



nasc

2017

Impact Report



January - December 2017

A Word from Our CEO

Fiona Finn, Chief Executive Officer

It is with great pride and pleasure that I introduce Nasc's Impact Report for 2017. This past year our work has gone from strength to strength and we have achieved huge advances towards our ultimate goal of creating an inclusive society based on the principles of human rights, social justice and equality. Our work was delivered amidst a worsening humanitarian crisis which this year saw 68.5 million people forcibly displaced worldwide.

Throughout 2017 Nasc successfully worked to ensure that Ireland took a leading role in responding to the crisis through our successful Safe Passage campaign. This campaign called for the establishment of safe and legal pathways for refugees and their families to access safety on our shores through Refugee Community Sponsorship and the Introduction of Humanitarian Visas. We were therefore delighted when the Government announced the formal introduction of both a Community Sponsorship Programme and a Humanitarian Visa Programme. We look forward to working with communities, the Department of Justice and Equality, and our NGO and INGO partners to fully implement these programmes in 2018 and ensure that Ireland becomes a beacon of hope in an ever-increasing global climate of hostility towards refugees and their families.

Our Safe Passage campaign also brought us into contact with an incredible individual, Dermot Costello, from Wicklow. Dermot and other members of his community set up Wicklow Syria Appeal to identify innovative ways to help Syrians who were suffering from the conflict. We spent much of 2017 working closely with Dermot and Wicklow Syria Appeal to deliver Ireland's first ever pilot refugee community sponsorship project. This work was overshadowed by the untimely death of the community leader Dermot Costello who sadly passed way in early 2018. I would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest condolences to his wife Jess and his children Kate and Alexander. Dermot leaves a proud legacy and will ultimately be responsible for bringing a Syrian family to safety in Ireland.

In 2017 our legal service assisted 1,318 people delivering 2,542 interventions. As always family reunification featured strongly – we assisted 57 families to reunite in Ireland. Working with our partner NGOs and the Civil

Throughout 2017 Nasc successfully worked to ensure that Ireland took a leading role in responding to the crisis through our successful Safe Passage campaign.

Engagement Group of Senators we tackled the erosion of refugees' rights to family reunification by attaining cross party support for the Family Reunification Amendment Bill 2017. This Bill seeks to restore the rights of refugees to reunite

Nasc Board

Othman Al Dawamenah
(Chairperson)

Michael Quinlan (Secretary)

Hamzeh Odeh

Brenda Cooper

Dr. Liam Thornton

Dr. Fiona Donson

with extended family members such as elderly parents and unmarried children over the age of 18. This Bill successfully passed all stages of the Seanad and we look forward to it coming before the Dáil in 2018.

Without our incredible team of staff, volunteers, interns and the Nasc Board, none of this would be possible. It is an honour and a privilege to work with such an incredibly dedicated and determined group of people. You are the ones who make all our work and significant achievements possible. Thank you to all the Nasc clients and those who used our service and all the agencies that we worked with throughout 2017.

Special thanks to all our funders, without whom none of our work would be possible. I would like in particular to thank the Tomar Trust, the HSE, Tusla, the Ireland Funds, St. Stephens Green Trust, Cork City Council, AMRI and the EU Funds Unit for their continued and ongoing support.

I would like to invite you to read our 2017 Impact Report which outlines our work and significant achievements.

