aimed at empowering communities to combat social exclusion. Area Development Management (ADM) on behalf of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs administers the LDSIP. There are 38 partnerships, 33 community groups and four employment pacts funded under the programme. The programme specifically targets ethnic minorities.

### ***The Community Development Support Programme***

The Community Development Support Programme (CDSP) funds local resource centres and specialised community development projects, and community and family support projects. Approximately 175 such groups are funded. Migrants are not listed as a specific target group of the programme. The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs is responsible for the programme. The National Community Development Programme published an antiracism code of practice, *Equality in Community Development: Creating Outcomes for All* in 2001.

<sup>30</sup> The *Equality Bill 2004* amends a number of provisions of the *Employment Equality Act 1998* and the *Equal Status Act 2000*, to give effect to three council directives including the race directive.

## ***City/County Development Board Strategies***

A key role of the City/County Development Boards is to ensure the integrated delivery of services at local level.<sup>31</sup> Each of the thirty-four City/County Development Boards produced a ten-year strategy (2002-2012) for the economic, social and cultural development of its county or city. The Equality Authority have supported City/County Development Boards to equality proof their strategies across the nine grounds of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion and membership of the Traveller community, which are the nine grounds covered in equality legislation. To assist them to undertake this task they have produced an *Equality Proofing Template* and the Equality Authority have produced a report on the *Equality Commitments in City/County Development Board Strategy Plans*. The role of City and County Development Boards will be important for the participation and inclusion of immigrants in Irish society.

## ***The European Migration Network***

The EU Commission established a European Migration Network (EMN) in 2002. Its purpose is to build up a systematic database for monitoring and analysing the multidimensional phenomenon of migration and asylum, by covering a variety of its dimensions — political, legal, demographic, economic, and social. Ten member states were designated national contact points in 2002. The Economic and Research Institute (ESRI) was designated as the Irish contact point. The ESRI produced the first report for Ireland in January 2004 (Quinn and Sexton 2004). The report outlines the directories of agencies and organisations dealing with migration and asylum, as well as research institutes and researchers working in the field. It also outlines national legislation, case law, policy, implementation of EU legislation at national level, statistics, and current research.

## ***Immigrant Workers in Ireland***

A limited number of non-EEA nationals may work without a specific, personal permission. They are (1) those who have been recognised as refugees or permitted to remain on humanitarian grounds, (2) those with permission to remain on the grounds that they are spouses or parents of Irish nationals, and (3) the spouses and dependent children of EEA nationals exercising a valid right to reside in Ireland. Other non-EEA workers working in Ireland do so as temporary workers on work permits, working visas/work authorisations, as international students (who have a right to work twenty hours per week or full-time during vacation periods), as self-employed people with business permission and as undocumented workers among other categories.

This study is also concerned with workers with refugee status, and with workers who have leave to remain and work in Ireland. All legal migrant workers are covered by the same employment rights legislation as Irish nationals.

31 The City and County Development Boards (CDBs) are comprised of local government, local development bodies, social partners, and representatives of relevant state agencies. The establishment of CDBs was one of the central recommendations of the Task Force on the Integration of Local Government and Local Development Systems, which reported in 1998 (published by the Department of the Environment). The National Development Plan 2000-2006 acknowledges the role of the CDBs in ensuring co-ordination of local service delivery. Each of the 34 CDBs produced a ten-year strategy (2002-2012) for the economic, social, and cultural development of its county or city. The CDBs have an important role to play in the delivery of integrated programmes for immigrants.

## Workers on Work Permits

In general, migrant workers need to have employment secured prior to coming to Ireland. Only an employer can apply for a work permit, which is granted to the employer for a specific job to employ a named employee. The work permit is non-transferable. The worker gets a letter from the employer to indicate that they are employed. In addition, migrant workers of some nationalities may also need an entry visa, usually for the same specified length of time as their permit, prior to arriving in Ireland.

The work permit is issued for a maximum period of one year. In some circumstances a person can change jobs if they can find a new employer who is willing to apply for a work permit and is granted one. Family reunification rights are limited. People on work permits may apply for family reunification if they have been in the state for at least a year, and have been offered a contract for a further twelve months. Family reunification rights are at the discretion of the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform. Where family reunification rights are granted, spouses of people on work permits have no automatic right to work. There is no mechanism whereby an immigrant can apply for long-term residency.

Since January 2002, arrangements have been formalised to ensure that employers offer first choice of available jobs to Irish or other EEA nationals. Employers are required to advertise a job vacancy with FÁS (Training and Employment Authority) prior to making an application for a permit for a non-EU national.<sup>32</sup> Since April 2003, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, in consultation with FÁS, publish a list on a quarterly basis of occupational sectors that are ineligible for work permits.<sup>33</sup>

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment publishes information on the type of work permit issued, economic sector, nationality and county of the employer's business on its official website. However, Ruhs (2003) has re-analysed data from the department and concludes that some of the information between 1995 and 1998 is incomplete and inaccurate. Also, there is some discrepancy between his figures and those of those of the department for 1999-2003 because Ruhs reclassified some of the data. Ruhs' revised statistics are outlined below.

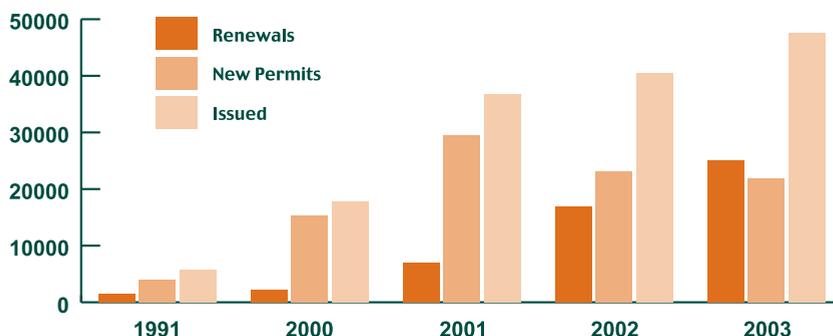
Despite the recent slowing down of economic growth, the number of work permits issued and renewed has increased dramatically over the past five years. In 1999, 5,750 permits were issued (this includes new permits and renewals of existing permits); in 2000, 17,833 were issued; in 2002, 40,504 permits were issued; and in 2003, 47,551 were issued, the majority of which were renewals.

32 The 'transition' period for the accession states to the EU commenced in May 2004. Current member states are allowed to restrict the employment of members of the EU accession states by requiring them to adhere to the employment permit system. In April 2003, Ireland decided to forgo this option and the *Employment Permits Act, 2003*, now allows full freedom of access to the Irish labour market for nationals from the ten accession states of the EU (who currently make up 33 per cent of all work permit holders in Ireland). Citizens of these states do not require employment permits. One of the major rationales for this policy was to ensure that the future requirements for foreign workers in Ireland, especially for unskilled labour, are primarily met by nationals of the EU accession countries. Although there is full freedom of access to the Irish labour market, the government introduced social welfare restrictions at the time of EU enlargement. These mean that all applicants for social welfare, regardless of nationality, are required to be 'habitually resident' in the State in order to qualify for certain payments including: unemployment assistance, child benefit and disability allowance. The Department of Social and Family Affairs is responsible for implementing the 'Habitual Residence Condition'.

33 Ineligible occupational sectors for work permits (for the period from 1 May 2004 to 31 August 2004) were as follows: clerical and administrative areas; general labourers and builders; operator and production staff; sales staff; transport staff; childcare workers; reception and barpersons in the hotel, tourism and catering sector, and specified craft workers.

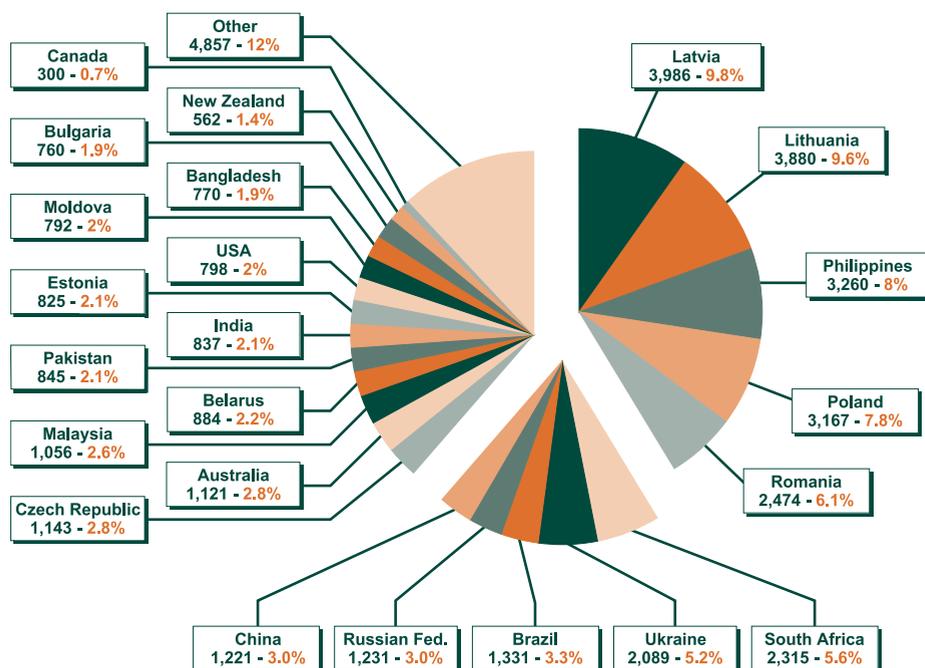
Year	Group Permit	Renewals	New Permits	Issued
1999	266	1,448	4,036	5,750
2000	297	2,201	15,335	17,833
2001	346	6,919	29,491	36,756
2002	436	16,861	23,207	40,504
2003 <sup>34</sup>	547	25,039	21,965	47,551

**Table 6: Number of work permits issued, and breakdown of type, (1999-2003)**  
 Source: Ruhs (2003) and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.



**Chart 1: Number of work permits issued (1999-2003)**

Source: Ruhs (2003) and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment



**Chart 2: Top twenty-three nationalities to whom work permits were issued (2002)**  
 Source: Ruhs (2003)

34 The statistics for 2003 are from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and are not statistics calculated by Ruhs (2003).

The top twenty-three nationalities granted work permits in 2002 is illustrated in Chart 2.

The top five countries (Latvia, Lithuania, the Philippines, Poland and Romania) accounted for 41.3 per cent of work permits while the top ten countries account for just over 61.4 per cent of work permits in 2002.<sup>35</sup> A broad range of continents, including Asia, Africa, America, and Europe are represented in the top ten countries.

