

European Refugee Fund

2010 - 2013

Final Outputs and Outcomes Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND TO THE EUROPEAN REFUGEE FUND

The general objective of the European Refugee Fund (ERF) is to support EU countries' efforts in receiving asylum seekers, refugees and displaced persons. The ERF also supports resettlement programmes and actions related to the integration of refugees.

BACKGROUND TO THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

In November 2010, Pobal contracted NEXUS Research Co-operative to design a monitoring and evaluation framework for the ERF and the European Integration Fund (EIF) in Ireland, to address a number of weaknesses in the existing arrangements. Following wide consultation, it was finalised in March 2011¹. The resulting framework incorporated three inter-related levels as follows:

- Final programme evaluation report, contracted by the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration to an independent evaluator(s).
- Programme-level evaluation which included a focus on programme level outputs and outcomes and, separately on, a thematic evaluation.
- Project-level monitoring and evaluation with a focus on monitoring of progress, process evaluation, project-level thematic learning and project-level outputs and outcomes evaluation.

The new framework was subsequently implemented by the 23 groups funded under the EIF and ERF Programmes. The present report comprises the final programme-level evaluation of the ERF Programme, covering the entire period from July 1st 2010 to October 31st 2013.

Two major sources of data were drawn upon. Extensive data, quantitative and qualitative, was gathered from projects through online *outputs and outcomes surveys*. The project-level final evaluations, submitted at the end of each project, were also utilised extensively.

INTERVENTIONS AND OUTPUTS

Outputs are distinguished from outcomes in the report in several ways. Outputs emerge as immediate results of project interventions. They tend to be under the direct influence of projects and represent means to ends rather than ends in themselves. Each intervention usually aims at achieving a determined and known set of outputs.

Outcomes, on the other hand, tend to emerge over a longer period. They can be influenced by many factors, and confer actual benefits on the target group.

Interventions are intended to begin sequences of events that result first in outputs and then in outcomes.

The ERF projects have, in terms of sheer volume, produced a large number of outputs in the three year period covered. A broad aggregation of the number of asylum seekers and

1 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the *European Refugee Fund* and *European Integration Fund*. Final Report March 1st 2011. NEXUS Research.

refugees participating in the activities of the 10 projects amounts to 10,013² people. With perhaps a degree of duplication in the figures, 5,115 asylum seekers and 2,176 refugees were direct beneficiaries of specific services. A further 741 members of the target groups attended a series of themed information clinics and workshops. 1,554 asylum seekers and refugees participated in intercultural dialogue activities and 427 people participated and benefitted from capacity building activities directed at the statutory and community / voluntary sectors. A gender breakdown indicates that about 30% of beneficiaries were women.

However, the key issue is not the volume but the *nature* of these services, some of which are once-off and limited in nature while others are intensive and ongoing. The following points include some highlights:

- **Drop-in centres**, offered by five of the ten projects, saw 1,414 individual asylum seekers and 1,455 individual refugees. The average number of visits by each asylum seeker, at about ten, was nearly treble that of each refugee. The total number of visits made by both groups totalled 19,258 visits.
- **Outreach, information and advice** visits were made by three projects to 2,169 people, all but a handful of them asylum seekers. 60% of visits were made to female asylum seekers.
- In all, 38 **themed workshop and clinics** were delivered by five projects to 741 people from the target groups.
- **Training and education**, in the form of English language but also other accredited and non-accredited courses, was delivered by seven projects. A total of 983 people enrolled in courses. 314 asylum seekers and 112 refugees enrolled for English language training. In other subjects, 345 asylum seekers and 124 refugees participated in non-accredited training, and 21 asylum seekers and 67 refugees took accredited training courses. By the end of the programme, the vast majority of people had successfully completed their course, with many completing more than one course.
- **Young people** were targeted by six projects. These included both education and non-educational activities. 269 young asylum seekers and refugees benefitted from educational supports. 527 young people from the target groups participated in other youth activities. 78% of the participants were asylum seekers, and a good gender balance was evident.
- **Legal advice and advocacy support** was provided by four projects to 309 people. 80% of beneficiaries were asylum seekers. Support ranged from general legal advice, support to access free legal aid and from additional support in interactions with immigration and social welfare services.
- **Counselling and other forms of therapy** were delivered to a total of 95 people, mostly refugees, 63 of them women.
- A diverse range of actions encouraging **intercultural and interfaith dialogue** was organised by four projects, attracting 2,874 people to 40 events nationwide. 54% of participants came from the target groups and the rest was divided between Irish and other non-Irish nationalities. One-off events included a winter concert, an anti-racism photo exhibition, celebrations of Africa Day, World Refugees Day and International Women's Day. Ongoing activities included film clubs, cookery demonstrations and women's groups.

2 This represents the grand total of asylum seekers and refugees benefitting from direct supports plus the total number of those participating in intercultural activities plus the number of asylum seekers and refugees participating in capacity building activities in the statutory, community and voluntary sector. See Tables 13, 14 and 15 for more information.

Other interventions focused on working with **service providers** rather than asylum seekers or refugees themselves. This work involved the statutory sector (seven projects) and community voluntary sector (eight projects), through training courses, seminars and other regular support.

Capacity building in service co-ordination, in delivery and in interacting with the target groups, included activities such as:

- One-to-one meetings with statutory sector workers including Gardaí, social workers, doctors, community welfare staff and others, with participation of people from target groups.
- Formal training courses for public employees of various kinds.
- Workshops.
- Creation of forums to facilitate interaction and consultation.
- Seeking participation in project committees and structures.

Of the 2,109 people participating in 552 capacity building activities (mostly one-to-one meetings) for both statutory and community voluntary sectors organisations, 70% were Irish.

OUTCOMES

The 12 ERF programme outcomes represent specific benefits for asylum seekers, refugees and/or wider society starting from reception and moving along the pathway to integration. The outcomes complement each other and build cumulatively to achieve the desired goal. The programme outcomes were grouped under two broad categories or ‘dimensions’. First is the *community and social dimension* i.e. the way in which the target groups can relate to and integrate within their communities. Second is the *service provision dimension* i.e. the manner and extent to which asylum seekers and refugees can access and use public and community / voluntary services.

Limitations in available evidence meant that outcomes from some project interventions could not be considered in this report. This is not to say that some projects did not have beneficial outcomes; only that the credible evidence available was insufficient to determine their extent.

Overall, the ERF has been particularly successful in improving service quality and accessibility, and has supported the reception and integration of asylum seekers and refugees, at a community and social level, to a lesser extent.

Evidence of Community and Social Integration

The overall evidence available demonstrates that the ERF has contributed positively to two programme outcomes and partially to another outcome of social and community integration.

The ERF had a positive impact on enhancing the life skills and personal development of a large number of young people and adults (outcome 1). Social supports delivered by drop-in projects and English language courses were largely responsible. Non-language training programmes and counselling also contributed, although, the extent of their impact is not as clear.

The programme was also effective in enabling a significant number of asylum seekers and refugees to become involved in community groups or in local sport and recreational activities (outcome 3). However, there was little concrete evidence demonstrating enhanced day-to-day

interaction between the target groups and the local community (outcome 2), or enhanced capacity of the target groups to engage in collective action and civil society (outcome 4).

As already noted, significant numbers of the target group did access training as a result of the programme but the capacity of asylum seeking and refugee adults to access *mainstream education* does not appear to have substantially increased (outcome 5). The impact on the capacity of refugee adults to access employment opportunities was also limited (outcome 5). However, The ERF did demonstrate success in increasing access to mainstream education for children and young people.

Evidence of Improved Service Provision to Asylum Seekers and Refugees

The findings show that the ERF made a significant impact on a number of outcomes relating to service provision in Ireland.

The provision of information, referrals and advocacy, through dedicated drop-in centres and outreach, has significantly reduced hurdles to accessing services for a large number of asylum seekers and refugees (outcome 6). Particularly isolated groups, e.g. resettled refugees and LGBT people, gained substantially from these interventions.

There have been considerable improvements in the skills and capacity amongst staff in the community / voluntary and statutory sectors. Some evaluations have also highlighted cases where the capacity of whole organisations was enhanced (outcome 8). However, at this stage, the extent to which there has been greater embedding of interculturalism amongst these organisations is unclear (outcome 10).

There is also significant evidence of improved collaboration between statutory and community voluntary sector service providers leading to better co-ordination and procedures in their work with asylum seeking and refugee service users (outcome 9).

The findings also indicate positive evidence of immediate policy and practice changes among agencies and service providers leading to a wide range of improvements for the target groups (outcome 12). These include new referrals procedures between organisations and improvements in the content of English language training programmes.

Sustainability and Mainstreaming

There is substantial evidence that quite a number of interventions are continuing to generate or sustain outcomes through different forms of mainstreaming (outcome 11). Mainstreaming and integration strategies have been critical in ensuring that services continue to meet the needs of the target groups. The commitment of projects to maintain certain policies and interventions should enable the ERF's impact to continue and multiply into the future.

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE EUROPEAN REFUGEE FUND

The European Refugee Fund (ERF) is one of four funds (along with the European Integration Fund) that form the European Commission's general programme '*Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows*' for the period 2007-2013. This general programme is administered by the Directorate General for Home Affairs within the European Commission.

The general objectives of the ERF are to support the reception of asylum seekers, refugees (and other displaced people) and to promote access to fair and effective asylum procedures. The ERF also supports integration initiatives for refugees. The ERF also provides for resettlement programmes for refugees and emergency measures to address sudden arrivals of large numbers of persons who may be in need of international protection.

The ERF, in Ireland, is primarily targeted at asylum seekers and refugees.

An **asylum seeker** is a person who enters the country and lodges an application in the asylum process to be recognised as a refugee. This person has a legal entitlement to stay in the country until a decision is made on their application. If a person is recognised as a refugee, they will be allowed to stay in Ireland for safety reasons and will be given rights under Irish law which are close to those of an Irish citizen.

In Ireland, asylum seekers are eligible for **reception supports**. Reception supports are activities that meet the basic social, medical and information needs of the target group after their arrival. Reception supports have an added focus on meeting the needs of specific 'vulnerable groups' from within the target group such as minors, unaccompanied minors, victims of rape or other forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence.

A **refugee** is a person who is forced to leave their country due to a well-founded fear of persecution. They are unable to return to their home country for reasons related to race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. Ireland has a legal responsibility to determine who is a refugee and to extend its protection to such a person.

In Ireland, refugees (and people whose stay is of a lasting and stable nature³) are eligible for both **reception and integration supports**. Integration supports are more focused on activities that promote people's durable and sustainable participation in the social, economic and cultural life of member states.

In Ireland, the Responsible Authority for the ERF (and EIF) is the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration. Responsibility for overseeing the implementation of both funds has been delegated to Pobal since 2007.

Following a national call for applications in late 2009, 10 organisations were awarded funding under the ERF. A total of €1,661,396 was awarded in grant aid to these groups, with a further €997,617 in co-funding provided from a range of public and private sources. Grant allocations under the ERF ranged from €60,000 to €245,000. Projects were funded on a

3 Other groups of people whose stay in the state is of a last and stable nature include persons receiving subsidiary protection, resettled people, and members of their families.

multiannual basis, initially from the 2009 ERF Annual Programme with funding also to be provided from the 2010, 2011 and 2012 Annual Programmes in some instances.

Funded groups commenced their ERF Projects on three different dates in 2010: 1st July, 1st September and 1st November 2010. Projects varied in duration from 18 months to 3 years.

Funded groups were from across the state and include a mix of national and locally based community sector and non-governmental organisations (seven), Local Development Companies (two) and a statutory body (one). The groups funded comprise the following:

- BeLonG To Youth Services.
- City of Dublin Education and Training Board (formerly City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee).
- Doras Luimní.
- Dublin Rape Crisis Centre (DRCC).
- Galway Refugee Support Group.
- Killarney Asylum Seekers Initiative (KASI) and Tralee International Resource Centre (TIRC).
- Longford Community Resources Limited.
- Mayo Intercultural Action.
- St. Catherine's Community Services Centre.
- Westmeath Community Development.

The **Longford Community Resources** project ended prematurely in September 2011 due to the closure of the direct provision centre in Longford Town. However, the project had undertaken a considerable amount of work by then. All other projects completed between May 2012 and October 2013.

Projects funded under the ERF varied in their focus, covering a range of themes and approaches including information provision, education programmes, community development initiatives, direct service provision, capacity building for service providers and local integration initiatives. Many projects combined a mix of approaches in their efforts to promote more effective reception and integration strategies for the target groups.

Each project funded staff to manage and support the implementation of their respective interventions. A total of 12.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff posts were supported under the ERF. In addition, many projects recruited volunteers. Over the lifetime of the programme, a total of 255 volunteers worked the equivalent of 907 days supporting the implementation of ERF projects.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

In November 2010, Pobal contracted NEXUS Research Co-operative to design a monitoring and evaluation framework for the ERF and (EIF) in Ireland. The need for a new framework arose out of a review of existing monitoring and evaluation arrangements that identified a number of weaknesses that needed to be addressed. These included:

- The inadequacy of indicators set at the ERF/EIF programme level.
- The variety of approaches to monitoring and evaluation adopted at an individual project level.
- The lack of an agreed integrated monitoring and evaluation framework specific to Ireland that provided coherence between individual project evaluations and

programme-wide evaluation, and aligned with EU monitoring and evaluation requirements.

- The potential for a disjuncture between current monitoring arrangements and future evaluation requirements at EU level.

Following a consultation process with a range of stakeholders, including direct engagement with funded ERF/EIF groups, a new framework was finalised in March 2011⁴.

The new monitoring and evaluation framework had three inter-related levels as follows:

- Final programme evaluation reports to be contracted by the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration to an independent evaluator(s).
- Programme-level evaluation which included a focus on both thematic evaluation and programme level outputs and outcomes.
- Project-level monitoring and evaluation with a focus on monitoring of progress, process evaluation, project-level thematic learning and project-level outputs and outcomes evaluation.

The framework addressed the weaknesses outlined above by providing the ERF with appropriate output and outcome indicators, ensuring coherence and consistency between project level and programme level evaluation, and by ensuring complementarity with European Commission requirements. The framework was subsequently implemented by the 23 groups funded under the ERF and EIF following the last call for applications in 2010.

A central component of the framework was the programme-level evaluation which aggregated the results from individual projects, and added value specifically at the programme level. The programme-level evaluation was focused on two key elements, the programme-level evaluation and the thematic evaluation.

