

Impact Report 2019

Nasc, the Irish word for 'link',
empowers migrants to realise
and fulfil their rights.



Nasc

Migrant & Refugee Rights



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Dr Fiona Donson Chairperson

This is my first year as Chair of the Board of Nasc having taken over in 2019 from Othman Al Dawamenah and I would like to start by thanking him for all his great work with Nasc over the last few years.

Nasc's Impact Report 2019 shows yet again that the organisation continues to progress, developing new areas of expertise and work, and with ever growing impact and strengthened reputation. 2019 saw the publication of a new and ambitious strategic plan for the organisation, crafted by the whole of the Nasc family (staff and board). The plan embeds the commitment to realise the rights of all migrants and refugees in Ireland through the organisations range of services and advocacy work. Indeed, Nasc's commitment to an expanded role is clear in the Report with the range of activities running from the core delivery of legal services (supporting 1105 individuals in 2019) through to its innovative programmes focusing on integration. Specific projects continue to have a significant positive impact on the lives of migrants and refugees in Cork such as the Connect Project working with vulnerable children and young people from a migrant background, and the Gateway Project providing employment supports to refugee women are now vital to Nasc's work. In addition, Nasc has forged a role as the leading organisation implementing community sponsorship in Ireland which has resulted in a significant expansion to the work in 2019 involving 8 communities.

These projects, delivered by a small but dedicated team, are supplemented by Nasc's advocacy work which is rooted in bringing a strong, measured and credible voice both locally here in Cork and nationally for positive effective change to our immigration, protection and reception systems. Highlighting issues such as direct provision and international protection, family reunification and focusing on essential community engagement Nasc can be proud of its influential advocacy work.

As always, none of the positive developments and interventions carried out by Nasc would have been possible without the dedication of the staff team. 2019 saw changes in staff with the departure of Jennifer De Wan from policy and communications who was replaced by Fiona Hurley. She in turn was replaced by Julie O'Leary at legal services. However, while old friends departed and new ones arrived, the work continued smoothly. The team is supplemented by volunteers and interns whose inputs are provided with energy and dedication and who play a vital role in Nasc's overall work.

The Board of Nasc are in many ways privileged to oversee the day to day activities, but they themselves bring important skills and enthusiasm that are essential in helping the organisation achieve its ambitious goals. I'd like to extend my warmest thanks for their years of service to outgoing board members Hamzeh Odeh and Michael Quinlan. Indeed, all of the Nasc team bring skill, dedication and compassion to all their work and the amazing results that are achieved through the range of projects are testament to their abilities and loyalty.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our funders without whom none of this work would have been possible. In particular our long-standing supporters The Tomar Trust, HSE, Musgraves, Tusla, Saint Stephens Green Trust, the Department of Justice and Equality, the European Commission through the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund 2014-2020, Pobal, The Ireland Funds, The Community Foundation of Ireland, Cork City Council and the EU Funds Unit. In addition, we need to thank all our individual donors, who help to keep our work going.

2019 was an important year of renewal: a new strategic plan and a new office space provided opportunities for positive development. Throughout these changes Nasc have shown the strengthen and commitment to grow and deepen its work in protecting the rights of our migrant and ethnic minority communities.

Nasc Board of Trustees 2019

Dr. Fiona Donson: Chairperson
Brenda Cooper
John Dennehy
Dr. Amanullah De Sondy
Sheila McGovern
Michael Quinlan
Hamzeh Odeh
Dr. Liam Thornton



I am very proud to introduce the Nasc 2019 Impact Report which highlights our key achievements across all areas of our work. Nasc is a dynamic organisation – one that strives to evolve, develop and to respond to the changing needs of the communities we work with and to deepen our impact on both an individual and a systemic level. Our work this year is a clear reflection of this ethos.

