

Newly published research demonstrates need for action on racism

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According to a report published today by Doras Luimní as many as 80% of those who experienced racism or discrimination in Limerick do not report it. The study carried out by UCD-based researcher Dr Patricia Kennedy, found that racism and discrimination are happening in Limerick but victims and witnesses are reluctant to turn to the authorities for assistance. The report '*Treated Differently? Evidence of racism and discrimination and racism from a local perspective*' was launched at an event which marked the official opening of Doras Luimní's new offices in O'Connell Street by Limerick County Cathaoirleach Cllr John Sheahan and Cllr Gerry McLoughlin on behalf of the Mayor of Limerick. The event was also an opportunity to highlight the regional launch of iReport.ie, an online racism reporting system developed by the European Network Against Racism Ireland (ENAR) which enables anyone who has experienced or witnessed racism to record it onto a national database.

Report author, Dr Patricia Kennedy commended Doras Luimní on commissioning the research, pointing out that while it documented local manifestations of racism and discrimination, the issues are of global, national and regional significance. Presenting some of the key findings Dr Kennedy noted: "Under-reporting is associated with fear, as well as with factors such as not knowing how to or where to go, a sense of disillusionment – the perception that nothing will be done, so what's the point?"

In addition to a contribution from the report author, UCD-based researcher Dr Patricia Kennedy there was also a panel discussion chaired by Anastasia Crickley from NUI Maynooth examining the issues relating to racism, reporting and developing responses. The panel included contributions from Shane O'Curry the Director of ENAR Ireland, Dr. Matt Cannon, Integration Policy Officer with Doras Luimní, Garda Racial and Intercultural Officer Sergeant Dave McInerney and Community Policing Co-ordinator Sgt. Denis Kennedy.

Integration Policy Officer Dr. Matt Cannon described the report as "drawing positive proactive attention to areas where integration isn't working at the moment so that we can develop an understanding on which to build change". He highlighted the recommendations put forward in the report to address the policy and leadership vacuum and inadequate legislative framework. Dr Cannon called on anyone who has experienced, witnessed, heard about or was supporting someone who had been subjected to any form of racism to report it.

This sentiment was echoed at the event by Shane O'Curry, Director of the Irish arm of the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) who was present to launch the new online racist incident reporting system in Limerick. Mr O'Curry described the *Treated Differently?* findings as "shockingly familiar - the patterns identified here chime with patterns nationally. There is a very considerable discrepancy between what migrants and ethnic minority communities experience on the ground and what is 'known' according to official statistics. By carrying out research like this, raising awareness of the issues and putting in place reporting mechanisms, we are trying to fill that gap between what we think we know and what's actually happening, and combat the denial of racism by the majority community".

Speaking at the event Doras Luimní CEO Karen McHugh remarked: "This event, part of The Gathering 2013, is a very happy occasion for us. We are delighted with our new premises here at central buildings. Relocating an organisation is a massive undertaking, logistically and financially, and we would not have chosen to do so. However, we can take many positives out of the experience including the strengthening of existing relationships and the development of new ones. We are very grateful to all those who assisted and supported us during this time. We are very lucky to be accommodated by United Presbyterian and

Methodist Church in this excellent location in Limerick city centre. Since the move our direct support services have been busier than ever. We are very happy to be able to keep our doors open for now but in order to continue to provide our services to those who need them we must continue to generate funds and so our next fundraising event, a Monster Table Quiz is taking place on Wednesday, October 30th and we hope it will be well attended and well supported.”

ENDS

Editor 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.

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