



“Doras expand support services to respond to refugee needs in Ireland” (12-02-2018)

In 2017, Doras supported more than 1,200 asylum seekers, refugees and migrants from almost 100 countries to integrate into communities in Limerick and across Ireland.

Doras was established in the year 2000 as Limerick’s only dedicated migrant support organisation. Since then, Doras has seen an increase in the number of people seeking assistance each year, with issues ranging from asylum application and family reunification support, to employment issues and exploitation.

Leonie Kerins, CEO of Doras Luimní, said:

“Each year, the issues presenting to Doras highlight the continued need for specialised immigration advice and integration support in Limerick. In 2017, we worked on 74 different immigration-related issues, which reflects the varied and complex nature of our work. Our support services are constantly changing to reflect the needs and profiles of new communities in Limerick.”

“Many of our clients have multiple and complex needs, requiring several interventions often over a number of years. A person may initially seek assistance with an application for asylum as a new arrival in Ireland but they may need support on various issues up until the point of applying for Irish citizenship, a process which could take seven or eight years to secure.”

Syrian nationals represented more than 20% of the people accessing Doras’ support services in 2017, which reflects forced displacement trends internationally and marks a significant increase relative to previous years.

Last year, Doras expanded its services and established a sub-office in Wexford to provide refugee resettlement support to people who had recently escaped war in Syria and Iraq. Doras now has a presence in Limerick, Wexford and Laois.

Kerins continued: *“Doras is now a national organisation operating in three counties in Ireland. While our work remains focussed and based in Limerick city, Doras is now supporting people nationwide. We continue to build capacity of local service providers through training, strategic partnerships and by contributing to local and national integration strategies.”*

“We draw on our experiences working on the ground and share our expertise with policy-makers to help ensure that statutory mainstream services are responding appropriately to the needs of migrant communities. At local level, we help to coordinate the development of Limerick’s migrant integration strategy and at national level, Doras contributes to policy development as members of the national Migrant Integration Strategy coordination committee.”

Refugee protection and migrant integration issues have become increasingly visible since the peak of the humanitarian crisis in 2015. Since then, there has been a notable increase in public support and interest in our work.

Kerins concluded: *“We are very grateful to the people of Limerick for reaching out to support our work in 2017, whether through financial donations or volunteering their time to support our clients and Limerick’s new residents. We look forward to building on the positive community engagement over the coming year, developing our services and contributing to an inclusive, supportive community in Limerick and beyond.”*

ENDS

Notes:

- Doras Luimní supported 1,208 people from 94 countries to access basic rights and entitlements and to integrate into local communities in 2017.
- 35% of Doras clients are refugees and 20% are people seeking asylum. The remaining 45% of people include naturalised Irish citizens; international students; people who arrived under family reunification; people with temporary leave to remain; work permit holders and others.
- 18% of Doras clients are Syrian nationals and 14% are originally from Afghanistan. Other large nationalities represented include Pakistan, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Sudan and Somalia. A total of 94 nationalities are represented in Doras’ client base.
- Family reunification, asylum applications, social welfare appeals, residency rights and travel document applications constitute the main issues presenting to Doras in 2017.

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