Nasc Staff

Fiona Finn, CEO

Fiona Hurley, Legal Services Manager

Majo Rivas, Legal Information Officer

Mark Durning, Legal Information Officer

Jennifer DeWan, Campaigns & Communications Manager

Maria Bateson, Campaigns & Communications Intern

Susan Mackey, Connect Project Officer

Emily Cunniffe, Pathways to Employment Project Coordinator

Fiona Ní Leime, Financial Administrator

Raymond Looney, Reception

Djamal Kenouche, Reception

John Usonobon, Maintenance Officer



Update from our Legal Service

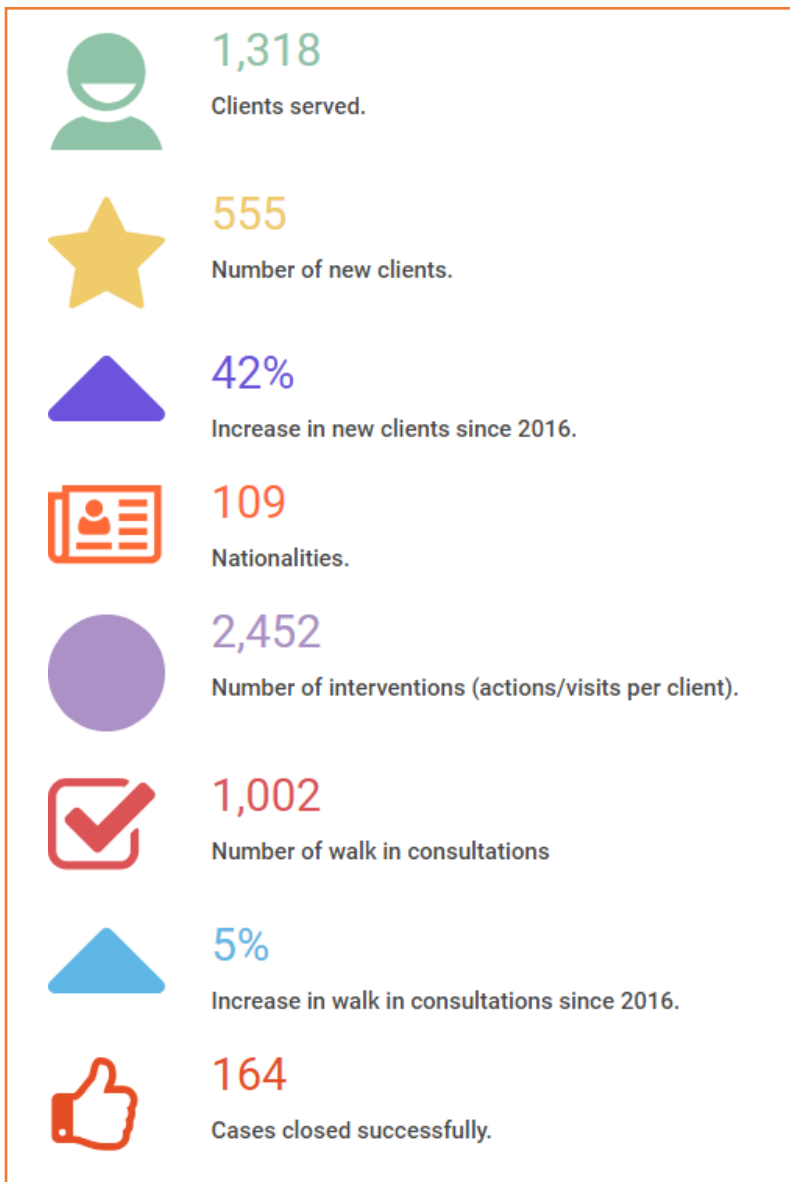
2017 was a very positive year for Nasc’s legal service. There were two key funding developments that allowed the service to significantly increase its capacity to deliver high quality information, advice and advocacy to migrants and reverse the cuts that had been made to capacity in 2016. Nasc’s legal service was delighted to receive support from European Commission through the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund 2014 – 2020 (AMIF) in April 2017. The ‘Integrating Cork’ project is co-financed by the European Commission under the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund 2014 – 2020 and is supported by the Department of Justice and Equality and co-funded by Cork City Council Social Inclusion. We were also delighted to receive funding for a second Legal Service project ‘Nasc Immigrant Integration Initiative’. This project is funded through the National Integration Funding Programme and is supported by the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration and the Department of Justice and Equality.

This project enabled Nasc to recruit a third staff member to the Legal Team and our newest Legal Information Officer, Mark J. Durning joined Fiona Hurley and Majo Rivas as part of the Nasc legal clinic staff team in December 2017.

As always Nasc’s legal officers were ably assisted by our wonderful interns and volunteers at Nasc. We would like to take the opportunity to thank the interns and volunteers who contributed so much to our service in 2017, namely Maura Kavanagh, David Rodgers, Noemi Magugliani, Emily Cunniffe, Natalia McDonald and Deirdre O’ Grady (interns) as well as Thea Pock, Salam Salman, Hajer Al Manea and Juliana Fayad (volunteers).

