UL Engage Reports

**Creating Community Research Partnerships
Field Notes from the 'Count Me In' Project,
Ennis 2007**

M. Adshead
A. Basogomba
A. Loftus
W. Mongans
E. Ni Shé
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2016, No. 1

Creating Community Research Partnerships

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INTRODUCTION

Who we are…

Our Community Research Partnership was made up from community volunteers, community development workers, Ennis CDP and faculty and students from the Department of Politics and Public Administration at the University of Limerick. The Partnership was organized via an advisory board made up of representatives from each of these groups. As members of the advisory board, we all met each other through our involvement in different dimensions of Ennis CDP activities.

What we did…

In the spaces between our different meetings and usually over cups of tea and biscuits, we began to tease out ideas about how people who are most affected by discrimination, and most marginalized from 'mainstream' society can provide evidence of their situation, so as to inform policy practitioners about the everyday difficulties they often have to face. We came up with a variety of elaborate and hypothetical research projects that none of us had the resources to finance. In the end, we decided that the best way to tackle our research ambition was with a small-scale pilot project: it would be cheaper to run and if it worked well, we would be able use it as a basis for larger -scale funding applications later on.

What we learned

In the rest of this paper, we share with you what we learned about 'doing community research'. Each section describes a different part of our research project and gives an account of all the practical issues we found that need to be considered in each stage of a community research project. The paper is written in hindsight and with this benefit, we have sometimes described what we should have done, as well as what we did. Wherever we can, we have included in each section either a 'key message' about what is needed at this stage of the project, or a 'top tip' from our own experience.

PROJECT RATIONALE

Although it is probably fair to say that we all thought we were doing something 'socially useful', our different individual and organizational backgrounds meant that we each tended to prioritize the benefits of the project differently. Once each of the partners had decided what it was that they could get from the project, they needed to pitch this idea to their own group. All of us had to go back to our communities and/or organizations to explain why they might like to get involved in the project: some of us needed to go to our bosses and look for time out to take part in the project; some of us had to fill in funding applications to justify our participation. In order to get approval for our involvement, we needed to 'sell' the project idea to our own people. To do this, we needed to recognize the different perspectives of the key project participants

The CDP perspective

Through Ennis CDP project activities, contacts within the communities, and weekly drop in services, a range of common concerns were identified by those people accessing Ennis CDP services. A need was identified for some way of recording local people's experience of living in the area and trying to access public services. Migrant groups, Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Irish Travelling People wanted to find a way of recording discrimination as experienced and identified by individuals. The intention was that this research should provide a baseline indication of the quality of local services, providing robust evidence for gaps in the provisions of some services; for lapses in care in others; and for examples of good practice that could illustrate effective service delivery.

When the CDP first discussed this project with local communities, many talked about research fatigue. They were concerned about being 'over researched', with little positive outcome for them. They noted that in many previous projects that they had given their time to, they had ended up not knowing what had happened to the research following their participation. *It is for this reason that the CDP was keen to ensure that the oversight of the project was designed to be both representative and inclusive of the people whose interests were central to the project.*

The communities' perspective

From a community point of view, this research project is one activity alongside other activities and projects that are part of the ongoing relationship and dialogue between community development workers and local ethnic communities, in particular, the Traveller community and people in the asylum process or with refugee and other legal status. Like all relationships of trust, when the community members give of their time and trust with the telling of their life experiences, there is an expectation that this should benefit the communities as a whole in the longer term. This benefit needs to have some immediate visible aspects and there needs to be dialogue around how these needs are addressed by the project. *Communities want to know what concrete action will be taken to ensure that the research project becomes part of processes of informing changes to social inclusion policies and practice.*

The development worker perspective

Community Development workers in our project noted that there needs to be an ever-constant appreciation that 'our project' is only one of a number of activities taking place alongside everyday living activities**.** The everyday business of real communities has its own natural pace or rhythm and our project presented an additional activity on top of the everyday. For this reason, it is important always to remember that the nature of social marginalization and exclusion means that many of the people within disadvantaged communities find themselves or someone in their social network with frequent episodes of crisis. *Community development workers stressed that any of our plans for activities associated with the project needed to be mindful that they are an 'addition' to the everyday and sometimes our arrangements would need to be flexible to take account of this.*

The university perspective

The project was initiated using seed funding from the UL Strategic Research Fund and presented as a small-scale research project that had the potential to develop new skills in engaged research and pedagogy.

The project rationale was to:

- catalogue the experience of Travellers and people with experience of the asylum process in respect of public services and discrimination

- pilot a method of producing this evidence via a community research partnership
  which can

- provide basic training in survey research to community researchers and UL students
  and

- develop new pedagogies for learning
  in order to

- produce evidence based policy analysis

From the above, it can be seen that our project rationale presented a fairly standard academic rationale for the work – one that was quite different to the rationales of our participating partners. We would not have been clear about the different needs and desires of our project partners and participants if we had been without the benefit of experience provided to us by the CDP and local development practitioners in the area. Our project benefitted enormously from a level of communication and dialogue that had taken place (and continues to take place) between Ennis CDP and members and representatives from ethnic communities in the area that the CDP serves. It is this organizational context that provided the context for the whole of our project. We needed to remember, however, that the completion of our research would not be the end of this relationship. Ennis CDP would continue to work with the communities around other activities and other pieces of research. *For this reason, we needed to be very mindful of the relationships of trust that existed already prior to our project and ensure that our work did not damage these.*

A partnership perspective

Together, our collective partnership provided a valuable means to maximize each of our individual resources – both experiential and financial. Ennis CDP had built relationships with the local communities through processes of engagement and support around issues of concern for those communities long before our project began. The Department of Politics and Public Administration, University of Limerick could bring experience, skills and knowledge of research and research methodologies and a body of staff and post-graduate students interested in engaging with the communities – but without local support, this project would have been impossible to implement.

Too often, university researchers are all but oblivious to the perspectives of their community project partners and participants. When we explored the perspectives of our partners, it was immediately clear that even an agreed project may have many different identities, relating to the different partners' needs and ambitions.

The fact that different parts of a partnership prioritize their expectations of the project differently and have different ideas about what it should deliver is really important. The partnership will not survive unless all members feel that they are getting a good return for their efforts. Before you begin the work then, there needs to be a frank discussion about what each partner can realistically hope to gain from participation and what they can 'deliver' back to their group. Nobody wants to be the token partner.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The field research involved both quantitative and qualitative methods, comprising surveys and focus groups. The objectives of the field research were:

1. To profile the Travellers, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants living in County Clare;

2. To profile the perceived needs of children, families and adults from these groups living in County Clare;

3. To profile current levels of service provision and to review available data from service providers;

4. To document levels and experiences in the take-up and access to mainstream services especially with respect to work, accommodation, health, and education.

The survey questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was initially designed using the international democratic audit framework (Beethan *et al,* 2001) so as to ensure international comparability of results. The audit framework provides 70 areas of investigation across 14 separate sections (Landman, 2012). Our survey questionnaire was based on the section concerning 'Government Effectiveness and Accountability'. Its precise wording was revised by the combined group of community researchers (see section on 'Data Collection' pp. 20-21), in order to make it more user-friendly and to add in questions on topics that community members felt needed to be addressed.

In addition to the surveys, thirteen structured focus groups (see Appendix 2) were organized with different categories of service providers in Co. Clare, and with migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees residing in the county. The focus groups were designed, monitored and facilitated by the Department of Politics and Public Administration, University of Limerick. The planning and support for the focus groups was undertaken in cooperation with members of the Inter-Agency Steering Group and the HSE Community Development Service. A number of themes were explored including: Housing and Accommodation; Health and Welfare; Education; Social Integration; and Work. All focus groups except one were recorded and transcribed, and notes were taken during every session.

Limitations of the Research

Significant gaps in the research need to be noted. A focus group with secondary school educators was planned, but did not take place as it coincided with the pre-arranged holidays. Some groups were not represented in the focus groups, nor were they among the respondents who supplied information about their experiences through questionnaires: members of the Roma Community represent an especially important omission and as a result, the research had to depend on perceptions about the needs of this community from service providers.

Efforts to make contact with the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) were unsuccessful during the period of active research, so that the final research report did not include their comments. Some time later, the RIA did review the final draft of the research report and a copy of the commentary that they submitted was included in an addendum to the final research report.
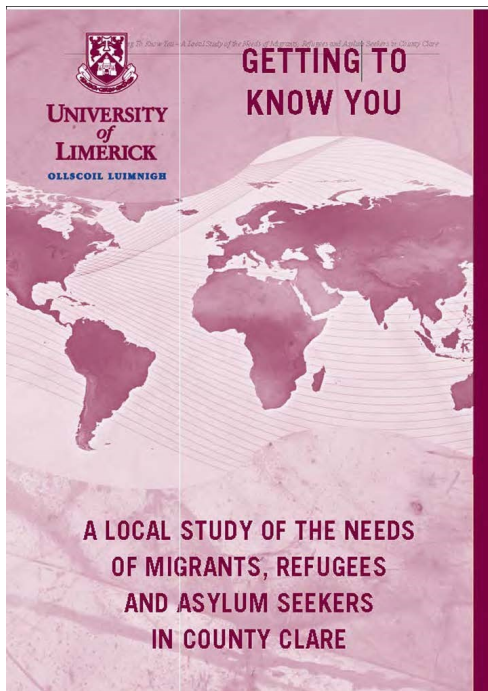
A report on the results of the research can be found in the HSE report: Ni She, E., Lodge, T. and Adshead, M. (20) *Getting to know you – A local study of the needs of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in County Clare,* available at: **https://goo.gl/c87Ttm**

In this report, we are more concerned to pass on what we learned about the research process and to share some of the very practical lessons we learned about how to do community research.