Ruhs (2003) points out that while there is a large number of countries whose nationals hold work permits, there is a trend of increasing concentration of work permits among nationals of a smaller number of countries. While the ten countries with the largest number of work permit holders in 1999 accounted for 54.4 per cent of all work permits issued in that year, the corresponding figure of 2002 was 61.6 per cent.

Thirty-four per cent of work permits were issued to EU accession countries.

Nationality Group	Number	Percentage
Selected OECD <sup>36</sup>	2,973	7.3
EU accession countries	13,889	34.3
EU applicant countries <sup>37</sup>	3,531	8.7
Other (non EEA) <sup>38</sup>	20,111	49.7
Total	40,504	100.0

**Table 7: Number of permits issued to various nationality groups (2002).**

Source: Ruhs (2003)

Forty per cent of all work permits were issued to employers in Dublin, 7 per cent were in Cork; 6 per cent in Kildare, 5 per cent in Meath, 4 per cent in Galway and less than 4 per cent in Limerick.

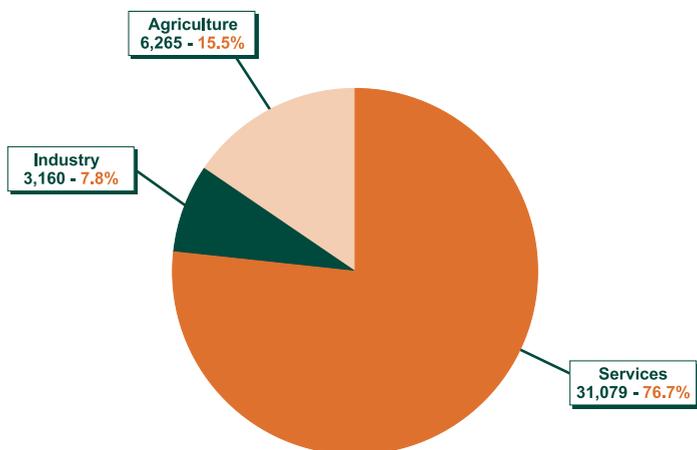
35 In 2003 the top countries were Poland (4808); Lithuania (4551); Latvia (4160); the Philippines (4042); Ukraine (2866); Romania (2527) and South Africa (2468).

36 This includes USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and Japan

37 This includes Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, and Turkey.

38 This includes the Philippines, South Africa, Ukraine, the Russian Federation, Malaysia, Brazil, China, India, Pakistan, Belarus, Bangladesh, Moldova and others.

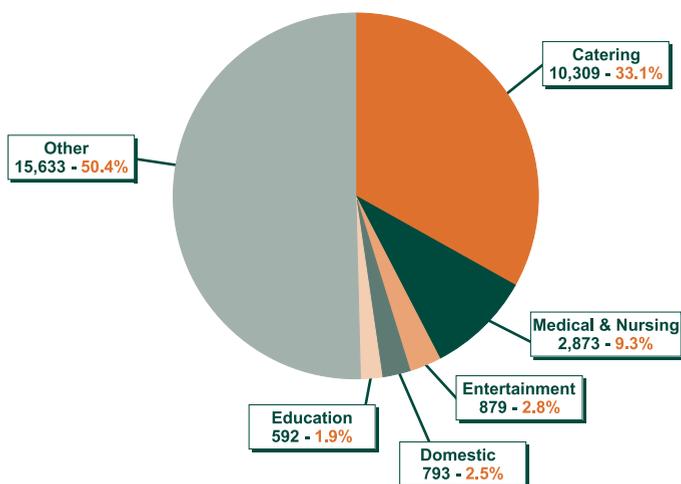
Fifteen per cent of work permits relate to agriculture/fishing; 8 per cent to industry and 77 per cent to services.<sup>39</sup>



**Chart 3: Number of permits issued by economic sector (2002).**

Source: Ruhs (2003)

Within the service sector, catering accounted for just over one-third of jobs, medical and nursing for 9 per cent; domestic service for 2 per cent; and entertainment for 2 per cent.



**Chart 4: Breakdown of number of permits issued in the service sector (2002).**

Source: Ruhs (2003)

Ruhs (2003) shows that different nationality groups tend to be concentrated in different sectors of the economy. For example, work permit holders from OECD countries are employed in highly-skilled occupations, while work permit holders from what were previously EU accession countries tend to be concentrated in unskilled occupations (especially agriculture), and in some semi-skilled

<sup>39</sup> The distribution of permits was not significantly different for 2003 comprising 15.2 per cent (agriculture), 6.4 per cent (industry), and 78.4 per cent (services).

occupations. Only three per cent of nationals from the new member states worked in Ireland as managers, administrators, or in professional or technical occupations in 2003.

Ruhs (2003) points to the limited availability of information, by sector, on the characteristics, wages, other employment conditions, and the nationality of foreign workers. To bridge some of the information gap, he collated and analysed new data made available to him by the Work Permits Unit of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. This data provides significant new insights into trends and patterns:

- The average work permit is for 340.6 days. In other words, most work permits are issued for one year effectively.
- The average age of new workers employed under the work permit scheme is thirty years, with little difference between workers from different nationality groups.
- There has been a gradual, but distinct, trend towards the feminisation of the migrant population as reflected in the number of new work permits, with the share of males decreasing from 72 per cent in 1999 to 63 per cent in 2003.
- Seventy-four per cent of all work permits relate to relatively low-skilled occupations.
- The average gross weekly pay of immigrant workers was €423.61. The job category with the lowest weekly pay was personal services in the domestic sector, which was €253 per week. This is roughly equivalent to the weekly wage of occupations in agriculture, which was €286.
- Between 1998 and 2002, the estimated average working hours per week for non-EU nationals employed in Ireland significantly exceeded those of all persons employed in Ireland (41.6 hours and 38.1 hours, respectively). In the health sector, non-EU nationals worked 15.6 hours longer per week than the average of all persons employed in the sector; in hotels and restaurants, non-EU nationals worked 6.9 hours longer; in the wholesale and retail trade, they worked 5 hours longer.

There is also evidence that workers are opting to remain in Ireland for longer than one year. The renewal rate of work permits issued (defined as the share of renewals in the total number issued) increased from 25 per cent (1,448) in 1999 to 53 per cent (25,039) in 2003.

Data does not exist (and therefore cannot be collated and analysed) on educational achievement, work experience, family composition, and the number of family members who are reunited with workers in Ireland.

Ruhs (2003) argues that the current economic slowdown or free access of workers from the ten new EU member states will not necessarily lead to a corresponding decline in the demand for workers from outside the enlarged EU. Foreign workers may have become structurally embedded in the economy. There may also be a mismatch between the skills of people from the new member states and the skills required. For example, skills provided by workers from an enlarged EU may not be able to replace the nursing and domestic skills provided by workers from the Philippines.

### **Workers on Working Visas/Work Authorisations**

Working visas/work authorisations are restricted to specified skilled occupations that are in short supply, such as professionals and technicians in Information Technology (IT) and computing, professionals in construction, and registered nurses. They are issued directly to the employee by the local Irish embassy or consulate in their country of origin, which in turn is the responsibility of the Department of Foreign Affairs. To be eligible for a working visa or work authorisation, the prospective employee must have a job offer and contract of employment in one of the designated sectors.

Work authorisations can be granted to prospective employees who are nationals of states whose passport holders do not need a visa to travel to Ireland. A working visa can be granted to prospective employees who are nationals of states whose passport holders need a visa to travel to Ireland.

A work authorisation/working visa is valid for two years and workers can change their employer. In general, spouses and/or minor dependant children may join workers after a three-month period once the worker can show that they have taken up employment.

In January 2004, the Tánaiste announced that spouses of non-EU nurses on working visas/work authorisations would be allowed to come and work in Ireland. This change was an attempt to retain non-EEA nurses in the Irish health service. In February 2004, spouses of non-EU professionals on working visas and work authorisations in IT, building, and research were also granted a right to work.<sup>40</sup> The Tánaiste has stated that only highly-skilled workers, who cannot be found within the enlarged EU, will be given favourable consideration in Ireland.

The number of working visas/work authorisations is much smaller than work permits.

Year	Visas	Authorisations	Total
2001	2,667	1,082	3,749
2002	1,753	857	2,610
2003	791	367	1,158

**Table 8: Number of working visas and work authorisations**

### **People with Business Permission**

Self-employed workers may get a business permission from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. The general criteria require a business plan with a substantial injection of capital and capacity to employ Irish nationals. For certain countries on the EU borders, the so-called Europe Association Agreements give a right of work and residence to self-employed non-EEA nationals without the capital or new job generation requirements.

<sup>40</sup> The new arrangements cover the spouses of workers on working visas and work authorisations, certain intracompany transferees, certain academics and researchers on work permits, and certain registered medical professionals on work permits. These arrangements do not remove the requirement for a work permit for eligible spouses but they give greater ease of access to employment for these people (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment 2004).

## Students

There is no information on the number of students who come to Ireland each year to learn English. Students must obtain a formal letter of acceptance from the language school where they intend to study, and confirmation that their fees have been paid. They can work full-time in paid employment during their vacations, and for up to twenty hours per week during their study term.<sup>41</sup>

In the 2002/2003 academic year, there were 9,108 third-level students from outside Ireland engaged in full-time education in Irish universities and colleges (Department of Education and Science, 2004). These figures are only an indication of the number of international students in Ireland, as statistics are not available regarding the number of immigrants who are enrolled in private colleges such as language schools. The total number of international students in Ireland is likely to be substantially higher. Students also need to prove that they have the resources to cover their living expenses. The large number of third-level students has been attributed to Ireland's economic boom and strong academic reputation (MacLachlan and O'Connell 2000). The fact that students also have a right to work on a part-time basis is also a factor, and is largely unmonitored.

## Refugees and Leave to Remain

There are two types of refugees in Ireland: A *convention* refugee and a *programme* refugee. A *programme* refugee is a person who has been invited by the government in response to humanitarian requests from bodies such as the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR). Programme refugees are generally accepted as a group, and do not have to prove their individual cases.

A convention refugee is a person who fulfils the requirements of the definition of a refugee under the *UN Geneva Convention 1951* and is granted refugee status.