Key Areas of Work

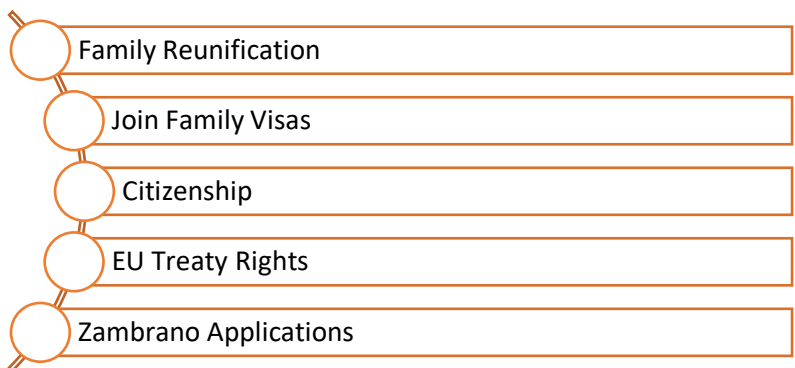
Family reunification continued to be a major reason (347 consultations) for visiting the clinics. 43 refugee/subsidiary protection families were granted family reunification and Nasc provided assistance with travel arrangements including obtaining travel documents and linking in with the Irish Red Cross



Restoring Family Links Unit and the UNHCR Ireland. Nasc successfully reunited 14 other families who had an Irish citizen or Irish family member resident in Ireland from counties including Venezuela, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Ethiopia, United Arab Emirates, Palestine and Cameroon. Nasc also saw an increase in the numbers of persons presenting with issues regarding EU Treaty Rights Residence Permits. Nasc increased our outreach presence in all the direct provision centres in Cork city and county and provided multiple information sessions at each of the five centres over the course of the year, particularly in relation to the new International Protection Questionnaire and around the Ombudsman and Ombudsman for Children taking complaints.

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Top Visit Reasons



Key Networks

Nasc continued to provide support to domestic violence agencies, refuges, homeless services, social workers, community organisations and citizens information centres with support and assistance in working with their clients of a migrant or ethnic minority background. The Legal Clinics participated in the Cork Advisory Group for the Tusla-commissioned Needs Analysis Project on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence. The Domestic Sexual and Gender Based Violence (DSGBV) services programme of Tusla undertook a Needs Analysis Project (NAP) with a view to evidencing need in a number of geographical/service areas within its remit. The Cork city and county DSGBV Needs Analysis field work was carried out between June and November

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2017. 351 people (plus 4 email submissions) across DV and SV agencies, service providers and service users took part in the Cork NAP and a variety of research methods were utilised to engage participants and gather data. The report was published in 2018.

Nasc's legal service remained a part of key national networks including the Immigration Information Network hosted by the INIS (Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Network) and the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB). Nasc continued to be an active participant in meetings of the European Migration Network and international networks including the European Resettlement Network and PICUM.



43

Refugee / subsidiary protection families reunited.



14

Clients successfully reunited with family members through visa applications.

Update from our Campaigns & Communications Team

2017 was a very successful year for Nasc from a campaigning and communications perspective. The Campaigns and Communications team is made up of the Campaigns and Communications Manager Jennifer DeWan and the Campaigns and Communications Intern Maria Bateson, who were regularly supported by a host of incredible volunteers and students. Special thanks to Sarah Ben Smida, Ivan Coughlan, Darcy Howard, and Honor Tuohy.

In 2017, we worked closely with a range of NGOs, community groups, statutory agencies, civil servants, politicians and policymakers in calling for reforms in such areas as the refugee crisis; the asylum process and direct provision; family reunification; integration; and migrant political participation.

Nasc's Response to the Refugee Crisis

Safe Passage

As the global humanitarian crisis continued to escalate in 2017, Nasc launched a national campaign – Safe Passage – to call on the Irish government to provide complementary pathways for people to safely come to Ireland and seek protection. This included a call to re-introduce a humanitarian admission scheme to reunite families fleeing conflict – an ask which became much more necessary with the commencement of the International Protection Act 2015, which restricted refugees' rights to family reunification. Safe Passage also called for the introduction of community sponsorship, to give Irish communities the opportunity to support and welcome refugee families into communities throughout Ireland.

Key campaign moments included inclusion of Safe Passage in the Justice Committee's [Report on Asylum, Immigration and the Refugee Crisis](#) which was published in February 2017. Also, the launch of our video "Ibrahim" which documented one man's journey to bring his family to Ireland – you can watch the video [here](#). We also hosted a series of events for World Refugee Week 2017 to raise awareness of our Safe passage campaign. We also worked closely with a strong volunteer group who helped us raise awareness, lobby TDs and Senators, and organise events.