In the remainder of this report, we outline the guiding principles that governed the way we carried out this research, with as much practical detail about the administrative and organizational set up of the project as possible, in order to give a clear idea of what is involved in the implementation of a community research partnership.

RESEARCH APPROACH

This project used an emancipatory research approach. Emancipatory research focuses on: the lives and experiences of people historically marginalized; how and why inequities are reflected in asymmetrical power relations; and how results of social enquiry into inequities are linked to political and social action (Stuttaford, 2004). Building on previous feminist (Lather, 1987; Ribbens, 1990) and disability research (Barnes, 2003; Oliver 1997), the emancipatory research paradigm is based on three key fundamentals: reciprocity, gain and empowerment. It is within this context that emancipatory approaches advocate the creation of of 'research coalitions', which shift the social relations of research production (Oliver, 1997) giving community participants the opportunity to define research agendas that (potentially) impact upon their lives. Within this framework, 'the researched' can be involved in the research: from its initial planning; to its execution and monitoring; and even commenting on the results (Baker *et al*., 2004: 183-184). Academic researchers are encouraged to explain and justify the research formats and the theories that they use in order to support the creation of 'learning partnerships'. In doing so, it is intended that 'research coalitions' may become 'mutual education forums for academics, researchers and community members', sharing their definitions and interpretations of issues and events (Baker, *et al*, 2004: 185- 86).

According to emancipatory research principles, both Learning Partnerships and Research Coalitions can be used as a method to gather data, to influence and implement policy and as a means of 'realizing change' (Baker *et al,* 2004: 186). It is argued that Learning Partnerships and Research Coalitions provide a most effective mechanism for research dissemination, ensuring that the data is disseminated in accessible form to those about whom it is written or whose lives are affected by it (Baker *et al*, 2004; 186).

So much for reciprocity and gain, but what of empowerment? Naturally this is not something that can be gifted; but if a marginalized group has decided to embark on a process of empowerment, then academics need to ask themselves whether or not their research is contributing anything to that process.

Emancipatory Research is one disciplinary approach to working with communities, but a recent report on Community Engaged Research in Ireland (Campus Engage, 2017) found almost 50 different methods from all kinds of disciplines for carrying out community engaged research. If you want to read more about alternative methods and approaches that might be more appropriate for you, the report, Engaged Research. Addressing Grand Societal Challenges Together, can be accessed at: https://goo.gl/5vwUQV
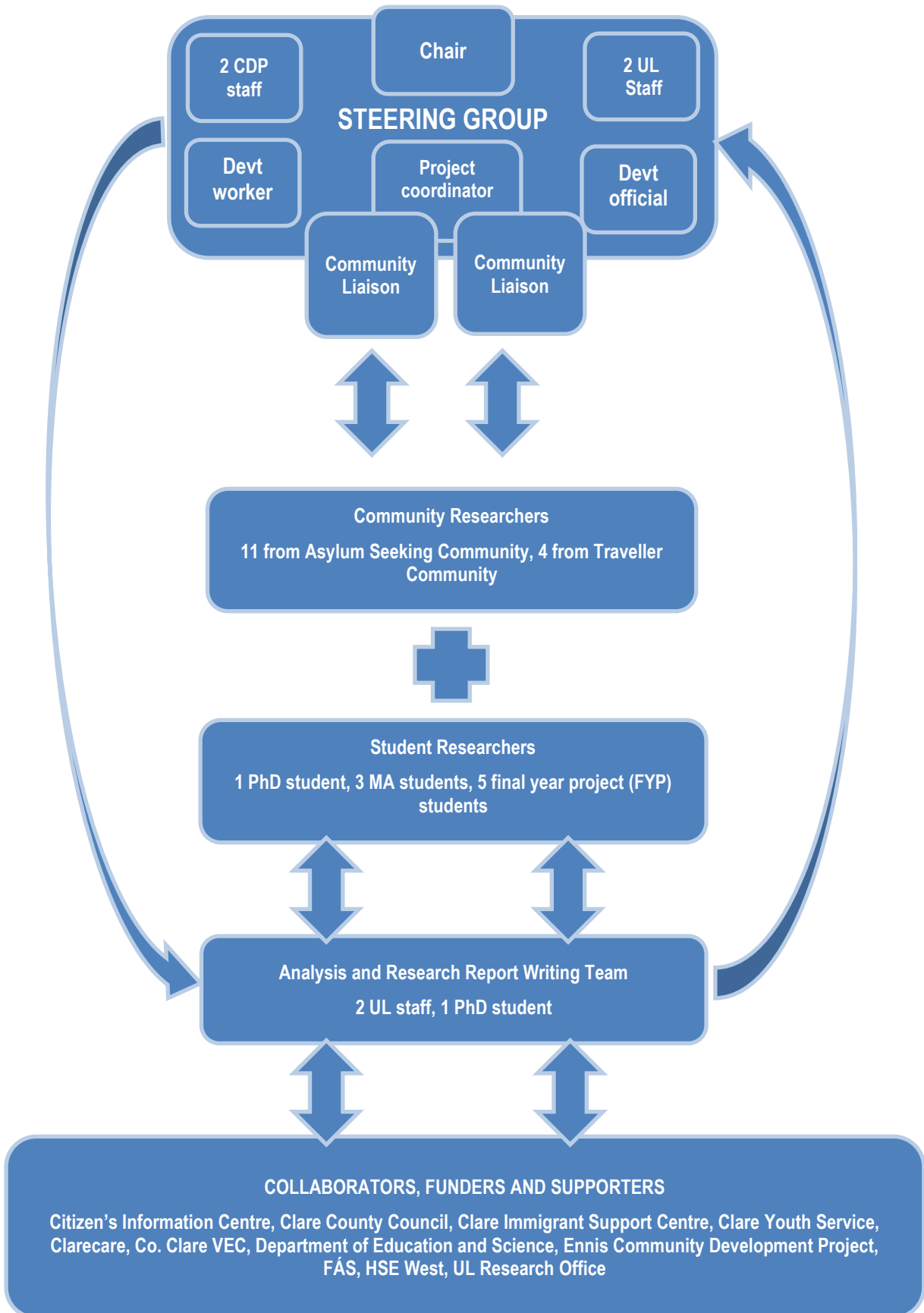
PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The partnership set up a research steering group comprised of all key stake-holders and including community development workers already involved with these communities, from the Community and Enterprise section of the Clare County Development Board and a local NGO, Clarecare. A long process of planning teased out a number of issues which would need to be addressed in the project's implementation:

- Tension between needs of the community and needs of academia.

- The best time(s) to engage with the communities in order to carry out the research.

- Tension between pace of the community, pace for a piece of work with deadlines and pace of academic year and the students' academic deadlines.

- Research with academic analysis and outcomes.

- How to engage the community in the research and research outcomes.

- How to engage members of the communities to be part of the research team.

- Research and analysis with outcomes that the communities themselves could use.

- Use of, analysis of and outcomes of the research findings for UL, for Ennis CDP and for the communities.

- Costings and resources and how to acquire the funding.

STEERING GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

- Agree roles and membership of steering committee
- Identify independent chair / facilitator
- Identify research needs
- Identify funding opportunities and ensure necessary financial systems are in place
- Design and plan research process
- Identify expertise required and recruit to steering committee as appropriate
- Recruit necessary staff
- Oversee implementation of project
- Discuss findings of research
- Engage in PR work – community, general public, targeted PR
- Influence policy – identify fora to disseminate findings
- Evaluate the project – outcomes and process

Figure One: 'Count Me In' governance structures

STEERING GROUP

- 2 CDP staff
- Chair
- 2 UL Staff
- Devt worker
- Project coordinator
- Devt official
- Community Liaison
- Community Liaison

Community Researchers

11 from Asylum Seeking Community, 4 from Traveller Community

Student Researchers

1 PhD student, 3 MA students, 5 final year project (FYP) students

Analysis and Research Report Writing Team

2 UL staff, 1 PhD student

COLLABORATORS, FUNDERS AND SUPPORTERS

Citizen's Information Centre, Clare County Council, Clare Immigrant Support Centre, Clare Youth Service, Clarecare, Co. Clare VEC, Department of Education and Science, Ennis Community Development Project, FÁS, HSE West, UL Research Office

Chair

The role of chair was important - to keep meetings in order, to ensure the balance between making sure that everyone had a turn and that all were included, and making sure that meetings did not last for ever and that all necessary issues were dealt with. In nascent partnerships like ours, the role of chair was especially important to ensure that there was someone in neutral position of trust, holding the partnership together by attending to all stakeholder concerns, whilst at the same time keeping an eye on 'the bigger picture'.

