



SOMRA

Intellectual Output 1

Executive Summary

Ireland



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The SOMRA project - Supporting meaningful Occupations for Migrants, Refugees, and Asylum seekers - offers an innovative approach to tackling climate change and refugee crises, by engaging refugees, asylum seekers and migrants (MRAs) in meaningful occupations that transform them into environment role models with a sustainable impact in their new and previous home.

To achieve this, the SOMRA project will facilitate:



Findings for the holistic study report were collected via desk and infield research – interviews with migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers (MRAs), professionals working with MRAs and NGO (non-governmental organisations) representatives.

NGOs in Ireland

Ireland has around 32,000 'not-for-profit' organisations that operate independently from the Irish government. These organisations are spread across the country and cover a wide variety of sectors, with the main charities in Ireland being in:

1. Education and Research (3829)
2. Local Development & Housing (1547)
3. Religion (986)
4. Arts, Culture Media (565)

Main NGO Networks in Ireland

NGO Networks in Ireland are influential because:

1. They can provide research, educational materials and policy perspectives that may otherwise not be missing from debate.
2. The most influential NGO's become members of NGO network groups which work collectively to push forward their charitable purposes.

Some of the most influential of these organisations include:

1. The National Women's Council of Ireland.

- a. Is the leading national representative organisation for women and women's groups in Ireland.
- b. NWCi aims to lead action for the achievement of women's and girls' equality through mobilising, influencing, and building solidarity.

2. Activelink

- a. Its popular website offers a variety of community development, of communication services and channels to NGO's who are interested in community development.
- b. Their website offers notice boards that connect people and organisations with events, vacancies and training available across the country.

3. Dochas

- a. Its vision is of a world where poverty and marginalisation are unacceptable, and where every person has the right to live a life in dignity.
- b. Their purpose is to be a meeting place and a leading voice for organisations that want Ireland to be a world leader in efforts to bring about global justice.

How to set up an NGO in Ireland.

In order to set up an NGO in Ireland, it is important to identify the charitable purpose of the organisation and to apply to the CRO for permission. In line with the Charities Act 2009, organisations can be set up to achieve any of these four goals:

- The prevention or relief of poverty or economic hardship;
- The advancement of education;
- The advancement of religion;



- Other purposes of benefit to a community.

The legal structures within Ireland

In Ireland, those wishing to establish an NGO can choose from one of three legal forms; an unincorporated association; a company limited by guarantee – not having share capital; and a charitable trust. Based on the goals and objectives and the ultimate scope that the NGO wishes to achieve, they will prefer to choose one of these three legal structures.

To ensure that the NGO conducts itself in line with legal requirements, the Irish Government has enacted a wide range of legislation to protect the interests of all stakeholders. The Companies Act 2014 was established to simplify the operation of a company in Ireland and to ensure that legal documents, such as the Constitution, are in place and fit-for-purpose. The Charities Governance Code ensures that NGO's operate in line with the legal and charitable requirements and actively take steps to mitigate against failures by governance boards to run the NGO in line with legal requirements and act with integrity, responsibility and honesty at all times.

Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers (MRAs)- Definitions

An asylum seeker is a person who flees their home country because of a major threat to their life, arrives in another country, whichever way they can, makes themselves known to the authorities, and submits an asylum application. Asylum seekers have a legal right to stay in the UK while waiting for a decision to be made on their application.

A refugee: has proven that they would be at risk if returned to their home country, has had their claim for asylum accepted by the Home Office, has permission to stay in the UK either long term or indefinitely.

The situation of low qualified migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Ireland

Direct Provision centres began in 2000 as a short-term measure to house migrants, yet still holds 7,000 migrants in 2021, including children. Residents are often confined to small rooms, usually shared with other migrants you may not know, and more often limited in their ability to cook, or even leave, their facility. Along with board and healthcare, they are provided with a stipend of €40 per week. Since 2004, the right to nationality by birth is no longer allowed.

Barriers for MRAs to set up an NGO



Language. MRAs that arrive to a new country often do not have good foreign language skills and can experience barriers in communication. Good language skills are not only crucial when trying to find employment, but also integrating into the community. In addition, some persons may be illiterate which creates extra barriers and creates the need for additional support. It is quite

common that migrants are put or put themselves in groups with people from the same country. This does not particularly help with integration and language learning, there must be mixing with people from other countries and effort from the migrants to want to do this. One to one mentorship can be extremely helpful.

Qualifications. In addition to the language barrier, with refugees in particular, skills and qualifications gained in their home countries are often not recognised. Migrants coming from other EU countries have an easier transition, as their certificates are either recognized or can be transferred; however, this is very different and much more difficult for third country nationals.



Mental and physical health. Inability to continue their old jobs can often frustrate and discourage refugees and asylums seekers, which can add to their trauma that they often have experienced in their home countries. Trauma needs a long-term support to heal. If they can heal their trauma, they will be able to overcome other barriers and needs such as social needs, language, and educational barriers.



Education. More one-to-one support is needed to help children and young people to achieve well during their educational journey, however, often a lack of resources available do not allow this.

Racism. Many migrants, refugees and asylum seekers will often experience racism, even if they have lived in a country for a while. The main challenge is the way the broader community thinks of and behaves towards migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. The mindset of a lot of people needs to change because everyone should have an opportunity and rights to food, warm place to sleep and respect, among others.

Permits. Migrants from outside of the EU and EEA who are trying to access the labour market must have an employment permit in order to gain employment in Ireland. Often, prior to obtaining a work permit, an individual has received a job offer from an Irish company who sponsors the individual during their stay.

Volunteering

To support those who are interested in volunteering, there are a myriad of options available to them. These include:

1. Volunteer.ie Website: <https://www.volunteer.ie>

This website has a variety of options to volunteer including searching within your radius or your hours of availability.

2. St. Vincent de Paul: <https://www.svp.ie/get-involved/volunteer.aspx>.

This is the oldest charitable organisation in the country and with a large collection of charity shops spread across the country, there are many opportunities to lend a hand.

It is important to ensure that prior to working with children, police clearance must be obtained from the Gardai.

Conclusion

Various bodies and NGOs offer significant support to MRAs. Setting up an NGO is quite formalised in Ireland and comes with a cost and certain legal and financial obligation. As the interviews have shown, various needs and gaps exist in Ireland that could be addressed. More actions are necessary to find solutions for the current barriers and gaps that MRAs face for the welfare of MRAs and their integration in the local community