This year we developed and launched our 3-year strategic plan which sets out a clear roadmap to realise the rights of all migrants and refugees within Irish society. We officially opened our new premises right in the heart of the city and we are very grateful to the Bishop of Cork and Ross, Bishop Fintan Gavin, for the use of this iconic Cork building. We launched our new logo and website. Our website now offers mobile and tablet friendly information on a range of important immigration and asylum related issues, and importantly, it also offers self-advocacy tools like template letters and how-to guides to support people nationally and locally to navigate important applications like citizenship or visa applications. I would like to thank all the clients who agreed to be photographed for the website, giving it real warmth, compassion and heart making it a true reflection of who we are as an organisation.

Legal Service

In 2019 demand for our services remained as strong as ever. Our Legal Service worked with 1105 people, delivering 4181 interventions across a range of critical immigration and protection related issues. Once again Family Unity remained the main issue that people came to Nasc for assistance with 549 consultations. We continue to be very proud of our work on Family Reunification, however, this year many families felt the real impact of the erosion of their rights to family reunification under the International Protection Act 2015. In 2019 Nasc, continued our partnership with Senator Colette Kelleher, the Irish Refugee Council and Oxfam to restore refugee rights to family reunification. The restoration of family reunification rights remains a critical priority.

Direct Provision

2019 brought our work on ending the current system of Direct Provision one step closer with the publication of the National Standards on Direct Provision. As a member of the National Advisory Group, Nasc played a key role in the drafting of these standards. We are



Fiona Finn
CEO

committed to working with partners and Government for the effective implementation of the Standards, and longer-term to secure the end of Direct Provision.

Community Sponsorship

Nasc is particularly proud of our groundbreaking work on Community Sponsorship and we were delighted when Minister David Stanton formally launched Community Sponsorship Ireland, securing Community Sponsorship as part of Ireland's resettlement programme. Nasc has been leading the way on Community Sponsorship for a number of years now and this was a particularly proud moment for us and for the refugee and for the communities and partner organisations we worked with to make this a reality. I would especially like to thank Minister Stanton for his passionate leadership on this issue and Eibhlin Byrne and her team in the IRPP who made this a reality. To date Nasc has supported 6 communities in their journey to sponsor a refugee family and last year we were delighted to welcome 4 families to Ireland under this new programme. We hope to welcome many more in 2020.

Nasc Projects

One of the key strengths of Nasc is the development and delivery of innovative and ground-breaking programmes. Our Gateway Programme for migrant women and our Connect Migrant Youth Programme are shining examples this and both programmes went from strength to strength this year with Connect transforming the lives to 70 children and young people and Gateways advancing the integration and social inclusion for 36 women of a migrant and refugee background.

The Nasc team

I want to pay tribute to all of my colleagues - new and not so new on Nasc team all of whom who carry out their duties with extraordinary levels of expertise, professionalism, and commitment. Each and every team member make a valuable contribution to achieving the mission of Nasc.

This year we said goodbye to our longstanding Communications and Campaigns Manager, Jennifer DeWan. Jennifer is an incredible advocate for migrant and refugee rights who was instrumental in Nasc's work on both the McMahon Report and the development of the National Standards. We wish her well in her return to the USA. We also said goodbye to our Legal Officer Majo Rivas. Majo is a powerful human rights advocate and we wish her well in her new role as a Disability Rights Advocate. I would like to take this opportunity to thank both Jen and Majo for their phenomenal work.

We welcomed new staff members in 2019, Cecilia Amabo is our new Integration Officer and Cecilia will be working with Cork City Council and partners in the city to develop an integration plan for our city. I am delighted that we were able to announce two new additions to our Legal Team, Julie O Leary BL, our new Legal Service Manager and Natalia McDonald our Legal Officer. I also wish to welcome Fiona Hurley to her new role as Policy and Communications Manager.

Nasc is hugely dependent on our volunteers for their selfless work and dedication. It would not be possible to deliver many of our services without them. I wish to offer my sincere thanks to everyone who has ever worked as a volunteer for Nasc.

I would also like to thank all our funders and supporters without whom Nasc would not be able to open our doors and achieve all that we have. My personal thanks go to the hugely supportive Board of Trustees and our Chairperson Fiona Donson. They all give of their time, and expertise freely, and go well beyond the call of duty.