Growing a partnership requires a delicate balance between allowing relations between members of group to grow to help develop trust between them and keeping the momentum of project moving forward.

A chair with facilitation skills and an understanding of the different contexts and/or organisational cultures that partners are operating within enhances effectiveness of the partnership.

Community Development practitioner

The community development practitioner role was central to this project, providing the practical knowledge about, and links to people within, the communities we were working with. In particular, our development practitioners helped us to identify, interview and recruit community participants in the project. A community development perspective was crucial for the implementation of interviews for these positions and the subsequent support offered to these roles. The development practitioner provided insights and advice to the work of the steering committee, supporting the process of feedback to the CDP and other local agencies; working with the liaison representatives; supporting the participation of the community researchers; and providing a link between the committee, the communities and the researchers. Towards the end of the project, the development practitioner was central to our efforts to disseminate the research outcomes and support communities in giving feedback on the completed research.

A community development perspective…

Very often when research is done by academic groups they don't come back to the community. And we did have a launch of the research. We had a community day. And so people heard back what had come up and I think that was terribly important. Generally speaking, we talk about the exclusion of immigrants – as if they are victims and not actors in their own right. What this research showed, I think, was that people can be involved in different ways in their own right as citizens and engage at different levels. This is probably a better way of looking at why people do engage and what they get out of it - instead of always looking at why they don't engage and kind of seeing them as the problem.

Community Development worker

Project co-ordinator

In our project, this role was taken up by the PhD student for whom our project provided a case study in the implementation of emancipatory research and Irish approaches to welfare provision (Ní Shé, 2011). The project coordinator organized our meetings, took the minutes and worked with the chair to finalize the agenda for meetings (in consultation with other partners) and generally keep us to task. Our coordinator was also responsible for liaising with the students assigned to the project and helping to administer their inclusion in the project.

In hindsight, we probably should have appointed a student liaison worker to the steering committee to facilitate information sharing and feedback from students in the same way that we did with community researchers. As it was our PhD student carried out this role too. A student who was familiar with the university might also have carried out the one important role that we missed: project treasurer.

Project Treasurer

This was a job that we missed, but in hindsight we should have allocated responsibility for this task to a single person who could devote their time completely to:

1)   setting up the financial system for payments of community researchers and

2)   ensuring that university payments were made promptly.

Although it is fairly normal for people working inside the university to wait 2-3 weeks for their expenses to be reimbursed, this caused unnecessary hardship to our community researchers, who needed the expenses we offered in order to pay for transport and/or child-minding costs whilst they attended training. The same was true for payments to community researchers on completion of questionnaires. We discovered that making small individual payments from a university account is incredibly difficult. It is much easier to transfer €4,000 than it is to get a cheque made out for €40. Gift vouchers do not pay for taxi fares and baby-sitters. We needed to find a way of making payments to our community researchers. When we tried to transfer the money to our community partner for allocation, we were subject to a routine administration fee. This was something that we had not budgeted for and not foreseen. This made life much more difficult for our Community Liaison workers, who were dealing with the community researchers on a day-by-day basis.

The big problem was on financial side. First of all I came under pressure from field workers to be paid. The cheques took a long time to come and this was difficult to explain to people. On a personal level this was not easy to manage and at the same time keep people's trust and interest. Secondly there were some costs which were not budgeted for, like the cost of telephone calls and a contact place to meet people.

Ennis CDP helped me out but I think this should be budgeted for next time.

Community Liaison Worker

Community Liaison Workers

The role of the community liaison workers was crucial to the success of this project. They gave our work legitimacy and provided accountability to the communities with whom we worked. The community liaison support in the recruitment of community researchers made the data collection much more effective. The people that we wanted to talk to would be less readily inclined to answer questions or participate in survey work if they did not already know and trust the liaison workers from their own communities. We could describe the impact that our community liaison workers had, but it is probably easier if you hear it first hand, in their own words:

> *So there are people from the community with somebody from UL and it was ok, then the community [person] can say that I know that person. And besides that, they [the academics] knew exactly where to go instead of going different days trying to get somebody to talk to you. Before they go there, that person from the community who are with them was prepping them [the interviewees] explaining why that person is there to talk to us so we go there. We don't lose time.*
>
> *Community Liaison Worker #1*

> *I'm delighted to say today that the project went very well.*
>
> *In the beginning, I had a feeling that the task would be more difficult, but we were able to correct some difficulties which arose, particularly in communication between us on one hand, and the information given to field workers on another hand.*
>
> *I have to say that I was surprised by the number of people who were willing to take part in the survey. We received more candidates than were needed. That shows at the extent to which we worked in background, explaining to people the importance of this project.*
>
> *Community Liaison Worker #2*

Figure 3. Job Advertisement for Community Liaison position

Public Service Rights and Discrimination project

The University of Limerick's Dept of Politics and Public Administration and Ennis CDP are researching ethnic minorities' experiences of public services, as part of a larger international project monitoring rights and discrimination. The aim of the research is to find out how people feel they are treated when they use public services.

This research will be based in Ennis Co. Clare and will involve the Traveller Community and people who have direct experience of the asylum process. This project will be supported by two Community Liaison workers, who will provide a link between the project's steering committee and the community researchers who will help in the project's data collection.

(The Project will provide accredited training in basic survey research to 10 Field Workers to work with a number of local families using a questionnaire. In addition to training, field workers will receive certification from the University of Limerick).

The Community Liaison workers will:

- Work with and be accountable to the project's development worker
- Have a good knowledge and understanding of either the Traveller Community or other ethnic minorities
- Report to and participate in the Project Steering Committee
- Support the project to identify, interview and recruit community researchers (with support from Ennis CDP and the project development worker)
- Support the co-ordination and administration of the community research training
- Attend the research training and support community researchers who are attending the training
- Help to identify interviewees for the research
- Help promote the research and possible research outcomes through relevant communities
- Support local communities in providing feedback to the project and to any relevant local agencies at the conclusion of the project
- Be prepared to work as part of a team - Ennis CDP, Clarecare, UL researchers, Ennis Immigrant and Refugee Council and other relevant agencies.

Contract will run from mid-April to June 2007

Application form and further information available from Ennis CDP

Research Team

Student researchers were recruited to this project. These included: those who were undertaking final year projects (5); masters theses (3); and a PhD (1). In addition to the student researchers, who were relatively easy to find, we wanted to recruit community researchers from the community groups who had originally approached us to carry out this research. At the time of our project, the going rate for national census administration was €40 per completed census: the steering committee determined that we should pay the same rate to our community researchers. Community researchers were recruited via an open competitive interview process. This would not likely have been our means of recruitment, were it not for the advice given to us by our community development practitioner. She noted that in the 'real world' people do not give away jobs and that if we did not recruit via a formal interview, we would be undermining both our project and the people who were interested in working with us.

> *People from disadvantaged communities do not wish to be patronised or pitied. They mostly just want a chance to be treated the same as everyone else.*

Figure 3. Job Advertisement for Community Researcher positions

Public Service Rights and Discrimination project

The University of Limerick's Department of Politics and Public Administration and Ennis CDP are researching ethnic minorities' experiences of public services, as part of a larger international project monitoring rights and discrimination. The aim of the research is to find out how people feel they are treated when they use public services.

This research will be based in Ennis Co. Clare and will involve the Traveller Community and people who have direct experience of the asylum process.

The Project will provide accredited training in basic survey research to 10 Field Workers to work with a number of local families using a questionnaire. In addition to training, field workers will receive certification from the University of Limerick.

The Field Workers will:

- Have a good knowledge and understanding of either the Traveller Community or other ethnic minorities.

- Be prepared to commit to and complete training.

- Be prepared to undertake and complete a survey

- Be prepared to work as part of a team.

Contract will run from mid April to June 2007

Interviews take place - 16th April 2007

Training begins   - 18th April pm

Application forms and job descriptions available from Ennis CDP

It should also be noted that equal opportunities and employment law prevented us from asking directly for people from the communities with whom we wished to collaborate. We sought instead, people with 'a good knowledge and understanding of these communities' and hoped that the ground work for the project – carried out initially in our consultation and co-design with communities and later by our community liaison workers – would be sufficient to encourage community members to apply.

Figure 4. Community Researcher Application Form

Public service rights and discrimination project
Additional information can be attached to the application form if necessary.

Name: _____
Address: _____
_____
Telephone _____

1. What work experience do you have? (Continue on a separate page if needed.)
_____
_____
_____

2. What experience do you have working in the community?
_____
_____
_____

3. Why are you interested in this research post?
_____
_____
_____

4. What skills do you have that you think might be useful for the job/research
_____
_____
_____

5. Are you prepared to commit for 2 to 3 months
_____
_____
_____

Interviews for the community researchers were carried out by a panel comprising: the community development practitioner, one UL academic, the two community liaison workers. The panel was chaired by the Ennis CDP member of the steering group.

DATA COLLECTION

The University of Limerick (PPA) faculty provided training in research methodology to all field researchers, combining UL students alongside their community researcher counter-parts. The training covered basic community research skills including key issues concerning: rights and entitlements with respect to public services for migrant communities; interviewing techniques and questionnaire design, data collection and interpretation and included a pilot of the draft questionnaire. The training, which took place over four evenings, was delivered in Ennis – because this was the most convenient location for our community researchers.