Leave to remain on humanitarian and/or other grounds may be granted at the discretion of the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform under Section 3 of the *Immigration Act 1999*.<sup>42</sup>

Until January 2003, parents of Irish-citizen children were automatically entitled to make an application for leave to remain as parents of an Irish citizen but this is no longer the case.<sup>43</sup>

- 41 Recognised English schools register with the organisation Marketing English in Ireland – Recognised English Schools Association.
- 42 Reasons considered by the minister include: age, duration of residence in the state, family and domestic circumstances, the nature of the person's connection with the state, employment record, employment prospects, character and conduct, humanitarian considerations, representations made on behalf of the person, the common good, and consideration of national security and public policy.
- 43 In January 2003 the Supreme Court ruled (*Lobe v. Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform*) that parents of Irish-citizen children no longer have an automatic right to remain in the country. The families involved were claiming a right to remain in Ireland by virtue of the automatic Irish citizenship of their newly-born children and the constitutional rights of the family in Irish law under article 41 of the Irish Constitution. The common good or the right of the state to control immigration took priority over the rights of children. On 19 February 2003, the minister ceased accepting new applications for leave to remain on the grounds of the birth of an Irish-citizen child. The court decision was later applied retrospectively to the cases already outstanding. On 17 July 2003, the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform announced that there was a backlog of 11,000 claims for residency for non-EU immigrant parents solely on the basis that they have become parents of Irish-citizen children. The department issued letters in respect of some families. Many of the letters were direct and stated "you are a person whose deportation would, in the opinion of the minister, be conducive to the common good". The families had 15 working days to make written representations for temporary leave to remain on humanitarian grounds that may include the length of time they have resided in Ireland, parentage of an Irish citizen, and their family and domestic circumstances. While the Irish state funds the cost of deportation, the parents applying to the department are not entitled to state-funded legal advice in preparing submissions. While Irish citizens cannot legally be deported they will be for all practical purposes obliged to leave the country with their parents. The minister has made it clear that he will not be blackmailed by parents threatening to leave their children behind, and, if necessary, the courts will compel them to take their citizen children.

### ***Undocumented Workers***

There is no estimate of the number of undocumented workers in Ireland and there is no reliable data on how they enter the country. Undocumented immigrants are likely to enter legally as temporary workers, students or tourists. Many workers become undocumented when they are made redundant and their residency permit is no longer valid.

# RECOMMENDATIONS





## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Immigration policy

Ireland will require significant numbers of immigrants in the future, a fact recognised by groups such as the Enterprise Strategy Group (2004). However, immigrants experience significant difficulties as a result of current policies relating to Irish immigration and inclusion. Currently, Irish immigration policy is piecemeal, market-driven and is aimed at attracting temporary workers to fill shortages in the labour force. Recent policy changes have been restrictive in nature, aimed at controlling borders and curbing abuse rather than promoting the rights and entitlements of immigrants.

The need for permanent workers, or the desire of some people to settle permanently is generally not acknowledged, and policies are not conducive to permanent settlement. For example, there is no specific provision in Irish legislation for guaranteed long-term, secure residence status for non-EEA nationals other than through naturalisation.<sup>44</sup>

Policy should focus on rights and entitlements of immigrants rather than on restrictions

- Achieving successful immigration and inclusion requires the government to establish a comprehensive and well thought out immigration policy. The government recently announced that they are conducting a review of current immigration and asylum policy. It is hoped that this review will result in a more comprehensive, thoughtful, and managed immigration policy which looks at all issues in an integrated way and focuses on promoting the rights and entitlements of immigrants rather than on restrictions.

Open consultation and debate needed

- This review should be undertaken in an open and consultative manner so that all sectors of society are given an opportunity to voice their concerns on the issue. Consultation and debate should take place with a wide range of interests including social partners, governmental and non-governmental organisations, the business sector, as well as interested individuals. This would increase confidence in the government's approach and engender support for any new immigration policies.

Principle of permanence should underpin any new immigration policy

- The principle of 'permanence' should underpin any new immigration policy and all immigrants should be seen as potentially permanent members of our society and provided with equal rights to Irish people. If this principle were taken on board, newcomers to Ireland would be seen as full members of this community.
- Adopting the principle of permanence would mean that as long as immigrants are here, they are recognised as people with families, rather than just workers, and can expect to be treated in the same way as Irish citizens in all respects, with the exception of the formal political privileges of citizenship itself.

44 The EEA comprises the EU member states, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. Switzerland has a similar status to EEA countries.

Clear criteria on entitlement to citizenship must be specified

- Clear criteria regarding a person's entitlement to citizenship need to be specified as currently citizenship is granted at the discretion of the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

Guaranteed right to permanent residence should be established

- Secure guaranteed permanent residence in Ireland, that does not require a person to change their citizenship, should be granted as a matter of right and should be available after a shorter period of time. Ireland is out of line with other EU countries in that a person must be in the state for ten years before they can apply for permission to remain on an indefinite basis. Also, this is not a statutory entitlement and is only granted on a discretionary basis.

## **2. Cross-departmental mechanism**

There is a general consensus across all interested groups that immigration policy and social inclusion policies need to be integrated. Several government departments and agencies have a brief in this area. These include the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, the Department of Education and Science, the Department of Social and Family Affairs, the Department of Rural, Community and Gaeltacht Affairs, the Department of Foreign Affairs, and the Department of Environment and Local Government. To date, collaboration across departments and agencies is underdeveloped. Migration and interculturalism is identified in *Sustaining Progress: Social Partnership Agreement 2003-2005* as one of ten issues to be specifically addressed, and promise of reform is reiterated throughout many government documents.

- Specific targets and monitoring systems need to be established to ensure implementation of these stated commitments from government. A Ministry of State for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs should be established in the Department of the Taoiseach. This ministry would have responsibility for driving a robust, high-level cross-departmental process that would co-ordinate the work of all departments and agencies that have a brief in this area. Currently, several government departments have a brief in relation to immigration and social inclusion policies with little or no co-ordination between them and there is a need for them to work more closely together.
- The proposed Minister of State for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs in the Department of the Taoiseach should be proactive, and develop a framework for progressing issues relating to immigration, race, and ethnicity, across departments. A framework should also be developed for auditing current policies and practices, ensuring that new policies are developed, setting targets, and monitoring their implementation as outlined in the other recommendations below.

### 3. Public debate

- There is a need for a public debate on diversity, on the role of immigration in Irish society, on the changing nature of Irish national identity and the contribution of immigrants in Ireland. Failure to acknowledge their contribution, and the exaggeration of any social welfare benefits immigrants get from the state, can fuel resentment, exacerbate social exclusion, and give rise to racism. To enhance the public debate, there is a need to undertake research on the economic, social, and cultural contribution of immigrants.
- The government should establish a national forum to facilitate this debate, and ensure that it becomes a key mechanism for defining the principles and procedures that will form the backbone of a comprehensive immigration policy. However, it should not only examine all aspects of immigration, but should also develop procedures that meet the highest international standards for the reception and integration of newcomers to Ireland as workers and as human beings.
- The proposed national forum on immigration should represent a broad range of interests including social partners, governmental and non-governmental organisations. Ethnic minority communities should also be facilitated to participate.
- The forum should clarify the role of immigration in Ireland; the rights and responsibilities of immigrants; and the rights and responsibilities of the receiving society. It should also address procedural issues covering reception, integration, administration and enforcement, learning from other countries which have a history of immigration. The debate should include a discussion on how to underpin immigration policy with a human rights approach that respects the minimum standards set down in international human rights law in relation to migrant workers.
- The debate should also include a discussion of ‘everyday racism’ and the privileged position that it generates for the majority population. Racism is a structural feature of Irish society. The importance of developing a ‘politics of heterogeneities’<sup>45</sup> that gives voice to the racialised minority is an essential aspect of undoing racism.
- The debate should also focus on what it means to be Irish and on the changing nature of ‘Irishness’ and Irish identity. It should also be possible to address concerns of the receiving society by addressing the need to develop a consensus based approach to core values as well as an agenda for diversity. To enhance this public debate, there is a need for research to be undertaken on the economic, social, and cultural contribution of immigrants, without whom current economic policy would not be sustainable.

45 This term is used by Lentin (2004). See Appendix A.

#### 4. Family life

For many, the government's immigration policy is seen as harsh and to be primarily concerned with security issues, and serving the needs of the economy, with little concern for the needs of individuals and their families. Many of the policies are keeping family members separated from each other and denying them the right to family life as under present legislation there is no statutory right for migrants to family reunification. The discretionary nature of the decisions, particularly regarding children joining their families in Ireland, is illustrated in this study. Migrants are also experiencing long delays receiving replies from government bureaucracies.

The right to a family life and to family reunification are fundamental human rights which should be recognised by government and policies must take the needs of migrants and their families, and international human rights obligations into account. While it is feasible to create short-term schemes for seasonal workers and require them to return to their country of origin, migrant workers who come for longer periods of time should have the right to family life. The importance of family life to the inclusion of migrants into receiving societies needs to be recognised.

- Family members including adult unmarried children, relatives in the direct ascending line, unmarried or registered partners, as well as dependants and children from previous marriages, should have a codified right to immediate family reunion and to reside in Ireland.
- Spouses and partners of all immigrant workers should have an immediate right to work once they arrive in Ireland.
- Members of the extended family should have a right to visit immigrant workers in Ireland.
- Residential rights should be granted to the special-case immigrant families with Irish-citizen children, who applied for residency prior to the Supreme Court decision in January 2003. The court ruled that immigrant parents of Irish-citizen children no longer have an automatic right to remain in Ireland as a matter of course.<sup>46</sup> In February 2003, the minister decided to retrospectively apply the Supreme Court ruling and refused to accept any more residency applications on this basis. Of the 11,000 applications for leave to remain in Ireland on the basis of having an Irish-citizen child, made prior to the Supreme Court decision,<sup>47</sup> 8,655 are outstanding. The families, who applied for residency on this basis, applied in good faith at a time when the practice was different. They have been living in a stressful state of uncertainty since January 2003 and the only humane approach is regularisation of their cases. This would not set a precedent that would endanger the future integrity of the asylum and immigration systems.

<sup>46</sup> Following an amendment to the Irish Constitution passed by referendum 11 June 2004, the absolute constitutional right to citizenship by birth for every child born on the island of Ireland has been removed.

<sup>47</sup> This figure relates to December 2003. See statement from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, "Proposal for Constitutional Amendment and Legislation Concerning the Issue of the Irish Citizenship of Children of Non-National Parents"

## 5. Work

Migrant workers in Ireland work long hours, often in low-paid jobs (Ruhs 2003). Immigrants experience difficulties integrating into the workplace (Conroy and Brennan 2003; Redmond and Butler 2003). Difficulties which emerged in the present study include the temporary nature of all forms of permission to work, the fact that the work permit is held by the employer, a mismatch between the jobs that workers are doing and their qualifications, downward mobility, and lack of opportunities for promotion. In addition, migrant workers must be proficient in the language of the receiving country if they want to progress economically and socially, but little, or no, support is provided in helping migrants to achieve language proficiency.

There is concern that labour legislation and regulations are not being complied with. Workers on work permits are particularly vulnerable to exploitation due to the fact that the employer holds the work permit. There is a fear among Irish workers that the non-compliance of labour legislation will drive down wages. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment does not record or publish data on the number of complaints made by immigrant workers.

