

# Treated DIFFERENTLY?

Evidence of racism and discrimination from a local perspective

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## Foreword

Recent surveys, including this report, have documented worrying levels of experiences of racism by immigrants living in Irish society. There is an urgent need to take racism seriously in Ireland. It is now five years since the shutting down of the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI). There is clearly a policy and leadership vacuum that is failing communities in Limerick and elsewhere. This report documents experiences of racism in Limerick and the human cost of these. The findings are similar to those of research undertaken in other parts of the country which have documented experiences of racist violence, harassment and anti-social behaviour along with experiences of discrimination. One of the striking findings of '*Treated Differently?*' is the belief held by many victims of racist incidents that they will not be listened to if they attempt to report their experiences. Another is that for some people living in Ireland experiences of racism are part of everyday life.

It is crucial that the experiences of racism documented in this report are taken seriously. Racism blights lives and prevents people from reaching their full potential. Communities around Ireland have been irreversibly changed by immigration. Leadership against racism has a crucial role to play in securing future social cohesion. Integration and social inclusion takes place in specific communities and localities or not at all. In a context of inadequate leadership from above, efforts by community organisations such as Doras Luimní to bring about positive change at a local level are all the more important. But it should not have to be so hard. Policy makers and political leaders, government and service providers need to acknowledge and address racism in Ireland.



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## Executive Summary

The prevalence of racism and discrimination in Ireland is unknown. Incomplete evidence from crime statistics, frontline agencies, and previous research is insufficient to understand the nature and extent of the problem and to plan and develop appropriate responses and prevention strategies. In order to address this void in the Limerick region, Doras Luimní commissioned Dr. Patricia Kennedy, School of Applied Social Science; UCD to undertake a study which starts the process of documenting people's experiences in order to address the lacuna at the local level. The purpose of the study was to explore the occurrence of various forms of racism, to understand where it occurs, who experiences it, and who the perpetrators are. Additionally the study sought to establish if racist incidents are reported, if so to whom and if not what are the barriers to reporting.

This study provides evidence of and illustrates some basic suppositions regarding the existence and prevalence of racism and discrimination in Limerick which had previously been based on anecdotal evidence. Racism takes various guises, is perpetrated by a wide range of people and occurs in a wide variety of settings. Victims and witnesses are slow to report because they are unsure of where to report, cannot identify the perpetrator and in some cases feel too vulnerable to report.

The evidence gathered in this research presents a local perspective on racism and discrimination, characterised by the following features:

- Racism occurs in public and private locations.
- Men, women and children are perpetrators of racism.
- Men, women and children are victims of racism.
- Racism may take the form of physical or verbal hostility or aggression, exclusion from or denial of services and other actions/inactions.
- Institutional racism is a feature of services across a wide spectrum.
- Racism has serious consequences for individual victims and society as a whole.
- Racism is under-reported.

## Organisation Profile

Doras Luimní, a registered company with charitable status, is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation working to support and promote the rights of all migrants living in Limerick and the wider Mid-West region. It works to change the lives of migrants, to change legislation and to change society. Its vision is for an Ireland where equality and respect for the human rights of migrants are social norms. Its mission is to promote and uphold the human rights and well-being of migrants through personal advocacy, integration, development and collaborative advocacy campaigns at the local and national level.

At the grass-roots level, Doras Luimní provides training to local community groups, sports organisations, schools, and service providers, to promote better understanding and improved responses to address racism. Doras Luimní advocates reporting and recording of racist incidents, offering advice, information and support to anyone affected by any form of racism or discrimination to make a formal complaint to the Gardaí. Doras Luimní assists the development of positive structures that promote equality and non-discrimination to corporate, community or statutory bodies. Campaigning for improved structures, policies and law at the national level and works in cooperation with other organisations around the country through its membership of the European Network Against Racism Ireland (ENAR). ENAR Ireland, the Irish national coordinator for the European ENAR, is a national network of anti-racism NGOs, which aims to work collectively to highlight and address the issue of racism in Ireland through the promotion and monitoring of EU and global anti-racist initiatives.

## Rationale for Exploring Racism in Limerick

Doras Luimní as one of the principal providers of services to migrants in Limerick and the Mid-West is committed to developing an appropriate response to tackling the rise in racism locally and nationally. In order to further develop an effective anti-racist strategy in Limerick, Doras Luimní commissioned this research. A detailed survey was conducted with Doras Luimní service users to identify where racism happens, what form it takes, to identify the perpetrators, to explore if victims/witnesses report the incident/s, if not why not, and if so, to whom.