A final word of thanks must go to the refugee migrant communities that we work with, some of whom have taken a brave stance to share their stories publicly to highlight both the challenges they face and their successes and achievements in making Ireland their home, you are an inspiration to all of us. Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir.



**Cutting
the ribbon
at 34 Paul
Street**





Julie O' Leary Legal Service

The Legal Service team saw some big changes in personnel over the course of this year, with Fiona Hurley moving to become Nasc's Policy and Communications Manager, and Majo Rivas leaving Nasc after 3 years to take up a role in the disability sector. We would like to thank them for all their hard work and dedication to the service over the years.

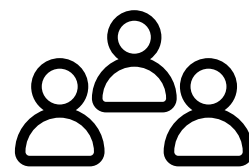
The legal service team was then joined by Julie O' Leary and Natalia McDonald, together with Mark Durning and with 2019 being as busy as ever, the work of the legal service continued. We were supported by our wonderful interns and students throughout the year, including Dearbhla de Barra, Hailey O'Shea, Roisin Nic Carthaigh, Linda Pentony and Eleanor Brooks. We are always delighted to see our interns go onto further study and employment, with two of our interns this year moving to work with our colleagues in Crosscare and the Jesuit Refugee Service.

We would like to acknowledge the funding provided by the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund 2014 – 2020 (AMIF), for our 'Integrating Cork' project which 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 Cork City Council. The second Legal Service project

'Immigrant Integration Initiative' 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. Support was also provided by private philanthropy through the Ireland Funds, St Stephen's Green Trust and the Tomar Trust.

1105 unique clients

628 new clients



**Our clients came from
110 countries across
the world**



4181 interventions

1653 Walk-In consults



Key areas of work

“Join Family” visas were the top reason for visiting the clinics in 2019 (549 visits). Some of these visits will have related to positive decisions under the International Humanitarian Admission Programme the second round of which opened for applications early in the year. This programme allowed Irish citizens and those with international protection with family members in eligible countries to apply for these family members to join them in Ireland. The Nasc team assisted 48 individuals with submitting applications to this programme which was a significant undertaking over a short period of time early in the year. To date over 20 of those applicants have been successful, allowing them to apply for visas for over 30 family members to travel and reside in Ireland during the year. The increase in visits relating to visas for family members in 2019 is also likely to relate to the positive economic circumstances during the year and the fact that the country was at almost full employment; many more of our clients were in the financial position necessary to sponsor visas for family members.

490 visits were related to citizenship. We saw significant delays in citizenship applications over the year due to the controversial High Court decision in *Jones v Minister for Justice & Equality*. This decision was thankfully overturned in November 2019, allowing the Minister to return to a more flexible policy that allows for limited absences from Ireland in the year before an individual applied for Irish naturalisation. Following this decision a number of our clients received positive decisions on their applications, and received their certificates of naturalisation at the citizenship ceremony held in Killarney in March 2020. We still do however continue to see long delays, in many cases of over two years, for many people when applying for citizenship.

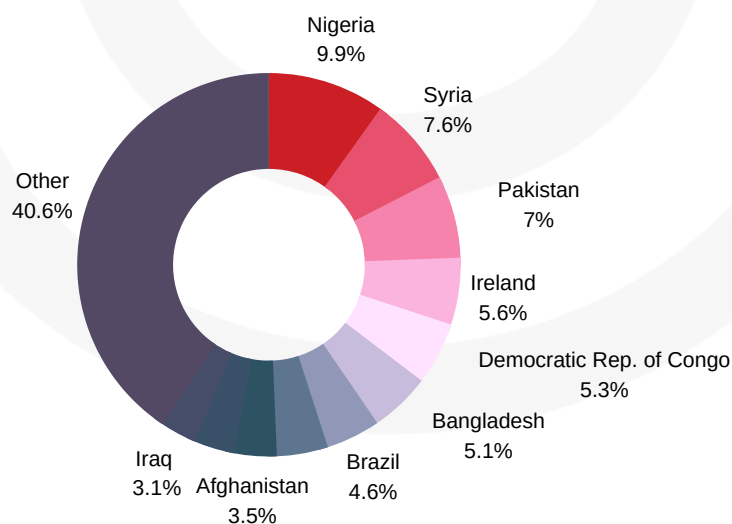
352 visits related to family reunification for beneficiaries of international protection. This is down by almost 100 visits from 2018 may be related to restrictions in family reunification under

the International Protection Act 2015. We also note that anecdotally many of our clients experience long delays between receiving a positive recommendation from the International Protection Office or International Protection Tribunal and receiving the official grant of their status from the Ministerial Decision Unit, resulting in a long delay before they can exit direct provision and apply to be reunited with their family members.