> **For the Questionnaire Survey Training, we needed:**
>
> - Preparation of UL students (intercultural awareness training)
> - Transport organization for UL students to training venue
> - Training room hire/ booking
> - Expenses for community researcher costs attending the training (to cover childcare and/or travel to the training). We settled on a flat rate for each session.
> - Simple refreshments (tea, coffee, biscuits, juice)
> - Plenty of advance information for everyone attending

During the training sessions every question on the questionnaire was discussed by all field-workers together (i.e. the community researchers and UL students). This was to ensure that they understood the rationale for each question and the best way that we should ask for this information. In the training all field researchers became familiar with the information that was being sought. The community researchers, in particular, gave crucial advice about the best ways to ask particular questions, and pointed out topics that might need further follow-up questions. These insights were used to amend the questionnaire format, so that we could get back exactly the information that we sought, and so that the survey was as user-friendly as possible. In many cases, our community researchers came up with alternative ways to ask for information in order to protect the privacy of those surveyed. Questions about income brackets for example, could be answered by identifying which social welfare allowances people used. Community researchers provided a number of key changes in this regard as well as important contextual information to the UL students in discussions about what questions might prove difficult to ask or answer.

Following training, community researchers and UL student researchers were paired to conduct the questionnaires in the field to refugees, asylum seekers and Travellers. Some self-administered questionnaires were distributed through VEC English classes for migrants. The list of nationalities represented amongst the respondents included but was not limited to Ukrainian, Nigerian, Ghanaian, Sudanese, Russian, Somali, Cuban, Guatemalan, Cameroon, Bangladeshi, Sierra Leone, South African, Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Georgia. A small number of respondents preferred not to have their nationality denoted in the report for reasons of confidentiality.

> **For the Survey Administration, we needed:**
>
> - Ethics approval
> - Information sheet to accompany questionnaire administration
> - Community priming / publicity – that is we gave out information about the project in a variety of ways additional to the standard ethics information sheet
> - IDs for interviewees – this involved photos, University stamps & lanyards!
> - Funds to cover survey administration

Once the surveys were completed, community researchers and UL student researchers received training at University of Limerick in how to input the survey data using SPSS software. Not everyone availed of this offer. About half of our community researchers attended. All agreed that the participatory approach was crucial to the success of the survey.

Course participants received a certificate on completion of the training course.

FEEDBACK FROM TRAINING SESSIONS

In an independent focus group with training session participants, the following feedback was recorded from the community and university participants:

People enjoyed it

We got a lot out of interacting with the other researchers from UL and with people being interviewed

Enjoyed the visit to UL

By the end we were all familiar with questionnaire

I enjoyed training with the students. There were no barriers and people had an opportunity to get to know each other and train together

Not being out of pocket

Going out in twos meant people choose what they were more comfortable doing, i.e. asking the questions or writing down the answers

Teams could make their own arrangements

We had fun together

Timing was good, time of year, before school broke up

As community members we were able to flag a better way of asking some questions without exposing and putting individual interviewee in personal danger

We changed a lot of Academic English into everyday English

We learned from each other

Social interaction was good

Demystified the process of research

Schedule – short time between training and carrying out –very good

I liked that in the training, we got to take some sensitive questions out and find other ways of getting the information needed

Engagement with the interviewees was good – people have many stories to tell but nowhere to tell them. I think they liked telling us.

Learned about SPSS

WHAT UL STUDENTS SAID

I found the training informative and comprehensive. It was invaluable to interact with everyone involved in the project before conducting the fieldwork. It gave a chance for all involved to have an input of their personal knowledge and experience into the content of the questionnaires. The most enjoyable part for me was working with somebody from the Community. I built up a fantastic working relationship with Kathleen. She always ensured that the interviewee's were informed of the work that we were doing, she scheduled all of the interviews for us with great precision and was a very competent person to work with. My experience of performing the interviews varied from interview to interview. Some interviewees were more than willing to divulge their experiences to us whereas others seemed to be more wary and hesitant about the context of the project. The research was relevant to the development and research elements of my Masters. The experience of doing collating and ultilising field work data has stood to me academically and will continue to do so.

UL Masters student

The training for the interviews, undertaken with volunteer asylum seekers as partners, was an attempt to achieve a similar mindset in university students and asylum seekers which was quite successful given the inherent difficulties. The asylum seekers we interviewed seemed to believe that by completing the interviews they would be helping themselves and those in a similar position, which positive outlook can be credited to the training of the interviewers. In our case, my partner being from Zimbabwe where I have lived most of my life and where I hold citizenship, the training and the interviews worked out well. We worked out a procedure which utilised each of our advantages to best effect but naturally there was a lot to learn.

UL Final Year Project student

In my opinion the training held in Ennis was great. The lecturers made sure we knew and understood all the questions. Also, we were given some tips on carrying the interviews in terms of the questions themselves and behaviour with interviewees that I found very useful later on when interviewing community people.

UL Final Year Project student

The experience of carrying the interviews would have been different if the interviews were carried without a community colleague. Most of asylum seekers and refugees find it difficult to trust somebody from 'not one of them'. A community member carrying the interviews with me let the interviewees trust us and feel safe. At the same time, arriving to interviewees' houses to carry the interviews with a community worker made me feel confident and safe myself. I think delivering interviews without community worker would have been very frustrating.

UL Masters student

WHAT COMMUNITY RESEARCHERS SAID

I think the reality of community is that it's rich and it's messy and it doesn't fit into a nice neat schedule. But we had great flexibility and again I think we learned a lot in terms of the speed at which let's say a research institute has to work at, but also if they are serious about engaging with the community they must give some credit to the community has a different vibe. And if they are gifting their story they are gifting their experience and that must be accounted for in terms of deadlines etc. for research.

Development worker

Above those small difficulties, I was really glad to have the opportunity to work with all of you, I learned a lot, especially the professionalism used to deal with difficulties.

I thank you for the confidence and trust you put on me in offering me this position, I know that everything was not perfect, but I tried to do my best to fulfil my obligations.

I will be more that delighted, if in future, another opportunity to work with you is offered to me.

Community Liaison Worker

Ennis is multinational community I found it useful to work with someone who is competent in languages it helped the interviewee to express their views and experiences in Irish community.

Community Researcher

I successfully achieved my goals and I found it very educative by dealing with people from different nationalities to know their experiences back home and the community they are living.

Community Researcher

With the support and cooperation of the interviewees the objective of the entire project was achieved.

Community Researcher

One of the reasons or the basic reason that we were interested in it is, at the time I was working with Ennis Community Development Project, we ran a drop in for Travellers and refugees and asylum seekers. And in that drop in you would get very detailed stories about what was going on in people's lives. A really rich analysis from their perspective around the problems, the issues that needed to be challenged, even ideas around solutions. And we were really conscious that we needed to try and bring that voice forward. But we didn't necessarily have the full research skills to frame that. So the collaboration with UL was really useful in that we could actually work with people with expertise in framing research and analyzing research to gather all of that information and that data in a coherent way and be able to articulate it to the wider community and the society.

Deirdre Toomey, Human Rights and Equality Commission, former chair of Ennis CDP

In April 2010 as part of a commitment made to ensure feedback locally, five 'Count Me In' project pamphlets were produced with summaries about the project's work on: Doing Community Research; Minorities and Citizenship in Ennis; Children; Discrimination in Ennis; Making a Living.
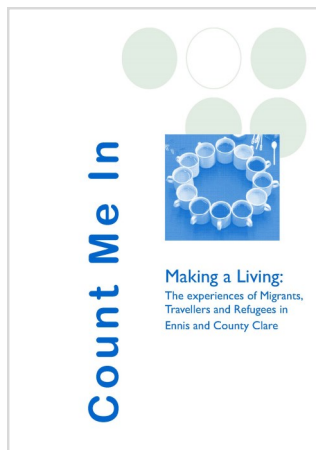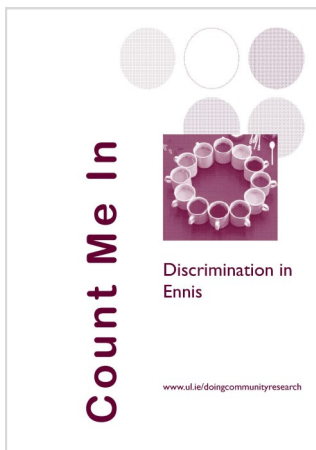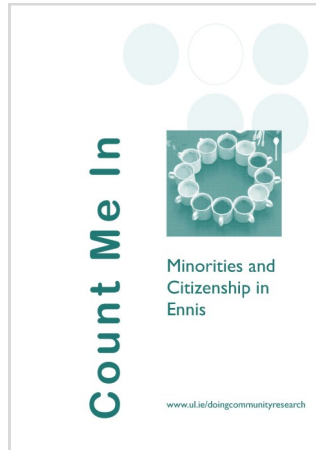
These pamphlets can be accessed at:
www.ul.ie/engage/node/2371

These information pamphlets were launched in Ennis on 29th April 2010 by the project partners (including Ennis CDP, Department of Politics and Public Administration, UL, Clare County Council, Ennis Traveller and Community and Ennis asylum and refugee communities).