## Introduction

Ireland is an ethnically diverse society. The 2011 Census results show that migrants account for a significant proportion of the population, approximately 10%, (544,357 people) and representing 199 different nationalities. *Census 2011* shows the population of Limerick (City and County) is 189,943 and of these 169,223 are Irish nationals while 18,427 are non-Irish nationals (in keeping with the national pattern), 3,549 from the United Kingdom, 6,090 from Poland, 1,033 from the EU15 (excluding Ireland and the UK), 3,010 from the EU 15-27 (excluding Poland), 526 other European nationalities. A further 1,137 African, 2,204 Asian, 575 American, 288 other nationalities, 15 multi nationalities and 54 declaring no nationality. *Census 2011* indicates that in Limerick there are between 401 and 1,522 Travellers, accounting for 7.9 per 1000 of the population. However organisations such as Pavee Point and the Irish Traveller Movement consistently argue that Travellers are undercounted by the CSO. A similar view is held by Doras Luimní that the migrant population locally and national is not fully represented in the CSO figures.

### Racism and Discrimination Defined

Race, racism and racist are terms used every day, yet they are seldom defined. Much scholarly debate has focused on the terms. Fanning reminds us:

it is important not to conflate all forms of prejudice under the label of racism. It is possible, even useful to distinguish between racisms, xenophobias, sectarianisms and other forms of prejudice while at the same time acknowledging the impact and consequences of race thinking on beliefs about distinctive groups within dominant ideologies, beliefs and stereotypes (Fanning, 2012: 12).

He recognises that race has more than one meaning and is socially constructed. Platt (2008: 370) writes of the emotive and contested nature of the language of race. She defines racism as 'behaviour that uses physical markers of difference such as skin colour as the basis of assumed inferiority and as a justification for less favourable treatment, whether through verbal or physical abuse (racial harassment), through denying employment or by obstructing access to opportunities or services'. Law (2010: 2) defines race as 'the social and cultural significance assigned to a group of people who are recognized as sharing common physical or physiognomic characteristics and/or a common lineage of descent' (2010: 2). He defines racism as comprising of 'two core elements in all historical and geographical situations; it presupposes that some concept of race is being mobilized and involves negative attribution of a specified racial group' (2010:3).

Fanning explains: 'racism can be expressed through the acts of individuals or in the values, presumptions, structures and processes of social, economic, cultural and political institutions' (2009:69). He refers to Article 2 of the UNESCO *Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice*:

Racism includes racist ideologies, prejudiced attitudes, discriminatory behaviour, structural arrangements and institutional practices resulting in racial inequality as well as that the fallacious notion that discriminatory relations between groups are morally and scientifically justifiable; it is reflected in discriminatory provisions in legislation or regulations and discriminatory practices as well as in anti-social beliefs and acts.

The Irish branch of the European Network Against Racism (ENAR Ireland) suggests that racism is not going away: 'Racism today is a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon. The face of racism has evolved over the last decades and has taken many different forms' (Lynch, 2012). It refers to the *United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*:

The term “racial discrimination” shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.’

Racism occurs on a number of levels, including individual, cultural and institutional. The McPherson definition of racism which grew out of the Stephen Lawrence case in the UK states that a racist incident is ‘any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person’. McPherson (1999) defines institutional racism as:

The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racial stereotyping which disadvantage ethnic minority people.

In *Responding to Racist Incidents and Racist Crimes in Ireland. An Issues Paper for the Equality Authority* (2011), Taylor reviews the policies, provisions and practices in relation to dealing with racist crimes and racist incidents in Ireland. The definition of hate crime in the recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry in Britain in 1999 has been adopted by An Garda Síochána. Hate crimes can have a particular and significant impact on self-esteem and personal confidence. Alongside this hate crimes send a message to the wider community regarding identity and the place of ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ (2010:11), they can contribute to developing negative community relations between peoples of diverse identities.

Fanning indicates that ‘the consequences of institutional racism include unequal access to services and unequal outcomes on the basis of ethnicity’ (2009:69). In a similar vein ENAR Ireland defines institutional racism as:

The network of institutional structures, policies and practices that create advantages and benefits for the majority ethnic group and discrimination, oppression and disadvantage for people from targeted racialised groups and minority ethnic groups. The advantages created for the dominant group are often invisible to them (Lynch, 2012)

The ENAR Ireland Shadow Report 2011-2012 shows that racism remains a problem in Europe, and Ireland is not immune to this phenomenon. The report cites the EU Fundamental Rights Agency research report which found that 26% of Sub-Saharan Africans surveyed in Ireland reported experiencing at least one incident of assault, threat or serious harassment with a perceived racial motivation in the previous 12 months (Lynch, 2012).

