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Limerick has become a more diverse society over last the ten years. Census 2011 shows that one in ten of our population are immigrants who have come to work, live or study in the region. Harnessing and managing this diversity is a key opportunity and a key challenge for everyone.

*Integrating Limerick: Integration Plan 2010-12* with a strong record of achievement documented in progress reports annually, provides a good foundation for future work of promoting integration and inclusion of migrants in Limerick. Limerick City and County Council have strongly endorsed and supports the work of the Limerick Integration Working Group over the past three years. The local authority remains committed to the *Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development* objective ‘to ensure refugees, asylum seekers and ethnic minorities are welcomed, supported and valued in the community’.

This Integration Plan was developed against a background of significant change. Organisations at all levels local government, statutory and community are in a process of transition. In 2013 Limerick City and County Councils commenced a formal merger process, Education and Training Boards (ETBs) replaced Vocational Education Committees (VECs), the Department of Social Protection set up as a ‘one stop shop’ to streamline income supports and employment services.

In the non-governmental sector, equally dramatic changes occurred with the Integration Centre and The New Communities Partnership sadly exiting the region. The key migrant support agency, Doras Luimní, faces reduced capacity and services over the duration of this plan as a direct consequence of key philanthropic bodies closing down and leaving Ireland by 2016.

Going forward the challenging reality for all organisations, statutory and community, is that more has be done with less - this demands a strategic partnership approach that engages a wide range of stakeholders, local and migrant, in delivery of this Plan.

The Limerick Integration Working Group (IWG) is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Integration Plan in the years 2013-16. There are 19 statutory, voluntary and community groups in the IWG that are strongly committed to progressing integration measures, celebrating diversity and enhancing social cohesion in Limerick City and County.

An exciting development for this plan is that Limerick has been selected as a region to be participate in The Council of Europe *Intercultural Cities* initiative. This affords Limerick the opportunity to dialogue and exchange best practice with other European and global cities and regions, including, Barcelona, Copenhagen, Rotterdam, London Lewisham, San Sebastian, Montreal and Limassol.

We would like to express our gratitude to all organisations, groups and residents of Limerick City and County, from both migrant and local communities, who contributed to the development of this Plan. We look forward to taking the next steps together to create a truly Intercultural Limerick.

*Eugene Quinn and Karen McHugh*
Integration Vision and Values

Integration is a challenge for all people who reside in Limerick and a measure of the ability of all residents to live in and maintain a peaceful co-existence in a diversified, open and just Limerick based on the principle of equal opportunities for everyone.

The Limerick Integration Working Group envisages the following values as prerequisites for integration:

Respect for Fundamental Rights

Democratic structures and the rule of law, together with freedom of expression and other fundamental rights outlined in national and international law are to be respected by all people in Limerick.

Equality

Equality requires that all members of Limerick society, especially those at risk of exclusion, be accorded equal treatment. Migrants should therefore be treated in the same way as any other members of the society. Providing equal opportunities requires special measures such as accessibility to rights and services, information and training.

Participation

Participation is the lynchpin of integration. The two are inseparable. There can be no integration without participation and there can be no participation without an integration process. All stakeholders in Limerick should strive to facilitate participation in order to make the economic, social, cultural and physical environment accessible and welcoming to migrants.
The aim of the Integration Plan 2013-16 is to work towards creating a vibrant, inclusive and truly intercultural society in Limerick in which all residents are valued, regardless of their colour, creed or culture.
The 2011 Census of Population recorded the total population as 189,943 for the Limerick City and County area. In the Census, 544,357 people, 12% of the usually resident population, described themselves as non-Irish nationals at this time, of which 18,427 (9.7%) were living in Limerick. In Limerick County there were 11,580 non-Irish nationals residing while in Limerick City there were 6,847 non-Irish nationals at the date of the census.

Of this population 90.3% indicated Irish nationality, 1.8% UK nationality, 3.0% Polish, 0.5% Lithuanian, 1.8% other EU 25, 2.1% rest of world which would include those with American, Australian, African, Asian and Russian backgrounds; 0.1% did not state their nationality and 0.6% are born in Ireland but do not have Irish citizenship.

The age structure of the non-Irish community in Limerick is significantly different to that of the overall population, with almost 82% of the population in the working ages compared to 67.5% of the overall population. Consistent with international experience the migrant population is on average much younger than the host Irish population.

The Integration Plan focuses on the following groups and their families:
- Asylum seekers
- Migrant Workers (EU)
- Migrant Workers (Non-EU)
- International Students
- Refugees / Persons with Stamp 4 / Leave to Remain

The Plan is not targeted at members of the Traveller Community, as an ethnic minority, given that needs of the Traveller Community are being addressed by separate initiatives (in Limerick County by the Interagency Group for the Delivery of Service for Travellers and in the city by Limerick City Interagency Group for Traveller Services).
The Integration Working Group uses the EU Common Basic Principles (CBP) as a framework to inform the development of an Integration Plan for Limerick City and County. The Principles were agreed by all EU Member States in November 2004 and aim: “to assist Member States in formulating integration policies by offering them a … guide of basic principles against which they can judge and assess their own efforts.”

1. Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States.

2. Integration implies respect for the basic principles of the European Union.

3. Employment is a key part of the integration process and is central to the participation of immigrants, to the contributions immigrants make to the host society, and to making such contributions visible.

4. Basic knowledge of the host society’s language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration.

5. Efforts in education are critical to preparing immigrants, and particularly their descendants, to be more successful and more active participants in the society.

6. Access for immigrants to institutions, as well as to private goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way is a critical foundation for better integration.

7. Frequent interaction between immigrants and Member States citizens is a fundamental mechanism for integration. Shared forums, intercultural dialogue, education about immigrants and immigrant cultures, and stimulating living conditions in urban environments enhance the interactions between immigrants and Member State citizens.

8. The practice of diverse cultures and religions is guaranteed under the Charter of Fundamental Rights and must be safeguarded, unless practices conflict with other inviolable European rights or with national law.

9. The participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies and measures, especially at the local level, supports their integration.

10. Mainstreaming integration policies and measures in all relevant policy portfolios and levels of government and public services is an important consideration in public policy formation and implementation.

11. Developing clear goals, indicators and evaluation mechanisms are necessary to adjust policy, evaluate progress on integration and to make the exchange of information more effective.

**Defining Integration**

The Integration Working Group for Limerick City and County defines integration as:

“Integration is a long-term multidimensional and dynamic process starting from the moment of arrival in Limerick. It aims at ensuring respect for diversity and equal opportunities for the participation of all residents of Limerick irrespective of cultural or religious background, age, gender or nationality. Integration takes place through the interaction of people and implies mutual understanding as well as shared rights and responsibility.”


1. European Policies

**European Ministerial Conference on Integration: Zaragoza Declaration (2010)**

A declaration on integration was made at an EU Ministerial Conference held in Zaragoza, Spain on 15th and 16th April 2010, which resulted in the drafting of this document. A comprehensive list of European Council conclusions, principles, agendas, pacts and communications dating back to 2002 are outlined in this declaration. They give evidence of the commitment of Ministers from all EU Member States to “promote integration as a driver for development and social cohesion by incorporating integration issues in a comprehensive way in all relevant policy fields.” The declaration gives particular attention to the following areas:

- **Education and Employment:** This section highlights the need to develop integration policies which are adapted to the labour market, rights of access to employment, new ways of recognising qualifications, and developing training to help immigrants access the labour market.

- **Comprehensive Participation / Diverse Districts:** This section emphasises “the role of local authorities and cities in dealing with intercultural challenges and developing and implementing integration programmes.” It calls on local governments to better manage diversity and combat racism, and to invest in districts with a high immigrant concentration.

- **Evaluation of Integration Policies:** This section calls for core indicators in employment, education, active citizenship and social inclusion for monitoring integration policies.

In terms of participation, the declaration emphasises “the role of local authorities and cities in dealing with intercultural challenges and developing and implementing integration programmes”, as well as managing diversity and combating racism more effectively.

2. National Policies

**Migration Nation (2008)**

This national policy statement on integration strategy and diversity management, Migration Nation was launched by the then Minister for Integration, Conor Lenihan, TD, in 2008. As a government statement on integration it emphasises the need for a local focus to integration in practice and points out that “integration lives and breathes, and indeed dies, at the level of community.”

The key principles that underpin this Government strategy on integration are:

- A partnership approach between the government and NGOs and civil society bodies;
- A strong link between integration policy and wider state social inclusion measures, strategies and initiatives;
- A clear public policy focus that avoids the creation of parallel societies, communities and urban ghettos; and a mainstream approach to service delivery to migrants;
- A commitment to effective local delivery mechanisms that align services to migrants with those for indigenous communities.