Members of the Research Steering Committee at the launch of the '**Count Me In'** information pamphlets

The launch featured a community theatre piece entitled 'A day in the life of an Asylum Seeker' performed by ALA Galway. After the play, the cast invited the audience to ask their characters questions about what they had seen. This enabled the audience to ask questions about the asylum process directly to the characters - a single mother, an unaccompanied child, a single man, for example. It enabled the cast to give truthful answers, based on these characters, whilst maintaining the privacy of individual asylum seeker stories.

The cast of the ALA theatre company answer audience questions

PROJECT OUTPUTS

Community Research Certificates

11 University of Limerick certificates of participation were presented to the project's Community Researchers, which were accepted as 'recognised prior learning' by the UL mature student and access offices for student entry.

Thesis Contributions

Data from the research has been used by students within the department of politics & public administration:

Grigaliunaite, Inga (2007) *An Examination of the Rights and Discrimination Towards Asylum Seekers and Refugees*, unpublished MA dissertation, University of Limerick.

Ní Shé, Éidín (2011) *Ireland's contradictory welfare reality, globalization and a diversity of migration experiences: the case study of County Clare,* unpublished PhD thesis, University of Limerick.

O'Regan, D. (2008) 'To Travel or Not to Travel, is discrimination a question?' unpublished Final Year Project dissertation, University of Limerick.

O'Shea, C. (2008) Travellers as an Ethnic Group - Worth Campaigning for? A Case Study of Traveller and Ethnic Group Discrimination in Ennis, unpublished Final Year Project dissertation, University of Limerick.

Reports

Ní Shé, É., Lodge, T. and Adshead, M. (2009) 'Getting to Know You-A Local Study of the Needs of Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Co. Clare'. The Report Can be viewed at: **https://goo.gl/c87Ttm**

Collopy, S. (2009) Renting Life in Ireland: The Experiences of Young Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Children from Ethnic Minority Backgrounds Living in County Clare. The report can be viewed at: **www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/SocialInclusion/renting.pdf**

Conference Papers

Adshead, Lodge and Nì ShÈ, (2007) Layered Citizenship in a Globalised Economy' Conference Paper Presented at The Knowledge-Based Economy, Identities and the Transforming State Aarhus Denmark, 16th November 2007

Ní Shé, Éidín (2007) 'Internationalised labour force segmented by different degrees of access? The case of Co. Clare', Paper Presented at the Department of Politics & Public Administration Student/Staff Seminar, 28th November 2007

Ní Shé, Éidín (2008) ''I don't want to research something-I want to make a Difference!" Doing Community Research', Paper Presented at the Irish Social Policy Association Conference at Trinity College, 26th September, 2008

Ní Shé, Éidín (2009) 'Undertaking Emancipatory Research', Paper Presented to the Community University Partnership Programmes (CUPP) Conference II: 'Shared Passion-Different Perspective', University of Brighton, 3rd April 2009
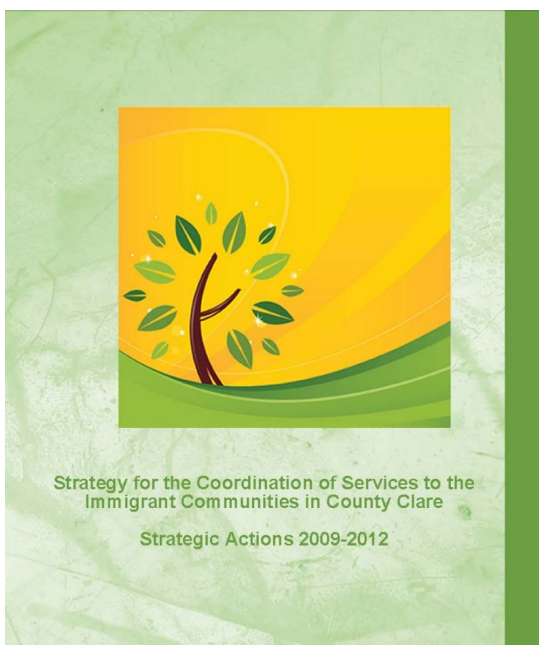
Journal Articles

Adshead, M. (2015) 'Engaged Scholarship at the University of Limerick: one response to the 'civic shift' in Irish Higher Education', *Social Alternatives,* Special Issue on 'Civic Roles, Random Callings: discerning the University mission', 34/2: 13-19

Adshead, M. Quillinan, B. (2016) 'Having it all? Transferring community oriented research principles to teaching and learning to develop better university engagement', *Educational Action Research,* 2016, DOI: 10.1080/09650792.2015.1124044

Ní Shé, Éidín (2009) 'Implementing Integration? State responses and the experience of immigrants and service providers in Co. Clare', *Translocations: Migration and Social Change. An inter-disciplinary open access E-journal,* 6/2: 1-20

Clare Immigrant Strategy

One immediate result arising from the report created by our project, was the creation of a multi-agency steering group in county Clare, designed to facilitate the feed back from the project's research findings regarding local service provision to immigrant communities and experiences of local service providers into better service provision. The multi-agency group undertook a county-wide consultation exercise in order to determine a county-wide strategy for provision of local services to immigrant populations in the county. This resulted in the launch in April 2009 of a three year multi-agency county strategy for the co-ordination of services to immigrants in County Clare.

The *Strategy for the Coordination of Services to the Immigrant Communities in County Clare. Strategic Actions 2009-2012* is available at: **https://goo.gl/0WP5e4**

Strategy for the Coordination of Services to the Immigrant Communities in County Clare

Strategic Actions 2009-2012

Launching the report, the Minister for Integration, Mr Conor Lenihan TD commended its approach:

As the experience of immigration is relatively new to us in Ireland, we must be innovative in our approach to the provision of services and learn from the experiences of other countries.

The partnership approach adopted to develop this report will be especially important in the implementation phase and I am delighted to see that a comprehensive list of goals and actions have been set down for responsible agencies.

I welcome the fact that many of the actions bring expertise together from different bodies and involve building up of linkages.

I commend all of those involved in the development of the strategy and I am sure that the linkages developed will be of immense benefit in the implementation stage.

Minister for Integration, Mr Conor Lenihan TD
Press Release, Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration, 02/04/2009

UL Teaching and Learning

At graduate level, the experience developed in this project was used to develop teaching material in the Department of Politics & Public Administration for the MA research methods module, as well as a new postgraduate module on 'Mainstreaming Social Inclusion'. The experience was also used to develop PhD training in Emancipatory Research and Ethics for the University of Limerick Winter School on Social Science Methods (now in its eighth year, see: **https://goo.gl/f0a7CM** and more recently the PPI Summer School, see: **https://goo.gl/H1GFtX).**

At undergraduate level, the 'Count Me In' project experience foreshadowed the development of the UL Practicum and was used as the basis for a successful proposal to the **UL Quality Improvement Fund in** a **December 2010** to develop an initiative to introduce this kind of applied research / service learning as a mainstreamed option for all UL students. Following much the same template as the Community Research Partnership developed in the 'Count Me In' project,

The **UL Practicum** enables students to engage in faculty-designed bespoke research projects and civic engagement in collaboration with external community partners. The UL Practicum is conceived of as a mechanism by which staff and students across the university may work together in inter disciplinary teams and projects with community partners to develop real-life experience of applied academic work. The UL Practicum was approved as part of the UL 'Broadening the Curriculum' initiative in May 2013 and is now available across all UL faculties.

The partnership has also created new links for teaching seminars and workshops between UL students and community researchers.

UL Task Force Report on Civic Engagement

In January 2012, as a follow on from the 'Count Me In' project, Maura Adshead was invited by UL Management Council to Chair a UL Task Force on Civic Engagement and to present recommendations for developing Goal 4 in the UL Strategic Plan, *Pioneering and Connected* regarding the university's mission role and goals in civic engagement.

A copy of the UL Task Force Report on Civic Engagement, which made 23 recommendations for action, all approved by Management Council and currently underway, is available in the UL Engage Report series at: **https://goo.gl/t165K9**

UL Engage

In September 2015, in accordance with the recommendations of the UL Task Force on Civic Engagement and the University of Limerick's Strategic Plan, **UL Engage** was established. The aim of UL Engage is to integrate civic engagement into the University's core missions in research, teaching and internationalization. UL Engage supports university/community collaborations in all shapes and sizes through a variety of new and existing UL programmes and projects. It serves as the hub for civic engagement activities across campus and works with staff in all faculties to amplify, incubate and co-ordinate the various ways that students, faculty and staff can work with communities to make a difference.

UL Engage website: www.ul.ie/engage

CONCLUSIONS

WHAT UL STUDENTS SAID ABOUT THE PROJECT

Working with somebody from the community was the best part of the entire project. Organising and delivering interviews with colleagues from the community gave a chance to get closer with them and understand the life of asylum seekers and refugees in Ireland better. Developing friendly relationships with community workers gave the feeling what is it like to be refused or discriminated by public services. Working with a colleague from Ennis community gave me a chance to see their daily routine and real worries of being the asylum seeker or refugee.