A report published by the Teachers’ Union of Ireland in 2010 revealed that 46% of teachers were aware of a racist incident in their schools in the previous month. Approximately 150 incidents were reported to ENAR Ireland and its partners in the period from 2011-2012 of which 75% of the incidents reported involved violence and crime. Yet, ENAR Ireland suggests that Ireland’s capacity to respond to and to prevent racism has decreased significantly since the beginning of the financial crisis (Lynch, 2012).



For the purposes of this study a racist incident is defined as any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person. The incident may involve targeting a person on the basis of their skin colour, or their ethnic, cultural or religious identity. Racist incidents can take many forms including:

Physical - violent assault, threatening behaviour or some other physical attack.

Verbal - name calling, ridiculing, telling racist jokes, making threats by social media or text message, racist graffiti.

Other - ignoring, excluding, and distributing racist literature, damaging property.

## Methodology

Based on consultation with key informants in the commissioning organisation the researcher developed an online questionnaire (Appendix 1). This survey was conducted in July 2013 for a one month period and was distributed to 151 Doras Luimní contacts. A further 282 emails were sent out to partner organisations in the community & voluntary sector known to Doras Luimní in the mid-West region. Hard copies were left in the Doras reception where visitors were invited to participate (on a voluntary basis). In total, 122 people responded to the survey, of these 25 gave their contact details with permission to contact them for follow-up interviews. As a result of subsequent follow-up, 6 telephone interviews and 3 face-to-face interviews were conducted.

### Profile of Respondents

Of the 122 people who completed the questionnaire 57 % (70) were men and 43% (52) were women. Respondents used an array of regional, racial, national and ethnic identifiers reflecting both the diversity of participants' backgrounds and the complexity of identity as outlined in the table below.

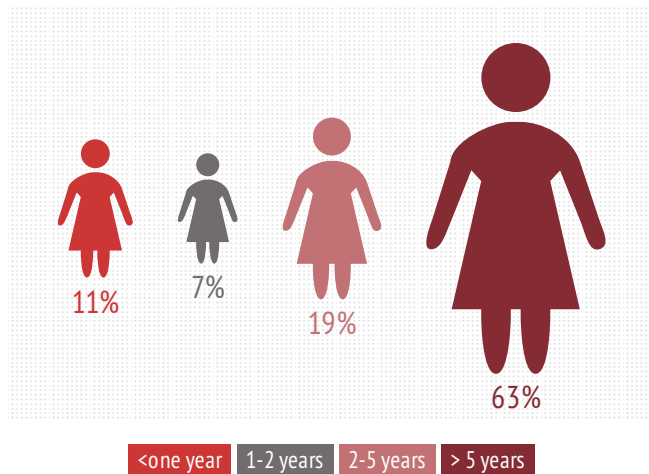
**Table 1: Ethnic Identity as declared by respondents**

European	African	Asian	America
65	27	16	3
Irish, Irish Catholic, White/Caucasian Irish, British, Greek, Latvia, Mediterranean, Russian, Serbian, Swedish, White English, White European	Black African African, Sudan, Somali, Angola, Eritrea, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigerian Igbo, North African, Togolese, Zulu	Asian, Middle Eastern, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Chinese, Indian, Karachi, Nepal, Pakistani, Sri Lankan	White North American, Anglo-Irish American

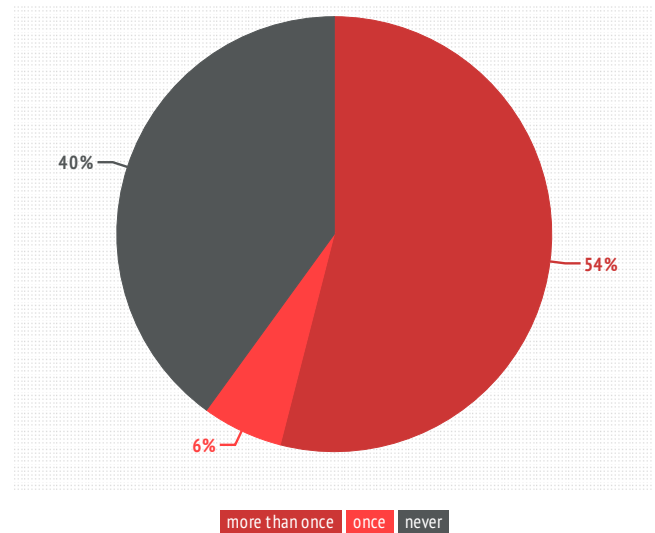
## Length of time in Limerick

Of the respondents 11% lived in Limerick for less than a year, 7% lived in Limerick between one and two years, 19% lived in Limerick between two and five years and 63% lived in Limerick for more than five years.