**Sector-Specific Integration Strategies (2007-15)**

The past decade has also seen the development of a host of sector-specific integration strategies, aggregating the goals of a number of national service providers in the areas of health, education, employment, policing and culture.

These strategies were developed using broad consultative processes and inform the work of service providers responding to the specific needs of particular groups.

- An Garda Síochána’s Diversity Strategy and Implementation Plan (2009-2012)
- Cultural Diversity and Arts Strategy (2010)
- Intercultural Education Strategy (2010-2015)
- National Strategic Plan on Early Childhood Care and Education (2011-2013)
Integration Plan Methodology
The development of the Integration Plan involved the following stages:

1. Research and Consultation: Structural Review, Needs Analysis and World Café
2. Identification of Key Themes
3. Development of Action Plans under each Key Theme
4. Stakeholder Feedback

A key emphasis in the planning process was participation by people who are affected by the outcomes. The process was designed to enable input not just at the beginning but also after an initial draft plan had been developed. The aim of the process design was to ensure that the plan would address the real integration concerns and needs of people on the ground.

Integration Research
The IWG commissioned via a public tendering process two independent pieces of research to inform the development of the Integration Plan 2013-16. The first involved a structural review of the role and operation of the IWG as an interagency working group. The second was an analysis of the needs of immigrants in Limerick City and County. The learning from these processes was supplemented by a world café session, which facilitated input by a wider group of stakeholders.

Structural Review
A structural review was carried out by an independent consultant with the objective of evaluating the effectiveness of the IWG structure and to recommend ways it could operate more effectively. The research methodology involved focus group sessions and structured and semi-structured interviews with IWG members and migrant representative organisations.

Needs Analysis
The aim of the needs analysis was to identify and prioritise the most urgent integration issues facing migrant communities in Limerick. This research also sought to consider the intercultural challenges and opportunities experienced in delivering and accessing services in Limerick City and County. The research tools were designed to ensure the voice and needs of ethnic minorities who access services and the integration experiences of service providers were listened to and heard.


The primary research included a series of on-line surveys and focus groups. Three surveys were carried out, which were completed by:
- Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers (54 respondents)
- Service Providers (38 respondents)
- Education Service Providers (15 respondents)

Six focus groups were conducted—four groups comprised of migrants and two of service providers—held in venues across Limerick city and county.

World Café
A process of consultation was undertaken with a wide group of stakeholders through the mechanism of a world café. This session was designed to provide feedback on the outcome of the Needs Analysis and to identify any gaps in the research findings. This half-day workshop featured facilitation of a world café discussion between service providers and members of immigrant communities. Feedback was recorded on the integration needs identified and further actions were proposed for inclusion in the draft plan. The session also provided an opportunity to discuss expectations of the Integration Plan and to clarify limitations in the light of available resources.

Key Themes and Action Plans
Based on the needs identified in the research and taking into account the input from the world café and local expertise, the IWG identified six priority thematic headings to be included in the Plan. Thematic subgroups reviewed the achievement in the past 3 years and identified integration needs and plan of actions to respond to those needs for 2013-16 under each heading.
The six priority integration themes chosen are:
- Language, Education and Lifelong Learning
- Information, Advice and Direct Support Services
- Access to Public Services
- Intercultural Awareness
- Active Citizenship and Supporting Communities
- Employment

A key criterion in drafting the Plan is that it should be realistic and achievable. Thus, prioritisation of key themes reflected resource constraints under which the plan will operate.

Each of the key themes constitutes an individual section within the Integration Plan, and is linked with one of the EU Common Basic Principles on Integration. Each theme is also linked to the Intercultural Cities policy initiatives the IWG aims to implement over the duration of the the Plan.

A context of needs to be addressed under each priority integration theme is provided. It draws on evidence gathered during the planning process and also other sources of relevant information and data, local and national. The needs and concerns identified in the thematic contexts are not exhaustive.

The Action Plans seek to build on the foundations built over the course of the previous plans. It identifies concrete steps and actions to be delivered over a three-year period with the aim of achieving concrete outcomes that will seek to address priority integration needs of migrants living in Limerick.

**Stakeholder Feedback**
A further process of consultation was undertaken with all stakeholders when a draft integration plan was completed. Representatives of service providers and migrant representative organisations were also invited to give feedback at this stage of the Plan’s development.

**Implementation and Monitoring**
The ongoing role of the IWG will be to oversee the implementation of the Integration Plan in the years 2013-16.

Operational Action Plans for each calendar year will be developed and delivered. Evaluations will be conducted at mid-term and at the end of plan cycle.

The IWG will have a role in securing the necessary human and financial resources to ensure a successful implementation of the Plan.

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**Integration - A Two Way Process**

**If you are from Limerick …**
Meet with people who are different to you
Get involved in local integration and education initiatives
Always remember respect and tolerance

**If you are a migrant …**
Get involved in host community activities
Learn more about local traditions
Always remember respect and tolerance

**If you are active in a local community group …**
Get actively involved with integration actions through the IWG
Let the IWG know where there is a need for integration work
Actively work to ensure that migrants are included in local community groups

**If you are from the business community …**
Develop awareness in the areas of employment and diversity
Actively participate and promote diversity
Allow people the opportunity to learn through internships

**If you are from an educational institution …**
Help to ensure that all young people have equal access to education
Ensure that intercultural understanding and diversity are part of the education experience
Promote diversity and inclusion of young people in the community

**If you are a politician …**
Take responsibility for giving political and economic priority to inclusion
Words are important: make sure that your communication and actions are inclusive
Help to develop the region in a way that makes the most of diversity
Language
Language is an essential element for integration at all levels. The 2011 Census enquired about non-Irish nationals' ability to speak English. This question was asked only of persons who speak a language other than English or Irish at home. An overall 33.8% in Limerick (35.5% nationally) said they did not speak English well, did not speak it at all or gave no response.

Improvement in ability over time is recorded: of the non-Irish nationals who arrived in Ireland in 1990 for example, three-quarters indicated that they spoke English very well in April 2011. In contrast to those non-Irish who arrived in 2010 just over 37% spoke English very well, while 24% could not speak English well or at all (DES Adult Literacy Review, 2013).

The National Intercultural Education Strategy 2010-15 called for a coherent approach among service providers and stressed that the needs of learners should be at the centre of their strategies. A good model of these principles in practice is the ESOL Partnership established in 2010 under Integrating Limerick: Integration Plan 2010-12.

The ESOL Partnership coordinates English language classes and strives for the best and most efficient delivery of language services in the region. While an increased number of migrants accessed provision as a result of the partnership, demand among migrants for ESOL classes in both Limerick City and County remains extremely high.

The IWG Needs Analysis conducted in 2013 found that migrants recognise that English language competency is essential for finding employment, supporting children in education and participating fully in society.

The 2008 Horwath Review of English Language Provision, commissioned by the Department of Education and Skills, stated that English language competence by parents can also lead to enhanced educational opportunities for 'second generation' immigrants.

One of the most significant needs identified was for more intensive English classes and the opportunity to speak and practice English between classes. The latter was particularly stressed as many migrants tend to use their native language at home, with family or with peers, and can forget what they have learned from class to class (Irwin, 2013).
The majority of non-Irish nationals have achieved their educational qualifications outside Ireland. Many migrants are highly skilled with 30% of non-Irish nationals who left the education system having achieved at least a degree compared to 23% of Irish nationals. However, this is partly a function of the age profile of both groups non-Irish nationals tend to be young, and older Irish people tend to have lower educational qualifications than younger people (ESRI, 2013). One of the issues raised by migrants in consultations is the fact that qualifications from their countries of origin are not recognised in Ireland.

State-funded education is available to Irish citizens at all levels and to migrants at primary and secondary levels, or until they are aged 18. In the IWG Needs Analysis ‘participants stated that in general their children liked school and they had no real problems with the schools as parents’ (Irwin, 2013). However, migrant communities in Limerick have consistently raised concern about access to third level and higher educational opportunities, especially for migrant students who have successfully completed their Leaving certificate, often obtaining very high points.

Asylum seekers are not entitled to free third-level (university or college) education, and the children of international students are generally not allowed to access state-funded education. While the majority of non-Irish nationals may access third-level and further education, most must pay fees to do so. Non-EU nationals often pay a substantially higher rate, which may be prohibitive for many (ESRI, 2013). The situation is exacerbated by the complexities of the higher education grants and financial assistance systems, leading to confusion on eligibility for migrants (Darmody et al., 2012).