Currently, workers from countries outside the enlarged EU hold 65 per cent of work permits. There is concern that the permits of these workers may not be renewed now that ten new countries have become members of the EU. It is also uncertain as to whether labour legislation relating to unfair dismissal covers these situations. In addition, it is likely to be more difficult for new applicants outside of the EEA/Switzerland to secure permits.

There is no reliable estimate of the number of undocumented workers in Ireland. Many undocumented workers enter the country legally as temporary workers, students, or visitors and become undocumented through no fault of their own. One person interviewed, who had been in Ireland legally for five years, became undocumented when he was made redundant. Attempts by a new employer to employ him legally were frustrated by what were perceived to be undue bureaucratic restrictions, despite the fact that the worker is skilled in the area of information technology (IT), which is designated as a sector in need of workers. A second worker interviewed was undocumented due to his lack of information and knowledge of the work permit system.

New policies with regard to immigration and work should include the following:

Principle of permanence

- The right to work in Ireland should be underpinned by the principle of ‘permanence’, which recognises that workers are people with families who can become permanent members of society if they so wish.
- One way in which this principle could be implemented would be entitling any person legally resident in Ireland for three years or more to apply for permanent residency.
- In the interim, the current system whereby work permits are held by the employer, needs to be changed to a system where all forms of permission to work are issued to the employee.

- Monitoring of non-renewed employment permits
- The number of workers from outside the EU whose permission to work is not renewed should be monitored.
- Interim permits
- Provision should be made for ‘interim permits’ for workers who have lost work permits through no fault of their own. This would prevent workers becoming undocumented. It would give them time to reestablish themselves without the threat of deportation.
- Enforcement
- There is a need to resource the inspectorate in the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment further, to ensure that the rights of immigrants are respected. The number of labour inspectors should be increased from their current number of seventeen to at least forty so that labour legislation and regulations can be enforced more robustly. All major cities should have an inspector and, in addition, each county should have an inspector. Enforcement should also be implemented in each industrial sector, and inspectors should be appointed to key sectors where migrant workers are concentrated such as building, security, catering, and cleaning. Interpretative services should be available to workers whose rights are being infringed.
  - The number of complaints made by immigrant workers should be recorded and published with figures broken down by nationality, gender, legal status, and sector of the economy.
  - Employers who flagrantly breach labour legislation should not be granted public service contracts from statutory agencies. If necessary, legislation should be introduced to copper fasten such a policy.
- Information and referral
- Migrant-led organisations and other organisations that provide information, advice, and interpretative services to migrants should be resourced. The capacity of organisations should be increased so that staff can provide effective information on labour regulations relating to the minimum wage, holiday pay, overtime, unfair dismissal and collective agreements entered into by trade unions and employers. The right of migrant workers to seek assistance and to join a trade union should be promoted.
  - There should be formal referral procedures in place between the NGO sector and the trade union movement. The NGO sector should document incidences of non-enforcement of labour law and regulations that they come across in their day-to-day work.

- Regularisation
- A regularisation scheme for undocumented workers should be considered, similar to schemes introduced into Greece, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Belgium. A similar scheme was introduced in the United States in 1986 from which many Irish immigrants benefited.
  - A working party comprised of interested parties should be established in the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment to address concerns relating to the informal economy, and to undertake research.
- Research and monitoring
- Research should be undertaken to determine the extent to which professional associations, employers, and other relevant agencies recognise foreign qualifications and skills. The research should also include identifying pathways to ensuring skills/qualifications acquired in other countries get recognised here.
- UN Convention
- The Irish Government should take a lead role in encouraging EU member states to ratify the *UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families* 1990 that came into force in July 2003. Also, protections afforded to migrant workers in Ireland should be expanded to take into consideration international human rights conventions.

## 6. Education

Keogh and Whyte (2003) found that there is a lack of inclusion of immigrant children in the school environment and that Irish students need to be supported to adapt to the arrival and inclusion of immigrant students.

The present study noted that immigrant children encounter hostility and difficulties at school. The fact that children of non-EEA immigrant families do not have equal access to third-level education due to the additional costs that they incur is illustrated in one of the case studies in the report.

- Equality of Access
- Immigrants and their families should be entitled to the same access to education and training as Irish people.
- Social inclusion and antiracism programmes
- Measures need to be taken to ensure the inclusion of immigrant children in the school environment, and social inclusion programmes need to be developed for Irish and immigrant students, parents, and teachers. Immigrant students need assistance to adjust to the new school environment, and awareness programmes are needed on Irish culture and society and on the Irish educational system, including subject choice and examination and assessment procedures. Irish students need to be prepared, through awareness programmes, for the reception of students from different cultures.

- The implementation of the antiracism intercultural programme of the Department of Education and Science in schools should be monitored.
- Curriculum and aptitude tests
- The education curriculum should be reviewed to identify negative images of minority ethnic groups. There is also a need to ensure that the lifestyles and cultures of minority ethnic groups are reflected in educational material thus giving minority ethnic groups a greater sense of identification with the education system, and a greater sense of belonging to Irish society.
  - Research should be carried out in order to ensure that aptitude tests in schools are culturally neutral.
- Cost of third-level education
- Third-level education should be available to children of immigrants at the same cost as it is to Irish children.
- Language programmes
- Data should be compiled on the language skills of immigrants, and the commitment<sup>48</sup> to expand literacy and language training for adult minority linguistic groups by the Department of Education and Science should be monitored.
  - New initiatives in language skills training, adult education, and mentoring programmes should take into consideration the work undertaken by the Southern Integrated Research Partnership.
  - Particular initiatives are needed to address the educational, cultural, and linguistic needs of adult students in the context of a policy based on a lifelong learning perspective.

## **7. Accommodation**

Immigrants on temporary work permits tend to be in low-paid work and it is often difficult for them to find good-quality affordable accommodation. Many migrant workers are ‘tied’ to their employer not only by the fact that the employer holds the work permit, but also by the fact that for some, the employer is their landlord and owns the transport that conveys them to work.

Even when migrants are in Ireland for a number of years, low wages and the fact that they do not have permanency makes it difficult for them to negotiate a mortgage to buy a house or an apartment. Accommodation at the lower end of the private rented sector tends to be basic, of poor quality, and expensive, and many share houses with other migrants to reduce the burden of high rent. Making telephone calls and identifying accommodation in the private rented sector, and negotiating with landlords or agents can be particularly difficult for people from other countries because of mutual difficulties in communication.

<sup>48</sup> *Sustaining Progress: Social Partnership Agreement, 2003-2005.*

- Immigrants should be entitled to equal access to housing. Also, guidelines need to be provided by the Department of the Environment and Local Government giving migrant workers an entitlement to be listed on local authority housing lists and to have their housing need assessed.
- Local authorities need to strengthen their monitoring role in regulating standards in the private rented sector. There is also a need to monitor incidences of discrimination and racism against minority ethnic groups when accessing accommodation in the private rented sector.
- Support and advocacy organisations in the NGO sector should be resourced to provide a service for finding accommodation in the private rented sector for immigrants.

## 8. Women

In Ireland, as is the case internationally, there is a gradual, but distinct trend towards the feminisation of the migrant population and many women are entering as workers in their own right. This is reflected in the percentage of new work permits allocated, with the percentage of males decreasing from 72 per cent in 1999 to 63 per cent in 2003 (Ruhs 2003).

Dependants of spouses who are on work permits are not entitled to residence in their own right, or to work, and may face deportation if they separate from their spouse.

Isolation in the home for women who come to join their spouse and who do not have the right to work results in them having no opportunity to achieve economic independence. This affects their economic and social well-being. Also, given the caring and home-making role of women, immigrant women are disproportionately affected by poor accommodation, poverty, and the lack of childcare facilities.

- Empowerment
- All spouses and partners of migrant workers should have the automatic right to work once admitted to the state.
  - There is need to resource initiatives such as women's networks, mentoring programmes, language classes and retraining programmes for immigrant women. Initiatives need to be child-centred and to have childcare available to participants.
  - Increased on-going consultation is needed with migrant-led women's groups, and initiatives so that their economic, social, and cultural needs can be met.
  - The needs of migrant women should be specifically addressed in the National Strategy for Women currently being progressed by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.
  - The data from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment should be published and disaggregated by gender and ethnic origin, as well as by country of origin.

## Violence against women

A small but increasing number of women from minority ethnic groups is accessing domestic violence services, and the services of rape crisis centres (Kelleher Associates 2001; 2002). As well as experiencing recent sexual abuse, women migrants may have experienced sexual abuse and/or rape prior to coming to Ireland.

Women whose residence permits are based on the status of their spouse and who are subjected to domestic violence are in a vulnerable position. When they leave their spouse they have 'no legal status'. In some cultures, women in such situations can fear returning home as they can be severely sanctioned for being seen to bring dishonour to the family. Women can fear calling out the gardaí, and can be reluctant to provide evidence that criminalises their spouse for fear that the family will be deported. It is important that immigration policy does not force women to choose between maintaining their legal status or seeking personal safety.

- There should be a mechanism whereby a woman who is in a violent relationship or who leaves her spouse because of domestic violence can be granted independent status as a matter of right. She should also be entitled to work.
- Women experiencing violence should be entitled to supports such as supplementary welfare, and a right to apply for local authority housing. The Department of Health and Children and the Department of Environment and Local Government should issue guidelines to this effect to all health board regions.
- On-going consultation should take place with migrant-led women's groups to identify the support needs of women in violent relationships, women leaving violent relationships, and women who have experienced rape or sexual assault.
- Facilities in family law courts need to be improved. There are no crèche or childcare facilities and premises have poor facilities for refreshments.
- Linguistic and cultural awareness training should be provided for the staff of domestic violence services and rape crisis centres on how to deal effectively with the growing cultural diversity in Irish society, and services should have access to interpreters who are sensitive to cultural diversity. Training needs should be monitored, and models of good practice in addressing the needs of women with diverse cultural backgrounds should be identified. Literature should be available in a range of languages.

## Trafficking of women

While trafficking and smuggling for purposes of labour exploitation generates both male and female victims, trafficking and smuggling for the purpose of the sex industry is primarily associated with women. In relation to the trafficking of women it is recommended that:

- The government should fund a dedicated agency to provide services to respond to the needs of women who are trafficked. The service should include safe housing, legal advice, psychological support, social integration and training/educational opportunities for women who are trafficked. The agency should provide training to the gardaí, service providers, and the NGO sector, and facilitate on-the-ground interagency networking and co-operation.
- A high-level interagency working group should be established to address policy issues.
- There is need for a public awareness campaign on prostitution and trafficking as a form of violence against women.
- Leave to remain needs to be legislated for in the case of women who are trafficked. It should not be conditional on the woman's willingness to testify against her traffickers.
- Following consultations with relevant NGOs and statutory bodies, the Irish Government should implement upcoming legislation on trafficking and ratify the *UN Trafficking Protocol* as soon as possible.
- The government should fund research into the trafficking of women in and through Ireland.