Key networks

Nasc’s Legal Service provided information and support to domestic violence agencies, refuges, homeless services, social workers, community organisations and citizens information centres working with people of a migrant or ethnic minority background across the country. We provided information and training sessions to Training Vision Ireland, the Children’s Rights Alliance, Túsla and YANA. We continue to work closely with other immigration and refugee organisations throughout the country including through 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 PICUM.

Clients by nationality





Fiona Hurley

Policy & Communications

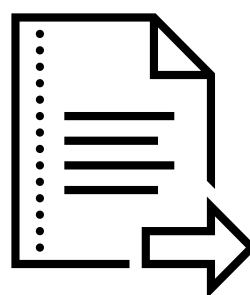
May 2019 saw the departure of Jennifer De Wan as Nasc's Communications and Campaigns Manager. I'd like to extend a huge thank you to my predecessor Jen for her exhaustive work over many years. Much of the work outlined below has its roots in Jen's indefatigable advocacy, in particular the publication of the National Standards on Direct Provision.

Relaunching Nasc

Nasc published our new Strategic Plan for 2019-2021. This ambitious plan sets our key policy priorities for the coming three years to achieve our goal of realising the rights of all migrants and refugees in Ireland.

A key goal of the Strategic Plan is to ensure "accessible web-based supports". Having secured funding through the AMIF (Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund) 2014-2020, Nasc were delighted to work with Piquant on the redevelopment of Nasc's new website and new look. The website is now mobile friendly and has updated resources for our many users.

We'd also like to give a huge thank you to the many clients, service users and supporters of Nasc who volunteered their time to become the faces of Nasc.



7 submissions made across important policy areas including electoral reform, family reunification, hate speech & the future of direct provision and the international protection process.

70 news spots across radio, TV, newspaper and online media outlets.



Family Reunification

The International Protection (Family Reunification) (Amendment) Bill moved through the last stage of the Seanad and into the Dáil in March 2018. The Bill, which was sponsored by Senator Colette Kelleher and the Civic Engagement Group, was supported by Nasc, Oxfam and the Irish Refugee Council. The Bill made it as far as the second stage of the Dáil with widespread support. The Bill, which would have remedied many of the restrictive provisions of the International Protection Act, 2015 was the subject of detailed scrutiny by the Oireachtas Justice & Equality Committee. Nasc presented before the Committee in February 2019. Their report broadly welcomed the proposed Bill and recommended that a 'money message' be passed so the Bill could proceed to formal Committee Stage. Unfortunately, the government refused to pass a money message and the Bill did not proceed any further.

Direct Provision & International Protection

“... the members of the Committee are of the view that the Direct Provision System currently in operation here is flawed in several respects and needs root and branch reform, preferably replacement.”

The Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice and Equality made the issues of direct provision and the international protection process a priority for examination by their Committee in 2019. Nasc were invited to present at the hearings and we were pleased that the final report, issued in December 2019, reflected many of the recommendations made in our written and oral submissions.

The report recommended urgent actions on issues from the length of time for processing applications to the replacement of the system of direct provision. Other important recommendations included the right of unaccompanied minors to make international protection applications as well as access to driving licences and bank accounts,



6,818 followers

↑ 23%



4,368 followers

↑ 19%

National Standards for Direct Provision

The introduction of National Standards for Direct Provision was a key recommendation in the Working Group Report on Direct Provision and the Asylum System (McMahon Report). Nasc was a member of the Advisory Group tasked with drafting the Standards. The Standards contain very important requirements such as the provision of living quarters and cooking facilities for all families as well as a roadmap for the implementation of vulnerability assessments. The Standards will come into force for all centres in 2021.