UL Masters student

First of all, I learned loads about the life of asylum seekers and refugees in Ireland. To know their experience made me feel grateful for my own situation (Lithuania is EU member since 2004 – being EU citizen makes life so much easier in many cases!!!) Secondly, I learned what community project is like (organisation, training, corporation with community people). Thirdly, now I have experience in carrying the interviews and processing the data through SPSS. Everything I have learned from doing this project will be very useful in future.

Personally I have always wanted to have my thesis written regarding to some project or live experience. Participation in this project provided me exactly what I was looking for – I was able to engage the theory and real experience in my MA dissertation.

UL MA student

My first impressions of the partnership project were a bit apprehensive, having not worked with members from either community in a project capacity before made it all the more challenging. The group meetings in Ennis brought around a clearer and more comprehensive view of the study while at the same time giving me time to integrate with the other participants and members from the community groups.

UL FYP student

Pre interaction with our partners from the communities made the interviews all that more comfortable and the conversation more free flowing, given that both myself and the interviewee had someone we both knew present.

UL FYP student

The experience was a rewarding one and brought to life some of the harsh realities of Third World politics which might otherwise have remained purely an arid theory.

UL undergraduate student

Overall the interviews exposed me to different experiences and opinions on the networks of necessity and how they can vary from person to person and community to community.

UL FYP student

Moving house can be a traumatic upheaval for many people. The comparison between moving house and being an asylum seeker is like comparing a broken finger with having brain surgery. The shock of starting life in a new country without friends, money or even the ability to communicate is bad enough. Added to the sense of dislocation is the frustration and worry over family and friends left behind, not knowing their fate, or when and if they will ever be seen again. The asylum seeker may have faced danger and experienced horrors and cruelties prior to their arrival in Ireland. Once arrived, asylum seekers may face years of indecision and delay here before they know if their asylum application is successful. During that time they live in hostels, subsist on nineteen euro a week and are not allowed to work. We interviewed only men for the report, women correctly being interviewed by female personnel, and their overriding concerns were firstly, their families at 'home' and secondly the status of their asylum application. Although understandably cagey about supplying information about their origins and the circumstances of their departure from their homelands, they were remarkably forthcoming on their institutionalised life in Ireland. It was a revelation to me, for example, to hear them talk about the overt racism they encounter on a daily basis and their almost humorous response to less obvious racism.

UL undergraduate student

*It was very interesting to work with a person with a different culture. I never did any work like that before.The training process was very good as I learned to be sensitive to the needs of people from different cultures. **Input of the questionnaire design** -There should be more done in research of how the questionnaire was designed. As a disabled person, I feel that people go off and research people with disabilities without giving their subject an input into the questionnaires or how the research is done. I would like if more research like this project was done with disabled people.*

UL undergraduate student

I got involved in the project when my lecturer informed me about the nature of the research. The whole project seemed like it would be a great learning experience for me and would provide a sound basis for my Final Year Project. My role was to accompany a member of the travelling community in visiting various members of the travelling community's homes to chat with them about their experiences of living in Ennis. Before the research commenced we were brought to Ennis for various training nights, the training was very informative and essential for all groups. I gained valuable interviewing skills and it gave us the opportunity to meet and get to know our research partners. My partner Bridget was a lovely person and we got on great; she had many laughs trying to direct me around Ennis. Upon visiting each house, we were met with tea, biscuits and whatever else we wanted. We were made to feel very welcome and usually met the whole family, not just the interviewee. The interviews made me aware of the many difficulties the travelling people face in their daily lives which I hope the research findings will highlight. Being involved in the Community research project was one of the most interesting, rewarding things I have ever done. The first hand experience will be invaluable in preparing my Final Year Project.

UL undergraduate student

Carrying out the interviews was very interesting from the point of view that it gave me the chance to see how people from other cultures do things. Some of the stories were harrowing – I did not expect to hear some the the details that I heard. There are people with disabilities within the refugee and asylum seeker community as well as within the Irish community. So we are more alike than different and Irish people should not be afraid of people from the refugee asylum seeker community. I am going to use the data for my FYP on the academic experiences of people with disabilities in third level education.

UL undergraduate student

WHAT COMMUNITY MEMBERS SAID ABOUT THE PROJECT

[-] what it meant to me was that I realised that there was a reciprocal learning. The community was able to benefit from having somebody to ask them questions directly and understand where they are and where they are coming from and at the same time I think the researcher from the University were able to realise that actually if you go direct to the person and ask them questions you get a more positive and strong results. So it was quite an enriching project and as I said it was reciprocal learning. We came up with community researchers within the community and it was very powerful I would say. And I was glad to be part of it.

Daudi Kutta, Community Member who had originally requested this research

I thought it was great. What it meant I think to me and for the Community Development Project was an awful lot of what you're picking up yourself – now there's an opportunity to not lose it because it's so heady to be operating in frontline and community development so you're picking up bits and pieces. So what happened with Count Me In was that it was a model that we could use to capture things that we might be capturing in an ad hoc way but not really being able to utilise as well as we might have liked to do. And the fact that, it was members of those communities who are actually engaged to get involved in bringing the work together and asking the questions and getting the responses back from the communities was a very progressive model I think. [-] It was a learning experience I think all around. I think for the communities that the people went out on behalf of our steering committee and our initiative, I think you know it has to be the way to go. So I'm not sure if we had everything spot on but I do believe that that was progressive and I do think that it worked very well from Ennis Community Development's point of view and I know for a lot of the other agencies around the table. We may not always have understood how complex it can be to do that kind of work. So I think that there was terrific learning and I would safely say, in my opinion especially now with reduced funding. [-] So basically, for us now I think we have even more opportunity to get out into the communities if we could do further research and maybe even a more refined model that's really what I would say. But certainly positive. Delighted to have the universities working with us.

Colette Bradley, Director, Ennis CDP

What did people get back? Some of them they have never been working with academics? Ok. Every time they see people come in researching them but this time they knew the ins and out – they knew everything. And even at the end they got a certificate which showed that they have been part of that process so that was very good. And of course after the research they were able to get a booklet which is not a very, very big volume of the data but something which they could very quickly understand what's happened.

Alphonse Basogomba Community Liaison Worker

Well it's been great experience. We've been working now as a continuity of the immigrant strategy through an organisation called IDEC Ireland which is partnership of community agencies and the universities and it's just been a good experience. I mean of course not every experience in the past has been as brilliant as it could be and it is important. The academic world has an awful lot to offer in terms of research and capacity to do research. But I think you know, ethics and issues around being mindful around community are really, really important and I think ... having community as part of every decision making will enable that to be carried out productively, effectively and correctly you know. So ... that's what I think. But it has been a really positive experience.

Elaine D'Alton, Project Co-ordinator, Clare Women's Network

Well I think there was huge achievements in the project. One of the reasons or the basic reason that we were interested in it is at the time I was working with Ennis Community Development Project and we ran a drop in for travellers and refugees and asylum seekers. And in that drop in you would get very detailed stories about what was going on in people's lives. A really rich analysis from their perspective around the problems. The issues that needed to be changed. Even ideas around solutions. And we were really conscious that we needed to try and bring that voice forward. But we didn't necessarily have the full research skills to frame that. So the collaboration with UL was really useful that we could actually work with people with expertise in framing research and analysing research to gather all of that information and that data in a coherent way and be able to articulate then that as a voice to a wider community and to the society.

Deirdre Toomey, Human Rights and Equality Commission, former Chair of the CDP

[-] I would call (this project) a 'jumping off board or platform' for which we have since done other research but also other engagements about [-] what value can a community group bring to a collaboration and what value can an academic organisation bring to a collaboration.? And that actually we both need each other. That the community in some ways, they have all the information sometimes, and the experience. So they have the lived knowledge and sometimes they have very good ideas about what the solutions are. But they don't have the power or the legitimacy to bring that about and the academic organisations have the legitimacy in terms of research. But probably have a difficult then in translating that into language and that people will engage with.

Ann Loftus, Community Development Worker

My experience through out the project is basically positive. The atmosphere - the excitement of community people working for the project – created only good memories.