The *Final Outputs and Outcomes Report*, the present report, draws together results from the project level. Groups completed an online evaluation survey annually and upon completion of their projects, they submitted details of their projects' cumulative outputs and outcomes. The survey was completed by project staff, with the support of their respective external evaluators where necessary. The completion of the online evaluation survey by each project enabled outputs and outcomes to be aggregated at the programme level.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

Work on the framework began after the projects had been designed and approved. As they were allowed considerable flexibility in terms of their goals and methods, a key challenge for the framework was to somehow render the disparate set of project objectives, outputs and outcomes into a coherent and comparable set of programme-level outputs and outcomes.

Key goals for the framework were to:

- Ensure coherence between project goals, national programme goals and European Commission goals.
- Maintain a focus on *actual outcomes* at project and programme level, while establishing a *causal link* between these and the concrete actions and outputs undertaken by projects.

4 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the *European Refugee Fund* and *European Integration Fund*. Final Report March 1st 2011. NEXUS Research.

- Facilitate the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration’s reporting to the European Commission.

At the same time, it was important to minimise any additional burden on projects in terms of their participation in programme level activities, and indeed to take into account the limited staff time and budget that Pobal could devote to it.

The framework proposed a solution with a number of characteristics.

1. The evaluation comprised two components:
 - A thematic component, grouping projects together to explore and extract policy and practice learning.
 - An aggregated component where the results of each project were combined in the context of a common and comparable set of programme outputs and outcomes.
2. The overall framework was based loosely on the Theory of Change⁵ and Logic Model, which explicitly trace the linkages between objectives, actions, outputs and outcomes. It also facilitated a link to be established between project and programme level activities, from the level of project objectives through to European Commission reporting requirements.
3. The process combined the experience and knowledge of those working in the projects, staff and volunteers, with independent empirical research.
4. For ease of reporting and analysis, it was decided to use an online tool for the aggregated component into which projects could input their individual data. Originally it was hoped to develop a custom-built tool, that could also display and explore results, but budgetary constraints meant that a commercial online survey tool, *Survey Monkey*, was used.
5. The framework covers both the ERF and the EIF programmes, but was implemented separately for each, to allow separate reporting. There was some scope for collaboration between projects, however, in the thematic component.

Following a further contract with NEXUS in May 2011, a detailed set of guidelines⁶ were issued to enable projects both to fully understand the principles and practice of the programme level evaluation and to participate effectively in the process. The guidelines covered both the thematic component and what was called the ‘outputs and outcomes’ component. This report draws primarily on the latter, as well as other sources.

The following were the main features of the ‘Outputs and Outcomes Evaluation’.

1. Each project individually completed an online *outputs and outcomes survey* annually covering the period to the end of June⁷. A closing survey was also completed that *cumulatively* covered the period from the beginning of the project to its final completion.
2. Drawing on a list of interventions and outputs agreed in consultation with the projects, each project selected those outputs that were relevant to itself, and reported in the closing survey on what they produced during the entire period.

5 See www.theoryofchange.org and <http://www.wkkf.org/knowledge-center/resources/2010/Logic-Model-Development-Guide.aspx> for more on these.

6 Programme Level Evaluation for the European Integration Fund and European Refugee Fund: Guidelines for Projects. June 2011.

7 In 2013, only the outputs part of the survey had to be completed, to avoid duplication with the final outputs and outcomes survey later that year.

3. Drawing similarly on a list of agreed outcomes, each project reported for each relevant outcome:
 - The focus it represented for the project during the period in terms of effort and resources.
 - The extent to which the project believed it had influenced that outcome.
 - The extent to which each output identified had contributed to this outcome.
 - The evidence available to sustain these conclusions.
4. Each group also completed a section to document what they learned, and how they might improve their effectiveness.

In addition, each project engaged its own independent evaluator, whose terms of reference included assisting with the completion of the programme level evaluation, in particular in gathering evidence for the outcomes claimed. The appointed project evaluator produced a final evaluation for each project, the analysis and conclusions of which have been taken into consideration here.

This *Final Outputs and Outcomes Report* presents the results of the entire process.

1.4 IDENTIFICATION AND SCRUTINY OF OUTCOMES

The data from online surveys combined with the individual project evaluations generated an enormous volume and wealth of evidence and documented experiences, gathered within the context of a coherent framework in which significant efforts were made to ensure comparability of evidence.

The ERF comprised a large set of projects, each unique, each of which had formulated its own specific goals interventions. Thus meaningful comparability, based on some equivalence of the indicators of change, was perhaps the biggest challenge facing the programme evaluation.

As part of the process of ensuring comparability, projects worked at the earliest stages with NEXUS and Pobal to produce a uniform set of output and outcome indicators. Each group then chose the outputs and outcomes most relevant to their project and reported on them, ignoring the rest.

The role of the programme-level evaluation was to aggregate cumulative outputs and outcomes, and to extract overall conclusions. Outputs involved mostly quantitative indicators, which simplified the task considerably. For outcomes, however, the task was more difficult since the changes sought, especially in the short and medium term, tended to be qualitative in nature. Even the quantitative outcomes indicators, for reasons referred to above, were methodologically more difficult to measure and compare.

1.4.1 Assessing the Level of Influence on Programme Outcomes

Aggregating evidence on the extent to which individual projects impacted on programme outcomes presented some challenges.

As already noted, the range of project interventions achieving the *same programme outcome* varied in a number of cases. The level of influence upon a programme outcome also depended on the *scale of the problem* that individual projects attempted to address. For

example, some projects addressed a problem by offering supports or training to large numbers of people. Other projects addressed inequalities by working with a smaller group of people to remove obstacles to integration within wider society. The outcomes of both interventions had to be evaluated differently in these cases. For instance, although a large, intractable problem may be influenced to only a slight degree, in laying the groundwork for future progress towards integration, the project may be considered to be a success.

It was essential not only to take account of the benefits to large numbers of people but also to consider evidence where a tangible change had been made in relation to stated barriers to the reception and integration of asylum seekers and refugees in Ireland. In order to facilitate both the capture and collation of diverse outcomes at a programme level, the online surveys asked all groups the following question:

“Compared to the **size of the challenge** faced by **your immediate Target Group** in this Outcome area, how much influence do you believe your Project’s activities have had since you began your work?”

This allowed projects to estimate the gravity of the problem faced and the extent of their own project’s success in solving that problem.

In the annual and final surveys, projects were asked to rate their influence on a scale of 0 to 4, taking into consideration the overall level of target group needs in this outcome area, where:

- 0 = “no influence”.
- 1 = “a very small influence, not directly discernible”.
- 2 = “a small but discernible influence”.
- 3 = “some influence but not major”.
- 4 = “a major influence”.

The question posed is whether projects believed not just that their work was efficient but that their interventions successfully addressed the matter in question. If a project claimed that it had a major influence on a given area of outcome, this suggests that the effort devoted to it was both effective *and commensurate* with the scale of the challenge in the area being addressed.

1.5 EVIDENCE USED TO DEMONSTRATE OUTCOMES

A comment will be useful concerning the nature and validity of the evidence available to assess outcomes. There were two main sources of evidence: the self-reported data entered by each of the projects in the annual and final online surveys; and the evidence contained in the final project evaluations⁸ that were completed by independent evaluators for each of the projects.

Such self-reported data must of course be used carefully. With this in mind, several key questions concerning outcomes and their relationship to interventions and outputs were included in the survey. The survey was designed to facilitate a uniform understanding by those completing it. Direct advice by phone or email was available to projects at all times, and used by many. The data entered was also verified as much as possible by Pobal staff working directly with projects, offering guidance where appropriate.

8 Guidelines were provided on the evaluation framework regarding the broad contents of these project evaluations.

The surveys were not limited to self-reported data. They also asked for *verifiable evidence* of the projects' conclusions regarding outcomes. Such evidence was, in the first place, summarised by the project in the survey itself. Secondly, the project evaluations, conducted by independent evaluators, were also drawn upon extensively by projects to verify the results and amplify the lessons learned. These final project evaluations had among their primary goals the identification and documentation of evidence of both outputs and outcomes.

In the case of some ERF project interventions, there were significant gaps in evidence. Hence, full assessments of whether particular interventions resulted in positive outcomes for asylum seekers and refugees, were not always possible. This was partly because evidence was difficult to gather about some types of actions, such as the mass distribution of information or large intercultural events. However, limitations in a number of the final evaluations also played a part, either by failing to, or lacking the resources to, put in place the methodologies and tools needed to gather evidence on the achievement of outcomes. This is not to say that beneficial outcomes did not accrue in these cases; only that the evidence available was insufficient to confirm their existence or determine their extent.

In order to ensure the veracity of findings regarding outcomes, the *Final Outputs and Outcomes Report*, focuses solely on *verified and documented cases* where real changes have taken place and contributed to the wider ERF programme outcomes.

SECTION 2: INTERVENTIONS AND OUTPUTS

The different categories of interventions and related outputs, as defined in the monitoring and evaluation framework, are presented below. This is followed by consideration, in turn, of the projects' aggregate outputs during the period, grouped in activities of a similar nature.

2.1 TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS

Sixteen types of interventions were identified in the framework. They are presented below under two headings: those that involve *working directly with the asylum seekers and refugees*, and those that relate to *service providers and the wider environment* including the public in general. Also shown is the number of projects engaging in each type of intervention.

Table 1: Interventions by Projects

Interventions	Number of Projects engaged in each Intervention
Direct Support to Refugees/Asylum Seekers	
1. Providing information and advice through a 'drop-in' service	5
2. Providing information and advice through outreach services	4
3. Delivering themed information supports	5
4. Building capacity in English language	5
5. Delivering non-language related education and training	6
6. Providing mentoring supports	5
7. Providing targeted support to young people from the target group	6
8. Providing advocacy and legal support for individuals	4
9. Providing trauma and other counselling supports	4
Interventions with Service providers and the wider Environment	
10. Supporting intercultural/interfaith dialogue	3
11. Supporting actions to directly combat racism	2
12. Building capacity of the statutory sector	7
13. Building capacity of the business sector	0
14. Building capacity of community/voluntary sector	9
15. Promoting mainstreaming and developing policy	10
16. Supporting other marginalised groups	7

No project engaged in building the capacity of the business sector, and it is therefore given no further consideration here.

All ten projects were concerned with promoting mainstreaming and/or influencing policy in relation to their activities or focus. Otherwise, the most common activity among projects was

building the capacity of the community and voluntary sector (intervention 14), which included community based services and representative groups and organisations formed or run by the target groups and others.

2.2 OUTPUTS FROM INTERVENTIONS

The interventions from **Table 1** are categorised further by drawing together those that are similar in nature to yield the following list:

Categories of Intervention that relate directly to the Target Groups

- Providing information and advice to the target groups (interventions 1-3).
- Building target groups' capabilities through training and education (interventions 4-6).
- Targeting support at young people (intervention 7).
- Providing advocacy and legal support (intervention 8).
- Providing trauma and other counselling (intervention 9).

Categories of Interventions that relate to Service Providers and the wider Environment

- Supporting intercultural or interfaith dialogue (intervention 10).
- Supporting actions that directly combat racism or xenophobia (intervention 11).
- Building the capacity of statutory and community/voluntary sectors to address the needs of the target groups (interventions 12 and 14).
- Promoting mainstreaming of project activities and policy development (intervention 15).
- Providing support to marginalised groups, beyond the primary target group (intervention 16).

The immediate outputs produced by these interventions are enumerated below under these headings.

As noted, the earliest project began on 1st July 2010 and the last completed on 31st October 2013, and varied in duration from 18 to 36 months. It should be noted, however, that many of the services provided continued after the period of funding, some ongoing today. This issue is returned to later.

2.2.1 Information and Advice Services

Information and advice was provided to refugees and asylum seekers in a number of contexts and forms, primarily by drop-in centres, but also through outreach services and in the context of information workshops or seminars.

Drop-in centres as a means to provide information and advice (intervention 1) were the most active in terms of the volume of asylum seekers and refugees seen during the period. Half of the ten ERF projects provided a drop-in service. **Table 2** breaks down unique individual visitors by gender and target group type.

Table 2: Drop-in Centre visitors by gender and Target Group

	Asylum Seekers	Refugees	Total
Male	993	1,059	2,052
Female	421	396	817
Total	1,414	1,455	2,869

The total number of *visits* made by asylum seekers was **14,250**, and by refugees was **5,008**, giving a total of **19,258** visits to drop-in centres.⁹ Male visitors outnumber females by well over two to one.

Each asylum seeker made, on average, 10 visits to ERF drop-in centres. The numbers of visits made by asylum seekers was nearly treble that of each refugee, illustrating the high support needs of that target group. About one in eight visits, on average, resulted in a referral, by letter, email or phone call, to another service.

However, the averages also conceal significant differences in the type of service provided by drop-in projects. For instance, **St. Catherine's Community Services Centre's** drop-in service focused on a small, fixed number of people, and supported 63 resettled refugees from the Rohingya community, over the lifetime of its project. Each person visited the service an average of almost 40 times. **Doras Luimní**, on the other hand, saw a total of 2,240 different people, but each visited on average less than twice. **KASI and TIRC** received by far the largest number of visits from asylum seekers - 88% of all drop-in visits in the ERF programme. The joint project supported one third of the individual asylum seekers attending ERF drop-in centres, with each asylum seeker visiting KASI or TIRC approximately 25 times. (This is no doubt because the two centres involved offered a much wider range of services and facilities than just information, including a space where the target group could engage in their own activities.)

The 2,530 referrals **to service providers**, also varied a lot, with more than one referral made for every two visits by **Doras Luimní**, to about one referral for every 18 visits by **St. Catherine's Community Services Centre**.

The issues and needs raised by visitors were varied, none dominating overall. Information provided most commonly related to:¹⁰ *asylum application and/or appeals process* and *education*; followed closely by *social welfare*, then *direct provision (living conditions/management)* and *accommodation (excluding direct provision)*. *Mental health, medical, citizenship applications* and *family reunification* also featured.

Although precise figures on the nationalities of those visiting are not available¹¹, the largest groups appear to be from Pakistan and Nigeria, followed by Somalis and Afghans. 14 other nationalities featured among the top five nationalities named by groups.

9 In general, where figures are given in bold they are not displayed in the tables, but come from the survey database.

10 When italics are used, they refer to categories that are named as closed options in the Survey.

11 Projects were asked to name the top five nationalities who visited drop-in centres.

The delivery of information and advice through outreach services (intervention 2) was undertaken by four of the five ERF projects operating drop-in services. All four outreach services worked almost exclusively with asylum seekers.