Towards the end of 2017, the Government announced not only would it be introducing a new family-linked humanitarian admission programme, but they would also be developing a community sponsorship programme. A very significant win for refugees and their families, for Nasc and for all of our supporters and friends.

Family Reunification

In addition to our Safe Passage campaign calling for a humanitarian admission programme, we also worked closely with Senators in the Civil Engagement Group and partner NGOs Irish Refugee Council and Oxfam Ireland to progress the Family Reunification Amendment Bill 2017 through the Seanad. This Bill



seeks to rectify the damage caused to refugee family reunification rights under the International Protection Act, 2015. It successfully passed all stages of the Seanad and we look forward to it coming before the Dáil in 2018.

Community Sponsorship

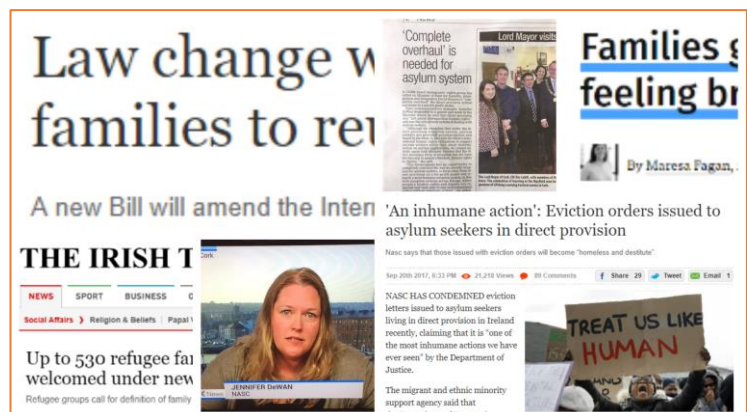
Through our national Safe Passage campaign, Nasc was contacted by Dermot Costello, who had established a group in Wicklow – Wicklow Syria Appeal – who were eager to do something to help Syrians who were suffering as a result of the civil war. Together, Nasc and Wicklow Syria

Appeal worked throughout 2017 to develop the first community sponsorship project in Ireland – we identified a refugee family through family reunification and Wicklow Syria Appeal have worked tirelessly throughout the year to raise funds, to identify and repair a suitable house, to raise awareness in their community – all in preparation for the arrival of a Syrian refugee family in 2018. This project is the first of its kind in Ireland and has become the model for the roll out of a national Community Sponsorship Programme in 2018.

Asylum System & Direct Provision

Nasc has continued to campaign for improve the protection process, calling for improved decision making and an end to long processing times. We have continued to push for the full implementation of the 173 recommendations in the Report of the Working Group on the Protection Process and Direct Provision (the “McMahon Report”), and in this vein conducted an extensive audit of the implementation process which we published in late 2017. This audit showed that the implementation process has been slow and ad hoc; there is only evidence of 51% implementation of the recommendations, as opposed to the Government’s claim of 98%.

Significant improvements were made in the direct provision system throughout 2017. The Ombudsman and the Ombudsman for Children finally began taking complaints from residents, and we worked closely with the Ombudsman’s office on this transition. Many centres made improvements to living conditions including access to communal kitchens and shops for provisions. The Supreme Court ruled the ban on accessing the labour market unconstitutional, which resulted in the Minister for Justice announcing that Ireland would opt in to the EU Reception Conditions Directive, something Nasc had



long called for. Nasc continued to engage with RIA in the development of national standards for direct provision, and also on the issue of threatened evictions.