Lifelong Learning

Limerick aims to develop as a region of lifelong learning. The overall objective is to support the values of, and enhance the opportunities for, learning continuously throughout the lives of all residents, local and migrant. Each year there is a Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival coordinated by a steering committee, which has a representative from the IWG. The festival runs an extensive week-long calendar of events promoting lifelong learning in Limerick City and County.

References:

### Integration Theme: Language, Education and Lifelong Learning

**Integrating Limerick 2010-12 Achievements**

- Establishment of ESOL Partnership
- Common applications and assessment process for language learners
- Additional migrant learners receiving formal provision
- Targeted language support for hard-to-reach groups, e.g., women in the home, asylum seekers
- More structured delivery of voluntary English classes
- Case-by-case support for migrants accessing third level education
- Active migrant participation in *Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival*

**Key Integration Challenges in Limerick**

- Successful outcomes from provision undermined by lack of opportunity to speak English outside of formal classes
- Resource limitations for future ESOL class provision
- Changing profile of learners who need language to access training and employment opportunities
- Access to third level and further education for migrants
- Need for further integration of migrants into the wider communities to access non-formal and other specific language opportunities available in Limerick
- Fees as a barrier for migrant youth to attend third level and post leaving certificate courses

### Proposed Actions

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<tr>
<th>Proposed Actions</th>
<th>Future Timeframe</th>
<th>Lead Organisation</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.1 To coordinate the delivery of language services in the Limerick region and to strengthen the model of provision</td>
<td>Dec 2013-15</td>
<td>ESOL Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 To provide language classes which complement formal provision</td>
<td>Dec 2013-15</td>
<td>Doras Luimní West Limerick Resources Limerick and Clare ETB</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3 To expand language and learning opportunities available to migrants in Limerick</td>
<td>Jan 2014-16</td>
<td>IWG</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.4 To develop integration support activities that enhance migrant knowledge of local tradition, culture and heritage in Limerick</td>
<td>Jan-Jun 2014</td>
<td>JRS Ireland</td>
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<td>1.5 To improve access to community and further education</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Limerick and Clare ETB</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.6 To promote Limerick as a region of lifelong learning for all residents, local and migrant</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Limerick Learning Region Steering Committee</td>
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</table>
### Strategic Goals

- To maintain and develop the ESOL Partnership and identify new strategic partners to join group
- To meet with migrant community leaders and other organisations and stakeholders with an interest in language development/language acquisition to assist with the development of language based courses in the Limerick City and County.
- To identify and provide informal language and learning opportunities to complement formal language provision
- To use existing community and agency structures to reach out to and develop services for migrant groups with a higher risk of social isolation, such as those who have spent a long time in direct provision accommodation and women in the home
- To support migrants to engage in further education and training that will increase their quality of life and enhance their employability

### Strategic Outcomes

- Enhanced language skills of migrant learners that improve their capacity to avail of further education, to obtain employment, to interact socially and to participate more fully in the economic, social and cultural life in Limerick
- An intensive model in place across the Limerick area that is achieving a wider range of accreditation options for learners that includes ESOL (English) but also other core language skills areas
- Informal learning networks or opportunities are mapped and developed for migrant learners that encourage greater participation in activities that build language ability
- Enhanced interaction and communication between education and training agencies and employment agencies informing language provision
- Providing language and educational opportunities for migrant groups at risk of social isolation that will enable them participate more fully in society
- Enabling enhanced access for migrants to further and third level education opportunities

### Projected Outcomes

- A strong functioning ESOL Partnership with broader membership
- Efficient and coordinated delivery of language services in Limerick
- Targeted services for hard-to-reach migrant groups
- An intensive model of language provision developed and rolled out across Limerick
- Enhanced ability of migrants to avail of progression into training and further education

### Possible Strategic Partners

- Limerick and Clare ETB
- Doras Luimní
- JRS Ireland
- University of Limerick (PVA)

- Ballyhoura Development
- University of Limerick (PVA)

- Limerick and Clare ETB
- JRS Ireland
- PAUL Partnership
- Limerick Volunteer Centre
- Older Persons Forum
- Doras Luimní
- University of Limerick (PVA)

- Limerick and Clare ETB
- Doras Luimní
- University of Limerick (PVA)

- PAUL Partnership
- University of Limerick (Community Liaison)
- Doras Luimní
- JRS Ireland
- Limerick Sports Partnership

- All Limerick Learning Region partners
EU Common Basic Principle 4: 'Basic knowledge of the host society's language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration'

Information and Advice
Support organisations have highlighted that access to information in relation to education and training, employment rights, social welfare entitlements, opportunities for social interaction, and cultural norms and traditions remains essential for successful integration (MRCI, 2006).

The Limerick Citizens Information Services (CIS) provides a free independent information, advice and advocacy service for the public, including migrants, on a broad range of social services and entitlements. In 2012 the top three categories of query in Limerick City and County were social welfare (54%), employment (9%) and health (7%). This is consistent with national CIS query category trends. Of the total number of callers in 2012, and where nationality was divulged, 13% were migrants (9% EU and 4% non-EU).

The graph opposite shows a breakdown, where recorded, of the countries of origin of migrant callers (13%) to Limerick CIS in 2012. It excludes Ireland. ‘Callers’ constitute face-to-face, telephone and electronic mail contact.
Participants in the IWG Needs Analysis felt that there was a general need to improve access to information and advice. This is an issue of particular concern to those in more rural areas as the city-based participants found it relatively easier to access information and advice from the Citizens Information Centres and from specialised services such as Doras Luimnín (Irwin, 2013).

A significant achievement over the past three years was the development of the Integrating Limerick section of the Limerick.ie website as a central on-line source of information on integration and intercultural events in Limerick City and County. There was regular update of the content on the site by IWG member organisations.

Every event in the Integration section is also mirrored to other relevant sections of the website. Overall, the Limerick.ie website received more than 280,000 unique visitors to the site during 2012. However, awareness of the website and access by members of migrant communities still remains low and this needs to be addressed if it is to serve its intended function.

Direct Support Services
Despite the trend of falling levels of inward migration to Ireland over the past three years strong demand remains for drop-in services, outreach and targeted clinics for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants throughout Limerick City and County.

Immigration and asylum have complex legal frameworks, with which migrants often need specialised and individual advice and support. Different migrant categories (asylum seekers, refugees, migrant workers, international students and their families) have differing needs for information and advice. For example, after legally residing for more than five years in Ireland many non-Irish nationals are eligible to apply for citizenship. Organisations such as Doras Luimnín have found a large increase in the number of clients seeking advice in respect of Irish citizenship applications.

In the IWG Needs Analysis there was general consensus that asylum seekers living in the four direct provision centres in the region are among the vulnerable categories of migrant. One in three asylum seekers have been living more than five years in state-provided accommodation centres.

Support agencies have argued that long-term living in Direct Provision accommodation results in significant human costs, with an impact on physical and mental health, on skills and training, family relationships and the ability to participate in society.

The long-term impact on children (around one-third of Direct Provision residents) growing up in this institutionalised environment is of particular concern. Lack of resources and the remote location of some centres may leave children socially excluded and cut off from the out-of-school activities of their classmates.

Direct provision accommodation does not provide a normal family environment for raising children … Often, children will grow up without the memory of their parents cooking a family meal. (Quinn, 2013)

In the IWG Needs Analysis the problem of domestic violence was noted as an issue for migrant women. The fact that their permission to be in the country is often linked to that of their partner is a particular issue for women experiencing domestic violence and their children. The high rate of migrant women using refuges was noted (Irwin, 2013).

Other groups of migrants including trafficked people, people experiencing discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation and those at higher risk of social isolation, all require targeted supports and services.