Table 3: Information and Advice through Outreach Services by gender and Target Group

	Asylum Seekers	Refugees	Total
Male	813	44	857
Female	1,302	10	1,312
Total	2,115	54	2,169

A total number of 2,169 individuals were seen over the course of **1,181 outreach visits**. Requests for information were varied and spanned access to welfare entitlements, educational and training opportunities, accommodation, health entitlements and immigration status. One project noted that regular phone calls, some on a weekly basis, could provide emotional support to the more vulnerable asylum seekers.

A total of **38 themed information workshops or clinics** (intervention 3) were delivered by five projects. In all, **741 people attended**. The most common workshop topics were citizenship, mental health and housing (excluding direct provision). A range of other issues were covered including education, housing, domestic violence, and immigration status.

Information and resource materials were also created and disseminated by ERF projects. The resources produced included a wide range of resources on adapting to the Irish education system by **City of Dublin Education and Training Board** (City of Dublin ETB); a series of posters on practical integration issues produced by **Doras Luimní**; information guides for LGBT asylum seekers and refugees by **BeLonG To**; and a local directory of services by **St. Catherine’s Community Services Centre**.

2.2.2 Building capacity and training/education of individuals

A large number of ERF projects engaged in building the capacity of *adult* asylum seekers and refugees. Five ERF projects provided various levels of English language training. Six projects provided non-language related education or training. Five groups also provided mentoring support. Some projects were active across all three areas.

Table 4: Target Groups enrolled in English language training*

	Asylum Seekers	Refugees	Total
Male	220	47	267
Female	94	65	159
Total	314	112	426

***This number does not include young people receiving English language support.**

A total of 426 asylum seekers and refugees enrolled for English language training (Intervention 4), with some progressing to more advanced classes over time. Participants were mostly asylum seekers and, overall, mostly male, though among the smaller number of refugees, women outnumbered men.

At least **14 nationalities** were given training, with those from Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Pakistan among the larger groups.¹²

75 refugees benefitted from more basic English language support such as one-to-one, conversational or beginner’s English classes. **32 refugees** successfully completed intermediate level English with **Eight refugees** completing advanced English courses. **Two refugees** received FETAC accreditation. In all, 27% of refugees completed intermediate level English, suggesting a slightly higher capacity in English language as compared to asylum seekers.

The numbers trained varied greatly between those with a strong focus on English language training to others targeting a small group or offering English language training as a marginal activity. **KASI** and **TIRC** trained the largest group, a total of **220 people**; followed by **Doras Luimní** with **159 students**. At the other end of the scale, **Longford Community Resources** provided training to just **three individuals**, bringing each of them through several levels.

A wide variety of **non-language related education and training** (intervention 5) was provided by six projects. **Table 5** shows the number of asylum seekers and refugees enrolling in courses. The table also presents the number of training courses successfully completed by the target groups (Note: many individuals completed more than one course).

Table 5: Target Groups in Accredited and Non-Accredited Training, 2010-2013

	Asylum Seekers enrolled in <i>non-accredited</i> training	Refugees enrolled in <i>non-accredited</i> training	Total	Asylum Seekers enrolled in <i>accredited</i> training	Refugees enrolled in <i>accredited</i> training	Total
Male	133	32	165	11	20	31
Female	212	92	304	10	47	57
Total	345	124	469	21	67	88
Training course placements successfully completed	321	260	581	34	58	92

In relation to the accredited courses, the gender breakdown was almost precisely equal among asylum seekers, among both those starting and those completing; whilst among refugees over twice the number of women began courses as compared to men, and about twice the number also completed them.

Many people attended more than one non-accredited training course. :

- Among **non-accredited** courses completed by **asylum seekers** in four projects: *IT Skills* (55), *parenting* (50), *personal development/confidence building* (39), *volunteering skills* (33) and *peer information training* (20); and the *other* training category counted 118 participants;
- Among **non-accredited courses** completed by **refugees** in five projects : The ‘*other*’ category was largest at 78, including 65 courses run by **St. Catherine’s Carlow Rohingya Resettlement Programme**. These courses covered a diverse range of short workshops supporting refugees to develop life skills and to

12 See previous footnote.

engage in new activities from growing vegetables, to enterprise development. Other popular training courses included *personal development/confidence building* (46); *IT skills* (35); *parenting* (34); and *independent living skills* (24);

- Among the much smaller number of **accredited courses** completed by **asylum seekers** were *radio production* to FETAC Level 4 *photography* to FETAC Level 3.

Note: numbers in brackets refer to courses completed.

Accredited courses were completed by **refugees** in five projects. *Community development* courses were delivered by three projects, accounting for 36 training placements completed. Both **Mayo Intercultural Action** and **Galway Refugee Support Group** delivered (with project partners) the *Community Work in a Changing Ireland* course at FETAC Levels and 8 and 7 (Special Purpose) respectively.

Mentoring support (intervention 6) was the third form of individual capacity building, delivered by five projects. The majority of participants were mentored on a one-to-one basis with 49 mentors matched with **56 mentees**.

Table 6: Target Groups beginning and completing Mentoring

	Asylum Seekers receiving mentoring	Refugees receiving mentoring	Total	Asylum Seekers completing mentoring	Refugees completing mentoring	Total
Male	4	10	14	3	2	5
Female	2	40	42	1	23	24
Total	6	50	56	4	25	29

St. Catherine’s Community Services (through a programme of mentoring of young people in youth leadership) and **Mayo Intercultural Action** accounted for most of these, with 23 asylum seekers and 20 refugees receiving mentoring support.

2.2.3 Targeted Support for Youth

Six projects targeted services at young people (intervention 7). The youth supports offered tended to focus primarily on the social and educational needs of young people from the target groups. However, in some cases, activities did bring asylum seekers and refugees together with other young people.

Table 7: Target Groups in educational and non-educational youth activities

	Asylum seekers in educational youth activities	Refugees in educational youth activities	Total	Asylum seekers in non-educational youth activities	Refugees in non-educational youth activities	Total
Male	105	44	149	236	43	279
Female	77	43	120	206	42	248
Total	182	87	269	442	85	527

Educational activities included English language support; after-school homework supports; additional tuition in specific subjects; and workshops in life skills, sexual health education and LGBT rights. A total of **400 other young people** (mainly Irish) were also brought

together (on a limited basis) to participate in educational activities – mainly information sessions about asylum and integration organised by **KASI**.

Non-educational activities included sports, music, arts, a youth café, fashion design, summer/seasonal camps and emotional/psychological support and advocacy. A number of project partners from youth organisations and local clubs were directly involved in delivering these activities to the target groups.

In non-educational youth activities, a total of **68 other young people participated**. Of these, **22 were of Irish national and ethnic origin, and 10 were from other EU countries**.

2.2.4 Legal and Advocacy Supports

Table 8: Target Groups receiving Advocacy and Legal supports

	Asylum Seekers	Refugees	Total
Male	167	26	193
Female	81	35	116
Total	248	61	309

Four of the ten ERF groups provided **advocacy and legal support** (intervention 8) to a total of **309 refugees and asylum seekers**, 80% of them asylum seekers. **KASI and TIRC** accounted for three quarters of the caseload with the remainder of people supported by **St. Catherine’s Community Services, Longford Community Resources and BeLonG To**. Services included:

- Legal advice and direct advocacy on asylum applications.
- Direct advocacy regarding transfer to other direct provision hostels.
- Support with citizenship applications.
- Legal advice and direct advocacy on family reunification.
- General legal advice and direct advocacy on accommodation, child protection and social welfare.

2.2.5 Trauma and Counselling

Four projects provided counselling, mainly to refugees but also to some asylum seekers, to assist in dealing with **trauma and other issues** (intervention 9).

Table 9: Number receiving trauma and counselling support:

	Asylum Seekers	Refugees	Total	Individual counselling sessions	Group counselling sessions	Total Number of Sessions
Male	13	19	32	220	7	227
Female	12	51	63			
Total	25	70	95			

A total of 95 people received support with women outnumbering men by almost three to one.

Four projects offered this service. **Westmeath Community Development** delivered 54 individual support sessions to 12 asylum seekers, all but one female. **St. Catherine’s**

Community Services delivered 143 individual counselling sessions to 46 refugees. They also delivered three group therapy sessions, as did **Mayo Intercultural Action**.

2.2.6 Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue

Activities to encourage and support dialogue between communities (intervention 10), embraced many groups of people and included the participation of the target groups alongside other nationalities. Three projects engaged in these types of activities. In all cases a diverse range of nationalities participated alongside the target groups.

Table 10 below gives an indication of the total numbers involved.

Table 10: Number of Intercultural One-off events, Ongoing actions and Participants

	One Off Events	Ongoing Actions	Total
Number of events/actions	26	14	40
Number of target group participants	1,163	391	1,554
Number of Irish participants	762	140	902
Number of other participants	338	80	418
Total Participants	2,263	611	2,874

The nature of the ongoing and one-off activities varied greatly, and this is reflected in the participation levels at any given event, ranging from several hundred to a couple of dozen or less.

Among one-off events were:¹³

- An Intercultural Winter Concert attended by 15 volunteers from the target groups, with an audience of about 200; an anti-racism photo exhibition by three target group members and eight other people, attracting an audience of 70 people; an Intercultural Family Fun Day which about 800 people attended (not recorded above); and a departure party for residents of Richmond Court attended by 45 from the target groups and 25 others (**Longford Community Resources**).
- Events for Africa Day, World Refugee Day and International Women’s Day, attended by 573 people, including over 400 members of the target groups; participation in the St. Patrick’s Day Parade; and six weekly seminars in Tralee providing information to the public on the culture of each respective speaker’s country of origin. The 2012 Africa Day event held by **TIRC** was attended by President Higgins (**KASI** and **TIRC**).
- An Intercultural Fun Day, run by volunteers from the target groups, attended by about 800 people (not recorded above); an anti-racism photo exhibition produced by three refugees and eight others, seen by 70 people; an Intercultural Winter Concert, run by 15 volunteers from target groups, with an audience of about 200 (not recorded above); and a barbeque attended by 20 people including 12 refugees (**Galway Refugee Support Group**).

Ongoing intercultural activities included:

- *East Meets West* women’s group, with 20 women participating, eight from the target groups; a film club of ten target group members and one non-target group member (**Longford Community Resources**).

¹³ Note: Some projects had difficulty verifying these numbers, as no detailed records were taken.

- African drumming workshops; story telling sessions; cookery demonstrations; a community garden project; and a series of six cultural seminars (**KASI** and **TIRC**).
- A book club and weekly football match (**Doras Luimní**).

2.2.7 Direct Actions to Combat Racism

Two projects supported **direct actions to combat racism and discrimination** (intervention 11). The total number of people involved is shown in **Table 11** below.

Table 11: Participants in actions to directly combat racism:

	Asylum Seekers	Refugees	Irish	Other	Total
Total	3	11	49	35	98

St. Catherine’s Community Services created a teenage boys group to develop good relationships between Rohingya and local Irish boys where problems had developed.

Activities organised by **Longford Community Resources** comprised: an Anti-Racism Week event, during which a speaker from the target group described the experience of racism in her life in Ireland; and use of local media to dispel myths and promote integration, in the *Longford Leader*, and through information on its website.

2.2.8 Building the Capacity of the Statutory, Community and Voluntary Sectors

Two types of service providers were targeted in order to improve their understanding of the target groups and the manner in which they interact with them and deliver services. Statutory sector organisations (intervention 12) were targeted by seven projects and community / voluntary sector organisations (intervention 14)¹⁴ by eight projects.

Projects also supported the establishment and development of organisations and groups led by the target groups.

Table 12 indicates the number and types of activities taken in relation to statutory service providers and community/voluntary sector organisations. **Table 13** presents the number of participants involved.

Table 12: Capacity Building Activities for Statutory and Community/Voluntary Sector Sectors 2010-2013

	Courses	Seminars	Workshops	Ongoing support programmes	Other	Total
Statutory sector	3	13	47	8	322	393
Community voluntary sector	20	1	31	33	74	159
Total	23	14	78	41	396	552

The majority of statutory sector activities were undertaken by **St. Catherine’s**. Of the 322 activities recorded in the ‘Other’ category, 279 actions comprised a lengthy series of one-to-

14 The Survey also included the category of Capacity Building of Businesses (Outputs 13), but none of the ERF Projects have so far taken action in this area.

one meetings with those working in the statutory sector, from Gardaí to social workers, to doctors, and community welfare and housing staff. Project staff accompanied refugees, arranging the presence of interpreters, on these visits in part to facilitate meetings and appointments; but also as a deliberate measure to support local agencies to build their awareness of key issues for the target group and to manage communication difficulties.

The number of people (excluding project staff) that participated in these activities was high.

Table 13: Number of Participants and Beneficiaries of capacity building actions 2010-2013

	Irish People	Other	Target Group	Total
Statutory sector	1,031	66	183	1,280
Community voluntary sector	465	120	244	829
Total	1,496	186	427	2,109

ERF projects used a number of different strategies to build the capacity of **statutory sector service providers**:

- **City of Dublin ETB** delivered 21 training workshops to approximately 375 teachers and trainee teachers on classroom techniques for working with the target groups; produced the *Stepping Stones* orientation DVD and pack; and developed a wide range of classroom materials and toolkits on the website www.separatedchildrenservice.ie.
- **DRCC** delivered training courses and seminars to 228 staff from statutory service providers (including teachers, Gardaí, key workers and staff from state agencies) on working with asylum seekers and refugees who have experienced sexual violence and trauma.
- **Mayo Intercultural Action** established a project steering committee to share policy lessons to ensure better service and provision for refugees in Mayo; and incorporated inputs from the statutory sector into the project's training programme as an opportunity to create dialogue between participants and the statutory sector. This work led to the participation of approximately 120 professionals from the sector.
- In addition to facilitating meetings, **St. Catherine's** also delivered training workshops to the principals of local schools and to the primary health care team on the culture and needs of the Rohingya community.
- **BeLonG To** delivered a series of training workshops on including LGBT asylum seeking and refugee youth into mainstream services to 119 staff from the statutory sector. This included 'whole-organisation' training to the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner, the Resettlement Unit of the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration, and the International Organisation of Migration. BeLonG To also made presentations at four inter-agency meetings of the Reception and Integration Agency in direct provision centres around the country. The project also set up a steering committee as a forum for mutual learning between statutory agencies and voluntary service providers on working with the target group.
- **Westmeath Community Development** produced the *Westmeath Integration and Diversity Strategy 2013-2017* to facilitate future inter-agency work amongst service providers working with the target groups.
- Longford Community Resources established the Intercultural Interagency Forum to bring a large number of state and voluntary agencies together to build alliances, enabling integration to happen at all levels. Training was provided by the Irish

Refugee Council on deportations, subsidiary protection and other issues. Terms of reference were drawn up for the forum with nine meetings taking place during the period.