Engagement with the Community

Nasc continued to engage and work with partners in community groups locally, nationally and internationally. Some highlights included the International Community Sponsorship event which brought together partners from around the world and the Cork Against Human Trafficking Day which brought together anti-trafficking partners throughout Ireland. We were also delighted to provide guest lectures and talks to law and human rights students.





Cecilia Amabo Integration

I was delighted to join the Nasc team as an Integration Officer in 2019. Integration and social inclusion remain one of Nasc's key strategic priorities to promote the rights of migrants and refugees in Ireland. We work in diverse ways to include migrant voices across all decisions pertaining to their rights and in promoting and advocating for effective integration and social inclusion in the economic, cultural, and social life of our city.

Family Reunification Integration

Nasc's integration work is delivered in collaboration with our Legal Team. In 2019, we focused on supporting refugee families who came here under family reunification. With thanks to funding from St Stephen's Green Trust, we were able to develop a project to support newly-arrived family members entering the State through Family Reunification. We successfully settled over 14 families from 9 different countries across the world. All 14 families, consisting of 3-7 family's members, were successfully resettled within the communities, and provided with the much-needed resettlement support to ensure a positive transition to live in Ireland. All of the families were assisted on a one-on-one basis to obtain and secure critical services such as: school enrollment for all children of school-going ages, medical cards, PPS numbers, GNIB/Immigration Residence Permit registration, housing, social welfare entitlements etc. We were also able to refer family members into our other projects - Connect and Gateway when additional needs were identified.

There are no formal support services and structures available to families who come to Ireland through family reunification and we are very grateful to the Saint Stephens Green Trust for their support to deliver this much needed programme.

An Integration Strategy for Cork City

In recent years Cork has become an increasingly diverse city and we are immensely proud of the pivotal role migrant communities play in terms of economy growth and cultural richness.

Cork in 2018 was voted one of the friendliest cities in Europe and was recently recognised as the number two small city in Europe for Economic Potential in the Financial Times FDI European Cities and Regions of Future 2020/2021 League. Nasc, in line with our policy to promote community integration and foster social inclusion in Cork, were delighted to receive funding under the Asylum Migration and integration Fund for our “Connecting Communities” programme. Part of that programme is the development of a second Integration strategy for Cork. This strategy will follow on from the city’s first integration strategy-Connecting Communities: The Cork City Integration strategy 2008-2011 and will be developed in partnership with migrant communities, Cork City Council other agencies, and key stakeholders in the city. The Cork integration Strategy will build upon national and EU best practice on integration and social inclusion.

The importance of this strategy to the city cannot be over-emphasized considering the recent growth in Cork’s socio-economic activities and educational sector all thanks to the exceptional and additional skills infused in the economy by our migrant population.

In the last quarter of 2019, Nasc in collaboration with the City Council, UCC representatives, researchers, faith-based groups and other agencies held five successive planning meetings to plan the structure, participation, framework and thematic areas to be included in the Integration Strategy. The need to effectively address migrants’ specific issues is a key driving force behind the strategy. As a migrant-centric organisation, Nasc has championed the development of Cork integration Strategy to promote migrants’ rights, recognition and to work with migrant communities in the city ensuring full participation and inclusion in every aspect of life in our city. This is the cornerstone in development of the Migrant integration Strategy.



Reunified refugee family supported through Nasc's Legal Service and Integration Project

Networks

In our work with the Cork City of Sanctuary Movement, Nasc collaborated with the group on joint submissions, supported submissions from residents of direct provision centres to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice and Equality on their hearings on Direct Provision and the International Protection Process and took part in campaigns calling for better living conditions for residents in direct provision centres around the country.



Maria Bateson

Community Sponsorship

Nasc has been at the forefront of implementing the Community Sponsorship programme in Ireland since our Safe Passage campaign and our work with Wicklow Syria Appeal in 2018, which saw Wicklow own welcome the Al Sulaiman Syrian refugee family to their community.