References:
### Integration Theme: Information, Advice and Direct Support Services

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<th>Key Integration Challenges in Limerick</th>
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<td>• Development of Integrating Limerick section on <a href="http://www.limerick.ie">www.limerick.ie</a> as a central source of information on intercultural services and activities</td>
<td>• Lack of accessible information remains a barrier to accessing services for some migrants, especially those at higher risk of social isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provision of information on migrant rights and entitlements by Citizen Information Centres</td>
<td>• Obtaining relevant information at the point of arrival</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Dedicated advice and information support services for migrants</td>
<td>• Migrants need assistance and advice to navigate complex asylum and immigration issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Legal service providing specialised advice to migrants established</td>
<td>• Asylum seekers and especially children growing up in the Direct Provision system require dedicated services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Regular outreach to four Direct Provision centres in the region</td>
<td>• Other vulnerable migrant group, such as migrant women suffering domestic violence and trafficked women, need specialised supports</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Support service for migrant women subject to sexual exploitation set up</td>
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<th>Proposed Actions</th>
<th>Future Timeframe</th>
<th>Lead Organisation</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.1 To maintain and develop further a central online source of information on support services, activities and groups for migrants</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>IWG</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2 To publish a comprehensive orientation guide to Limerick for migrants</td>
<td>Jan 2014</td>
<td>Doras Luimní</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3 To provide outreach, information support and representation to asylum seekers, refugees, people given leave to remain and migrant workers and their families in the Limerick region</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Doras Luimní, JRS Ireland, Citizens Information Services (CIS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.4 To ensure children in Direct Provision receive educational and developmental support and opportunities to participate in activities in the wider community</td>
<td>Jan 2014–16</td>
<td>JRS, Doras Luimní</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.5 To provide targeted assistance to migrant parents and children</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>IWG</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.6 To deliver services that support at-risk and vulnerable migrants in Limerick</td>
<td>Dec 2013–15</td>
<td>Doras Luimní, ADAPT, RED Ribbon Project, Limerick Homeless Centre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Strategic Goals

- To publish accessible information on statutory, community and voluntary supports and services to orient arriving migrants
- To ensure that the website, Limerick.ie, provides comprehensive information on intercultural services, activities and events
- To assist, support and advise asylum seekers and their families living in direct provision centres in the Limerick region and to prioritise the needs of children living and growing up in Direct Provision
- To provide a dedicated advice and information centre, including legal advice, for migrants
- To deliver targeted support services to at-risk migrant groups, including trafficked women, victims of domestic violence and for those who require support because of their sexual orientation

### Strategic Outcomes

- Availability of online intercultural information portal that is a comprehensive guide to resource, services and activities of interest to migrants
- Increased awareness of existing sources of information for migrants, especially those in other languages
- Outreach and support to asylum seekers and the delivery of services and training that enhances life-skills and long term ability to actively participate in society
- Dedicated and specialised advice and support available to migrants to respond to asylum and immigration issues
- Provision of targeted support to children growing up in direct provision and to counteract where possible long-term impact on personal and social development
- Maintenance and development of a range of direct support services for vulnerable and at-risk migrants living in Limerick

### Projected Outcomes

- Provision of accurate and up-to-date information on migrant services
- Increased number of migrants accessing the integration section in www.limerick.ie
- Enhanced information available including comprehensive guide to interfaith services and intercultural groups
- Publication of orientation guide to Limerick for newly arrived migrants in a number of languages
- New website developed to accompany orientation guide
- Widespread dissemination of the guide
- Accessible and dedicated immigration related advice and information centre available on a regular basis to respond to asylum and immigration queries
- Provision of information on migrant rights, entitlements and citizenship in Limerick City, Newcastle West and Kilmallock Citizens Information Centres
- Access to up-to-date information on www.citizensinformation.ie includes material in Polish, French and Romanian.
- Specialised legal advice, support and representation provided to migrants
- Weekly outreach and support to asylum seekers in four direct provision centres in the Limerick region
- Crèche and afterschool services available to children living in Direct Provision
- Increased opportunities offered to participate in sporting, cultural and educational activities in the local community
- Support for migrant parents, including asylum seekers, through Incredible Years Programme
- Targeted support for migrant families when required
- Outreach service that provides support to migrant women affected by prostitution and trafficking in Limerick
- Advice and support for migrants who are experiencing domestic violence
- Support provided for migrants on sexual health issues
- Providing assistance to migrants who experience homelessness

### Possible Strategic Partners

- Limerick City and County Council
- Midwest Interfaith Network
- Migrant Representative Organisations
- All IWG Members
- University of Limerick
- Tiny Tots
- Corpus Christi NS
- Music Regeneration
- Limerick Sports Partnership
- Limerick Youth Service
- Incredible Years Programme
- Doras Luimní
- PAUL Partnership
- Limerick Social Services Centre
Integration Theme 3: Access to Public Services

EU Common Basic Principle 6: 'Access for immigrants to institutions, as well as goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way is a critical foundation for integration.'

Ireland’s economic difficulties have presented huge challenges for the delivery of public services at all levels: local government; health; welfare; and policing. Budgets have been cut and staffing numbers have been reduced at a time when demand for services has increased. The intercultural challenges arising from a changed demographic profile has added to the difficulty in providing access and quality services to all.

Local Government

Local Government is responsible for administering and delivering many vital services in the Limerick region, including roads, water, housing, libraries and public parks. The local authority aims to deliver services to all Limerick residents in a fair, inclusive and non-discriminatory manner.

Responding to the challenges of integration has long been recognised in Limerick through the establishment of the Limerick Integration Working Group, originally under the aegis of the Development Boards. The local authority committed under the Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development to 'ensure refugees, asylum seekers and ethnic minorities are welcomed, supported and valued in the community'.

In the area of integration and inclusion the local authority has an important leadership role. This has been evidenced by strong support for migrant-led initiatives and intercultural events and activities in the region. For example public amenities such as libraries and parks have been made available for cultural celebrations such as Africa Day.

The local authority seeks to promote and develop public services that are accessible and delivered in a culturally appropriate way. In general there is a need for an audit of services, language competences and training within public sector organisations, who deliver services to migrants, to identify synergies and areas of improvement and to support best practice.

Health

Whilst the experiences and perceptions of health service provision and health care providers among the immigrant population is broadly positive, the implementation of the National Intercultural Health Strategy (NIHS) remains challenging as health service priorities compete in an environment of constrained resources and increasing pressures.

Despite these pressures, progress is being made in implementing the main recommendations, particularly with regard to enhancing access to health information and services. Language and communication barriers remain significant issues of concern but much effort is being spent on working in partnership across sectors to create a more responsive health system. In the Mid-West progress has been made over the past few years with multilingual signage and intercultural training for health professionals, but more work needs to be done.

From the perspective of service users, a number in the IWG Needs Analysis responded that they felt that the costs of services in Ireland are very expensive and those without a medical card stated that they were often unable to access health services because they simply couldn’t afford to.
The continuing implementation of the NIHS remains critical, especially as service users from diverse and cultural backgrounds may be significantly and disproportionately affected by the poor economic situation, where the impact of the Habitual Residence Condition (HRC) is a critical factor.

Policing
An Garda Síochána in Limerick are committed to be a police force for all residents, local and migrant. Participation from migrant communities in the Garda Reserve has been supported locally and nationally. In the Limerick Garda Division over 10% of the Garda Reserve are members of ethnic minority communities. All community guards have received intercultural training.

In consultation with migrants, the relationship with the Gardaí was noted as being a challenge for many, particularly those who come from countries where the police might be seen as an enemy. In 2012 the Connecting Communities initiative was launched linking Garda Liaison Officers with designated contact persons from migrant communities in Limerick. This initiative aims to break down communication and other barriers to ensure that the policing needs of each migrant community in Limerick are met.

During 2012 in Limerick there were a small number of racially-motivated incidents reported to the Gardaí. Concern persists that racist incidents and racially-motivated crimes are under-reported. The IWG Needs Analysis highlighted the absence of appropriate legislation to prosecute racist actions; in particular, the Incitement to Hatred Act is in need of radical reform.

Welfare
The Mission Statement of the Department of Social Protection is 'to promote active participation in society through the provision of income supports, employment services and other services'. A Customer Charter sets out the level of service all customers, local and migrant, can expect when dealing with this department.

In 2012 Inreos, the Department’s new integrated employment and support service to assist jobseekers in getting back to work was launched. This "one-stop shop" approach means employment and income supports are now offered in the one place for the first time, incorporating the services of the Community Welfare Service, FAS Community and Employment Services and the Department of Social Protection.

With high levels of unemployment in the region the Department of Social Protection has experienced increased demand for services from migrants and their families in welfare offices throughout Limerick.

The Department of Social Protection seeks to improve access to information by publishing in eight languages an on-line resource, Guide to Social Welfare Services. Interpretation and document translation services help staff to provide accessible information on migrants’ rights and entitlements in the Limerick region.

Occasionally frustrations and tensions are experienced at the point of service delivery between migrant service users and service providers. A number of contributory factors can give rise to misunderstandings on both sides, including a lack of accessible information, poor language ability and insufficient cultural awareness. Lack of language skills, however, remains the issue that causes the most difficulties for both service providers and users.

"Ineligibility for services or benefits may be incorrectly interpreted as a race issue because there is not sufficient language capacity to understand the nuances of legislation or entitlements." (Irwin, 2013)

The IWG could provide support to assist public service providers and migrant service users overcome language and communication difficulties experienced at the service interface through intercultural training and cultural mediation.