The **community/voluntary sector** also received significant amounts of support in building its capacity to work with asylum seekers and refugees:

- **BeLonG To** delivered ‘whole organisation’ training to 110 staff from community and voluntary organisations including the Irish Refugee Council, SPIRASI, AkiDwA, The Integration Centre, and Outhouse. The project also produced the resource, *Key Principles for Working with LGBT Asylum Seekers and Refugees*, which highlights the importance of mainstreaming LGBT asylum seeking and refugee youth in the policy and practice of service providers.
- **DRCC** delivered training to 133 staff in key support roles with refugees and asylum seekers.
- **St. Catherine’s Community Services Centre** also provided interpretation and support for local community-based services (e.g. youth services, MABS, Citizens Information Service) engaging with the Rohingya population.
- **Doras Luimní** delivered intercultural awareness training and produced an intercultural resource pack aimed at childcare providers. The objective was to increase cultural diversity understanding among child care providers in the Limerick city enabling them to relate better to children and parents from a diverse population.

Finally seven projects also assisted in setting up ten groups either led by asylum seekers and refugees or involving the target groups (intervention 14), including the following:

- **Westmeath Community Development** supported the establishment of Lissywoollen Residents Group in the Lissywoollen reception centre. The project provided ongoing support and training for the group.
- Participants in **Mayo Intercultural Action’s** project set up two migrant resource groups in Mayo and formed a Nigerian Association.

2.2.9 Mainstreaming and Policy Development

All ten projects undertook some form of mainstreaming and policy development activities (intervention 15). Projects adopted a range of approaches to mainstreaming work and influencing policy such as meeting with policy makers and institutional actors; making submissions to policy forums; creating working groups; and producing policy and research papers.

Four projects produced **publications**, two of them examining progress and issues arising within the project itself:

- **City of Dublin ETB’s** paper, *Supporting Refugee Students transition to and progress into supported students transition to Post-primary School* published by the National Centre for Guidance in Education;
- **BeLonG To** disseminated *Key Principles for Working with LGBT Asylum Seekers and Refugees* at an end of project seminar.

Four projects also made **submissions to policy forums**. **BeLonG To** made representations on the issues faced by LGBT asylum seekers and migrants to the Fine Gael LGBT Group and

an Oireachtas Committee. **Mayo Intercultural Action** also approached political forums to raise awareness on the effects of the increase in visa fees and decrease in welfare payments.

Westmeath Community Development facilitated the production of an integration strategy for the county.

Working Groups were also established, and the project steering / advisory groups were, in many cases, constructed in a manner intended to influence policy in members' respective organisations.

2.2.10 Support for Other Marginalised Groups

Although all ERF projects focused their resources specifically on asylum seekers and refugees, six projects provided services to other marginalised groups (intervention 16) at no additional cost, and with some advantages.

The number benefiting is estimated at a very substantial **2,955 people**, comprising **1,542 EU Nationals, 1,401 third-country nationals** and **12 people from other nationalities**. Specific groups and nationalities that availed of services included Roma, Lithuanians, Latvians, Poles and Slovaks; as well as people from a range of Asian and African countries.

2.3 AGGREGATE OUTPUT FIGURES FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

Some projects point out that the number and nature of beneficiaries are not always known. For instance, projects cannot measure the number of people accessing their publications and information leaflets. Although websites can produce statistics on the number of people viewing webpages, they cannot state exactly where those people may be from. Policy interventions with agencies can also create improvements to procedures that benefit the target groups, however, the number of people benefiting from new systems procedures can be difficult to determine.

Table 14 presents the overall numbers involved in activities delivered *directly* to asylum seekers and refugees, either on an individual or group basis.

The figures below show that over 5,000 asylum seekers and 2,000 refugees have benefited from ERF funded services. The gender breakdown is over two to one in favour of males. However, the cumulative totals should be treated with a degree of caution. Some duplication is undoubtedly involved where a proportion of individuals may have been in receipt of more than one service. Nevertheless, the totals are impressive.

Table 14: Aggregate Target Group numbers for selected Outputs 2010-2013

Activity	Asylum Seekers	Refugees	Total	Additional Data
Drop in Centre	Unique Visitors			Total Visits
Male	993	1,059	2,052	19,258
Female	421	396	817	
Total	1,414	1,455	2,869	
Outreach Services	Unique people met through outreach services			Total Visits
Male	813	44	857	1,181
Female	1,302	10	1,312	
Total	2,115	54	2,169	
Themed Information Supports	Asylum Seekers and Refugees Attending			Workshops / Clinics
Total	No data	No data	741	38

Activity	Asylum Seekers	Refugees	Total	Additional Data
English Language training courses	People enrolling in Courses			
Male	220	47	267	
Female	94	65	159	
Total	314	112	426	
Non-Language training	Enrolled in non-accredited courses	Enrolled in non-accredited courses	People enrolled in courses	Total No. of Training Placements successfully completed
Male	133	32	165	581
Female	212	92	304	
Total	345	124	469	
Non-Language training	Enrolled in - accredited courses	Enrolled in accredited courses	People enrolled in courses	Total No. of Training Placements successfully completed
Male	11	20	31	92
Female	10	47	57	
Total	21	67	88	
Mentoring Supports	Number receiving mentoring support			Total mentors
Male	4	10	14	49
Female	2	40	42	
Total	6	50	56	

Targeted youth support	Number of young people in educational youth activities			Non target group
Male	105	44	149	400
Female	77	43	120	
Total	182	87	269	
Targeted youth support	Number of young people in non-educational youth activities			Non target group
Male	236	43	279	68
Female	206	42	248	
Total	442	85	527	
Advocacy/legal support	Numbers receiving these supports			
Male	167	26	193	
Female	81	35	116	
Total	248	61	309	
Trauma and other Counselling	Numbers receiving counselling			Counselling sessions
Male	13	19	32	227
Female	12	51	63	
Total	25	70	95	
Anti-Racism actions				Total Actions
Total	3	11	14	3
GRAND TOTAL	5,115	2,176	8,032*	

***Total is greater than the total of asylum seekers and refugees as the themed information supports did not differentiate by target group or gender.**

Table 15 shows additional target group participation in intercultural activities, estimated at 1,554 people. Over half as many Irish people also participated in these events and initiatives.

Table 15: Intercultural Events and Actions 2010-2013

	One Off Events	Ongoing Actions	Total
Number of events/actions	26	14	40
Number of target group participants	1,163	391	1,554
Number of Irish participants	762	140	902
Number of other participants	338	80	418
Total Participants	2,263	611	2,874

Finally, there were also actions to build the capacity of service providers, both in the statutory sector and among community and voluntary organisations. The target groups were also involved in many of these activities, sometimes in support positions and as contributors.

(Note: See **Table 13** for more information on numbers of asylum seekers and refugees involved).

2.4 PROJECT RESOURCES

As already stated, 10 organisations were awarded funding under the ERF. A total of €1,661,396 was awarded in grant aid to these groups, with a further €997,617 in co-funding provided from a range of public and private sources.

Each project funded staff to manage and support the implementation of their respective interventions. A total of approximately 12.5 full-time equivalent project development posts were supported under the ERF.

In addition, many projects recruited volunteers. During the full period of the ERF programme, a total of 255 volunteers participated in project activities, working the equivalent of 907 days supporting the implementation of ERF projects. This represents a very considerable added-value to the initial investment.

SECTION 3: OUTCOMES

The previous section enumerated and described the outputs of the ERF programme over its duration. The volume of the benefits accruing has undoubtedly had a perceptible impact on the overall scale of the challenge faced by asylum seekers and refugees in Ireland. The sheer number of outputs suggests this.

The key question, however, is: what benefits accrue for the target groups, immediately and in the medium term i.e. what are the *practical outcomes* of all these project interventions and outputs?

The programme-level evaluation found that evidence of outcomes demonstrated by individual projects was uneven. In some cases, project evaluations stopped short of indicating outcomes, and focused simply on outputs. This is not to say that outcomes have not occurred. However, in this section, the emphasis is on *documented cases* where real changes have taken place and contributed to the wider ERF programme outcomes.

The analysis in this *Final Outputs and Outcomes Report* takes account of interventions where tangible benefits have accrued to reasonably large numbers of people. In other cases, the report also accepts evidence demonstrating that positive inroads have been made in relation to particular barriers to integration for asylum seekers and refugees in Ireland.

3.1 THE NATURE OF ERF PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

12 distinct types of outcomes were identified for the ERF Programme¹⁵.

The design of the outcomes was informed by the Council of the European Union's *Common Basic Principles of Integration* and also by the stated objectives of the ERF.

The 12 ERF programme outcomes¹⁶ below represent the practical benefits of reception and also the pre-requisites for the longer-term goal of integration. Each individual outcome characterises specific benefits for the target groups or wider society from reception to integration. From this, a *progressive, complementary sequence* of outcomes can be discerned that complements builds cumulatively to achieve the desired goal.

1. Enhanced life-skills and personal development of target groups.
2. Enhanced day-to-day interaction of target groups with the local community, and intercultural dialogue.
3. Increased level of participation of target groups in social and recreational activities and community bodies.
4. Enhanced capacity of target groups to engage in collective action and in civil society.
5. Enhanced capacity of target groups to seek and obtain training, education and employment.
6. Enhanced capacity and empowerment of target groups to access social and community services.

15 Methodologically, the possibility of unanticipated outcomes was also considered and a means included documenting any.

16 The wording of the listed ERF programme outcomes is based on the wording in the annual and final online surveys. Projects were asked to provide evidence of their level of influence on these programme outcomes in the online surveys and in their project level evaluations.

7. Improved redress for target groups regarding racism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination.
8. Improved skills and capacities of statutory bodies and community/voluntary organisations in interacting with target groups.
9. Improved collaboration between statutory bodies and community/voluntary organisations.
10. Greater embedding of interculturalism among social and other groups and the public.
11. Mainstreaming replicating good practices, within and outside project partners.
12. Changes in policy or practices among organisations or companies with which target groups relate.

There are two broad dimensions through which the 12 ERF programme outcomes can be considered.

First is the *community, social and employment dimension* i.e. the way in which the target groups can relate to and integrate within their communities, including for example, sports and cultural clubs, schools, local community development activities, and in developing the personal skills needed for employment.

Second is the *service provision dimension* i.e. the manner and extent to which asylum seekers and refugees can access and use public, community and voluntary services. This includes services targeting their specific needs, such as drop-in centres but applies more widely to mainstream services. Working within this dimension, the immediate target of many ERF project interventions were the staff of organisations, with a view to improving the quality and level of the services they provided.

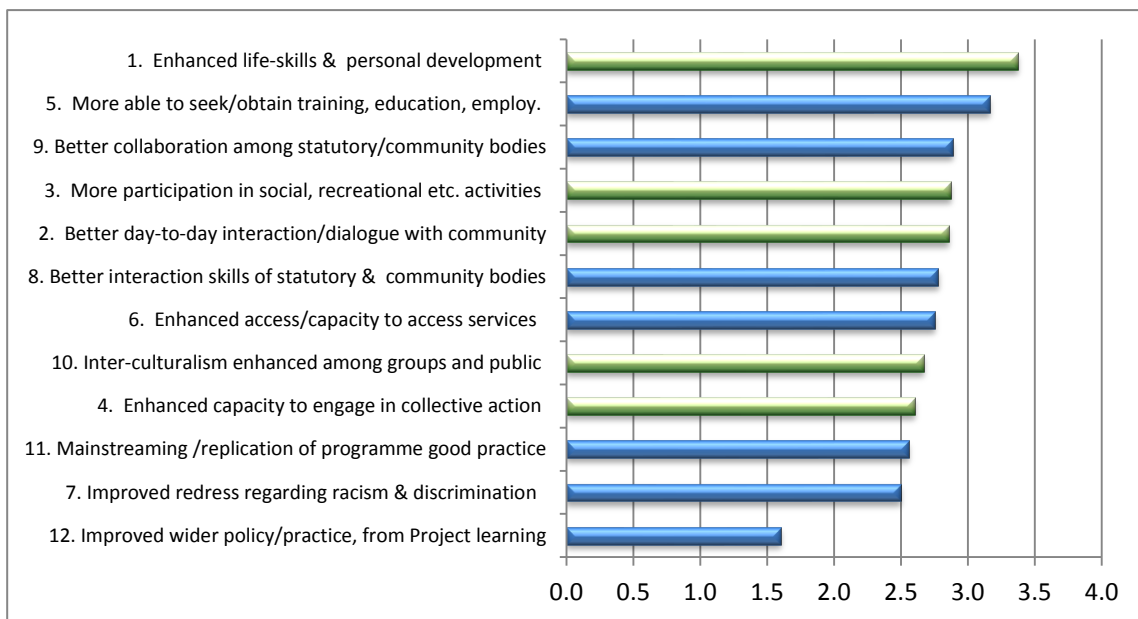
3.2 THE PERCEIVED DEGREE OF INFLUENCE ON OUTCOMES

Projects were asked to judge, taking into account the gravity of the problem faced in each outcome they sought to achieve, the extent of their project's influence on it i.e. the extent to which their project succeeded in solving the problem they had identified.

The question posed is whether projects believed not only that their work was efficient but that their interventions successfully addressed the matter in question. If a project claimed that it had a major influence on a given area of outcome, this suggests that the effort devoted to it was both effective *and commensurate* with the scale of the challenge in the area being addressed.

Figure 1 below looks at the extent to which projects believed they influenced different outcomes. Note that **Figure 1** includes a control for the number of projects that actually sought to achieve each outcome. For example, the perceived level of influence on the first outcome only takes into account the views of those projects that sought to bring about that outcome.

Figure 1: Projects' perceived Degree of Influence on Outcomes



In relation to 9 of the 12 outcomes (descending from outcome 9 to outcome 7 in Figure 1), projects felt that they had achieved an impact ranging on the scale from ‘a small but discernable difference’ to at most ‘some influence but not major’.

Projects attempting to influence wider policy and practices, based on the project learning (outcome 12), felt that they had very achieved significantly less success as compared to any of the other areas. This is the most striking result.

Secondly, projects seeking two other outcomes felt that they significantly more success than in other areas: enhancing life skills and personal development (outcome 1), and improving the target groups ability to seek and obtain training, education or employment (outcome 5). These projects reported that their impact on these outcomes ranged between ‘some influence but not major’ and ‘a major influence’. The two outcomes involved direct interventions with the target groups. Being able to directly observe the impact on these groups may in part explain why projects believe they had a stronger influence in these areas.