### **9. Social inclusion measures**

Lack of migrant rights in a society marginalises migrants.

- A progressive, comprehensive immigration policy should be accompanied by social inclusion measures that give basic rights to migrant workers, and treat them as potentially permanent members of our society.
- As outlined above, the promotion of the social inclusion of immigrants in Ireland requires that immigrants have access to secure permanent residence in Ireland which does not require them to change their nationality by applying for citizenship.
- Also as outlined above, in the shorter term, all forms of permission to work should be issued to the employee rather than the employer.
- Equality of representation and participation for members of immigrant groups should be promoted at all levels of society, and pathways should be created for migrants to enter the political arena, the trade union movement and the community and voluntary sector. Guidelines for the

inclusion of members of migrant groups should be developed and adopted by all interested parties.

Immigrant families can also have difficulty settling into Ireland due to racism, language difficulties and cultural differences. The availability and access to language classes and support groups is uneven throughout the country and is largely provided by voluntary organisations. Immigrants who become marginalised are vulnerable to the risk of poverty.

- Induction programmes, including language classes and orientation programmes to Irish life need to be available to immigrants. In developing these programmes, the work undertaken by the Southern Integrated Research Partnership should be taken into consideration. Induction programmes in Canada and Australia should be researched. These programmes involve paid co-ordinators that match volunteers in a 'buddy' system with immigrants. This helps immigrants to learn about Canada, while also helping Canadians to get a greater understanding of immigrants.
- The extent to which issues of concern to ethnic minorities and immigrants are prioritised within the Local Development and Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP) administered by Area Development Management (ADM) and within the Community Development Support Programme (CDSP) should be monitored and assessed.
- The Equality Authority assisted the City and County Development Boards to equality proof their strategies across the nine grounds contained in the equality legislation. The strategy of each of the thirty-four City/County Development Boards (CDBs), drawn up for a ten-year period (2002-2012) should be examined to determine the extent to which race and issues concerning cultural diversity are addressed and targets and goals are set. Implementation of actions should be monitored to identify positive outcomes and models of good practice. A starting point for this work could be Equality Commitments in City/County Development Board Strategy Plans produced by the Equality Authority.
- Implementation strategies of the Department of Social and Family Affairs which has responsibility for implementing the *National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion (2002-2006)* should be examined to determine the extent to which the commitment to implement a comprehensive policy for the social inclusion of migrants is being progressed. This commitment is also outlined in *Sustaining Progress: Social Partnership Agreement 2003-2005*. In line with government commitments, government policies and programmes also need to be 'poverty proofed', for the impact which they have on black and minority ethnic groups.
- There is an EU requirement that measures included in the National Development Programme (2000-2006) be gender proofed and the process of developing a gender perspective in policy formulation and implementation has begun. However, progress on gender proofing is uneven across departments and state agencies. Complex proofing

measures to assess multi-disadvantage are required in relation both to mainstream and targeted policies and services in order to identify the intersection of gender with the other eight grounds of the equality legislation.

## **10. Resourcing the community and voluntary sector**

The importance of advocacy, support, and information for immigrants is illustrated in the present study. However there is no designated funding line to fund such services. Additional resources alone however are not sufficient, as findings of research indicate that organisations in the community and voluntary sector need to promote more actively the inclusion of minority ethnic groups in their organisations (Faughnan and O'Donovan 2002; Mutwarasibo 2002; Rourke 2003; Guerin 2003).

- The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform should outline its policy for building the capacity of ethnic minority-led groups and for emerging ethnic institutions such as newspapers and other media, recreational facilities and cultural facilities, in order to build the capacity of these institutions. This would help to reduce the marginalisation of 'new ethnic communities' in our society.
- A dedicated funding line to fund advocacy, support, and information for immigrant organisations needs to be implemented in recognition of the important role of information and advocacy for immigrant groups. Ethnic minority-led groups should also be resourced and strengthened to carry out this role. Current funding of information and advocacy services for immigrants should be audited in advance of this and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform should fund these services.
- Groups and organisations, that receive funding to work with migrants and new ethnic groups, should promote the inclusion of migrants in the work of their organisations. In doing so the antiracist code of practice, *Equality in Community Development*, developed by the National Community Development Programme should be taken into consideration (see also recommendation 11).
- The extent to which minority ethnic groups receive funding under the Community Development Support Programme (CDSP) and are mainstreamed through core funding should be audited. Minority ethnic groups should be specifically listed as a target group in the revised Community Development Support Programme.
- There is a need for an organisation in Ireland to represent the interests of *au pair* students to ensure their rights are respected.

## **11. Racism**

The many publications on racism in Ireland (MacLachlan and O'Connell, Eds 2000; Farrell and Watt, Eds, 2001; Lentin and McVeigh, Eds, 2002; Fanning 2002; Garner 2004) reflect the increasing ethnic and racial diversity in our society and the concern regarding an increase in racism. However anti-Traveller racism and

anti-Semitism have been part of Irish society throughout the twentieth century (Lentin 2002; Goldstone 2002).

The specific impact of racism on women was articulated by Fitzgerald as early as 1992 and more recently by Sinha (2002). The sexualised aggression experienced by women of colour is also identified by McCarthy (1999) in her study in conjunction with the African Refugee Network.

There is, however, limited survey research on the attitudes of the Irish people towards immigrants or on the experiences of immigrants in Ireland. One of the few surveys is that commissioned by kNOW Racism and carried out in September 2003 by Irish Market Surveys (IMS). This research indicates that there is a significant amount of racism in Ireland with one in five of the general public stating that they have witnessed a racist incident. There is a significant amount of mistaken perceptions of why immigrants come to Ireland, with a tendency to deny the legitimacy of immigrants, and to exaggerate the benefits immigrants receive from the state.

The present study found that although many immigrants had very positive experiences of living in Ireland and experienced Irish people as friendly, the majority of respondents also experienced racism on a daily basis. The hostility and the lack of sensitivity that they experienced take the form of avoidance, verbal abuse, stalking, obstructing, stone-throwing, egg-throwing, and damage to property.

Tackling racism is fundamental to facilitating the participation of immigrants in receiving societies. The publication of the *National Action Plan Against Racism* in 2004 should help to create a climate where racism is challenged. Mistaken information needs to be counteracted with a clear public campaign on the economic, social and cultural contributions of immigrants (see recommendation 3). Racism also needs to be counteracted at the school level (see recommendation 6).

Racism is not just an aberration, but is endemic to Irish society (Lentin 2004). Racist incidences are not once-off, occasional incidences, but are encountered on a daily basis by people of colour (Sinha 2004). Racism is a process of exclusion, which humiliates 'the other'. It privileges some members of the society, while marginalising others. Developing a 'politics of heterogeneities', which respects the cultures of different ethnic groups, is an essential aspect of undoing racism (Lentin 2004). Such a politics should give voice to the racialised minority to determine how the Irish nation can become other than white, Christian and settled.

- On-going quantitative and qualitative research needs to be undertaken on the attitudes of the Irish people towards immigrants.
- There is need for on-going quantitative and qualitative research on the experiences of immigrants in Ireland of racism. This research should be undertaken in collaboration with migrant groups.
- Designated funding should be put in place for organisations, that have been specifically established to address the advice, information and advocacy needs of immigrants (recommendation 9). These services should have specially trained staff to provide advice to, and to act as advocates for, people

who have experienced racism, and to highlight the importance of reporting and registering racially motivated incidences to the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI). The presence of institutional racism needs to be identified and racist incidences should be disaggregated and analysed by gender, race, and nationality.

- There is a need for self-help groups for adults and children to help them to cope with racism.
- Existing legal protection against assault, incitement, verbal abuse and dissemination of material motivated by racism should be strengthened in the way it is promoted and implemented. The review of legislation currently being undertaken should be published as a matter of urgency.

## **12. Policies, protocols and training**

The development of proactive policies and procedures that take into account cultural diversity and institutional racism are at a relatively early stage of development in Ireland. It is important that policies, protocols and training are progressed and implemented in collaboration with ethnic minority-led groups (see recommendation 1).

Useful guidelines in developing such policies include:

- *Guidelines on Anti-Racism and Intercultural Training* (2001) and *Guidelines on Developing a "Whole Organisation" Approach to Address Racism and to Support Interculturalism* (2003a) published by the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI).
- The antiracist code of practice, *Equality in Community Development* developed by the National Community Development Programme (2001).
- The work of the Southern Integrated Research Partnership as documented by Stavrou (2003).
- The *Guidelines on Employment Equality Policies* drafted by Conroy (2003).
- *Support Pack on the Equality/Diversity Aspects of Quality Customer Service for the Civil and Public Service* published by the Strategic Management Initiative Quality Customer Service and the Equality Authority.
- All public authorities should be required to promote equality of opportunity (as is required in Northern Ireland under section 75 of the *Northern Ireland Act, 1998*).
- Relevant national and regional agencies including government departments, local authorities, the gardaí, hospitals, community care services, community welfare services and non-governmental organisations should have written policies, protocols and procedures in place which are practical and sensitive on issues relating to cultural diversity awareness and antidiscrimination. Policies and protocols should be based on a human rights principles and should take into consideration the language needs of immigrants.
- Training programmes on policies and protocols should be implemented for all relevant staff. Frontline service providers should receive specific training on

how to integrate cultural diversity awareness and antidiscrimination into customer service.

- Targets, indicators and bench-marking should be established and monitoring should be undertaken on the development and effectiveness of policies and training initiatives.

### ***13. Increasing the knowledge base of Irish people***

It can be frustrating and hurtful for immigrants that Irish people lack knowledge of the rich cultural heritages, histories, and civilisations of their home countries.

The fact that the economies of less-developed countries, (where many immigrants to Ireland come from) are marginalised by a global economic system that benefits the more developed industrial world is little understood.

- The importance of Irish people supporting world policies and programmes based on human rights principles, which aid the development of the home countries of immigrants and promote real transfer of resources from industrialised to less-industrialised countries needs to be highlighted. ‘Solidarity pacts’ between groups in Ireland and less-industrialised countries, that advocate the principles of ‘ethical globalisation’, should be promoted. Ethnic minority-led groups should be resourced and strengthened to carry out this role.
- In workplaces where there is a significant proportion of immigrant workers, the workforce should be encouraged to acknowledge and celebrate important occasions, for example the ‘national days’ and religious holidays, of the countries of origin of immigrants.

### ***14. Redressing data deficits***

A major requirement if the challenge of cultural diversity is to be met is the development of an appropriate data and research base. Understanding Irish immigration trends can only be fragmentary and limited, as long as there are major data deficits on published statistics on the work permits scheme (Ruhs 2003).

