

Press statement: 13th August 2015

“Asylum seekers have so much to contribute to Ireland, if granted the opportunity”

Anna Kern, resident of Knockalisheen Direct Provision centre who arrived in Ireland just two years ago, received an incredible 575 points in her Leaving Certificate results this week. Despite the challenges Anna faces as an asylum seeker, her hard work and dedication has put her amongst the highest achievers in the country.

Leonie Kerins, Doras Luimní, said “Anna’s achievement is hugely inspiring and is a testament to her hard work and determination to succeed. Sadly, under Ireland’s current education policy, Anna will be unable to progress to university and this situation highlights the continued restrictions that asylum seekers face in Ireland in accessing third level education. Young people are particularly affected by Ireland’s education policy for asylum seekers and it is a gross injustice that a bright hard-working student like Anna is unable to progress her education. We hope that Anna’s meeting with Minister Jan O’Sullivan will encourage positive change to the restrictive policies that have excluded students like Anna from making further positive contributions to Ireland.”

She continued “Regrettably, the proposals put forward in the recent report of the Working Group and currently under consideration by the Minister fall short of what is really needed for students in the asylum system sitting their Leaving Certificate in Ireland. While we welcome the Ministers intention to loosen the restrictions, the proposals recommend access only for those in the system for 5 years or more and would be of no benefit to Anna or others in her situation. Perhaps Anna’s story will encourage the Minister to go beyond what has been put forward by the Working Group and to bring about effective and ambitious reform.”

“Following the media coverage of Anna’s achievements, there has been huge public support for Anna in Limerick and across the country. We remain hopeful that the Government will soon take heed of the changing public attitude towards Ireland’s treatment of asylum seekers and that effective reform of the system will finally materialise. There are thousands of men, women and children living in Direct Provision across the country who have so much to contribute if granted the opportunity. Not only do we have an obligation to do more for asylum seekers, but Ireland also stands to gain significantly from their participation in community life.”

ENDS

Notes

- Doras Luimní is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation based in Limerick. Our mission is to promote and uphold the human rights and wellbeing of migrants through personal advocacy, integration development and collaborative advocacy campaigns at the local and national level.
- Anna Kern came to Ireland from the Ukraine in 2013 and currently lives in Knockalisheen Direct Provision centre, Meelick, Co. Clare.
- The Working Group on the Protection Process was established in November 2014 and concluded in June 2015 with a publication of a report, outlining recommendations on a range of issues of relevance to asylum seekers.
- The Working Group recommendation regarding access to third level education proposes limited access for young people in the asylum system for five years or more.
- The Working Group can be accessed here: [Full report of the Working Group](#)

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