The projects’ perception in relation to their influence on particular outcomes does differ from the findings of this report. Based on the evidence provided, it appears as though projects underestimated their influence in the area of service provision – particularly in relation to changes to policies and practices (outcome 12), mainstreaming and replicating good practice (outcome 11), enhancing access to services (outcome 6). The programme level influence improved capacities of service providers is likely to have been underestimated to a lesser extent (outcome 8).

Due to a lack of evidence provided, this report is unable to substantiate projects’ claims on the enhanced capacity of the target groups to access training, education and employment (outcome 5) and on their impact on day-to-day interaction between asylum seekers, refugees and their local communities.

3.3 LINKING INTERVENTIONS, OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

An examination of the evidence suggests a rough correspondence between certain interventions and certain outcomes. While being only approximate, **Table 16** offers a useful way to link interventions to outcomes via the outputs generated. The outcomes (and hence corresponding interventions) are grouped into the three categories. In a couple of cases the interventions are repeated as they influence different outcomes.

Table 16: From Interventions to Outcomes

Each of the outcomes as presented below can be traced back to one of more of these outputs and interventions.

Project Interventions	Outcomes Sought
Building Target Group's Capacities	
4. Building capacity in English language. 5. Delivering non-language related education and training. 6. Providing mentoring supports. 7. Providing targeted support to young people from the target group. 14. Building capacity of community / voluntary sector.	1. Enhanced life skills and personal development of target groups. 4. Enhanced capacity of target groups to engage in collective action and in civil society. 5. Enhanced capacity of target groups to seek and obtain training, education and employment.
Enhancing Interaction in the Community	
7. Providing targeted support to young people from target group. 10. Supporting intercultural / interfaith dialogue. 5. Delivering non-language related education and training. 14. Building capacity of community / voluntary sector. 4. Building capacity in English language. 5. Delivering non-language related training.	2. Enhanced day-to-day interaction of target groups with the local community, and intercultural dialogue. 3. Increased level of participation of target groups in social and recreational activities and community bodies. 10. Greater embedding of interculturalism among social and other groups and the public.
Enhancing Service Provision	
1. Providing information and advice through a 'drop-in' service. 2. Providing information and advice through outreach services. 3. Delivering themed information supports. 8. Providing advocacy and legal support for individuals. 12. Building capacity of the statutory sector. 14. Building capacity of community/voluntary sector. 15. Promoting mainstreaming and developing policy. 11. Supporting actions to directly combat racism. 4. Building capacity in English language. 5. Delivering non-language related education and training.	6. Enhanced capacity and empowerment of target groups to access social and community services. 7. Improved redress for target groups regarding racism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination. 8. Improved skills and capacities of statutory bodies and community / voluntary organisations in interacting with target groups. 9. Improved collaboration between statutory bodies and community/voluntary organisations. 12. Changes in policy or practices among organisations or companies with which target groups relate.

3.4 SPECIFIC CHALLENGES FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

Before presenting the evidence, some key points must be made about asylum seekers living in direct provision centres and refugees living in the community.

A significant proportion of refugees and asylum seekers experience trauma in their countries of origin. Most projects reported that building trust among asylum seekers and refugees was a vital precondition of their work. Providing social outlets and reducing feelings of isolation were essential for those who were hardest to reach. The high support needs of the target groups had to be incorporated within wider project work on an ongoing basis. Generating positive interactions with the community were also very important.

Direct provision centres cluster together large numbers of asylum seekers, from different origins and at different stages of the asylum process. Accommodation is temporary in nature, and so households and relationships tend to be suspended in a ‘no-man’s-land’ while awaiting decisions on asylum applications. As a result, there tends to be minimal interaction between asylum seekers and the wider community in which they are located.

There has been a decrease in the numbers of asylum seekers entering Ireland in recent years but asylum seekers living in direct provision tend to have been there for a considerable length of time.

3.5 OUTCOMES: THE COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL DIMENSION

Exploring this Dimension

The *community, social and employment dimension* encompasses the way in which the target groups relate to and integrate within their immediate and wider communities.

The findings show that within this dimension, ERF projects broadly employed three types of strategies to promote integration at the individual, social and community levels:

1. Providing training and other supports with a view to developing target groups’ life skills and personal development (outcome 1) and to increase education, training and employment opportunities (outcome 5).
2. Bringing individuals and communities and together through one-off and ongoing intercultural activities to increase target groups’ participation in social and community activities (outcome 3) and to enhance day-to-day interaction with the local community (outcome 2).
3. Capacity building activities supporting the target groups to engage in collective action and in civil society (outcome 4).

3.5.1 Training Provision and other Supports for Integration

Direct interventions with the target group included training and other supports such as mentoring and counselling. The majority of training courses were devised with the aim of developing English language fluency, ICT proficiency, skills to work or volunteer in the local community and parenting skills.

All activities aimed at enabling asylum seekers and refugees to engage more effectively with the wider community. As already noted, there was a common theme throughout the project evaluations on the need to address very specific issues for the target group such as isolation

and mental health issues (e.g. trauma from previous experiences, separation from family members and adjusting to life in Ireland) before building confidence and personal development.

Developing Life Skills and Personal Development through English Language Training

English language courses represented the largest category of training provision in the programme. Developing language skills was a central feature of two ERF projects, **KASI** and **TIRC**, and **Doras Luimní**. Three projects **Mayo Intercultural Action**, **Westmeath Community Development** and **Longford Community Resources** also provided English language training on a smaller scale.

Three of the five ERF projects concluded that the provision of English language training had a positive impact on the personal confidence of the target groups and their ability to engage with others.

KASI and **TIRC** were the biggest providers of English language training with 220 people (mostly asylum seekers) enrolled in a range of courses. Training ranged from informal conversation classes to more structured English language classes up to more advanced levels in partnership with Kerry Education Services. The evaluation found that:

“... The consensus is that the majority of asylum seekers and refugees in Kerry have at least some knowledge of English as a result of attending the English classes, with some now fluent...” (p13)

The evaluation also noted other benefits:

“... a reduction in isolation, increased sense of belonging to Irish society, and increased coping mechanisms to deal with life in direct provision.” (p23)

Doras Luimní partnered with key providers of education and training in Limerick City to provide training from pre-beginners to intermediate level to 159 people.

According to the final evaluation, the English which were combined with cultural classes led to:

“... increased self-confidence and improved language skills amongst the participants and progression routes to higher levels.” (p24)

Westmeath Community Development provided training and education in English language targeting residents of the direct provision centre in Lissywollen and Kurdish refugees in Mullingar. Numbers engaged were much smaller with a total of 29 people participating in English language classes. However, the evaluation reported that the English classes were valuable in reducing isolation between residents in the centre leading to new friendships and social interactions. A manager reported the following:

“Over the past 12 months, I and my staff have noticed a huge improvement in their communication skills and their willingness to learn. From a small number of very timid participants in the learning group, I have noticed a steady increase in participants whose social skills have improved greatly in conversation and interaction ... through the English classes, they are now more integrated into local society which could be nothing only positive for themselves and the local community as it helps break down previous barriers of isolation.” (p25)

Developing Life Skills and Personal Development through other Training Interventions

Five ERF projects provided accredited training primarily in community development. Five projects also delivered short-term non-accredited courses on a variety of subjects, to larger numbers of people.

The projects providing short-term, non-accredited courses tended to focus on building the personal development and life skills of asylum seekers. Almost three times as many asylum seekers participated in these courses. Overall, the most popular training courses were on confidence building or personal development and acquiring very specific skills (e.g. IT training, parenting skills). Training for a variety of volunteering roles were also popular. Given the type of training provided, a positive impact on the confidence and life skills of the target groups should be likely. However, actual outcomes arising from these training courses, were more difficult to determine, and tended to be indistinguishable (in project evaluations) from the outcomes of other supports.

The development of personal development and life skills were not the primary objectives of the community development courses. However, project evaluations report that increased confidence and life skills emerged as unanticipated outcomes for the target group.

Mayo Intercultural Action's *Different Together* project provided 21 refugees with community development training. Mentoring was included as a component of the course. Of the 21 participants, 20 received FETAC Level 8 certification in *Community Work in a Changing Ireland* from NUI Maynooth.

The project evaluation concluded:

“The primary aim... was to build the capacity of participants to actively engage in the life of their communities with confidence and skills. There is overwhelming evidence that this aim was achieved. There is substantial evidence that the project has given the participants confidence in organising things themselves, take steps to create better conditions or generate ideas in their own communities. Every participant interviewed was able to give examples how they benefited in tangible ways from the project ranging from taking up representative positions to more personal benefits ...” (p42)

Galway Refugee Support Group's project was similar to that of **Mayo Intercultural Action**. It worked with 16 refugees to build their capacities to become involved in local community organisations. Like the Mayo project, *Community Work in a Changing Ireland* (FETAC Level 7) was delivered to participants in partnership with NUI Maynooth. Students received a range of supports, including mentoring through placements in local community organisations. All participants claimed that participation had “resulted in very positive changes in their lives.” (p21)

Westmeath Community Development provided accredited training in community radio production (FETAC Level 4) for asylum seekers living in Lissywollen Accommodation Centre. The trainees have since becoming actively involved in the work of the station.

In contrast, **St. Catherine's Community Services Centre's** project provided a wide range of short courses to 28 Rohingya refugees in horticulture, business development, cookery, basic DIY and fire safety. However, the outcomes achieved are considered in the context of a much wider range of supports including a drop-in service.

KASI and TIRC's project also delivered IT training and courses and support on parenting skills. The evaluation did note that most participants in their IT classes moved on to more

advanced computer classes by a local training provider (p14). However, other specific outcomes were not recorded.

Doras Luimní delivered ten week computer classes were to 32 people; and 25 women attended a women's development course. An *Incredible Years* programme was run for parents of young children. Better communication, increased confidence as well as practical benefits to adults and children were reported. Less successful was a highly structured mentoring programme that originally targeted 20 people. (Only two matches successfully completed.)

With regards to the IT course, the evaluation found that:

“As well as increased skills and knowledge amongst the participants, this programme had the added benefit of a holistic approach whereby capacity building of the participants through encouragement, self-direction, and problem solving took place in tandem with skills enhancement.” (p24)

Developing Life Skills and Personal Development through other Supports

Mentoring Initiatives

Five projects offered mentoring supports to the asylum seekers and refugees they engaged with.

The objective of mentoring differed from project to project. While some positive benefits did accrue for the target group, they did not necessarily relate to the acquisition of new skills.

Mayo Intercultural Action and **Galway Refugee Support Group** offered mentoring to support participants to successfully complete their assignments and work placements in community-based organisations.

In **St. Catherine's project**, young people from the local community in Carlow who had been trained in youth leadership were paired up with members of the Rohingya community and encouraged to meet at weekends to provide peer support and friendship. The primary gains identified were additional support from Rohingya young people to discuss their problems and to achieve their personal goals (p28).

With two matches made, **Doras Luimní's** mentoring initiative was under-subscribed and did not meet its targets. However, the project evaluation did comment on the potential benefits of mentoring from an intercultural perspective (p26).

Counselling and Mental Health Supports

Four projects provided professional counselling, to address a range of problems including trauma. Three of these projects also delivered complementary mental health programmes. **St. Catherine's** delivered counselling and other therapeutic supports to the largest group of people – 14 male and 32 Rohingya female refugees – almost half the number of people benefitting from these services.

All four projects identified a clear need amongst the target groups for counselling and support – particularly among those who had experienced and/or witnessed trauma in various forms. However, despite the recognised mental health issues, there was a relatively low take-up of individual counselling sessions. Clear evidence of the impact of these interventions on the personal development of asylum seekers and refugees was lacking in the project evaluations.

Although the positive effects of the interventions on personal development are implied rather than demonstrated, other benefits were noted on an anecdotal level such as the creation of 'safe spaces' for people to share their stories and in some cases, a reduction in isolation.

Two project evaluations highlighted specific barriers for asylum seekers and refugees accessing counselling services. In a number of cases, clients did not have "... sufficient proficiency in English to engage with therapeutic services in a meaningful way," (Carlow CDB Rohingya Resettlement Programme, Final Evaluation, p33). Excerpts from an interview with a service provider in the evaluation revealed:

"Even for the adults who have good English, they could still sometimes struggle to explain the core of the pain that they have. It is very hard to express yourself properly in a language that you are not fluent in." (p33)

This was backed up by **Westmeath Community Development's** evaluation. While interpretation services can bridge this gap, service providers also reported that interpreter costs were prohibitive in a number of cases. Low educational development leading to poor attention spans and low retention of information also led to setbacks in the counselling process.

While the western model of psychotherapy presented some practical and cultural challenges, three of the projects demonstrated innovation in adapting to the target groups' needs. **St. Catherine's** delivered an art therapy programme where men and women were asked to reflect on their life in Burma and their journey to Ireland. The artwork was then exhibited in the VISUAL Centre for Contemporary Art in Carlow.

As one of the beneficiaries noted,

"... even if we cannot communicate in words, we can communicate through art," (p 20).

Westmeath Community Development's *Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP)*, was delivered in Lisseywollen as a specialised course on mental health well-being for isolated asylum seekers. Some outcomes were reportedly positive for the individuals, but related to a very small number of beneficiaries.

Mayo Intercultural Action delivered CAPACITAR training in partnership with Mayo Rape Crisis Centre at an early stage in the programme. The training was used as a platform to introduce concepts of positive mental health and to identify those in need of follow up with additional personal support and counselling sessions (p32).

Personal Supports

Drop-in centres and outreach into target group families and communities are considered mainly in the next section since their main goal was to improve access to services. However, drop-in projects also served other purposes. Outreach and drop-in centres helped to reduce the sense of isolation and to encourage more interaction with the local community. Some provided valuable services such as writing letters, and communicating with recreational and sporting facilities and meeting other groups in the locality. To the extent that they served this purpose, this report has found that drop-in centres and outreach also made a contribution to local integration and everyday life in the community.

Increasing the Target Groups' capacity to access Training, Education and Employment Opportunities through Training and Personal Supports

The output data revealed high numbers of asylum seekers and refugees engaged in training courses throughout the lifetime of the ERF programme. A total of 366 asylum seekers and 191 refugees participated in both accredited and non-accredited training courses.

In addition to the high numbers, there is some evidence of enhanced systems of provision for adults in accessing training. **Doras Luimní** worked very successfully with other education and training providers in Limerick. Their project evaluation stated that the collaboration resulted in:

“...the avoidance of duplication and ease of access, provision and progression for participants on English Language courses. The programmes on offer range from pre-beginner English, beginners English to Intermediate English.