- The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment should collate work permit data by:
  - age
  - wages and working conditions
  - working hours
  - language skills
  - skill level of job
  - length of time worker in country
  - channels of recruitment and expenses incurred
  - the number of immigrants who have children in the home country and ages of children

- education level of worker
- proportion of foreign workers in any particular enterprise
- emigrants' remittances
- Similar data should be published on working visas/work authorisations.
- The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment should record the number of work-related complaints made by immigrant workers and publish data by nationality, gender and sector of the economy.
- The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform should publish data on the number:
  - who apply for family reunification
  - granted reunification and reasons for refusals
- The Department of Education and Science should publish information on foreign students in Ireland.
- All published data on immigration should be disaggregated by gender, race, and nationality.
- Measures to have ethnicity included in the census should be progressed.

### **15. Research and monitoring**

A broad range of research on the needs, work conditions, and experiences of immigrants in Ireland needs to be undertaken. In addition, the extent to which issues of concern to ethnic minorities and immigrants are prioritised within the government departments and agencies, local authorities, and NGOs should be monitored and assessed.

Research

Research in the following areas could be considered:

- income distribution and living conditions of immigrants, including the spatial concentration of poverty of diverse immigrant groups
- a needs analysis of minority ethnic groups
- rural and urban case studies on the supports and obstacles that hinder immigrant participation and integration
- immigrants' experience of, and access to, state services such as social welfare, health, education and training and garda protection
- a comparison of the socio-economic profile of immigrant prisoners with Irish prisoners, and with Irish prisoners held in Britain
- specific issues that affect women, including the intersection between racism and sexism

- the work conditions and experiences of domestic and childcare workers in private households
- the trafficking of children and other persons
- a longitudinal study on how newly-arrived immigrants adjust over time — their work experience and conditions, risk of poverty, language skills, cultural practices, family composition and links with home country — taking into consideration gender, class and ethnic origin, and the diversity of experiences of different immigrant groups

A summary of research studies that need to be undertaken, that were identified in other recommendations of this report, include:

- on-going quantitative and qualitative research on the attitudes of the Irish people towards immigrants, and on the experiences of immigrants in Ireland
- on-going quantitative and qualitative research on immigrants' experience of racism in Ireland
- the economic, social, and cultural contribution of immigrants
- the extent and nature of the informal economy
- the trafficking of women in and through Ireland
- the extent to which gender, nationality, and poverty (including education and language skills) intersect
- the support needs of migrant women who have experienced violence
- the housing needs of migrant workers

## Monitoring

Monitoring studies which are needed and are identified in this report include the:

- extent to which the strategy of each of the thirty-four City/County Development Boards (CDBs), drawn up for a ten-year period (2002-2012) have addressed issues of race and cultural diversity and other issues of concern to migrants
- extent to which immigrants are prioritised in the Local Development and Social Inclusion Programmes (LDSIP) and in the programmes under the National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion (2002-2006)
- extent to which the Community Development Support Programme targets minority ethnic groups
- extent to which there is positive discrimination to ensure there is ethnic minority and new community

representation in key service delivery and policy areas

- extent to which professional associations, employers and other relevant agencies recognise foreign qualifications and skills, including identifying pathways to recognising skills/qualifications acquired in other countries
- education curriculum and its portrayal of distinct ethnic groups
- extent to which employers make language classes, induction programmes and courses on employee rights available for immigrant workers
- expansion of literacy and language training for adult minority linguistic groups
- number and motivations of immigrant workers applying for Irish citizenship, number granted citizenship and reasons for refusal of applications
- reasons as to why some immigrants do not apply for citizenship



## **Appendix A**

*Irish Research  
on Immigrant Workers and Emigrants*

## **Appendix B**

*Explanations of Migration*

## **Appendix C**

*Acronyms*

## **Appendix D**

*Glossary*

## **Appendix E**

*Bibliography*





## IRISH RESEARCH ON IMMIGRANT WORKERS AND EMIGRANTS

### **General Studies**

General studies on immigration and cultural diversity include *Labour Migration into Ireland* (MacEinrí with Wally 2003). This provides a comprehensive outline of statistical trends and migration patterns. The legislative framework operative in Ireland in a comparative context is also examined, and an integrated set of proposals for a reformed system of immigration is put forward. In *Labour Migration into Ireland* (2003) the authors suggest that because of such factors as globalisation and high levels of inequality between the northern and southern hemispheres, there will be a continuing flow of migrant workers to all of the more prosperous developed economies. Ireland, because of its economic growth in the past decade, is now a country of labour immigration with more than 45,000 migrating to Ireland each year, in contrast to 20,000 who emigrate.

Migrants are employed in every sector of the economy. There is increasing demand in the high-waged knowledge-based jobs. Migrant workers are also increasingly working in low-waged service jobs and in areas such as horticulture and meat processing where it is difficult to get Irish or other EU workers.

One of the main conclusions of *Labour Migration into Ireland* is that there is no coherent legislative or social policy on immigration. Legislative provisions have been *ad hoc*, piecemeal, and designed to control immigration and to present it as a security issue, rather than designed to promote the rights of immigrants. Also, there is no clear route of access for immigrants into Ireland. The report outlines the elements of a long-term integrated coherent strategy.

The *International Comparative Study of Migration Legislation and Practice* (2002) was commissioned by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and carried out by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). The study was undertaken to support the department in revising its immigration policy and procedures. It focuses on immigration legislation and practice in a comparative context, and addresses issues such as entry controls, enforcement measures, residents permits, labour immigration systems, administrative structures and integration.

An international conference *Expanding Nation: Towards a Multi-Ethnic Ireland* was organised by Ethnic and Racial Studies, Department of Sociology, University of Dublin, Trinity College, Dublin. It was one of the first forums in Ireland to bring together academics, the public sector, the voluntary sector, contemporary migrants, and other ethnic groups to debate the issues of race, ethnicity and nationalism. The proceedings are published by Lentin (1999). The many issues addressed by the conference include multiple identities and transnational migrant communities, religion, and profiles of specific ethnic groups.

The proceedings of a conference on cultural diversity, *Mosaic or Melting Pot? Living with Diversity* (Daly 2003) are published by the Royal Irish Academy and the European Cultural Foundation. Issues examined include citizenship and cultural identity, cultural adjustment, and the implications for the health and education services.

The report of the Southern Integrated Research Partnership (to be published) presents the results of a European study visit to eight cities in six countries. The report explores national and regional policy in relation to the reception, and integration of asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants. It also explores how statutory and non-statutory agencies work together to deliver services, and identifies models of good practice to assist programme implementation in Cork city and county. Much can be learned from this report in developing initiatives in Ireland.

### **Directories**

In July 2003, the Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI) published the *Handbook on Immigrants' Rights and Entitlements in Ireland* (Kenny 2003a). This provides practical information on rights and entitlements, and on the services available to the various categories of immigrants resident in Ireland, or seeking to come to Ireland. A study of *Immigration and Residency in Ireland* (Ward 2001) was commissioned by the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee (CDVEC) and outlines the different forms of legal residence in Ireland and their associated rights.

*Making Connections: A Community Directory for the Canal Communities Partnership Area* (Mutwarasibo and McCarthy) and *Step by Step: An Information Resource for Members of the New Communities* (Mutwarasibo and McCarthy) were also published in 2002.

More recently a useful *Guide to Published Research on Refugees, Asylum-Seekers and Immigrants in Ireland* (Cotter 2004) was produced by Integrating Ireland. This report is a map of research published on labour migration, asylum and refugee issues in Ireland over the past few years.

### **Migrant Workers**

Two main studies (Conroy and Brennan 2003; Redmond and Butler 2003) have been carried out specifically on the views of migrant workers. *Migrant Workers and their Experiences* (Conroy and Brennan 2003) was commissioned by the Equality Authority, *kNOw Racism*, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) and employer organisations. Interviews were held with thirty-six migrant workers working in the hospitals and healthcare sector, agriculture, catering, and general employment including information technology.

The study found that migrant workers, at both ends of the occupational hierarchy, were relatively satisfied with their work circumstances. Computer professionals considered themselves to be treated equally to other Irish workers in the sector. Agricultural workers, however, located in single nationality teams, often work long hours and are frequently paid below the minimum wage. Despite the fact migrant workers sometimes have little English, Conroy and Brennan found little use of professional interpretation services or publications in languages other than English. In general, the study found that migrant workers do not experience an intercultural workplace, information at the point of recruitment is sparse, and, in some instances, international standards in regard to the charging of fees to migrants are breached. Other issues raised by the study include the difficulty posed by restrictions on family reunification, and the cost of financing a family in Ireland when the spouse of a worker on a visa or permit is not permitted to work.

The Interact project, *Promoting an Intercultural Workplace: Building on Diversity* was funded under the European Social Fund's EQUAL Initiative and was carried out by Redmond and Butler (2003). The study is based on 566 questionnaires, which were completed by Irish (337) and migrant workers (229). The researchers also held focussed group interviews with Irish and migrant workers, management, and union officials. Interact comprises the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC), Integrate Ireland Language and Training, and FÁS. Results indicate that non-EU nationals found difficulty accessing specialist training in third-level establishments. Disturbing findings in relation to the integration of migrant workers in the workplace were also found. Over half of the migrant workers interviewed expressed a fear of losing their job, over half felt that they do not have the same chance to succeed as Irish workers, and one-third felt that Irish workers have a prejudiced attitude towards migrant workers. Although most migrant workers felt that Irish workers welcomed them, four in ten migrant workers felt that Irish workers do not trust migrant workers. There is also little evidence of interaction outside the workplace.

### **Education**

In *Getting On*, Keogh and Whyte (2003) examine the experiences and needs of immigrant students in four second-level schools linked to the Trinity College Access Programme. The study is based on interviews with twenty-two immigrant students, twenty-two Irish students, twenty-three teachers, and seven sets of parents. Difficulties encountered by immigrant students include inadequate knowledge of the education system and their educational entitlements, and inadequate language skills to access information. Specific difficulties were identified that inhibit immigrant students' access to third-level education. The need for support for Irish students so that they can adapt to the arrival and integration of immigrant students was also identified.

Teachers need training in basic English as a foreign language, and training on interculturalism, antiracism, and inclusion in the classroom. It is also important to provide a forum where teachers can discuss issues arising on cultural and language diversity in the classroom. School counsellors need training on specific issues relating to interculturalism. There is also a need for the development of standardised culturally-relevant aptitude tests for schools, to help teachers to place immigrant students appropriately in the education system. Education tasks that require culturally-specific knowledge should be identified, and appropriate measures taken to facilitate the performance of immigrant students.

Structured inclusion programmes need to be developed for Irish and immigrant students, parents, and teachers. Schools should also disseminate information to Irish parents on the needs of immigrant students and families.