Community Researcher

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Rights and Discrimination among the Asylum Seeker and Traveller Communities in Ennis
Questionnaire for People with experience of the Asylum process

Section 1: Background
1.1 Language of interview
1.2 If in English try and ascertain level of English language comprehension and speech
fluency:
    ☐   Generally fluent
    ☐   Occasional difficulties in comprehension, possibly due to accent, etc.
    ☐   Basic comprehension and speaking ability: questions need to explained
1.3 Gender (tick correct box):
    ☐   Male
    ☐   Female
1.4 How old are you?
    ☐   18-25
    ☐   25-30
    ☐   30-40
    ☐   40-65
    ☐   65+
1.5 Are you married or living with a partner? (tick correct box):
    ☐   Yes
    ☐   No
1.6 Do you have children and if so how many?
1.7 Do you have members of your family living with you in Ennis? If so, please could you
give us details about the family members living with you? (Interviewer: try and establish the
respondent's position in the family structure).
(Open answer)

1.8 Have you left behind in your home country members of your family with whom you were
living, in the same household, at the time of your departure?
 (Open answer)

1.9 If your application is successful would you like to bring other members of your family to
Ireland?
    ☐   Yes – immediate family
    ☐   Yes – extended family
    ☐   No

1.10 What is your religion? (tick correct box)
    ☐   Roman Catholic
    ☐   Anglican/Methodist/Presbyterian
    ☐   Evangelical/Pentecostal
    ☐   Other Christian
    ☐   Muslim
    ☐   Buddhist
    ☐   Hindu
    ☐   Jewish
    ☐   Orthodox Christian
    ☐   Other
    ☐   No religion

1.11 Which language do you use at home when you are speaking to members of your family?

1.12 In your home country, which language did you use at work?

1.13 What is your nationality? If you prefer not to tell us your nationality from which region of the world have you come?
Nationality:_____

- North America
- Central America
- South America
- West Africa
- Central Africa
- East Africa
- North Africa
- Southern Africa
- Europe
- Middle East
- Rest of Asia

1.14 Did you bring a passport or an identity document from your home country?

- Passport
- ID document
- No documentation
- Prefer not to say

1.15 Can you tell me about your educational experience? (Tick correct box)

- No formal education.
- Completed less than six years of school.
- Matriculated from secondary school
- Attended third level institution
- Completed third level education
- Trade/technical qualification
- Adult learning qualification

1.16 What is your highest educational qualification?

1.17 Do you have in your possession your educational certificates?

- Yes
- No

1.18 Before you left your home country were you working? If so what was your last occupation at home? (Tick correct box)

- At school or college
- Unemployed
- Housewife
- Manual labourer
- Machinist
- Farmer
- Craftsman/woman
- Self employed businessman/woman
- Clerical/sales
- Professional (specify)
- Other (specify)

1.19 What is your legal residential status?

- ☐ Stage 1
- ☐ Refused asylum awaiting appeal outcome
- ☐ Refused asylum subsidiary status
- ☐ Received deportation letter
- ☐ Irish born children
- ☐ Leave to remain
- ☐ Refugee status

Section 2: Rights and entitlements

2.1 What part of Ennis are you living in?

2.2 At the place where you live how far is it to the nearest useful shops?

- ☐ Very close/ easy to walk, just a few minutes
- ☐ Very far/ difficult to get to

2.3 If you have children, how far do they have to travel to school?

- ☐ Very close/ easy to walk, just a few minutes
- ☐ Very far/ difficult to get to

2.4 Do you have a car or easy access to a car?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Have a car
- ☐ Easy access to a car (owned by a family member, neighbour or co resident)

2.5 What kind of accommodation do you live in?

- ☐ Single family house rented from private landlord
- ☐ Single family house owned by local council
- ☐ Shared house
- ☐ Staying with friend in one of above
- ☐ Apartment
- ☐ Shared apartment
- ☐ Hostel
- ☐ Bed and breakfast

2.6 At the place where you live do you have your own bedroom?

- ☐ Own bedroom
- ☐ Shared with members of my family
- ☐ Shared with non family members

2.7 Does your family live together in a single room or more than one room?

- ☐ One room
- ☐ More than one room
- ☐ Not applicable: single

2.8 How many people live in the house where you are staying?

2.9 How many people have to share the kitchen?

2.10 How many people share the bathroom and toilet?

2.11 How many people share the lounge/dayroom? (Ask this question only of interviewee is living in accommodation shared by different families or in a hostel)

2.12 Do you cook your own food or are your meals provided?

- ☐ Own cooking
- ☐ Meals provided

2.13 If the food is provided is it adequate? (Tick all the boxes which the interviewee agrees with)
- ☐ Badly cooked
- ☐ Dull but adequate
- ☐ Sometimes good
- ☐ Usually appetising and nutritious
- ☐ Objectionable on religious or other ethical grounds
- ☐ Culturally appropriate
- ☐ Took some time to get used to because it was new to me

2.14 Is your accommodation warm enough in winter?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

2.15 If you live in a hostel is there a curfew and do you have to sign your self in and out?
- ☐ Don't live in a hostel
- ☐ Live in a hostel no curfew no signing
- ☐ Live in a hostel with curfew and/or signing

2.16 How would you describe your accommodation with respect to space, comfort and security?
- ☐ Accommodation is spacious, comfortable and safe
- ☐ Accommodation is spacious and comfortable but does not feel very safe
- ☐ Accommodation is safe but crowded and/or uncomfortable
- ☐ Accommodation is unsafe, crowded and uncomfortable

2.17 What ages are your children (ask this question if the children are here in Ennis)
Child Age
Child 1
Child 2
Child 3
Child 4
Child 5

2.18 Are your children going to school?
- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes at primary school
- ☐ Yes at primary school and secondary school
- ☐ Yes at secondary school

2.19 If your children attend school have you met their teachers?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

2.20 How often have you met them?
- ☐ Once only
- ☐ Quite often
- ☐ Every term

2.21 How would you describe your children's experience at school?
- ☐ Unhappy/unsettled/upset
- ☐ Seem to be settled/okay
- ☐ Fairly settled and happy and making friends
- ☐ Very settled and happy and making friends

2.22 How are they doing in their classes?
- ☐ Completely bewildered
- ☐ Find it difficult to keep up with the other children
- ☐ Language difficulties
- ☐ Difficult at first but are making progress
- ☐ They are doing well

2.23 Is their teacher helpful? Do your children like him/her?
- ☐ Teacher is helpful and supportive
- ☐ Children seem to like him/her
- ☐ Teacher pays them no attention
- ☐ Children are nervous of their teacher

2.24 Have your children made friends at school?
- ☐ They don't seem to have made friends
- ☐ Yes, though mainly with the children of other asylum seekers
- ☐ Yes, and with Irish children as well.
- ☐ Yes, with our neighbours

2.25 If your children have made friends have they been invited to their friends' homes
- ☐ Have not made friends
- ☐ Have made friends but not been invited
- ☐ Have been invited
- ☐ Provide example of such an occasion

2.26 Do your children have special educational needs?
- ☐ Yes (specify)
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

2.27 If the answer to the last question is yes, are these needs being met?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

2.28 Do your children attend homework club?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

2.29 Do your children attend crèche or preschool?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

2.30 Have you attended any adult education classes?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not available
- ☐ Would like to but can't because I must look after children
- ☐ Would like to but can't for other reasons (specify)

2.31 Have you or members of your family attended any English language classes?
- ☐ Would like to but have been unable to
- ☐ Classes are not available
- ☐ Don't need to
- ☐ Have attended
- ☐ Members of my family have attended
- ☐ Would like to but can't because I must look after children
- ☐ Would like to but can't for other reasons (specify)

2.32 Have you or members of your family seen a doctor or a nurse since arriving in Ennis?
- ☐ No, but I and/or they don't need to.
- ☐ We would like to but we haven't been able to
- ☐ Yes, when we have needed to.

2.33 If the answer to the last question was yes, when did you last see a doctor or a nurse?

2.34 If you have seen a doctor or a nurse where did you visit them?
- ☐ At his or her surgery
- ☐ They came to my home/where I live
- ☐ In the local health centre
- ☐ Other (specify)

2.35 Have you or your wife/partner had children here?

2.36 If so what kind of support did you receive before and after the birth?
- ☐ Attentive care by GP
- ☐ Inadequate care by GP
- ☐ Short-term care for other children while in hospital
- ☐ Vaccinations
- ☐ Visits from public health nurse

2.37 Do you have a health condition that requires regular care from a doctor or a nurse or that needs regular medication?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

2.38 If the answer to the last question was yes, do you receive the care and the medicine?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

2.39 Do you find it difficult or is it easy to communicate with doctors and other HSE/Health board medical people in Ennis or Limerick? For example, is it easy or hard for you to make them understand your health problems?

- At first it was difficult but now it is better
- No problems in making the doctor understand my health needs
- They don't seem to believe me
- Yes, because they ask me questions that I find embarrassing to answer
- Yes, this is very difficult, mainly because of language problems

2.40 When you last attended Limerick or Ennis hospital how long did you have to wait until you received attention (specify which hospital in answer).

- Have not attended

Waited for

2.41 Have you or a member of your family visited a dentist since your arrival in Ennis?

- Don't need to.
- Would like to but have not been able to.
- Yes.

2.42 Have you or a member of your family visited an optician/opthalmist/ eye doctor since your arrival in Ennis?

- Don't need to.
- Would like to but have not been able to.
- Yes.

2.43 Have you or a member of your family visited a speech and hearing therapist?

- Don't need to
- Would like to but have not been able to
- Yes

2.44 Do you have any kind of disability?

- No
- Partially sighted
- Hearing disability
- Movement impaired (e.g. need to use wheelchair)
- Other (specify)

2.45 Since arriving in Ireland, have you received any support with respect to your disability? (specify)

2.46 Do you or members of your family need counselling or psychological support as a consequence of the experiences that compelled you to leave your home country? For example, have you or members of your family had an appointment with a psychiatrist or a mental health nurse.

- Don't need it.
- Would like to try such services but they don't seem to be available
- Would like to try such services but don't know how to obtain them
- Yes, have received such support

2.47 Generally, how well have you and your family been treated in Ennis (and Limerick) by doctors and other health workers?