The progression route from one to another allows for a building of language skills over time in a consistent setting and sustainable outcomes for participants.” (ps23-24)

Outcomes relating to increased access to education and employment for *adults* were more relevant to the refugee community who are entitled to a wider range of publicly funded education and employment supports.

There were anecdotal reports throughout project evaluations and evaluation surveys indicating that increased English language skills and training enhanced refugees' ability to pursue further education and obtain employment. Project evaluations also refer to relatively large numbers of the target group participating successfully in volunteering placements. However, there was limited hard data on refugees' progression to employment. This may be because the majority of projects' primary focus was on skills development.

Initiatives supporting children and young people to engage in mainstream education were quite successful. Three projects, **City of Dublin ETB, St. Catherine's Community Services Centre** and **KASI** and **TIRC** emphasised the unique needs of asylum seeking and refugee schoolchildren, supporting educational integration through after-school supports; additional tuition in English and Maths; youth work; mentoring; summer programmes; and intensive education programmes prior to entering mainstream education.

City of Dublin ETB's *Refugee Access Programme (RAP)* offered strong evidence of a significant outcome. The project specifically targeted newly-arrived separated children seeking asylum during their initial care placements in short-term residential units in Dublin. The ERF funded additional resources to expand and develop an existing education programme that supported their transition to mainstream second level-schools through improving English, maths and life skills over a 12 week period. 91 young asylum seekers and 42 young refugees participated with the majority progressing to post primary schools. The project evaluation¹⁷ found that:

¹⁷ A list of the final evaluation of each project is given in Annex 2. Only the page numbers are referenced in the text. In a few cases, such as the one below, the closing survey paraphrases the evaluation. The page to which it refers is also included.

“...[s]tudent progress in English language and communication during the average 12 weeks *RAP* programme is dramatic with self-assessments showing improvement in skills such as comprehension, speaking, reading and writing. Tutors also report high motivation levels among students and marked increases in English language proficiency and ability to communicate, learn independently and in a group, all skills which are necessary for the transition to mainstream schooling.” (survey evidence and p14)

Past *RAP* students reported significantly increased levels of English and communication skills, personal development, and confidence since they had completed. General interactive skills were also important:

“...past students report how crucial it was to their successful integration in mainstream school, to understand the concept of body language and the real differences between gestures and facial expressions between their own culture and that of Ireland.” (survey evidence)

One of the key objectives of **St. Catherine’s** project was to facilitate access to education for young people from the Rohingya community. Interventions included close liaison with schools, dedicated after-school clubs and a range of tailored youth work activities. Although teenage boys had lower levels of engagement with the formal education system (p12), the evaluation found that teenage girls and children of primary school age were continuing to access and advance in mainstream schools.

In addition to the social activities and after-school supports provided by **KASI** and **TIRC**, the projects provided personal support and mentoring to two refugees engaged in further education (survey evidence).

3.5.2 Bringing Individuals, Communities, Cultures and Faiths together

Interculturalism was not a major theme under the ERF Programme. While some projects included intercultural activities as a component of their wider work, improving access to services and meeting the immediate needs of the target groups took priority.

There is clear evidence that social activities and community networks (in particular) led to increased participation of asylum seekers and refugees in volunteering and social groups (outcome 3).

However, most projects were unable to demonstrate enhanced daily interaction between both target groups and the local community (outcome 2) or greater embedding of interculturalism in social groups (outcome 10). The exception is where targeted work with young people took place, leading to an increased level of interaction. (Although, the extent of mutual interaction was not fully explored.)

Promoting Interculturalism through Community Networks

In summary, the primary aims of both **Mayo Intercultural Action’s** and **Galway Refugee Support Group’s** projects were to build the capacity of participants to actively engage in their local communities. However, both projects also had objectives of developing intercultural networks and groups.

In both project evaluations, participants demonstrated a keen commitment to carry on with their engagement in the local community as either volunteers or by joining local community groups. However, participants also highlighted an absence of intercultural exchange.

Promoting interaction and interculturalism through one-off events and ongoing social activities

Projects undertook a number of interventions that brought the target groups, Irish people and others together to join in sport and community activities, and interact in a variety of collective events and celebrations.

Overall, the attendance numbers from these events were good with over 1,500 asylum seekers and refugees, approximately 900 Irish people and 400 other nationalities attending.

A brief overview of activities include:

- **St. Catherine's** launched Carlow Cricket Club with the participation of 17 Rohingya. Now into its second year it has members from seven countries including Ireland. Three Rohingya also sit on the club's committee.
- **Longford Community Resources** ran a series of eight one-off events (some attracting large numbers of participants); supported volunteer placements; and four ongoing groups intended to promote interaction and integration.
- **KASI** and **TIRC** organised a variety of social events designed to enable engagement with communities including President Higgins attendance as guest of honour during TIRC's Africa Day; participation in local festivals such as the St. Patrick's Day parade; supported volunteering; a community garden; intercultural lunch events; cultural seminars; and information talks about migration and asylum in local schools, libraries and with community groups.
- **Doras Luimní** organised a number of activities including the formation of a football club, with the FAI; an intercultural book club. The outreach service to the four direct provision centres allowed them to connect residents to other social activities within the surrounding community.

Doras Luimní's evaluation demonstrated that both the football club and the book club led to "... Increased social interaction with the majority population .." (ps21-22).

However, at present, the above interventions have demonstrated a limited impact on increasing intercultural dialogue and minimal influence in terms of enhancing day-to-day interaction between the target group and local communities (outcome 2). There was also little evidence of greater embedding of interculturalism among social groups and the public (outcome 10).

The primary achievements to date indicate a growing awareness of integration issues and the circumstances of the target group. **Longford Community Resources'** evaluation noted:

"At the level of broader public awareness, both the use of media and the organisation of public events have raised the profile of the issue in general and have increased knowledge about particular associated challenges. Efforts to engage asylum seekers as volunteers in community-based and voluntary projects have also been successful, with successful outcomes for both participants and host organisations being evident." (p20)

This is echoed by the **KASI** and **TIRC** evaluation, which highlighted the importance of offering opportunities for target groups to address prejudices and raise awareness of interculturalism:

“The visit of the President of Ireland as guest of honour during the TIRC Africa Day celebration in May 2012 was a considerable awareness raising opportunity within the Tralee community and was one with which the local community fully engaged.” (p7)

Interventions targeting Young People

Only two projects had a direct focus on developing relationships between young people from the target group and the wider community.

St. Catherine’s delivered an integrated set of actions in partnership with Carlow Regional Youth Service. These included bringing together seven Rohingya with nine local teenage boys, successfully defusing negative perceptions; 18 local adult volunteers and 15 youth mentors also developed personal relationships with the group while assisting them in various ways. Five teenage boys joined local sports clubs, and a dozen teenagers attend various social groups run by Carlow Regional Youth Service.

Once contact had been established with LGBT asylum seekers and refugees, they were supported to join **BeLonG To’s** peer support network with other LGBT young people. As the evaluation noted;

“This decreased the sense of social isolation, and increased the sense of social support, that the young people experienced. The young people reported not feeling as alone as they did before.” (p20)

3.5.3 Building Capacity of the Target Group to engage in collective action and in civil society

The application of community development principles and working methods has been central to the practice of the majority of ERF projects.

The extent of the impact should be viewed as a continuum ranging from supporting the personal development of both target groups, to upskilling asylum seekers and refugees, to enhancing the self-organisation of representative groups, to increasing active engagement at a local and societal level.

The type of interventions employed depended on the starting point of individuals that projects initially engaged with. As already noted, findings from evaluations emphasised the high support needs of asylum seekers and refugees. Addressing immediate needs had to take precedence before progressing to further capacity building and empowerment activities. Where interventions were delivered to promote collective action, initial capacity building interventions tended to dominate the work.

The primary outcomes appear to be the initial establishment and development of representative groups and forums. There is evidence of these groups becoming effective. However, the volume of outputs are relatively low and the extent to which target groups were equipped to engage in collective action and civil society (outcome 4) by the end of the programme was limited. The work to date represents a positive but small first step in promoting the civic participation of asylum seekers and refugees.

Supporting the establishment and development of Migrant-led Groups

Training was a key component of many capacity building initiatives. Participants benefited from a wide range of training courses including workshops on volunteering, committee skills,

negotiation skills, intercultural skills, facilitation, leadership development and accredited training in community development. Other capacity building activities included outreach, information sharing, provision of space and resources, mentoring, facilitating meetings and intensive support on a regular basis.

The final evaluation surveys and project level evaluations identified approximately ten groups that were established by ERF projects. These include:

The Lissywollen Resident's Group was formed through the support of **Westmeath Community Development** with training, workshops and other activities. According to the project evaluation, members of this group built their capacity significantly, and,

“... have a clearer understanding of the systems and structures and how they operate and where they need to establish themselves in order to have a stronger voice.”
(p20)

The Resident's Group successfully made representations to the accommodation centre management to improve facilities. It also made representations to the Westmeath Integration and Diversity Inter-Agency Group. The group is now represented on the Athlone Community Health Forum.

The intensive training provided by **Mayo Intercultural Action** to 21 participants resulted in the creation of migrant resource groups in Ballina and Castlebar and the formation of a Nigerian Association. The Ballina Resource group has gone on to engage with the Ballina FRC to organise an Intercultural Social Group. One participant joined the board of Mayo Rape Crisis Centre. The students also organised youth activities for direct provision residents in Ballyhaunis.

The Rohingya community, supported by **St. Catherine's**, have also been particularly active in collective organisation. They developed a website for Rohingya in Ireland and are in the process of creating a national Rohingya Support Group. They also have strong links with Burma Action Ireland. Representatives of the group met with Aung Sang Suu Kyi on her recent visit to Ireland and presented her with an art work of their life in Burma, which raised the profile of the group. Two Rohingya now act as representatives on the Carlow Integration Forum.

3.6 OUTCOMES: THE SERVICE PROVISION DIMENSION

Exploring this Dimension

This dimension relates to ensuring that public, community and voluntary sector services are accessible to asylum seeking and refugee people and that these services adequately address their needs.

The findings show that within this dimension, ERF projects broadly employed two types of strategies to promote access and treatment within services:

1. Information provision through dedicated drop-in centres, outreach, information clinics and resources to enhance the capacity of the target group to access social and community services (outcome 6).
2. Improving national, public and community services by building up the understanding and capacities of staff (outcome 8), improving co-operation between services in order

to enhance their delivery (outcome 9), and influencing the policies that shape service delivery (outcome 12).

Despite projects' own perception of their level of influence in this area (see **Figure 1**), the different strategies employed have culminated in greater access, more positive changes to practice and policy and greater improvements in the quality of service provision than estimated.

3.6.1 Drop-In Centres incorporating Outreach and additional Supports

Drop-in projects were tailored to meet the specific needs of asylum seekers and refugees by providing information on services, and supporting the target groups to access them. However, these projects were not merely conduits to mainstream services and they should be viewed as services within their own right. Drop-in centres responded directly to a broad range of diverse queries including (but not restricted to) the asylum and immigration systems, residency, citizenship, rights, entitlements, employment issues and domestic violence. In some cases, drop-in projects also offered additional personal supports such as English language classes, after-school clubs, training courses, and support with official correspondence and applications; all of which contributed to confidence building and greater engagement with the wider community.

Five ERF projects provided drop-in services, with four supplementing their service with outreach activity. Outreach was central to making initial contact with people – particularly those who may have been hardest to reach. Outreach was a critical tool in raising awareness of services.

All five projects combined drop-in clinics with referrals to other service providers. Four of the drop-in services also provided advocacy and legal support.

As noted in Section 2, the five drop-in centres attracted approximately 1,400 asylum seekers and just over 1,450 refugees. A total number of 19,258 visits were made by these service users to the drop-in centres over the lifetime of the programme. Asylum seekers accounted for the largest number of visits. 14,250 visits were made by asylum seekers, making on average, ten visits, per person. Approximately 2,100 asylum seekers and 54 refugees were seen during the outreach visits made by four of the five ERF projects. The projects made over 2,500 referrals on behalf of service users. Four of the projects also followed up with advocacy and legal supports, in a total of 309 cases. The majority of the caseload, 248 cases, were undertaken on behalf of asylum seekers.

The sheer numbers involved in wrap-around drop-in services indicate that some significant benefits did accrue. A couple of the ERF projects also targeted and engaged with groups that were particularly hard to reach.

The primary aim of **BeLonG To's** project was to build the capacity of service providers to include and support young LGBT asylum seekers and refugees. However, the project also offered a small drop-in service combined with outreach visits to direct provision centres. The project's target group was particularly isolated and vulnerable due to the high levels of stigma in some cultures leading to safety issues in direct provision centres.

BeLonG To's drop-in service supported 25 LGBT asylum seekers and refugees. The outreach service covered the Dublin / Meath area and made contact with 13 members of the target group. Although the number of service users appears to be quite low, the invisibility and vulnerability of this target group must be taken into account. Those who did access the

service had complex mental health and service needs and required intensive support with 48 referrals made to other service providers. The project also provided advocacy and legal support in 15 cases. The project evaluation concluded, based on interviews, that the project:

“... provided a vital direct service to this highly vulnerable client group. Those who engaged with the service received an intensive response from the project youth worker – a response that was tailored to the client’s needs ... testimony from the project staff and clients would suggest that the service has had meaningful and lasting impact on the lives of those who engaged with the youth worker.” (p21)

The drop-in centre run by **Doras Luimní** saw by far the largest number of clients, with 880 asylum seeker and 1,360 refugee visitors. The project also accounted for the highest number of people reached through outreach visits – 1,747 asylum seekers were visited in direct provision centres. The project also facilitated 1,502 referrals to other service providers.

The strategy within the drop-in service gradually changed over the duration of the project to accommodate the needs of the service users. The service developed three central aspects of support: an appointment system to cut down on clients’ waiting time; a new database system to ensure greater handover information between case workers; and a renewed focus on referrals to mainstream providers. The project evaluation found that:

“The [drop-in] numbers increased on a month by month basis and reflected the deep seated needs of the communities it served. Reaching out to the most isolated was embedded in the project day to day operations. Service users in particular were aware of this ethos - “They listen and understand what we need”. The consistency of response by the drop in staff is striking. Services users also talk about the drop in service as a “life line” ensuring that they had access to information but also support “respect and understanding that you don’t get anywhere else”. (p18)

The outreach service, as noted, focused almost entirely on asylum seekers in four direct provision centres in County Clare, Limerick City and County Limerick. In addition to, “Increased skills, information and resources amongst [the] target group,” (p21), outreach visits countered the isolation experienced by those living in direct provision with caseworkers often linking the target group with other activities taking place at **Doras Luimní**. Outreach work also provided a critical programme of supports to families and children living in direct provision.