### **Women**

The needs of immigrants and women from minority ethnic groups were specifically addressed by a conference, Women's Movement: Migrant Women Transforming Ireland, held in Trinity College Dublin. Lentin and Luibhéid (2003) have published the proceedings of the conference. The conference focused on women as agents and as transformers of their own fate. The trafficking of women is raised in two papers (Wylie 2003; Kenny 2003b). Other subjects addressed include migrant women as carers, international women prisoners in Ireland, and Italian immigrants in Ireland.

## **Disability**

The Equality Authority commissioned the study *Minority Ethnic People with Disabilities in Ireland* (Pierce 2003). It is a follow-on from the work by Zappone (2001; 2003) that outlined the importance of focussing on the intersection of differences and multiple discriminations. In *Charting the Equality Agenda*, Zappone outlines a conceptual framework for equality strategies in Ireland, north and south.

Pierce focuses on the intersection between disability and ethnicity. She set out to develop a profile of the target group and to examine their experiences of discrimination. Her task of profiling was hindered by the lack of data that would allow her to correlate disability and ethnicity variables. She points to the need for the national population census, the Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS), disability databases, and health monitoring databases to generate data that would allow the identification of multiple identities. The experiences of people interviewed point to the need for service providers, employers and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to develop an understanding of the multiple barriers encountered by people from ethnic backgrounds who also have a disability. These include not only the physical barriers and low expectations that people with a disability experience, but the additional barriers related to language, racism and culture.

## **New Ethnic Groups**

Research is being pioneered on the interaction of the traditional community and voluntary sector with members of new community organisations and on the infrastructure and internal differentiation of minority-led organisations (Smith and Mutwarasibo 2000; Faughnan and O'Donovan 2002; Feldman 2003; Rourke 2003).

In a study of 174 organisations from the traditional voluntary and community sector, Faughnan and O'Donovan (2002) in *A Changing Voluntary Sector: Working with New Minority Communities* examine how the movement towards a more diverse society impacts on the traditional voluntary and community sector. In expanding its remit to include antiracism and interculturalist agendas, major deficits in skills and in organisational capacity are being encountered by the sector. Government policy in supporting work on interculturalism is seen as ambivalent by many organisations. The development of intercultural competence and the promotion of integration and inclusion of members of 'new communities' are identified as a challenge across organisations.

Rourke (2003) examines the support needs of new communities<sup>49</sup> within Dublin's north west inner city. He points to the lack of involvement of the new communities in the work of indigenous Community Development Projects (CDPs). This results in people with leadership skills and potential not progressing to leadership roles within the broad voluntary and community sector in inner city Dublin. Recommendations include the need for government policy statements on the community development support needs of new communities. New communities also need to become part of the planning, implementation, delivery and evaluation of projects, and CDPs need to be resourced to develop their capacity to respond to the needs of new communities. Mechanisms also need to be created to disseminate the reports and documents on immigrant communities to a broader audience.

<sup>49</sup> New communities refer to migrant workers outside of the EEA area; programme refugees and convention refugees; asylum seekers and undocumented immigrants.

The lack of integration of members of new communities into Dublin's south inner city is outlined by Guerin (2003). A mechanism such as a new communities forum, or an intercultural working group is needed at community level.

Conroy and Taguinod (2003) point to the absence of representation of members of minority ethnic groups in the institutional structure of Irish society, and point to the importance of redressing this imbalance.

Feldman *et al.* (2002) raise questions about the lack of effective inclusion and participation of refugees and asylum seekers at all levels of projects. The lack of inclusion gives rise to a suspicion of the agendas underpinning these projects. The authors raise questions regarding accountability to the individuals and communities who participate in the research, and the importance of the dissemination of research results. They make the case for a code of practice for research and development work.

Following on from this research, a workshop for voluntary groups was held in 2002 to address the issues raised. Participants represented organisations and agencies in third-level education, government, private sector, and the community and voluntary sectors. Feldman (2003) has published the summaries of the presentations by panel members and key issues arising from discussions. The case is made in the conclusions for a code of practice for research and development work to be based on participatory principles and practices. The establishment of a cross-sector research forum is needed to analyse and support on-going research in the area of racism, antiracism and interculturalism. The Social Science Research Centre, University College Dublin could take a lead role in establishing such a forum.

Feldman (to be published) in *Towards a New Interculturalism in the Irish Third Sector* focuses on the internal organisational development of minority-led organisations as well as the relationships developed between minority-led organisations and organisations in the mainstream voluntary and community sector.

### **Voices of Immigrants**

The voices of immigrants and people of colour are being articulated in research (Mutwarasibo 2002; Sinha 2002).

Mutwarasibo (2002) looks at the changing nature of the African population in Ireland. This population is diverse and comprises a broad range of legal categories, including Irish citizens, EU nationals, students, refugees, asylum seekers, descendants of historic African immigrants, people granted leave to remain, people granted residency as parents of Irish-citizen children or spouses of Irish nationals, diplomats, economic migrants, and business people. The diversity of countries and cultures of origin within the African continent, coupled with differences in economic, social and religious backgrounds, accounts for the reasons why African communities have not emerged in Ireland. What has emerged is a variety of organisational forms including support/solidarity groups, welfare groups, and groups concerned with educating the Irish public and enlisting support for the development of African countries. Mutwarasibo points to the emergence of seventy African evangelical churches in Dublin and other cities and towns in Ireland.

Many of the groups established by immigrants have not been able to develop

due to the lack of resources and funding. Conversely, many Irish groups in the third sector have attracted funding from government departments and the EU for their work with immigrant communities. Mutwarasibo (2002) makes the point that the engagement of the Irish third sector with immigrant groups is limited.

Sinha (2002), who is an Indian woman, independent journalist, and counsellor on equality issues, was born in Canada and is now a permanent member of Irish society. Rather than looking at how people of colour cope with racism, there is need to undertake a systematic analysis of racism that is defined in terms of the domination of some people over other people. For Sinha, racism is *systematic* and the overall message is that being different is unacceptable. Racism is *institutionalised* meaning that racist attitudes go beyond individuals and are part of our institutions including education, media and the law. Racism is a form of an *everyday* recurrent, familiar experience of mental abuse. In this sense, racism needs to be seen as a mental health issue. Given the intersection between sexism and racism, and the sexualised racist remarks experienced by women, racism can have a severe impact on the mental health of women. Women are forced to develop strategies and to learn not to draw attention to, or to expose, themselves. There is also a constant fear of physical violence. There is a need to provide resources, and to create space, for people oppressed by racism to self-organise to challenge racism. White Irish people, in turn, need to become aware of their own role in the privileged system of racism.

### **Regional Studies**

Two research projects were commissioned in Cork county and city by the Southern Integrated Partnership, which is made up of statutory agencies, University College Cork and NASC (the immigrant support centre). One study focuses on identifying the profile of Cork immigrants and examining how well immigrants in Cork are settling in the Cork region (Stavrou and O'Riordan 2003). Profile data is based primarily on seventy-seven questionnaires that were administered to seventy-seven migrant workers in Cork city and county.

In general, immigrant workers were satisfied with life in Ireland. People were satisfied with the friendliness of the Irish people and the relaxed pace of life, economic conditions, and employment opportunities. Dissatisfaction related to issues around interracial tension and cultural diversity. State health and social services were not used to any great degree. For some, there was dissatisfaction at not having access to a general practitioner, due to the expense involved, or the fact that transport was not available.

The main cause of dissatisfaction with work was low pay, and not being able to use their skills. However, despite positive feelings about Ireland, immigrants see themselves as outsiders in Ireland. An important finding of the research is that Eastern Europeans, more than people from other regions, intend to remain in Ireland, would like to take out citizenship, and have encouraged others to come to Ireland. This is despite the fact that they are not proficient in English and find it difficult to integrate into Irish society.

Extensive interviews and form-filling was undertaken by frontline and management staff of the main services as part of the study on the *Provision of Services to Migrants in Cork City and County* by Stavrou (2003). The study examines the extent to which organisations have specific policies on service provision for immigrants, the role of particular agencies, data systems, and

communications channels within organisations, knowledge and training needs of staff, and co-ordination between organisations. Recommendations relating to these areas are outlined in the report.

### ***Prejudice and Racism***

The large number of publications on racism in Ireland (MacLachlan and O'Connell, eds 2000; Casey and O'Connell 2000; Farrell and Watt, eds, 2001; Lentin and McVeigh, eds, 2002; Fanning 2002) reflects the increasing ethnic and racial diversity in our society, and the concern regarding an increase in racism. Race is emerging as a significant cause of discrimination, both in relation to employment and to access to goods and services. The number of claims being brought to the Equality Tribunal on the grounds of race doubled from 43 to 84 between 2002 and 2003, while it increased from 50 to 63 in relation to access to goods and services.

Racism is not new in Ireland and researchers point out that hostility to minorities long pre-dates the arrival of contemporary migrants. Anti-Traveller racism and anti-Semitism have been part of Irish society throughout the twentieth century (Lentin 2002; Goldstone 2002).

Fitzgerald (1992) and, more recently, Sinha (2002) articulate the specific impact of racism on women. McCarthy (1999) also identifies the sexualised aggression experienced by women of colour in her study for the African Refugee Network. Also, because women negotiate and interact with state agencies on behalf of family members more often than men, immigrant women are more likely to encounter institutionalised racism from the state.

Racism is a form of discrimination directed against racial minorities. It involves the use of economic, social or political power for the purpose of legitimating exclusion and discrimination. Boucher (2000) points out that racism is about a power relationship and results in the exclusion of black and minority ethnic groups to the benefit of majority group members.

In a challenging analysis of racism, Lentin (2004) contends that racism is not just about the domination of one group over another, but is an intrinsic element of the modernising nation state. Putting the modern state centre stage, she claims that nation and race are coterminous and defined in terms of each other. The Irish nation as defined in the 1937 Constitution is configured largely as male, white, Catholic and settled.

Lentin specifically addresses issues regarding Irish immigration policy and policies relating to integration and multiculturalism. Language and public discourse in relation to immigration denigrates migrant groups. The number of immigrants is exaggerated by suggesting that migrant numbers are "spiralling out of control" and "floods of black babies" are being born in Ireland. Such language, together with legal measures, is used to 'manage' ethnic diversity that threatens the perceived homogeneity of the nation state. It is used to legitimate exclusion, and deny the rights of residency to migrants.

Lentin claims that proponents of integration and multicultural programmes fail to address the issue of power in the relationship between ethnic minorities and privileged middle-class whites. The privileged position of Irish whiteness is denied. The assumption of multiculturalism is that dominant and subordinate groups can learn how the other half lives, while leaving the structures of power

intact. In espousing ethnic pluralism and denying racism, the state distances itself from racism.