References:
### Integration Theme: Access to Public Services

#### Integrating Limerick 2010-12 Achievements

- Intercultural training delivered to staff from HSE, Department of Social Protection and An Garda Síochána
- Translation and interpretation services available to welfare offices
- Guide to Social Welfare Services provided in eight languages
- Mapping of the health needs of migrant women in Limerick
- Connecting Communities initiative launched by An Garda Síochána with the aim of linking ethnic liaison officers with representative of migrant communities in Limerick
- Increased access to local government amenities such as public libraries for intercultural events

#### Key Integration Challenges in Limerick

- Lack of information on background to decisions, particularly in relation to welfare rights, sometimes result in false perceptions of discrimination
- Language ability of migrants accessing public services
- Ongoing training need for staff of public service providers to deal with intercultural issues encountered in the delivery of services
- Forum for migrant service users to give feedback on the issues of concern they experience in seeking to access public services
- Leadership role for the local authority in promoting and supporting the integration of migrants

#### Proposed Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Actions</th>
<th>Future Timeframe</th>
<th>Lead Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 To improve the delivery of health services and access to health information for migrants</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>HSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 To deliver policing services that are equally accessible to all communities, local and migrant</td>
<td>Jan 2014–16</td>
<td>An Garda Síochána</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 To ensure migrants are aware of their welfare entitlements and can access them readily</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>DSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 To develop mechanism to gather migrant service users experience and to feedback to service providers</td>
<td>Mar 2014–16</td>
<td>IWG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 To provide leadership as the local authority promoting migrant integration</td>
<td>Mar 2014–16</td>
<td>Limerick City and County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 To provide interpretation and translation services where possible within public service organisations</td>
<td>Dec 2014</td>
<td>Limerick City and County Council, An Garda Síochána, HSE, DSP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Strategic Goals

- To enhance the interaction between migrants and public providers of supports and services
- To explore ways of overcoming the language barrier in the provision of services to migrants
- To train staff of public service providers to provide services in a culturally appropriate manner
- To develop a forum for migrant service users to feedback issues of concern (accessibility, information, understanding) and to identify ways in which public services could be improved
- To create a mechanism for exchange of best practice and learning between different public service providers
- To provide leadership in the development of accessible and culturally appropriate public services, which are responsive to the needs of migrants

### Strategic Outcomes

- Improved access and delivery of public services by migrants
- Better relationship and interaction between service providers and migrant service users
- Statutory and non-statutory agencies completed intercultural awareness training
- Exchange of interpretation and translation resources between public service providers
- A network of service users and service providers that have greater awareness of intercultural issues in the delivery of services and supports
- Best practice rolled out across the delivery of local authority services

### Projected Outcomes

- Identification of intercultural health priorities for the region
- Increased take-up of health services and improved health and wellbeing among migrants
- Enhanced staff cultural competency and culturally sensitive service delivery
- Provision of multi-lingual signage and user friendly information

### Possible Strategic Partners

- All IWG members
- Migrant Representative Organisations

### Possible Strategic Partners

- Greater awareness of services that An Garda Síochána provide to all communities in Limerick through Open Days conducted in Garda Stations
- Dissemination of information card to all migrants engaging with Henry Street Immigration Office
- Maintenance and development of Garda Ethnic Liaison Initiative with representatives of migrant communities
- Increased migrant representation in the full time force subject to the availability of new positions
- Continued support from Community Police officers for intercultural activities

### Possible Strategic Partners

- Migrant Representative Organisations

### Possible Strategic Partners

- Gather feedback from migrants on experience of accessing services and obtaining entitlements in welfare offices
- Frontline staff have received intercultural training
- Availability of interpretation and translation services on request

### Possible Strategic Partners

- Migrant Representative Organisations

### Possible Strategic Partners

- Migrant Service User Forum established
- Issues of concern documented and fed back to public service providers
- Remedial plan of action put in place

### Possible Strategic Partners

- Migrant Representative Organisations

### Possible Strategic Partners

- Ensuring intercultural best practice is rolled out across local authority services
- Active support of integration activities and intercultural events and celebrations
- Creation of links between older migrants and Limerick Age Friendly Programme
- Public space made available for migrant events where possible
- Provision of information on migrant voting rights

### Possible Strategic Partners

- All IWG members
- Migrant Representative Organisations

### Possible Strategic Partners

- Audit of service provision to migrants, language competencies and intercultural training conducted among public service organisations
- Identification of areas of cooperation and improvement and examples of best practice
- Agreement on provision of shared pool of interpretation services and translators
- Delivery of intercultural training to frontline staff in public service organisations

### Possible Strategic Partners

- All IWG members
- Migrant Representative Organisations

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Limerick Integration Plan 2013-16
Integration Theme 4: Intercultural Awareness

Intercultural Cities Theme - Governance, Mediation and Conflict Resolution; Public Space; Arts and Sports

EU Common Basic Principle 1: 'Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States.'

Intercultural Awareness
Integration occurs in a social context where members of both local and migrant communities can meet and interact and cultural values are recognised and appreciated. An intercultural approach seeks to create the conditions for interaction, equality of opportunity, understanding and respect between cultures and ethnicities. There needs to be a wider public debate about the benefits and challenges of a more diverse society. The IWG Needs Analysis identified a need for 'improved understanding of different culture', intercultural awareness training and education.

Schools and Youth
The Intercultural Education Strategy 2010-15 aims to ensure that:

(i) All students experience an education that 'respects the diversity of values, beliefs, languages and traditions in Irish society and is conducted in a spirit of partnership' (Education Act, 1998).

(ii) All education providers are assisted with ensuring that inclusion and integration within an intercultural learning environment become the norm.

In 2010 the Teachers Union of Ireland commissioned a survey of 442 second and third level teachers in VEC and Community and Comprehensive Schools, as well as Colleges of Further Education and third level institutions. Forty-six per cent of post-primary school teachers reported that they were aware of racist incidents which had occurred in the past month (Integration Centre, 2013).

Diversity offers new opportunities for learning for students, local and migrant, through positive engagement with the history, languages and traditions of each other’s culture. Best practice seeks to create an environment in the school that is welcoming, inclusive and respectful of the rights of all students. Some schools have been proactive in the development intercultural policies, which promote integration and inclusion of all students. They also have a procedure to deal with situations where pupils experience discrimination on the basis of their colour, creed or culture.

The chart above shows the six secondary schools in Limerick City and County who have the highest proportion of non-Irish national students. In the 2011 Census migrant pupils constituted 10 per cent or more of the total student population in sixteen out of thirty four Limerick secondary schools.
In 2010 Trinity College Dublin published, *In the Front Line of Integration*, on what life was like for 15-18 year old migrant youth in Ireland. The young people interviewed faced many challenges dealing with differences between life in Ireland and the life they had known prior to migration.

- Barriers to friendships with local Irish young people included perceived differences in cultural background, language and accent, differences in educational and life experience, racism and differences in attitude towards education, authority, religion and alcohol.
- Many migrant young people are unfamiliar with the ‘slagging’ (mostly friendly trading in insults which is common among local Irish young people) and some struggle to understand and adjust to it.
- Racism emerged spontaneously as an issue in almost all of the focus groups. Many participants talked about how they encountered racism on the street from strangers (including adults), peers in school, at work and in the search for work.

**Anti-Racism**

The continuing economic difficulties have created a more hostile environment for migrants. At the national level an analysis of data from the European Social Survey suggests significant changes in Irish attitudes to immigrants and immigration between 2002 and 2010. While not definitive the ‘evidence, consistent with research from other countries, suggests that the economic recession and rapid rise in unemployment have played a significant role in changes in attitudes. Positive evaluations peaked in 2006 and fell in 2008 and further in 2010, at a time when unemployment was rising rapidly’ (ESRI, 2013).

In a Millward Brown Lansdowne survey commissioned by the One Foundation in 2011, it was found that almost two-thirds of TDs surveyed had encountered racist sentiments while canvassing in the previous General Election.

Furthermore, ‘only 4% of the TDs believed that speaking up for migrants would be electorally beneficial, that is, the TDs believed that their constituents were not very supportive of migrants’ (Integration Centre, 2013).

Overall the level of racism in Ireland is less than in other EU Member States; however, there is no room for complacency. While the official figures show a decrease in the number of racist incidents reported to An Garda Síochána in 2012, this trend is strongly disputed by migrant support organisations, who have recorded a large increase in the number of incidents of racism being brought to their attention by clients. Migrants may be reluctant to report racism in Garda stations because of previous negative experiences with police in their homelands or fear of repercussion.