The **KASI** and **TIRC** drop-in centres saw the next largest number of people. The two drop-in centres received visits from over 480 asylum seekers and 25 refugees. Regarding the drop-in advice, support and advocacy service, the final evaluation concluded:

“Practical assistance such as interpreting important correspondence, writing letters and making phone calls has been a crucial support for people. The links that are made both with other service users and with other organisations through referrals have been critical in the lives of many.” (p10)

As with other drop-in services, both KASI’s and TIRC’s drop-in centres provided more than access to information and services. Both centres offered a functional space for asylum seekers to meet and engage in collective activities including English classes, meetings, social activities, a men’s group and space to cook meals twice a month. As the final evaluation found:

“... it [is] crucial not to underestimate the provision of a safe, welcoming place to go particularly for people living in direct provision.” (p10)

Those surveyed in the mid-term evaluation placed the highest value on the ‘social and drop-in centre’ among all services provided by the ERF project. (p29).

Like **BeLonG To**, two other drop-in centres dealt with much smaller numbers, but with more intensive support.

St. Catherine’s drop-in centre worked with 63 refugees from 13 resettled Rohingya families. The high support needs were evident in the number of visits made to the drop-in centre with the target group visiting a total of 2,489 times – an average of 40 visits per person. 140 referrals were made on behalf of service users during this period. Working with this group of resettled refugees proved to be very labour-intensive work – especially due to the target group’s low levels of educational attainment, lack of English and experience of high levels of trauma.

The drop-in centre adopted a number of strategies to facilitate access to mainstream services such as accompanying the target group to appointments. In the last stages of the project, the phase-out of the drop-in service proved successful. The drop-in service hours were cut and it changed to an appointments based service in the last year. This encouraged independence and also provided the target group with a more realistic experience of dealing with service providers.

The **Longford Community Resources** project was terminated prematurely in September 2011 with the closure of the direct provision centre, Richmond House, which it was servicing. The project sought multiple outcomes but in the time available to it, and most relevant here, were direct supports to asylum seekers mainly via an advice clinic and outreach visits. The evaluation of their impact was considered in the context of impact of other interventions, without singling out information provision activities.

Themed Information Events and Information Resources

Themed information events were also used to promote engagement with services. Six ERF projects (including the five drop-in projects mentioned above), provided a range of additional information supports. As noted in Section 2, five projects delivered 38 themed information workshops 741 people. However, these figures must be treated with some caution when considering outcomes. Project evaluations revealed that some of information supports provided may not have been directly relevant to promoting access to service provision.

ERF projects produced a number of informative, user-friendly resources such as:

- A local directory of services by **St. Catherine’s**;
- **City of Dublin ETB’s** website: (<http://www.separatedchildrenservice.ie/young-people>) and *Stepping Stones* - a resource for young migrants starting secondary school in Ireland for the first time: (<http://www.separatedchildrenservice.ie/resources/index/stepping-stones-starting-second-level-school-in-ireland>);
- **BeLonG To’s** services card, promotional poster and *Welcome Guide for LGBT Asylum Seekers and Refugees*;
- **Doras Luimní’s** posters on practical integration issues.

3.6.2 Improving Service Delivery to Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Improving the skills and capacities of service providers was critical in both attracting the target groups to services and in ensuring that those services meet their needs more effectively.

Encouraging improvements in service quality and accessibility was the concern of a number of projects. This involved the direct training of service providers, and also encompassed extensive, structured interaction between NGOs, services, agencies, ERF projects and the target group themselves.

Improving the Skills and Capacity of Service Providers

As detailed below, building the capacity of service providers was a key priority for a number of projects. Numbers of Irish and 'other' staff trained in the statutory and community / voluntary sectors are high. A total of 1,097 staff from the statutory sector and 585 people from community and voluntary services benefited from capacity building activities. (These figures excluded members of the target groups who may have contributed to the delivery of these actions in addition to benefiting from training and supports of their organisations.)

Four ERF projects took a strategic approach to training and targeted staff in specific roles including teachers, staff in Government Departments, interpreters and childcare staff. Other groups resourced service providers through ongoing contact, meetings and also the development of inter-agency working groups.

A number of ERF projects evaluated the impact of their activities (particularly in the case of training) on improved skills and capacities of organisations in interacting with target groups (outcome 8). Evaluations provided evidence of a deeper understanding amongst service providers of the varying needs of the target groups and increased confidence and enhanced skills. There was also documented evidence of improved competencies amongst individual staff in their day-to-day work. There was also some evidence of improved competencies at organisational levels. However, this is to a *lesser extent*.

Tailored Training Programmes

Three ERF projects strategically targeted staff working in specific roles in both the statutory and community / voluntary sectors. Training was adapted on an ongoing basis to ensure that training participants derived information relevant to their professional roles. In addition (and on the recommendation of Pobal), all three projects established project advisory committees comprising experienced and well-connected members who played important roles in promoting the projects to other stakeholders.

Dublin Rape Crisis Centre (DRCC) focused exclusively on building the capacity of service providers, in both statutory and community voluntary sectors, through the provision of tailored training courses ranging from half-day workshops (for teachers) to four day courses for staff in key support roles. Training content focused on working sensitively with refugees and asylum seekers who had experienced sexual violence and other trauma.

A total of 28 workshops and training courses were delivered to 411 people with 231 participants coming from the statutory sector.

The project evaluation assessed impact using findings from follow-up surveys. 46% of participants responded to the surveys offering a good evidence base. (School teachers were not included in the survey.)

Key results demonstrated significantly enhanced skills and understanding amongst individual participants four to six months after training ended:

- 97% of respondents indicated that their understanding of the impact of sexual violence and other trauma had increased.
- 39% expressed moderate increases and 53% indicated considerable increases in confidence in interacting with refugees and asylum seekers in a more sensitive manner.
- 86% felt their skills levels had been significantly improved (e.g. how to handle disclosure, resource a person more effectively, recognising and dealing with symptoms of PTSD). Participants on longer courses benefited more in this regard. (ps 8-9)

City of Dublin ETB's *Refugee Access Programme* delivered training to a total of 560 professional working with separated children seeking asylum or in the education sector. 21 of the 29 training workshops engaged with 375 teachers and teacher trainees. Training content tended to focus on supporting language and literacy development across the curriculum. A further eight workshops were delivered to other target groups, including City of Dublin ETB tutors and youth workers.

The high numbers of teachers engaged in training indicate the popularity and demand for more training in this field. However, although a number of teachers stated that they would incorporate the ideas learned at sessions, verification of increased skills and competencies (as a result of the training workshops) were not evident. The training appeared to have been most beneficial in raising awareness about particular teaching techniques.

BeLonG To's project aimed to increase the capacity of statutory / voluntary services working with asylum seekers and refugees and LGBT services to meet the needs of LGBT asylum seekers and refugees. A total of 22 training workshops (plus a number of presentations) were delivered to 128 staff and 138 staff from the statutory sector and community / voluntary sectors respectively.

The project provided training to individuals and to 'whole organisations'. Training courses were based on knowledge gaps identified through a needs analysis at the beginning of the project. The primary objectives of the training were to promote positive attitudes to the target groups, enhance knowledge of the target group and to enhance the efficacy of participants in responding appropriately to the needs of the target group.

Pre- and post-training questionnaires were designed by the evaluator to measure the impact of training in relation to the attitudes, knowledge and self-efficacy of training participants. The evaluation found that:

"In conclusion, analysis of the outcome data for the training programme showed a significant improvement in Knowledge of LGBT issues from pre-to-post. For Attitudes and Self-Efficacy, the trainees as a whole had very positive attitudes towards the client group and had a lot of confidence in their ability to respond to the needs of the group (Self-Efficacy) pre-training. Consequentially, there was no significant improvement in these domains for the full training group from pre- to post-training. However, when those with low Self-Efficacy and less positive attitudes were examined as a sub-sample of trainees, this group showed significant improvements in both domains after the training. **Thus, those who needed the capacity building training most, benefited most.**" (p11)

This project was particularly successful in bridging a particular gap in knowledge amongst a diverse group of service providers, thereby enhancing their capacity to meet the needs of the target groups.

Doras Luimní also provided training to a specific cohort of workers albeit on a smaller scale. The project delivered eight workshops to childcare providers to increase their cultural awareness of the target groups.

Other Capacity building Activities

Taking the total number of individuals benefiting from capacity building activities, it is worth noting some other successful interventions employed by ERF projects:

- The **St. Catherine's** project worker accompanied clients to meetings and appointments with service providers as a means of supporting their interaction and helping services to manage the language barrier. The joint appointments also served to increase awareness about specific cultural issues or needs.
- **Mayo Intercultural Action** built the capacity of key service providers in a number of ways. It worked with its mainstreaming committee (made up of local statutory and community service providers and agencies) by presenting policy lessons from the project to ensure better service and support provision for refugees at a regional level. Training participants also made presentations to local community services. This provided a platform for engagement and increased knowledge of barriers to integration. The mainstreaming committee also participated in the project seminar which provided a platform to identify opportunities to promote the integration and participation of migrants in their own organisations. Finally, the project incorporated inputs from the statutory sector into its training programme. This served as an opportunity to create dialogue between training participants and staff from the statutory sector, informing the sector of experiences and issues of the target group.
- **BeLong To's** steering committee also acted as a forum for mutual learning not just between groups working with asylum seekers/refugees and LGBT communities, but also between statutory and voluntary organisations.

Moving from Individual Capacity to Organisational Capacity

The findings above show that there has been a positive impact on service delivery at an individual level but there is also evidence (in a few cases) that whole organisations have improved their capacity as a result of ERF-funded interventions.

The DRCC evaluation shows some there has been an openness to learn from the training offered and that there have been some improvements in terms of accessibility. Over half of those trained indicated that their:

“...organisations afforded the participant an opportunity to pass on the learning to colleagues, e.g. by way of a presentation. 44% of respondents believe that their organisations showed a willingness to change their practices as a result of the learning brought back and 24% indicated that their organisations had in fact already made some changes.” (p10)

“Overall, 41% of respondents indicated that the accessibility of their organisation's service improved as a result of the learning they brought back.” (p10)

BeLong To's final evaluation found that training delivered to whole organisations, was particularly beneficial in harmonising capacity and ensuring the buy-in of management. This in turn led to requests for more in-depth training. For example, after the first training session with the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner, they requested two further training workshops.

The evaluation also found that capacity and skills of asylum and refugee organisations were particularly enhanced by training.

Improved Co-ordination leading to enhanced Practices and Policy amongst Service Providers

A number of projects attempted to contribute to better collaboration between service providers (outcome 9). In these cases, there is a demonstrable and significant link between ERF funded activities and enhanced co-ordination of service provision within different organisations.

A number of outcomes fall under this heading, including supporting the development of, or reinforcing, county integration strategies, and better interactions and relations between projects and service providers sometimes fostered through the steering or mainstreaming committees.

KASI and **TIRC** continued their work on the implementation of the Kerry Integration Strategy. The project continued to participate in the Monitoring and Implementation Group for the strategy. The final evaluation concluded that they played a leading policy role that benefited both them and other service providers. Both **KASI** and **TIRC** were:

“... recognised as professional organisations that have skills and resources to offer that support the work of other agencies such as the HSE, ETB, etc. They are also recognised as the organisations that are most in touch with the refugee and asylum seeking communities and can liaise between the communities and the agencies when necessary. On the other hand KASI and TIRC benefit from improved working relationships with a variety of organisations such as the HSE, ETB and Local Development Companies that enables the agencies to work in partnership with TIRC and KASI to address issues.” (p19)

Both are also active on the Kerry Primary Care Team Forum.

St. Catherine’s ERF project demonstrated very good practice in its co-ordination and support of an inter-agency steering committee. The committee maintained a co-ordinated response to supporting the integration of the Rohingya community and their access to services. The committee facilitated information sharing and a multi-agency response to critical issues as they arose. In addition, the work of the committee was central to the design of the project’s mainstreaming strategy.

The evaluation noted a growth in the commitment of service providers as a result of their involvement in the committee:

“Service providers themselves also spoke highly of the interagency approach to this work:

‘Representatives kept coming back to the focus of the families. There was a lot of good will there and they were extremely committed to trying to support the families and trying to address the issues that came up. The focus of the work and the targeted approach is what made it a success’ (Service provider, 2012).

‘Everyone was there for the good of the Rohingya’ (Service provider, 2012).

This strategic approach with an emphasis on ‘needs-driven’ activities ensured a very productive year for the key personnel involved in the programme.” (p27)

The creation of the Carlow Integration Forum in 2010 was, according to the evaluation, a direct development of the ERF project. The forum was set-up to ensure that skills developed through the inter-agency committee would continue to support not just the Rohingya community but other communities in Carlow. Two members of the Rohingya community now sit on the forum. The final evaluation regards this as “an ideal opportunity to foster meaningful relationships with the wider community and integration in the long-term.” (25).

Westmeath Community Development was instrumental in leading the design and launch of the *Westmeath Integration and Diversity Strategy*. The strategy has been formally approved by the Country Development Board. The final evaluation concluded:

“The formation of the ... Interagency Group as part of the consultation phase and to support the action plan work is extremely positive in establishing the framework for the Forum. An effective working relationship now exists and there is a commitment from the partners to participate in the implementation phase of the strategy.” (p15)

In a separate outcome, the Lissywollen Residents Group secured representation on the local *Community Health Forum*, and as a direct result of its participation, the HSE undertook a health needs analysis of the centre, and ran an information session there.

As a result of its engagement with **BeLonG To’s** ERF project, the steering committee successfully devised a streamlined referrals system for the target group amongst its members:

“An informal referral system is in place between BeLonG To and other key service providers, including the Irish Refugee Council, SPIRASI, AkiDwA, UNHCR and the Migrants Rights Centre ... The inter-agency nature of the Committee, in itself, promoted the inter-agency working capacity of the sector, in that it established a network of stakeholders with growing knowledge and acceptance of the need to respond in a coordinated way to LGBT refugee and asylum seekers.” (p15)

Doras Luimní agreed a *Memorandum of Association* with key agencies and service providers to improve referral procedures into the future - the process was facilitated by its mainstreaming committee.

The project also worked with the ESOL Partnership in Limerick city, comprising key providers of education and training. The initiative ensured a more consistent and co-ordinated approach between Doras Luimní and the ETB in supporting the progression route of the target groups from pre-beginner to beginner to intermediate English courses.

3.7 MAINSTREAMING OF PROJECT INTERVENTIONS

The term ‘mainstreaming’ as an outcome is defined in the Programme Evaluation Guidelines as:

“... the current or future replication of the Project activities, within the Project sponsor or partners themselves or elsewhere for instance amongst other statutory agencies or community/voluntary bodies.”