Migrant Political Participation



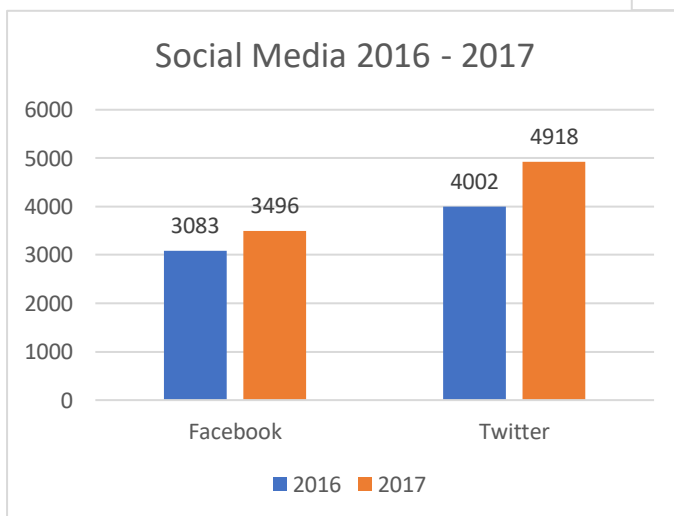
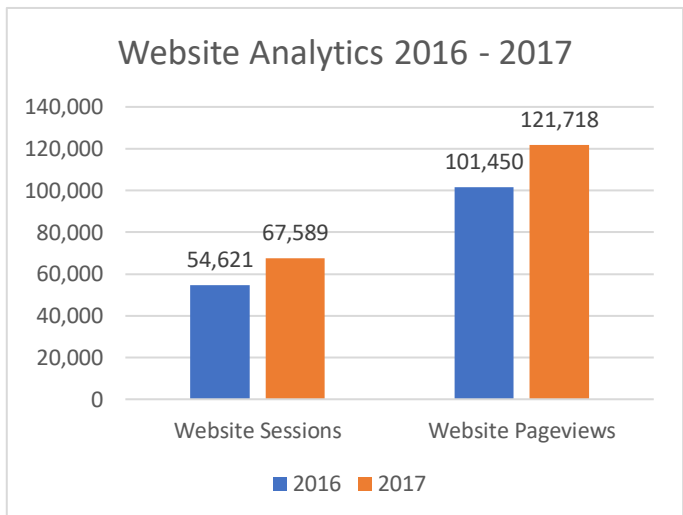
Throughout 2017, Nasc continued to engage in an EU and Open Society funded project to promote migrant political participation throughout the country. We hosted two “one stop shop” events – one in Midleton and one in Nasc for the Roma community - where organisations from throughout the region could give out information and support migrants in participating in public life. In addition, we hosted stalls at Cork Africa Day and at Limerick’s Intercultural Week to raise awareness about the project. The Participate! project has now ended, however Nasc continues to engage with local and

national organisations to promote migrant political participation.

Communications

Nasc’s media presence continues to remain strong and increase the profile of the organisation and showcasing our work in national and local media and through social media.

We continue to engage with our followers,



supporters, service users and other interested parties through a strong website and social media presence

Our media work grew exponentially this year, with over 16 press releases issued to national and local broadcast and print media outlets. We had 59 media spots in 2017, approximately 5 per month, which is a 127% increase from 2016.

Nasc had a 127% increase in media engagement in 2017.

Update from Our Interns

As Campaigns and Communications Intern at Nasc, I benefitted from the diversity of experiences included in the role. Prior to this internship, my undergraduate degree in History of Art and Architectural History had taught me communication and analytical skills through an entirely different medium; while ancillary studies in Social Anthropology and Psychology, as well as extra-curricular roles in both university and non-university bodies, first led me to consider working in the NGO sector.

The Campaigns and Communications Internship in Nasc was an ideal stepping-stone between theory and practice. My role, which included design work, report writing and email- and social media-based communication, allowed me to acquire more specific knowledge around both legislation and policy; and NGO campaign strategies.

My experience at Nasc has been an invaluable insight into an NGO working directly with the community.

The guidance of Jennifer DeWan (Campaigns and Communications Manager at Nasc), alongside the other highly knowledgeable team members, has been essential to navigating the wide

range of campaigns and events that Nasc coordinated this year. My experience at Nasc has been an invaluable insight into an NGO working directly with the community, at a local level. Having completed this internship, I am determined to continue to work in the field of human rights, and am encouraged to seek out similarly minded organisations working in both an Irish and European context.

Maria Bateson, Campaigns and Communications Intern

Since joining Nasc, the experience I have gained has been invaluable. Having just completed my undergraduate in Law International, with a keen interest in human rights and immigration law, applying for the Nasc internship seemed like a natural next step.

Every day in Nasc presents a new experience, new challenge and new case. Through my work as a legal intern, I have vastly increased my knowledge of migrant and refugee's rights. Being a member of the legal team has given me the opportunity to develop an expansive range of skills which will not only benefit my future in the legal profession but also my everyday life.