While under-reporting of racist incidents is an issue throughout Ireland, the evidence gathered in *Treated Differently*, commissioned by Doras Luimnì, indicates that reporting racism for many migrants in Limerick is associated with fear, not knowing how to report and a belief that nothing will be done anyway. Sixty per cent of migrant respondents had experienced or witnessed at least one racist incident. Of the respondents who witnessed racism and discrimination, 80% said they did not report the incidents (Kennedy, 2013).

The experience of racism in Limerick is consistent with that of the island of Ireland as a whole. Nevertheless, it is worth remembering a number of key findings of the *Treated Differently* research:

- Racism occurs in public and private locations.
- Men, women and children are perpetrators of racism.
- Men, women and children are victims of racism.
- Racism may take the form of physical or verbal hostility or aggression, exclusion from or denial of services and other actions/inactions.
- Institutional racism is a feature of services across a wide spectrum.

### Number of Incidents of Racism Reported Annually to An Garda Síochána in Ireland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**References:**

### Integrating Limerick 2010-12 Achievements

- Outreach to primary and secondary schools raising awareness of intercultural issues
- Major public conference on Integration and Inclusion held by Doras Luimní
- ‘Integreat’ public bus campaign promoting integration in Limerick
- Conduct of racism survey and the launch of Treated Differently research report
- Migrant Youth Café offered an opportunity for local and migrant youth to interact socially

### Key Integration Challenges in Limerick

- Outreach to primary and secondary schools raising awareness of intercultural issues
- Second generation issues experienced by migrant youth
- Intercultural awareness raising and anti-racism education in schools Support for schools with development of intercultural policies
- Ensuring schools and sporting organisations welcome and include migrants and have procedures to deal with incidents of racism and exclusion
- Under-reporting of incidents of racism in Limerick for a variety of reasons
- Lack of engagement by wider public in debate on racism and racist attitudes in Limerick

### Proposed Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Actions</th>
<th>Future Timeframe</th>
<th>Lead Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 To raise intercultural awareness in primary and secondary schools in Limerick</td>
<td>Dec 2013–15</td>
<td>JRS Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 To address the concerns of migrant youth and promote their integration in the wider community</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Limerick Youth Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 To assist sporting organisations to be inclusive and welcoming to migrants</td>
<td>Mar 2014-16</td>
<td>IWG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 To run a public campaign that promotes Intercultural Limerick</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>IWG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 To challenge racism and racist attitudes in all forms</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Garda Síochána</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 To advance the process of developing Limerick as an Intercultural City and Region</td>
<td>Dec 2013–15</td>
<td>Limerick City and County Council Doras Luimní</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Strategic Goals

- To raise public awareness of intercultural issues and to challenge racism in all forms where it occurs in Limerick
- To promote the inclusion of ethnic minorities across the whole social and cultural spectrum of life in Limerick and to ensure there are policies in place to respond when this fails
- To engage with the wider public on the benefits and costs of migration
- To record and respond to the needs of migrant youth and young people
- To assist school and youth services in creating greater intercultural awareness and understanding among all students
- To combat any discrimination or racism experienced by migrant youth
- To advance process of Limerick’s participation in Intercultural Cities initiative

### Strategic Outcomes

- Development of Intercultural Limerick resources and education materials
- Public campaign carried out across the different spheres of life and influence in Limerick
- Training and support provided in developing intercultural policies and in responding to racism or discriminatory behaviours and attitudes
- Wider public discourse on the opportunities and challenges arising from migration
- Connecting with schools and youth services that have a significant migrant representation
- Identification of the issues and concerns of second generation migrant
- Raising intercultural awareness in schools among all students and challenging attitudes and prejudices that discriminate against people based on their colour, creed or culture
- Providing training and assisting education and youth service providers to assist the development of intercultural policies and responding to incidents of racism

### Projected Outcomes

- Deliver intercultural awareness and anti-racism education presentations in primary and secondary schools
- Publication and dissemination of intercultural school resources Schools to run intercultural days and events that promote integration and inclusion of all students
- Staff in schools to receive intercultural training
- Increased number of schools have an intercultural policy

- Delivery of activities aimed supporting the integration of migrant youth, e.g. Migrant Youth Café
- Promotion of One World week and support of international youth work
- Migrant representation in other youth initiatives in Limerick such as Comhairle na nÓg
- Engagement of migrant youths as volunteers at sports and mass participation events

- More clubs appointing officers responsible for intercultural issues
  Intercultural officers receive training
  Increased number of clubs develop an intercultural policy

- Run a public campaign promoting Intercultural Limerick and highlighting the benefits of diversity
  Widespread dissemination of campaign material
  Engagement of general public in debate on the integration and intercultural challenge arising from the changed demographic profile of Limerick City and County

- To accurately record and investigate all reported incidents of racism which are reported to An Garda Síochána.
  To assist in promoting local integration and delivering an anti-racism message through various mediums
  Include anti-racism message in Garda Schools Programme and assist other agencies in campaigns
  Provide a third-party mechanism for reporting through iReport.ie

- Increased awareness of key elements of components of Intercultural Cities
  Final decision on local authority role in working towards Limerick becoming an Intercultural City
  Work with local media to raise intercultural awareness in the region

### Possible Strategic Partners

- Primary and Secondary Schools in Limerick
- Limerick and Clare ETB Schools
- Limerick Volunteer Centre
- Doras Luimnì
- Comhairle na nÓg
- Limerick City and County Council
- Limerick Sports Partnership
- FAI
- GAA
- JRS Ireland
- An Garda Síochána
- Limerick Sports Partnership
- All IWG members
Integration Theme 5: Supporting Communities & Active Citizenship

Intercultural Cities Theme - Arts and Sports, Leadership and Citizenship, Housing and Neighbourhoods

EU Common Basic Principle 9: ‘The participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies and measures, especially at the local level, supports their integration.’

Active Citizenship

The Report of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship (2007) contends that active citizenship implies duties as well as responsibilities and that everyone, local and migrant, has both a responsibility and a right to contribute fully to and participate in Irish society through an active and continuing engagement.

The Integration Centre has reported on the role migrants have had in re-vitalising churches and volunteer centres; in 2010 they accounted for 28% of registered volunteers. However, it highlights that migrants are not so active in sporting and resident associations. Involvement in sport and resident organisations often represents the first step towards civic and political participation.

Among the indicators of active civic and political participation by migrants in Ireland:

- Nearly half of Irish nationals are members or volunteers of sports organisations, while 27% of EU nationals and 19% of non-EU nationals are.
- Non-Irish nationals are under-represented on the electoral register: in Dublin only about 5% of registered voters are non-Irish. Previous voter registration drives led to increases but many non-Irish nationals are still not registered to vote (Integration Centre, 2013).
- Four immigrants were elected in the June 2009 local elections (0.2% of all local council members). Overall only 37 immigrant candidates actually ran for election in 2009.
- Between 2005 and 2012 more than 50,000 non-Irish nationals became Irish citizens, which granted them the right to vote in general elections if registered (IOM, 2013). Local elections in 2014 will provide an opportunity to mobilise migrants to exercise their democratic right to vote. It is important that migrants are aware of their voting rights and are registered in time.

Service providers indicated that they believe that diversity provides an opportunity for local and migrant communities to interact and integrate. In recent years, nationally and locally, there has been an increase in the number of migrant volunteers. ‘Increased mobilisation, education and the specific immigration experiences have contributed to the gradual rise in civic activism among migrants in Ireland in the last few years’ (IOM, 2013).

When consulted about supports required for migrant communities to participate more fully in civic activities in Limerick, the respondents highlighted a need for education on the culture of volunteering in Ireland: how to get involved; information on available opportunities; and the skills required.

Volunteering by migrants bring benefits both to the volunteer and the receiving organisation. For the volunteer it offers an opportunity to gain new skills, to meet people and to contribute positively to the wider community. For the receiving organisation migrant volunteers bring a new perspective to the organisation, including an understanding of ‘the way of life, beliefs and values of different cultures, leading to improvements in communication and programme design, and more culturally sensitive service delivery’ (IOM, 2013). Migrant community engagement and volunteering generates goodwill and a route to greater integration and active citizenship.
In our view, being an Active Citizen means caring about the welfare of fellow citizens, recognising that we live as members of communities and therefore depend on others in our daily lives. Active Citizens:

- Support and become involved in different types of community and voluntary activities
- Respect and listen to those with different views from their own
- Play their part in making decisions on issues that affect themselves and others, in particular by participating in the democratic process
- Respect ethnic and cultural diversity and are open to change
- Welcome new people who come to live in Ireland

Report of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007

**European Common Basic Principle 7:** 'Frequent interaction between immigrants and Member State citizens is a fundamental mechanism for integration. Shared forums, intercultural dialogue, education about immigrants and immigrant cultures, and stimulating living conditions in urban environments enhance the interactions between immigrants and Member State citizens.'