Throughout 2019 we have been delighted to see Community Sponsorship go from strength to strength. The programme's 'pilot' phase has drawn to a successful close; more newcomer families have been welcomed by communities across the country; new groups have formed; our working partnerships have strengthened; and government commitment to the programme has been renewed.

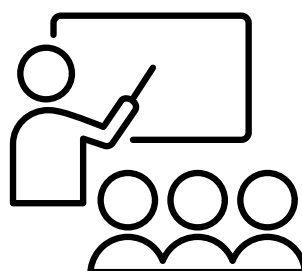
Government Commitment

This year, following the success of the pilot programme in 2018-19, the programme entered its more permanent 'implementation phase'. Minister of State for Justice and Equality, David Stanton TD formally launched the programme in Cork in November 2019.

In December 2019, we welcomed the announcement by Minister for Justice and Equality Charlie Flanagan TD and his colleague Minister David Stanton TD that the State would renew its commitment to refugee resettlement, including Community Sponsorship, under 'Phase II' of the Irish Refugee Protection Programme from 2020-23.

Community Sponsorship invites communities across Ireland to welcome and support resettled refugees arriving in Ireland for the first time.

8 communities across Ireland welcomed Syrian refugee families providing a new home to 30 individuals



6 trainings provided by Nasc to 4 community groups

New Households & Communities

We were delighted to see the Dunshaughlin Community Sponsorship Group, who we have worked with since their formation in 2018, welcome a family at the beginning of 2019. New groups in Midleton, Carrigtwohill and Lismore formed and each welcomed a family this year. In spring of this year, we also began supporting three new groups in Kinsale, Carrigaline and Cork City. Kinsale has since welcomed a family, who arrived in the community in late December 2019.

The feedback from families and groups who have participated so far in the programme has been overwhelmingly positive, with families finding new connections and comfort in the support of community members; and communities consistently reporting that they have been brought together by the experience. We have already learned so much from groups and newcomers as they share their experiences of the programme with us.

Programme Development

Since the programme's inception, Nasc has been working collaboratively with our fellow stakeholders to develop the programme's policy, guidance and application documents. Early this year, we completed these documents, laying the groundwork for future community sponsorship groups. It has been a pleasure to work on this and other parts of the programme alongside our colleagues including UNHCR Ireland, the Irish Red Cross, the Irish Refugee Council, Amnesty Ireland and the Irish Refugee Protection Programme.

Nasc played an instrumental role in developing a comprehensive training package for community sponsorship groups. In developing the training, we have drawn on the expertise of other countries with successful sponsorship programmes.

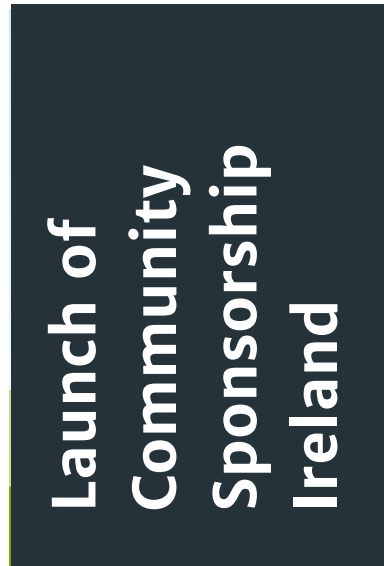
Early this year, we had the pleasure of greeting our Canadian and UK counterparts as they came to Dublin, and worked with them to adapt and deliver a sponsorship training package.

Throughout the year, we have delivered several on-site trainings to the Kinsale, Cork City and Carrigaline groups, including evening trainings and full-day sessions. Nasc has also actively supported fellow RSOs, SECAD, Cork City Partnership and Waterford Leader Partnership to deliver training to their respective groups.

Reflecting the immense progress made over the course of the year, in October Ireland won the International Award at the Community Sponsorship Awards Ceremony in London. Nasc was delighted to attend the ceremony to collect the award alongside colleagues from the Irish Refugee Council, the Irish Red Cross, Amnesty Ireland and the Irish Refugee Protection Programme.