The state is caught in contradictions in managing the increasing heterogeneity of the society and at the same time claiming to be non-racist. In denying racism it silences its victims and obscures the invisibility of 'white privilege and power'. While declaring its commitment to racelessness, the Irish State continually redefines the boundaries of belonging to the nation in a racial way. The deportation of migrant parents of Irish-citizen children is a case in point.

What is needed is a 'politics of heterogeneity' which gives voice to the racialised minority to determine how the Irish nation can become other than white, Christian and settled.

### ***Prejudice and Tolerance in Ireland***

A landmark study on Irish attitudes and prejudice, *Prejudice and Tolerance in Ireland* by MacGréil was published in 1977. *Prejudice in Ireland Revisited* is a follow-on survey based on over 1,000 interviews undertaken in 1989. This study examined a wide range of attitudes and opinions towards various ethnic, gender, political, racial, religious and social groups and minorities. The study, however, was undertaken when Ireland was a country of emigration as opposed to a country of immigration. MacGréil (1996) reports evidence of strong negative attitudes towards people from minority categories including, alcoholics, ex-prisoners, people with AIDS and drug addicts. The Traveller community experienced consistent and systematic discrimination, and this prejudice increased significantly between 1977 and 1989.

### ***kNOw Racism***

Increasing ethnic and racial diversity is an inevitable consequence of migration. Limited survey research has been undertaken on the attitudes and prejudice of Irish people towards minority ethnic groups since the late 1980s when Ireland became a country of immigration, and an increasingly diversified society.

One of the few surveys is that commissioned by *kNOw Racism* carried out in September 2003 by Irish Market Surveys (IMS) and published in February 2004 (Brown and Milward, 2004). In a sample of 1,200:

- 20 per cent (240) stated that they had witnessed a racist incident.
- 62 per cent (744) stated that they did not have experience of minority groups.
- 78 per cent stated that they had not witnessed racist behaviour. Of those that did, 80 per cent witnessed verbal abuse, 15 per cent witnessed physical abuse, 13 per cent witnessed refusal of entry, and 2 per cent witnessed some other form of abuse.
- Of the 36 per cent (432) who had personal experience of minority groups, 20 per cent (87) stated that they had a negative impression of minority groups. Reasons for the negative impression included begging (61 per cent); cultural differences (23 per cent); language barrier (18 per cent); noisy neighbours (6 per cent) and other (22 per cent).
- 48 per cent (576) considered that Irish society was racist or very racist.

There was a significant amount of mistaken or exaggerated perceptions of why

immigrants come to Ireland, and there is a tendency to deny the legitimacy of immigrants and to exaggerate the benefits they receive:

- 41 per cent stated that they come for economic reasons due to poor economic conditions in their own country, but do not intend to work.
- 51 per cent stated that ethnic groups are taking jobs from Irish people.
- 37 per cent agreed with the statement that ethnic groups have benefited the Irish economy.
- 41 per cent agreed with the statement that ethnic groups living in this country make Ireland a more interesting place to live in.
- 32 per cent were keen to find out more about minority groups living in Ireland.

### ***Irish Emigrants***

Researchers and writers have focused attention on different groups and communities of the Irish abroad. Several authors document the lives of Irish factory workers, many of whom championed the rights of workers and campaigned for trade union recognition. Holmes (1998, 2000, 2002) and O'Dowd (1991) address the concerns of seasonal agricultural workers that worked as 'tattie hokers' on large estates in the north of England and Scotland. Workers in the building industry have also received attention, including the 'navies' that worked in the building industry, the more recent Irish building workers in Britain and Europe (Woods 2003), and the building workers in New York (Corcoran 1991). Ryan (2001) analyses the experiences of women who worked in domestic service. Many of these emigrant workers were escaping from extreme poverty (*Report of the Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems, 1954*; National Economic and Social Council 1991; Department of Foreign Affairs 2002).



## EXPLANATIONS OF MIGRATION

A variety of explanations have been put forward to explain migration movements.

### ***Neo-classical Economics***

Neo-classical economics explains migration in terms of ‘push’ factors that coerce or impel people to leave their own country, and ‘pull’ factors that attract people to receiving countries. This approach focuses on the motivations of individuals to migrate to maximise their well being.

The growing inequalities between industrialised and less-industrialised countries, and global inequalities in wages, give rise to the movement of people from less-industrialised to industrialised countries as people seek opportunities to better themselves. Over one-fifth of the world's population live in conditions of abject poverty, and 1.5 billion people live on less than one dollar a day (Walley 2001). In Ireland, for instance, a supermarket checkout person from Latvia can earn a multiple of what they would earn as a schoolteacher in their home country. In this context, emigration is a strategic option available to individuals, families, and wider kinship groups who want to improve their life chances, or to leave for other personal reasons. Refugees leave when there is a threat to their life and liberty.

### ***World Systems Theory***

World systems theorists, on the other hand, adopt an historical and structural approach. This position argues that migration is a way of mobilising cheap and adaptable labour for the capitalist world system. Under this theory, labour migration is seen as a requirement of global institutional transformation and the integration of the world economy. It is part of the supply side of international production. Countries of mass emigration are often seen as the ‘losers’ in a world economic system that is based on attracting ‘footloose’ mobile foreign capital into its economy, while the ‘winners’ are seen as the ‘receiving countries’.

World systems theorists also point out that less-industrialised countries can benefit from emigration because it can provide an outlet for surplus labour, and permits less-industrialised countries to undergo transformation, such as industrialisation. Less-industrialised countries also benefit through emigrants' remittances. Migrants sent \$88 billion in remittances during 2002. This is 54 per cent more than the \$57 billion those countries received in development aid (Annan 2004).

MacLaughlin (1994) has applied world systems theory to the Irish context. In his view, Ireland up until the recent present, was an ‘emigrant nursery’ whereby Irish labour was used to supply the world system with adaptable labour. Emigration was also in the interests of the dominant classes. In nineteenth century Ireland it staved off agrarian revolution.

A more recent insight derived from globalisation and world systems theory is the notion that investment moves to low-cost wage economies (‘race to the bottom’). This creates ever more negative working conditions, for example, textiles in Morocco, Vietnam and China. However, for industries and employment sectors that by definition cannot move, we are seeing the re-creation of third-world type working conditions in first-world economies. Classic examples of this phenomenon are the caring professions (childcare and geriatric care) and

horticulture (mushroom farming) that involve low-value, high-volume production of products with short shelf-lives that need to be produced close to the market place.

In the industrial developed world, demographic and social change is leading to a situation where 'nurturing' tasks are being 'outsourced' to increasingly vulnerable women from other places.

### ***Mediating Factors***

Middle range theorists have attempted to specify the context and concrete mechanisms that link the world economic system, nation states and individuals/families in the migration process. The emphasis here is on:

- The role and practices of individual states and the relationship between dominant economic and political élites in less-industrialised countries and the international world order.
- The role of informal family networks in providing information and support that makes emigration possible. It is recognised that other family members will emigrate and join those already settled in receiving countries.
- The role of recruitment agencies and brokers in facilitating the movement of people.
- The formation of ethnic communities in the receiving country that are often an unintended consequence of decisions by governments to recruit foreign workers.
- The extent to which receiving societies facilitate immigrant participation and multiculturalism and facilitate equal opportunities for the immigrant population.
- The mobilisation of migrants in 'group struggle' in attempts to expand migrant rights, and in attempts to counteract exclusion and discrimination. Migrants also mobilise to assert and re-create ethnic identities.
- The growth of transnational communities, where social and cultural identities transcend national boundaries, leading to multiple and differentiated forms of belonging.
- Issues relating to border control, and the control of trafficking and smuggling.

## ACRONYMS

Term	Definition
ADM	Area Development Management
CDB	City/County Development Board
CDC	Campaign for Democracy in the Congo
CDSP	Community Development Support Programme
CDVEC	City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee
CERD	The <i>UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination</i>
CEDAW	The <i>UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women</i>
CTA	Common Travel Area
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire)
ECDL	European Computer Driving Licence
ECAHB	East Cost Area Health Board
EEA	European economic area agreement. In 1994, the EEA was signed between the European Union and Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. Nationals of these states enjoy rights within the EU that are similar to those of nationals of EU member states and include those set out in the <i>European Communities (Right of Residence for Non-Economically Active Persons) Regulations, 1997</i> .
EMN	European Migration Network
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
EU	European Union (formerly the EEC)
FÁS	Foras Áiseanna Saothair, Training and Employment Authority
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
IBEC	Irish Business and Employers Federation
ICCPR	The <i>UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights</i>
ICTU	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LDSIP	Local Development and Social Inclusion Programme

LNAR	Limerick Network Against Racism
NAPS	National Anti-Poverty Strategy
NASC	'Nasc' is the Irish word for link, and is the name of the Irish Immigrant Support Centre in Cork.
NCCRI	National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
QNHS	Quarterly National Household Survey
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VEC	Vocational Education Committee
VTOS	Vocational Training Opportunity Scheme
WTO	World Trade Organisation

## GLOSSARY

Employment permit	The legal term for what is commonly-referred to as a work permit (see definition of work permit).
Immigration policy	Immigration policy is concerned with who should be allowed into a particular country or region and under what conditions.
Social inclusion	The debate on social inclusion is concerned with the extent to which receiving societies facilitate immigrant participation in the economic, political, and social life of their societies.
Work permit	<p>Non-EEA/Swiss nationals require permission to work in Ireland. This permission may take the form of a work permit, a work authorisation, or a working visa depending on the type of employment, and whether the applicant is required to possess a visa in order to travel to Ireland.</p> <p>A work permit is only valid for the named employee and the job specified. It is not granted to migrant workers themselves, but is obtained and held by their employer. It covers periods of one month to one year and can be renewed.</p> <p>The legal term for work permits is employment permits but they are commonly referred to as work permits.</p>
Work authorisation	<p>Non-EEA/Swiss nationals require permission to work in Ireland. This permission may take the form of a work permit, a work authorisation, or a working visa depending on the type of employment, and whether the applicant is required to possess a visa in order to travel to Ireland.</p> <p>A work authorisation is the type of permission to work in Ireland issued to persons who have an offer and contract of employment from an employer in Ireland in a designated sector, and who do not need to have a visa to travel to Ireland.</p>
Working visa	<p>Non-EEA/Swiss nationals require permission to work in Ireland. This permission may take the form of a work permit, a work authorisation, or a working visa depending on the type of employment, and whether the applicant is required to possess a visa in order to travel to Ireland.</p> <p>A working visa is the type of permission to work in Ireland issued to persons who have an offer and contract of employment from an employer in Ireland in a designated sector, and who need a visa to travel to Ireland.</p>
Good Friday Agreement	Also known as the Belfast Agreement, this is a peace agreement between the British and Irish governments, ratified by popular vote in 1998.



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## NOTES