**Supporting Communities**

Migrants and their families often experience social isolation. 'Casual conversations with neighbours or parents at the school rarely happen. A number [migrant participants] stated that they do not have any Irish friends or acquaintances. Those living in the county believed that opportunities in smaller more rural areas are fewer than those open to those in the city' (Irwin, 2013).

In Limerick there are in excess of 20 migrant representative organisations. These groups have different membership size, source populations and organisational structure. Supporting and strengthening of migrant-led groups remains a priority.

A forum is required to reach out and to listen to the needs and understand the problems facing migrant communities in the region. Practical assistance may be required in responding to those needs, for example, in securing accommodation for group meetings, training and formation of community leaders and developing funding applications.

A key aim for the Integration Working Group is to ensure that the migrant perspective is heard and represented in actions and services planned for their benefit. Arising from the recent Structural Review of the IWG a need for greater migrant representation was identified. This has led to additional migrant representatives joining the IWG and contributing significantly to the development of the Integration Plan 2013-16.

There is a need to provide pathways for migrants to participate fully in the economic, social and cultural life of Limerick City and County, and to improve representation and enhance participation of migrants in key community and voluntary groups and local decision-making bodies in their areas.

The IWG Needs Analysis highlighted the need to build on past success by developing intercultural activities which further support the participation of migrant communities in local community initiatives providing a path to active citizenship and further involvement in the democratic process. Active participation of migrants in public celebrations like St Patrick’s Day and Riverfest is very important.

**Sport and Interfaith**

The role of sport in breaking down barriers and promoting integration is very valuable. Limerick Sports Partnership, the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) and the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) have been to the vanguard in assisting migrants and their families to participate in sporting activities and in developing intercultural sports events and initiatives in the region.

The Mid-West Interfaith Network promotes interfaith dialogue and seeks to create greater understanding and awareness of different faiths and beliefs. It has established itself as an independent organisation with a membership drawn from all the major faith traditions practised in the Limerick region. The Network meets monthly and runs regular events.

References:

### Integration Theme: Supporting Communities & Active Citizenship

#### Integrating Limerick 2010-12 Achievements
- Organised Limerick Sixes intercultural sports festival annually
- Strong migrant participation each year in St. Patrick’s Day parade
- Weeklong calendar of integration events in Limerick City and County to mark inaugural Intercultural Week
- Very successful and well attended Africa Day celebrations
- A large number of intercultural events and activities run in the Hunt Museum
- Development of the Mid West Interfaith Network
- Integration one of the issues covered in the *Living with Dignity* Seminar held in Adare

#### Key Integration Challenges in Limerick
- Need to integrate migrant public events into Limerick City and County planning
- Integration should occur in a social context where members of both local and migrant communities can meet and interact.
- Enabling active participation for migrants in the economic, social, cultural, economic and political life of Limerick as a key measure of integration
- Need to support interfaith dialogue and promote greater understanding and awareness of diverse faith traditions
- Greater harnessing sport as an important bridge between communities, local and migrant

#### Proposed Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Actions</th>
<th>Future Timeframe</th>
<th>Lead Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 To provide routes for migrants to participate in local communities through increased access to community groups and organisations</td>
<td>Dec 2013–15</td>
<td>IWG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 To promote the role of volunteering as a starting point for engaging with and participating in local community activities</td>
<td>Dec 2013–15</td>
<td>Limerick Volunteer Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 To increase participation by migrants in local community initiatives and key decision-making bodies</td>
<td>Mar 2014–16</td>
<td>Doras Luimní</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 To celebrate the contribution that diverse communities can make to Limerick</td>
<td>Dec 2013–14</td>
<td>Limerick City and County Council Migrant Representative Organisations Midwest Interfaith Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 To promote integration through sport</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>JRS Ireland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Strategic Goals

- To provide opportunities for social integration by ensuring strong migrant representation in major public celebrations
- To promote integration and support communities through arts, sports and interfaith initiatives
- To provide pathways for migrants to participate fully in the economic, social and cultural life of Limerick City and County and to improve representation and enhance participation of migrants in community and voluntary activities in their local areas

## Strategic Outcomes

- Run a number of cultural and sporting events that will provide an opportunity for integration on the ground
- Increase the participation of migrant communities in large public events and celebrations
- To increase the number of migrant volunteers and volunteering opportunity
- To provide training and support for migrants seeking to engage more actively in their communities
- To identify key decision-making bodies through a mapping exercise
- To work with organisations and key decision-making bodies to develop inclusive policies leading to the inclusion of migrant representatives in decision-making bodies

## Projected Outcomes

- Identification by IWG member organisations of local community groups with which they interact
- Development and implementation of plan which will identify mechanisms by which migrants can become members of these groups
- Greater awareness amongst the migrant population as to the routes to participation in these bodies
- To provide training and support for migrants seeking to engage more actively in their communities
- Greater awareness amongst the migrant population as to the routes to participation in these bodies
- Encourage links between informal English language programmes and volunteering
- Engagement of migrant youth as volunteers at community and sporting events
- Identification of key decision-making bodies through a mapping exercise
- Increase number of migrants registered to vote through voter registration drive
- Co-ordinating with local organisations and businesses to ensure the agreement and update of equality and diversity policies
- Strong migrant representation in major local celebrations such as St Patrick’s Day Parades, RiverFest, Irish Coffee Festival (Foynes)
- Activities organised highlighting the contribution diverse communities make to Limerick, including celebration of Africa Day and Migrant Community Festivals
- Hold events marking UN Days including International Anti-Racism Day (Mar 21), World Refugee Day (June 20) and International Day of Solidarity with Migrant Workers (December 18)
- Support and active participation of migrants in 2014 events for Limerick as a City of Culture
- Expansion of Midwest Interfaith Network and increased support for interfaith events and activities
- Run annual intercultural sports festival reaching out to local and migrant communities in Limerick
- Increased migrant participation in public sporting events such as the Great Limerick Run, Women’s Mini-Marathon, Bike Week and National Play Day
- Increased migrant participation in training and education specific to sports coaching and club governance as a volunteer

## Possible Strategic Partners

- All IWG Members
- Migrant Representative Organisations

- West Limerick Resources
- Doras Luimní
- Limerick Youth Service
- Limerick Sports Partnership
- JRS Ireland
- University of Limerick (PVA)
- Migrant Representative Organisations

- Limerick City and County Council
- Migrant Representative Organisations

- All IWG Members
- Irish Aid
- Limerick City and County Council (Arts Officers)
- Hunt Museum
- Public Libraries
- City Gallery

- Limerick Sports Partnership
- FAI
- Doras Luimní
- Crescent College Comprehensive
- Limerick City and County Council
- Migrant Representative Organisations
Employment

Employment is central to the process of integration and social inclusion. It facilitates financial independence and enables migrants to contribute economically to society. ‘Job loss can be associated with poverty, psychological distress and more general social exclusion. Through employment, legal residents can also build networks, develop their language skills and increase participation in society’ (ESRI, 2013).

In 2012 non-Irish nationals accounted for 14.7 per cent of the total adult population, 14.8 per cent of total employment and 18.4 per cent of total unemployment. ‘These figures suggest that immigrants are particularly vulnerable during prolonged economic downturns, and it is clear that the economic crisis has affected immigrants in the labour market more severely (Barrett and Kelly, 2012).

The Annual Monitoring Report on Integration 2012 highlights the fact that in the last four years employment among non-Irish nationals fell by 23 per cent, compared with a fall of 13 per cent for Irish nationals. In 2008, 6.6 per cent of non-Irish nationals were unemployed; by 2012, this figure had risen to 18.4 per cent. Unemployment among Irish nationals rose to 14.4 per cent in 2012.

Using 2011 Census data to consider unemployment by nationality, it can be observed that unemployment rates are similar among Irish nationals and citizens of countries from the Asian and American continents. However, Quarterly Household National Survey data shows that Africans and EU Accession State nationals suffered higher unemployment rates than those from Old EU states, who relatively were shielded from recession-related unemployment (ESRI, 2013).

Since the start of the economic crisis high levels of unemployment have persisted locally in Limerick. Non-Irish nationals mirror national trends in experiencing very high levels of unemployment, especially those previously employed in the hospitality and construction sectors.