In November, Nasc had the immense honour of hosting the International Community Sponsorship development conference in Cork. Nasc played an instrumental role in coordinating the event alongside the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative. The conference was attended by hundreds of representatives from countries including New Zealand, Australia, Argentina, Germany, the UK and Canada; as well as Irish sponsor groups and newly arrived refugee families. Attendees benefitted from a range of insightful workshops and discussions; and the conference also provided the setting for the official launch of the Irish Community Sponsorship programme by Minister David Stanton TD.

In the coming year, we look forward to working alongside groups and our colleagues to continue to improve the programme for resettled refugees and community sponsorship groups. After an inspiring year, we are confident that we will see even more people get involved in welcoming refugee families to their communities.





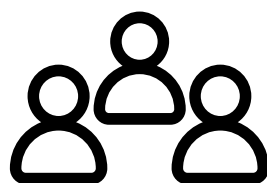
Susan Mackey Connect

The Connect Youth Project was established in 2018 by Project Coordinator and social worker, Susan Mackey. The project is supported by Tusla, Child and Family Agency, St Stephens Green Trust and the Community Foundation of Ireland.

Asylum seeking and refugee young people face a complexity of issues including social isolation, language barriers, racism, mental health issues, emotional distress and immigration-related barriers. This impedes their educational and health outcomes and places them at greater risk of poverty and abuse. We work to address these issues through co-ordinating supports, linking in with other agencies and with our in-house services at Nasc to build up a network of supports in the young person's life.

2019 saw an increase in the numbers of young people joining the service. We saw a larger uptake via self-referrals, word of mouth recommendations and referrals from social, community and health workers. Recurring issues included the challenges of getting a young person's voice heard in immigration and asylum procedures, policy gaps in PLC education and its disproportionate impacts on 17-21 year olds, and the difficulties encountered by former foster children from minority backgrounds accessing financial supports eg SUSI.

Connect provides social work support to young refugees and asylum seekers aged 14-23 years. We work with young people living in Direct Provision, migrants in care or in aftercare services as well as those who have reunited with their refugee families in Ireland



69 young people and their families supported in 2019



Supported 18 young people at risk of homelessness, abuse and destitution.

Connect provides support in three main areas for the young people we work with: Immigration and asylum support, access to education and integration, mental health and wellbeing.

Immigration & Asylum support

We work to ensure the young person understands the asylum process and are active participants in voicing and resolving their immigration needs. We provide advocacy and accompaniment to appointments and provide practical and emotional support to deal with their immigration issues. This includes help to obtain their passports, visas for travel and applications for Irish citizenship.

Access to education

Asylum seekers and migrant children transitioning from secondary school often face many challenges in accessing education and further training. We work to advocate for a reduction in fees from colleges/training bodies and help young people to apply for scholarships and financial support. We also provide learning supports, like transport, IT and remote learning equipment, books and study materials, and academic English language support.

Integration, mental health & wellbeing

Many of the young people we work with have no family in Ireland, experienced breakdown in family relationships and have very few social supports. We help to reduce their social isolation, by supporting them to participate in social, community and sporting groups. We link them with activities they enjoy and employ peer support from other young people on the project. Many of those we work with also experience emotional distress and trauma. We link them in with therapeutic and mental health supports and fund associated costs to access these supports wherever possible.



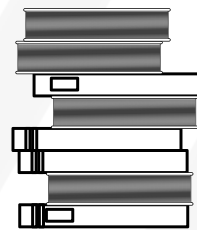
Helped to secure residency, including refugee status for 7 young people.



4 young people won scholarships for their third level courses.



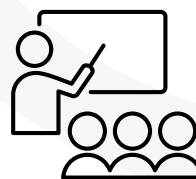
12 young people enrolled in 3rd level institutes including UCC, CIT, UCD & Trinity College



11 young people completed QQI Level 5 PLC courses.



5 students achieved distinctions in their PLC courses.



6 training sessions & lectures delivered to university groups with asylum seeking young people.

In their own words...