Mainstreaming, in this sense, was not considered in the analysis of outputs above since it essentially comprises a process of reinforcing and prolonging those outcomes sought into the *future*. The question to be considered is thus:

What is the evidence that the interventions implemented under the ERF programme, and hence the outcomes sought, are being continued by projects or by others, to what extent, for what period, and in what areas (outcome 11)?

Several ERF projects have seen considerable success in mainstreaming, taking different approaches such as:

1. Mainstreaming interventions or processes within the project's own organisation.
2. Identifying and supporting other organisations willing to continue the work.
3. Producing or tailoring substantive project materials or components, for use in other contexts or by other organisations.
4. Embedding a particular project intervention within a policy or strategy of a wider body that has been promoted by the project, including a commitment for future support.

A clear case of success is **DRCC**. The organisation has declared its firm commitment to, and is in the process of, integrating the training programme, *Working Sensitively with Refugees and Asylum Seekers*, into the core work of its Education and Training Department. All training materials have been recorded, collated and documented to that end. The intention is to offer the training for as long as the need is perceived.

Specific modules developed during the project will also be integrated within other training programmes they provide. For instance a module for service providers working with children and young people will include dealing with issues where parents have experienced trauma.

As a result of the project's engagement with the teaching profession, a number of concrete outcomes have emerged. The Curriculum Development Unit of Mary Immaculate College in Limerick asked **DRCC** to deliver training to final year students, and is now in discussion to include this as an ongoing module in the curriculum. **DRCC** is in similar discussions with St. Patrick's Teacher Training College; and a three hour *Trauma and the Child* module is being integrated within Froebel teacher training in NUI Maynooth. Although **DRCC** will deliver the training in most cases, the modules themselves will be mainstreamed into external courses.

BeLonG To remains committed to the ongoing provision of direct support to young LGBT asylum seekers and refugees, with a view to integrating those they have worked with into their general youth services. Other training modules on LGBT issues have also been adjusted to include the asylum seeker and refugee component; and staff have included the topic in their continual learning process.

As already noted, the project steering committee has helped to establish a 'wrap around' referral service for the target group ensuring a streamlined referrals pathways between the Irish Refugee Council, the Gay Men's Health Service, **BeLonG To**, **OUTHouse** and **AkiDwA**. An informal referral system is also in place between **BeLonG To**, the Irish Refugee Council, **SPIRASI**, Migrant Rights Centre Ireland and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (Ireland).

Training participants from both the community / voluntary and statutory sectors reported that they had introduced new codes of practice as a result of the training. The evaluation reported that:

“The Resettlement Unit in the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration is developing a policy on LGBT issues and the management of Baleskin Reception

Centre and Hatch Hall Direct Provision Centre are developing a Code of Conduct for staff on working With LGBT asylum seekers (with advice from BeLonG To)". (p11)

"That some of these services are now introducing new codes of practice and policies on working with this client group means that the impact of this training on the service environment has been greater than initially envisaged." (piv)

The project also produced a best practice report entitled, *Key Principles for Working with LGBT Asylum Seekers and Refugees*, that focuses on service delivery and interagency cooperation. A quick reference guide was also produced, *How to support LGBT Asylum Seekers and Refugees*, and an awareness-building DVD. These were widely distributed to service providers and other organisations working with asylum seekers and refugees.

As already noted, the impact of **Doras Luimní's** mainstreaming strategy is demonstrated in the outcomes of its work with the ESOL Partnership and in devising a new referrals system with other key stakeholders who engage with the target groups.

The project successfully worked with the ESOL Partnership in Limerick City to improve access and participation in English language courses for asylum seekers and refugees as they progress through different levels. The evaluation found that:

"This has resulted in the avoidance of duplication and ease of access, provision and progression for participants on English Language courses. The programmes on offer range from pre beginner English, beginners English to Intermediate English.

The progression route from one to another allows for a building of language skills over time in a consistent setting and sustainable outcomes for participants." (ps 23-24)

"The on-going partnership between ESOL partners resulted in an increase in English language provision." (p29)

The project also enhanced the training content of English language programmes across the city:

"A key output from the programme is the newly developed curriculum as informed by feedback from tutors. This new revised curriculum was developed in year two of the ERF programme and included additional material for use by all tutors in the delivery of English language classes in year three of the programme." (p24)

The evaluation verified that that:

"... the curriculum developed acts a core text for the development of English language provision in the City and County of Limerick." (p30)

As already mentioned, the project has also established a new referrals procedure with key agencies and service providers in the city. This was undertaken by enhancing communication with local stakeholders and instilling a partnership approach. The Citizens Information Service, Vincent de Paul and Adapt Women's Refuge signed up to the *Memorandum of Understanding* for the co-ordinated referrals process.

City of Dublin ETB's project produced a wide range of teaching and learning resources that were mainstreamed externally through its training programme and on the project website: <http://www.separatedchildrenservice.ie>. The positive feedback on the DVD,

Stepping Stones: Starting second level school in Ireland

(<http://www.separatedchildrengovernment.ie/resources/index/stepping-stones-starting-second-level-school-in-ireland>) demonstrates that it has been a very useful resource for both secondary teachers and young students who are starting secondary school for the first time.

The project also enhanced its own delivery of the *Refugee Access Programme* by:

- Delivering a range of training workshops with City of Dublin ETB tutors and agreeing common teaching methodologies in the new programme.
- Developing new competency-based syllabi in English language, maths and life skills.
- Designing customised assessment tools monitoring student progression at an educational level.

One of the main goals of **St. Catherine's** project was to mainstream the integration of Rohingya refugees into mainstream services. A key objective of the project was to avoid prolonging ERF funded interventions. The dedicated ERF drop-in service has been successfully phased out with 13 of 16 families demonstrating 90% independence in their independent living skills (including accessing services with the support of other family members).

The project was a very successful model of inter-agency working. **St. Catherine's** co-ordinated the steering committee and used the mainstreaming strategy as a practical planning tool to map gaps, responsibilities and future commitments. The mainstreaming plan identified gaps in support and a number of agencies committed to particular actions that they can take responsibility for. Although some services ceased at the end of the project, other services continued (albeit on a reduced basis as a mainstream service). The inter-agency committee committed to meet again after the project ended to review the effectiveness of mainstreaming,

Westmeath Community Development's project successfully led to the creation of the *Westmeath Integration and Diversity Strategy*, adopted by the Local Authority and service providers. The strategy includes continued support for the Lissywollen Residents Group, which was created through the project.

3.8 OUTCOME CONCLUSIONS – A FINAL WORD

The ERF Programme has been active in encouraging and enabling the integration of asylum seekers and refugees at community level and improving service quality and accessibility. The overall evidence available does show that the ERF Programme has contributed, in some cases significantly, to a number of programme outcomes – mainly in relation to service provision.

Asylum seekers and refugees have enhanced access to statutory and community services (outcomes 6). They have also benefited from direct interventions and initiatives with service providers leading to improved skills and capacity amongst service providers (outcome 8), improved collaboration between statutory bodies and community / voluntary organisations (outcome 9), mainstreaming and replicating good practice (outcome 11) and changes in policy or practices among organisations with which target groups relate (outcome 12).

This report notes positive outcomes for the target groups in terms of enhanced life skills and personal development (outcome 1), and increased levels of participation in social and recreational activities and community bodies (outcome 3). There is also clear evidence of increased access to education for young refugees and asylum seekers (outcome 5).

3.8.1 Community and Social Dimension

Life skills and personal development of asylum seekers and refugees (outcome 1), considered prerequisites to integration, were noticeably enhanced for a significant number of people. From the evidence provided, English language provision appears to have played the greatest role (not only in terms of outputs but in outcomes reported). Projects themselves (from the survey) also believe that English language training was among the most influential of interventions in achieving this outcome.

Drop-in centres and outreach visits also played a critical role in reducing isolation and enhancing personal development through the range of services offered. The additional supports provided (e.g. classes, social activities and a safe meeting space) were particularly important in addressing anxieties and enhancing social contacts.

The evidence regarding other training courses, suggests that they contributed to self-confidence and often to a reduction in isolation through relationships established during the course. However, more concrete evidence on the value of both counselling and non-language training would have allowed this report to make a stronger statement regarding the impact of the ERF Programme on the confidence, personal development and life-skills of the target groups.

When considering integration from the perspective of the community and employment, there was limited evidence of benefits. Although significant numbers of the target groups participated in training, only some anecdotal references in evaluations indicates that their capacity to access employment opportunities improved. However, the ERF programme has been more successful in supporting children and young people to integrate into mainstream education, with evidence of positive outcomes provided (outcome 5).

Enhanced day to day interaction and intercultural dialogue with the local community by the target group (outcome 2) is always challenging to evaluate and tends to be a long-term process. A variety of social and public events were organised by a number of projects that brought all ages among the target group together with Irish and others living in their communities, in various public celebrations and festivals, exhibitions, volunteer projects, cultural activities and others. Projects report that these had some impact, but corroborating evidence was almost entirely unavailable and difficult to gather. However, the evidence contained in final evaluations and the surveys do suggest that the target groups participated extensively in wider social, recreational and sporting activities as a result of their engagement with the programme (outcome 3).

3.8.2 Service Provision Dimension

As noted above, the ERF has had some impact on a social and community level in Ireland (outcomes 1 and 3). The combination of these outcomes have almost certainly increased the likelihood of asylum seekers and refugees accessing statutory and community voluntary services (outcome 6), for instance through improved language skills and confidence, and greater experience in interacting with Irish people and other communities.

The provision of information, referrals and advocacy through drop-in centres and outreach has also, for large numbers of the target groups, significantly reduced hurdles to accessing services. Specific barriers such as lack of knowledge of the existence of services and how to contact them, and an inability to interact successfully with services were addressed by these projects (outcome 6). Particularly isolated groups, e.g. LGBT people living in direct provision and resettled refugees, made significant gains from these interventions.

There is strong evidence of staff in both statutory agencies and community / voluntary services benefiting from improved skills and capacity in interacting with the target groups (outcome 8). Additional evidence has verified that in some cases, interventions have progressed from an individual level to enhanced capacity at organisational levels.

There is extensive evidence of improved collaboration between and among statutory and community voluntary sector service providers leading to improved co-ordination and some improved procedures (outcome 9). A few cases of county or sub-county integration strategies are also likely to lead to further beneficial collaborations and practice change into the future.

There is also concrete evidence of immediate policy and practice changes among agencies (outcome 12). The benefits of policy and practice changes take time to emerge. However, these do suggest that projects succeeded in influencing policy and practice in ways that are likely to bring benefits.

Most project evaluations were unable to substantiate greater embedding of interculturalism within organisations as a result of training (outcome 10). Improvements in redress against racism were not demonstrated (outcome 7). Nevertheless, the overall evidence available does show that the ERF Programme has contributed, in some cases substantially, to increased access to services, skills development within service providers, enhanced collaboration between service providers and improved practices and policies within service provision.

As a result, this report takes the view the ERF Programme has had a significant impact in increasing access and enhancing service provision for asylum seekers and refugees.

3.8.3 SUSTAINABILITY AND MAINSTREAMING

Finally, there has also been considerable success in this area. A number of projects are committed to maintaining support for their interventions (subject to available funding). Other projects have secured a commitment or a policy change by a statutory or other body, enabling the project's impact to be sustained over a longer period. Consequently, the positive outcomes of the ERF programme are likely to continue and multiply into the future.

ANNEX 1: OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

The output and outcome categories listed below are taken from the Programme evaluation guidelines distributed to groups in June 2011.

Outputs relating to direct supports for Target Groups

1. Providing information and advice through a 'drop-in' service.
2. Providing information and advice through outreach services.
3. Delivering themed information supports.
4. Building capacity in English language.
5. Delivering non-language related education and training.
6. Providing mentoring supports.
7. Providing targeted support to young people from the target group.
8. Providing advocacy and legal support for individuals.
9. Providing trauma and other counselling supports (ERF only).

Outputs related to service providers and the wider environment

10. Supporting intercultural/interfaith dialogue.
11. Supporting actions to directly combat racism.
12. Building capacity of the statutory sector.
13. Building capacity of the business sector.
14. Building capacity of community/voluntary sector.
15. Promoting mainstreaming and developing policy.
16. Supporting other marginalised groups.

Direct Outcomes for Target Groups

17. Enhanced life-skills and personal development of target groups.
18. Enhanced day-to-day interaction of target groups with the local community, and intercultural dialogue.
19. Increased level of participation of target groups in social and recreational activities and community bodies.
20. Enhanced capacity of target groups to engage in collective action and in civil society.
21. Enhanced capacity of target groups to seek and obtain training, education and employment.
22. Enhanced capacity and empowerment of target groups to access social and community services.

Outcomes related to Service Providers and the Wider Community

23. Improved redress for target groups regarding racism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination.
24. Improved skills and capacities of statutory bodies and community/voluntary organisations in interacting with target groups.
25. Improved collaboration between statutory bodies and community/voluntary organisations.
26. Greater embedding of interculturalism among social and other groups and the public.
27. Mainstreaming replicating good practices, within and outside project partners.
28. Changes in policy or practices among organisations or companies with which target groups relate.

ANNEX 2: LIST OF PROJECT EVALUATION REPORTS

BeLonG To: The LGBT Refugee and Asylum Seekers Project *An Evaluation*, Dr. Kiran Sarma, 2013.

City of Dublin ETB:

Final Evaluation Report of the Refugee Access Programme, Foley Lanao Consultants, July 2013.

Doras Luimní: European Refugee Fund Project, Josephine Lally, June 2013

Dublin Rape Crisis Centre:

Findings from Survey of Participants on 2011 Courses, Ann Clark, 2012

Findings from Survey of Participants on 2012 Courses, Ann Clark, 2012

Evaluation of Courses on Working Sensitively with Refugees and Asylum Seekers, Final Outturn Report, Ann Clarke, 2013.

Galway Refugee Support Group:

European Refugee Fund Project, Intercultural Network of Community Activists Evaluation Report, Josephine Lally, July 2012

KASI and TIRC:

Kerry Consortium, Killarney Asylum Seeker Initiative and Tralee International Resource Centre, European Refugee Fund Project, Mid-Term Evaluation, Ann Irwin,

Kerry Consortium, Killarney Asylum Seeker Initiative and Tralee International Resource Centre, European Refugee Fund Project, Final Evaluation, Ann Irwin,

Longford Community Resources Ltd:

Evaluation of Asylum Seeker and Refugee Support Project, Brian Dillon October 2011

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