- Very helpful and supportive
- Generally helpful and supportive
- They have tried hard but they don't understand our needs
- Not very helpful
- Unhelpful

2.48 Do you receive any of the following?

- €19.10 weekly personal allowance?
- Social Welfare allowance
- Job seekers allowance
- Rent allowance
- Child benefit
- Other (specify)

2.49 Roughly, can you tell me how you spend this money?
(Open answer)
Item (Food/recreation/ clothes/
transport etc) Cost Frequency

2.50 Is television available in your accommodation?

- Yes
- No

2.51 If your answer to the question is yes, what type of programmes do you watch?

- RTE
- Satellite Sky/Chorus
- Satellite programmes from home

2.52 Do you have access to any other kinds of entertainment than television?

- Nearby or on-site sporting facilities (including table tennis)
- Public library
- Pub/bar
- Community centre
- Youth club
- Internet
- Cinema
- Theatre/Arts Centre
- Watching Sport
- GAA
- Other

2.53 Do you attend a local church or mosque or temple?

- Yes
- No

2.54 Have you got to know local residents through attending religious services?

- Yes
- No

2.55 Does a minister of your faith regularly visit where you live?

- ▯ Yes
- ▯ No

2.56 Do you feel safe in the place where you live?

- ▯ Yes, all the time
- ▯ No, not at weekends
- ▯ No, most days I feel unsafe

2.57 If not, what are the main threats to your security that you perceive?

- ▯ Other asylum seekers who live in my residence threaten my personal safety
- ▯ Local residents seem hostile when I encounter them in street or in shops
- ▯ Other (specify)

2.58 If you were the victim of an assault or any other kind of crime would you report it to the police?

- ▯ Yes
- ▯ No

2.59 If the answer to the last question is no, why would you not report such a crime? (Tick the answer(s)that are closest to being correct)

- ▯ Because the police would not bother about a crime committed against an asylum seeker
- ▯ Because I do not want to draw attention to myself
- ▯ Because I do not want to get the community into trouble
- ▯ Because I am frightened that I will be assaulted again
- ▯ Because I do not trust the police
- ▯ Because I am frightened of the police
- ▯ In my home country I was frightened of police and this makes me reluctant
- ▯ Other, specify

2.60 Are there particular kinds of help that you need that you have not received?
(Open answer)

2.61 Briefly, describe for me a typical day. To make this easier, just tell me what you might be doing at the following times.
Morning
Lunchtime
Afternoon
Evening

2.62 If you need information about how to obtain any kind of help (health, educational, etc.) who would you ask for advice?
(Open answer)

3.60 In an emergency, if for example you needed to visit the doctor urgently, is there somebody whom you can rely on to look after the children during your absence? (Interviewer: in this question we are trying to identify whether the respondent has developed a supportive social network, so try ascertain the details of any such arrangements, if the answer is positive).
(Open answer)

Section 3: Encounters with Officials and with Service Providers.

3.1 When did you last meet the Refugee Applications Commissioner?

3.2 When you were completing your application for asylum did you receive help in filling in the form and lodging the application?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

3.3. From whom did you receive help?

- ☐ From a solicitor/lawyer provided by the Refugee legal service
- ☐ From a solicitor/lawyer which I/we or a friend paid
- ☐ From a friend
- ☐ Other

3.4 Did you need help from an interpreter when lodging your application?

- ☐ Did not need such help.
- ☐ Did need it but interpreter was not available
- ☐ Was helped by an interpreter

3.5 Do you have to report to an immigration officer? Or a Police Station?

- ☐ Yes, here in Ennis
- ☐ Yes, in Dublin
- ☐ No

3.6 How often must you go to report?

3.7 How many times have you reported to the immigration officer?

3.8 Are these officers polite and helpful?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

3.9 Have you had any contact with the Refugee Appeals Tribunal?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

3.10 Have you received any legal advice or any other kind of legal assistance?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

3.11 If your answer to the above is yes, from whom have you received legal help?
(open answer)

3.12 Have you had any contact with any other officials in government agencies including health services, social welfare, or the county council?

- ☐ No

Specify

3.13 Have you had any encounters with the Gardaí (police)?

☐   No

Specify:

3.14 With social workers/family support workers

☐   No

Specify

3.15 Do you find the services supplied by family support workers useful?

☐   Yes

☐   No

3.16 If your answer is yes, could you tell us what sort of services have been especially helpful?

(Open answer)

3.17 Have you had any serious disagreements with people who have offered services or support?

☐   No

Specify

3.18 In general how helpful have been the various officials and service providers whom u have encountered since arriving in Ireland (Fieldworker: explain that you are going to ask some questions to get an idea of what these meetings have been like. Use: use the following table)

Very helpful and Reassuring
Helpful
Unhelpful
Very unhelpful and hostile or Intimidating
Have not accessed or encountered
Have tried to access but not succeeded
Refugee Applications Commissioner
Immigration Officer
Refugee Appeals Tribunal
Gardaí
FAS/Dept of Social and Family Affairs
Public Health Nurse
Community Welfare Officers
Social Workers/Family Support
Dentists
Disability Services
Mental Health Services
Other health
Local Housing Authority
Education or teachers
Other services providers (specify)

Section 4: Social Relationships

4.1 Since arriving in Ennis have you made friends? (Tick whichever is applicable)
- Not really
- Only social contact with other asylum seekers with whom I am living
- Have made friends more widely within the asylum seeker community
- With parents of children's friends at school
- With local Irish people
- Have made friends with compatriots who live in Ennis
- Have made friends with people in the immigrant community who are not compatriots (specify nationality)

4.2 What was the last social event you attended? (This can be quite casual – a cup of tea with a friend or a night out at the pub or more elaborate, a shared meal, a party, a Christening or similar celebration)

4.3 Are there groups of people within the asylum community to which you belong that provide organised social activities?
- Faith congregation
- Sports team
- Charitable association
- National association
- Other (specify)

4.4 Do you have family members or people that you used to know at home who are now living in Ireland as legal residents with refugee status or as full Irish citizens?
- No
- Yes, friends
- Yes, family
- Yes, both

4.5 Have you been in touch with them?
- Yes
- No

4.6 Have you met any members of the refugee community in Ennis who come from your country and who have already obtained refugee status?
- No
- Yes, but not very often
- Yes, frequently

4.7 Do you feel that you or your family members have experienced any racism or discrimination since your arrival in Ennis? (Tick whichever are applicable)
- No, not at all.
- Not very often
- Some hostility in everyday encounters with local people, in shops and suchlike
- From other children at school
- From teachers
- From officials

4.8 Can you give me an example of your own experience of racism in Ennis?
(Open answer)

Section 5: Aims and Aspirations

5.1 If your application is successful would you stay in Ennis if you could?
- ▢ Yes – if I could find work
- ▢ No
- ▢ Don't know

5.2 If not, where in Ireland would you prefer to live?
(Open answer)

5.3 Why would you like to move there?
(Open answer)

5.4 Would you like to obtain more education?
- ▢ Yes
- ▢ No

5.5 If your answer to the last question was yes, what sort of education would you like?
- ▢ English
- ▢ Basic/elementary
- ▢ Diploma/vocational
- ▢ University

5.6 What kind of work would you like to do?
(Open answer)

Section 6: Experience as an asylum seeker

6.1 Can you tell us a little bit about your recent experience of leaving home and your journey to Ireland? If you would rather not we can skip this question but it would help our research if we knew why you decided to leave your home country

6.2 What was the date of your arrival in Ireland?

6.3 How long did you spend at the Dublin Reception Centre?

6.4 When were you sent to Ennis?

6.5 Did you come to Ennis straight from Dublin or did you stay in other places as well?

6.6 Did you or members of your family who were accompanying you need medical attention at the time of your arrival in Dublin? If so, what kind of attention did you or they need?

6.7 If you need information about the progress of your asylum application who would you ask?

6.8 Do you believe that the asylum procedure is fair?
- ▢ No
- ▢ Not very
- ▢ Fair
- ▢ Altogether fair

Additional points:

Appendix 2: List of Focus Groups

1. Clare VEC Tutors Focus Group, 15/5/07, VEC Ennis

2. Clare VEC Students Focus Group, 15/5/07, VEC Ennis

3. Social Integration Focus Group, 17/5/07, Temple Gate Hotel Ennis

4. Housing & Accommodation Focus Group, 17/5/07, Ennis Town Council Civic Office

5. Health and Welfare Focus Group 21/5/07 HSE Tobertaoiscain Physiotherapy Department, Ennis

6. Ennistymon Ethnic Minority Focus Group, 28/5/07, Fall Hotel Ennistymon

7. Ennis Ethnic Minorities Focus Group 28/05/07, Temple Gate Hotel Ennis

8. Clare Care Focus Group, 29/5/07, Clare Care, Ennis

9. Scarriff Ethnic Minorities Group, 1/6/07, Derg House Scarriff

10. Primary Education Focus Group, 5/6/07, Clare Education Centre, Ennis

11. Kilrush Ethnic Minorities Focus Group, 7/6/2007, Kilrush Family Resource Centre, Kilrush

12. Knockalisheen Residents Focus Group, 13/6/07, University of Limerick 13. Knockalisheen Service Providers (HSE) Focus Group, 19/6/07, River House, Ennis