“

When I seek asylum I was only 17 years old... I had just done my Leaving Cert back home but I needed to pursue my education. But then I was being told that being an asylum seeker, I couldn't go to college...

When I went to Nasc, they told me they had a project called Connect project supporting the youth. I started working hand in hand with Susan Mackey. Before, when I was in a hostel in direct provision, I was struggling with my mental health and I could never see a light at the end of a tunnel but from this help that I got, she was there for me.

She helped me to get a college place. I had insufficient funds in terms of travelling and everything but she has been there for me. She would top up my leap card, and when I was in direct provision, I didn't have a place to cook... but Susan Mackey used to give me vouchers to get food myself... Sometimes when I finish college they had finished serving in the hostel and maybe I miss dinner but with these vouchers it was really helpful for me.

And then as time was going, I got denied in my refugee interview. And then I explained to Susan and she tried to organise me a solicitor... Now I have my refugee status which is very helpful. When I got the refugee status, it was still hard. I didn't have enough money to pay for rent. Susan Mackey contacted a few landlords for me - and at the end of it I got my own place...

From this Connect project, I have benefitted a lot. I was struggling with my mental health and with the help of Susan Mackey, she helped me to put me in the right place. She connected me with counsellors and I used to go there and have a chat with them so I really appreciate Connect. I'm where I'm at now because of it.

”

Connect participant (refugee & unaccompanied minor)



The Gateway Project aims to equalise the basis on which refugee women access and participate in the labour market and Irish life.



Claire Mackey Gateway Women's Project

I was delighted to join the Gateway Women's Project at the beginning of 2019. I want to extend a huge thank you to the Gateway team including Mary-Anne Oke, Kiren Khalid and Nadia Rashdan for their contribution to making Gateway an incredibly successful project in 2019.



“Nasc classes have not only helped to improve the deep and strong fears I had with my English language, it has also created an environment of diversity and love. My lessons were more than teaching and learning English, the teacher was passionate and professional.”

Gateway participant



Gateways is a holistic programme that meets women where they are at, and creates an individualised package based on personal goals and requirements. The project is based around English language provision taught at three levels; within a class group or one-to-one tutoring. We also offer literacy support for those who require it. As well as English classes we provide mentoring, career coaching, CV making, personal development, stress management and yoga classes. Along with this, information, advice and guidance is offered in relation to social welfare, employment and further education.



The barriers to participation for refugee women were considered carefully in the planning of this project and so childcare and travel costs are catered for. Therefore, assisting women to come to class and focus on their learning and enabling them to progress.

The project has been in operation since 2018 and has gained a positive reputation among migrant women, with many previous participants recommending the programme to their friends.

Women have reported increased confidence and ability to communicate, and feel empowered and supported to pursue their goals for their life in Ireland.

“ *It has been great taking the English classes in Nasc. I started the English classes last year and it has been fantastic. Now, I have the confidence to go to many places without help.* **”**
Gateway participant

In 2019 social work provision was added to the programme based on needs that had arose. Supports are now provided for issues such as domestic violence, homelessness, social welfare, mental health problems and trauma. This addition to the project seeks to reinforce the women's sense of community, connection and a safe space for women to learn and receive the help they require.

“ *Nasc classes have given me a feeling of complete security that it's now possible to progress and to learn good English following the correct steps, practicing, and doing the necessary work. I am so glad to be part of their English classes.* **”**
Gateway participant

Successful outcomes for our participants include increased ability to speak and write English, improved self-confidence, participation in the community, achieving a sense of belonging and inclusion and creating a pathway for future learning, training and employment.

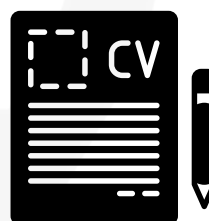
The Gateways Project 2019 was sponsored by Pobal, with the Cork Education and Training Board providing funding for additional English classes to be taught, based on the high demand to attend.



**36 women
participating**



**12 women
transitioned to
further education**



**3 women found
employment**



**Participants
came from 14
countries**



**6 women began
volunteering and
undertook work
experience**



**4 women enrolled
in short general
interest courses.**