It is a privilege to work closely with our clients and to assist them in improving their lives here in Ireland.

Fiona, Majo and Mark's dedication, compassion and patience enabled my personal and professional growth. Under their direction, my proficiency in putting theory into practise has flourished. It is a privilege to work closely with our clients and to assist them in improving their lives here in Ireland. Nasc is an outstanding organisation. The rewarding nature of the work and legal internship make it an honour to be a part of Nasc.

Ellen McCarthy, Legal Intern

Connect Project

The Connect project provides a specialised advice and advocacy support service for young people aged 14-23 years, with a priority focus on prevention for young people in Direct Provision and specialised support for young people in or exiting Care. This project is supported by Tusla, Child and Family Agency, St Stephens Green Trust and the Association of Leaders of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland (AMRI). The service combines social work and legal support to ensure that the needs of asylum seeking and refugee young people are being responded to in full.

Our main activities include:

- a) Information and practical support on access to financial assistance, accommodation, education and employment.
- b) Strengthened links to community integration, wellbeing and mental health supports.
- c) Support for young people to overcome any immigration-related or language barriers.
- d) Information and support with the asylum process and living in Direct Provision.

Over the last eight months this part-time project has provided 105 interventions in total to 24 young people and their families.

Vulnerable refugee children and young people face a complexity of issues including social isolation, language barriers, mental health issues and immigration-related barriers. This can place them at greater risk of abuse, poverty and exploitation. As stated in

Better Outcomes Brighter Futures, our national youth policy (2014-2020), it can also impede their educational and health outcomes.

This is a relationship-based, collaborative project based on evidence informed approaches from Nasc's research and our experience of providing front-line services to migrants for over seventeen years. We incorporate the voices and feedback from service users to continually improve this service. Additionally, the project works to support the capacity of social work and community work professionals to respond to the needs of migrant young people and families. This is carried out through the provision of information and the development of training workshops is currently underway in collaboration with young people.

Over the last eight months this part-time project has provided 105 interventions in total to 24 young people and their families. These interventions ranged from support for victims of domestic abuse to enabling access to education and work for asylum seekers. Successful outcomes to date have included secured immigration status for young people,



greater access to education, employment and social protection, safe and secure accommodation, enhanced mental health and wellbeing, and increased participation in social and community life.

In June 2018 we were delighted to be successfully awarded funding from the QCBI Innovation Fund, an initiative developed by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. This will enable us to scale and grow the Connect project, deliver the service on a full-time basis and provide additional resources for young people in need.

Pathways to Employment Project

The Gateway to Employment project seeks to assist in equalising the basis on which refugee women access and participate in the labour market and Irish life. We particularly seek to work with isolated women from new communities who often encounter difficulties with inclusion, integration, and accessing services and spaces in Cork.

The project includes the provision of an intensive English course, computer classes, personal mentoring, and supports in pursuing further education, volunteering opportunities and/or employment. A total of 25 women have actively participated in the course thus far.

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In addition to the course, individual mentoring sessions are run with the majority of the women attending the course. This mentoring has included developing individual action plans,

confidence building, assistance in applying to Further Education Colleges, the planning of a cookbook project, and assistance with applications for jobs.

Another part of this project is opening up spaces within Cork through group trips. The first trip was to the Cork City Library where the women filled out forms to apply for a library card and were shown around the library. The second trip was to the Glucksman Gallery at University College Cork (UCC) where we were given a tour of the gallery and met by representative from UCC and the Cork City of Sanctuary movement for a post-tour conversation.

We have also held a number of workshops run by guest lecturers centred around the interests and requests of the group. These workshops have included a visit from the HSE in which a local public health nurse and the community support worker gave information on navigating the healthcare system in Ireland. This workshop also allowed the women to express the difficulties they had faced in accessing healthcare services. Another workshop was held on driving licenses and a local driving instructor came in to give advice on taking the test and the procedure behind applying for a license.

After the completion of the project, many of the women plan to go on to further education studies, jobs, or self-directed projects. The course has thus far been, more than anything, an important social space and is primarily directed by the interests and requests of the women attending.



Nasc's 2017 Impact Report is dedicated to the memory of Dermot Costello (1968-2018), founder of Wicklow Syria Appeal.