The 2011 Census statistics for Limerick show the labour force participation rate is higher for members of the non-Irish national community at 73.2% compared to 58.6% for the overall population. At 25.3%, the unemployment rate for members of the non-Irish national community is also higher than that of the overall population at 20.7% A key employment challenge in Limerick involves providing support to the increasing number of migrants who have become unemployed during the recession.
In the IWG Needs Analysis a number of service providers noted that employment was the primary motivation for some migrants for learning to speak English. The 2008 Horwath Review of English Language Provision stressed that many migrants were not maximizing their employment potential because of their low standard of English.

With the economic downturn PAUL Partnership, West Limerick Resources and Ballyhoura Development found a greater number of migrants attending Jobs Clubs and accessing employment services and supports. In the Integration Plan 2010-12 Progress Reports it was noted that lack of language skills inhibits the capacity of migrants to take advantage of re-training opportunities and acts as a barrier to further employment. The consultation process highlighted key issues for migrants in this area as recognition of qualifications and the greater understanding of their employment (Irwin, 2013).

In addition employers interviewed highlighted the need to understand better the rights of migrant workers.

The high unemployment rate among migrants demonstrates a need for labour market initiatives specifically targeted at the migrant population. Ethnic entrepreneurship has long been identified as a key area with potential for growth and development. A number of migrants have articulated a desire ‘to be part of the solution’ to this economic crisis as entrepreneurs. They need support and advice to help them create viable businesses which in time will hopefully generate jobs and employment.

An Examination of Ethnic Entrepreneurship in the Mid-West, conducted by Doras Luimní in 2012 highlighted a number of barriers to the development of ethnic entrepreneurship in the region (Birdthistle, 2012). The study also demonstrates potential opportunities for encouraging ethnic entrepreneurship such as the provision of clear information targeted at migrants on starting a business, on training programmes and on business and employment law.

### References:

2. Birdthistle. N., (2012), An Examination of Ethnic Entrepreneurship in Mid-West, Limerick: Doras Luimní
### Integrating Limerick 2010-12 Achievements

- Seminars for ‘Immigrant Jobseekers’ were held
- Publication of *Barriers to the Labour Market for Refugees and Persons with Leave to Remain*
- Publication of research on ethnic entrepreneurship
- ‘Ethnic Entrepreneurs’ and ‘Start your own Business’ courses were delivered to migrants
- One-to-one supports were delivered to migrants seeking employment or considering potential self-employment ideas
- ‘Business-to-Business for Ethnic Entrepreneurs’ seminars held

### Key Integration Challenges in Limerick

- Poor or limited English language abilities as a barrier to employment
- Migrants disproportionately affected by the recession with a higher rate of unemployment than the rest of the population
- Challenges for migrants getting their professional qualifications recognised
- A need for greater understanding of the rights of migrants in employment
- The need to promote volunteering in migrant communities as a pathway to employment
- Raising awareness among migrant jobseekers of labour activation initiatives, including Work Placement Programmes and the Job Bridge Internship Scheme

### Proposed Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Actions</th>
<th>Future Timeframe</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 To establish a Migrant Employment and Entrepreneurship Working Group, bringing together the key stakeholders in the Limerick region to develop a plan of action to stimulate increased migrant employment</td>
<td>Dec 2013–15</td>
<td>IWG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 To link the Migrant Employment and Entrepreneurship Working Group and the ESOL Partnership to address English language needs of migrants who are seeking employment</td>
<td>Dec 2013–15</td>
<td>ESOL Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 To promote and raise awareness of volunteering as a route for building transferable employment skills</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Limerick Volunteer Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 To provide job-seeking and career guidance supports to immigrant communities</td>
<td>Mar 2014–16</td>
<td>IWG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 To develop a project to assist migrant entrepreneurs in establishing businesses and accessing supports</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Doras Lumní</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Strategic Goals

- To create a Migrant Employment and Entrepreneurship Working Group which will co-ordinate strategic responses to migrant employment needs
- To liaise with the ESOL Partnership to develop specialised English language programmes that meet needs of employers
- To identify and remove the barriers to migrant entrepreneurship by providing clear information on access to supports

### Strategic Outcomes

- Strategic working group established to provide a forum to link employers and migrant groups on employment related issues
- A clear and measurable plan of action to stimulate increased migrant employment developed by the strategic working group
- More effective networking taking place between migrant communities and employment stakeholders in Limerick area
- Gaps that exist in the skillset of unemployed migrants and needs of employers, especially in relation to language competency, are identified and addressed
- Active support of migrant entrepreneurship to create businesses and generate employment

### Projected Outcomes

- Establishment of Migrant Employment and Entrepreneurship Working Group (MEEWG)
- Regular meetings to develop and implement a strategy for increasing employment of migrants and participation in labour activation schemes
- Links developed and networking opportunities created with local employers and businesses to highlight the benefits of a diverse workforce

### Possible Strategic Partners

- DSP – Employment Services
- Limerick Chamber
- Jobs Clubs (PAUL Partnership, WLR, Ballyhoura Development)
- Limerick City and County Council (Local Enterprise Office)
- Doras Lumní
- DSP – Employment Services
- Limerick Chamber
- Jobs Clubs (PAUL Partnership, WLR, Ballyhoura Development)
- Limerick Learning Region Group
- Doras Lumní
- Jobs Clubs (PAUL Partnership, WLR, Ballyhoura Development)
- Local Employment Service
- Limerick Youth Service
- Provision of one-to-one support for career development, CV preparation for migrant job seekers
- Information provision on all educational and income supports available to unemployed migrant workers
- Information on Work Experience Initiatives, including opportunities available on Work Placement Programmes and Job Bridge Internship Schemes, is widely disseminated to migrant jobseekers and communities
- Publication and wide distribution of *Ireland: Your Guide to a New Beginning*, containing information and advice on living and working in Ireland
- Greater recognition of qualifications and experience gained in migrant workers’ countries of origin
- Training and support delivered to employers, which enhances their understanding of the rights and entitlements of migrants in employment

### Support received for the further development of an Ethnic Entrepreneur Network

- DSP Employment Services
- Limerick Chamber
- Ballyhoura Development
- West Limerick Resources
**Asylum Seekers:** A person who seeks to be recognised as a refugee by Ireland’s Department of Justice, Equality and Defence under the 1951 Geneva Convention.

**Direct Provision:** Support system for asylum-seekers where all accommodation costs, together with the cost of meals and snacks, heat, light, laundry, and maintenance are paid directly by the State. Asylum seekers in receipt of direct provision do not have a right to work and are currently in receipt of an allowance of €19.10 per adult and €9.60 per child per week.

**Discrimination:** Unfair treatment of a person or group based on prejudice, bias, favouritism, bigotry, intolerance.

**Ethnicity:** Shared characteristics amongst a group of individuals based on common geography, culture, language, religion, traditions and ancestry which contribute to a person’s identity. Ethnic groups are not easy to define people can, and usually do, come from a number of different ethnic groups.

**Integration:** Integration is a long-term multidimensional and dynamic process starting from the moment of arrival in Limerick. It aims at ensuring respect for diversity and equal opportunities for the participation of all residents of Limerick irrespective of cultural or religious background, age, gender, disability or nationality. Integration takes place through the interaction of people and implies mutual understanding as well as shared rights and responsibility.

**Migrant Worker:** A person from another country who lives and works in Ireland and who is legally allowed to do so.

**Nationality:** The status of belonging to a particular nation by birth, origin or naturalisation.

**Racism:** A particular form of exclusion faced by minority ethnic groups based on the false belief that some ‘races’ are inherently superior to others because of their skin colour, nationality, ethnic or cultural background.

**Refugee:** A person who has been granted the legal right to stay in Ireland by the Department of Justice, Equality and Defence because they or their family would face serious threat if they returned to their own country.

**Trafficking:** Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, or of the abuse of power, for the purpose of sexual exploitation or forced labour.
List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CIB</td>
<td>Citizens Information Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIS</td>
<td>Citizens Information Services</td>
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<td>DSP</td>
<td>Department of Social Protection</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESOL</td>
<td>English for Speakers of Other Languages</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESRI</td>
<td>Economic and Social Research Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>ETB</td>
<td>Education and Training Board</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>HSE</td>
<td>Health Service Executive</td>
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<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organisation for Migration</td>
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<td>IWG</td>
<td>Integration Working Group</td>
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<td>JRS</td>
<td>Jesuit Refugee Service</td>
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<td>MRCI</td>
<td>Migrant Rights Centre Ireland</td>
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<td>PVA</td>
<td>President’s Volunteer Award</td>
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<td>SIM</td>
<td>Social Inclusion Measures</td>
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<tr>
<td>UL</td>
<td>University of Limerick</td>
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<tr>
<td>WLR</td>
<td>West Limerick Resources</td>
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