**Table 2: Length of time living in Limerick**



**Table 3: Those who experienced/witnessed racism in Limerick**



Of those who responded, 40% said they had never directly experienced or witnessed racism/racial discrimination in Limerick. 6% said they experienced or witnessed racism once and 54% said they experienced or witnessed racism more than once.

## Findings

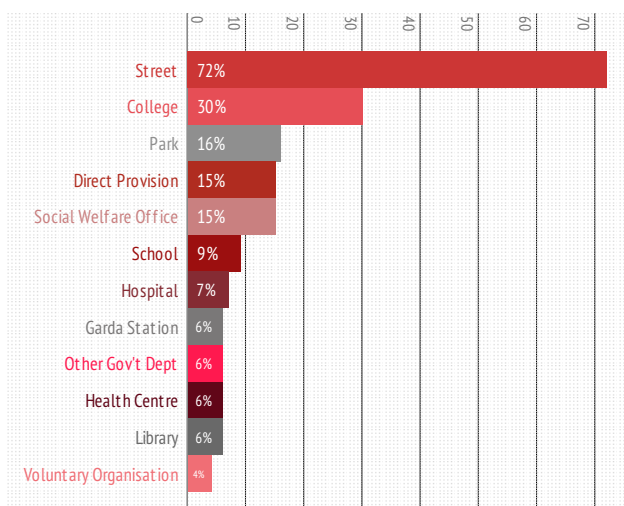
### Place of Incident

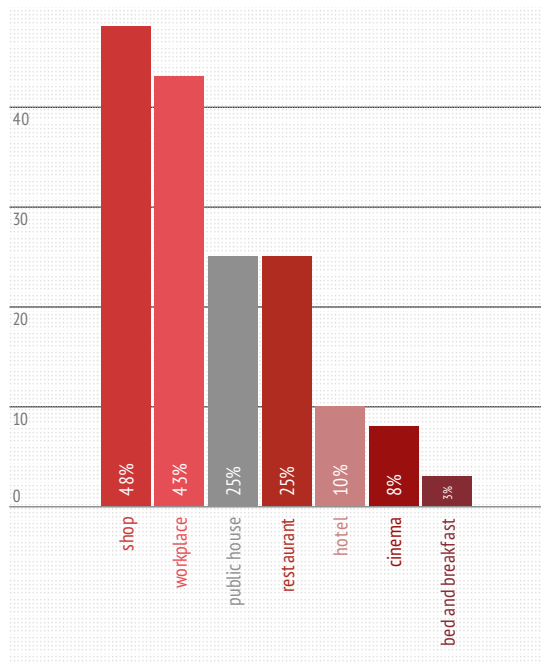
The majority of those who reported experiencing or witnessing incidents of racism/discrimination discussed multiple incidents rather than single instances. In relation to place, 68 respondents reported where the incident/s took place as: 72% street; 29% college; 16% park; 15% direct provision; 13% social welfare office; 13% school; 9% hospital; 9% Garda station; 7% other government department; 6% health centre; 6% library and 4% voluntary organisation.

**Table 4: Place of incident - public services**

Thus racism has been experienced by respondents in public places like the street and park and significantly in official sites where respondents should feel safe to freely avail of services. These sites cross the whole spectrum of social services.

Forty (40) respondents reported incident occurring in other places: 48% shop; 43% workplace; 25% public house; 25% restaurant; 10% hotel; 8% cinema; 3% bed and breakfast.





**Table 5: Place of incident - private services**

These locations are deemed to be open accessible businesses, where the general public is welcomed and needed in a functioning society. Follow up interviews with respondents elicited a longer list of locations which included: bus station, taxi, train station, hostel, night club, primary school, university, VEC, pharmacy, church, solicitors, courts, city council offices, post office and media. This shows there seems to be no place free of racism, public or private.

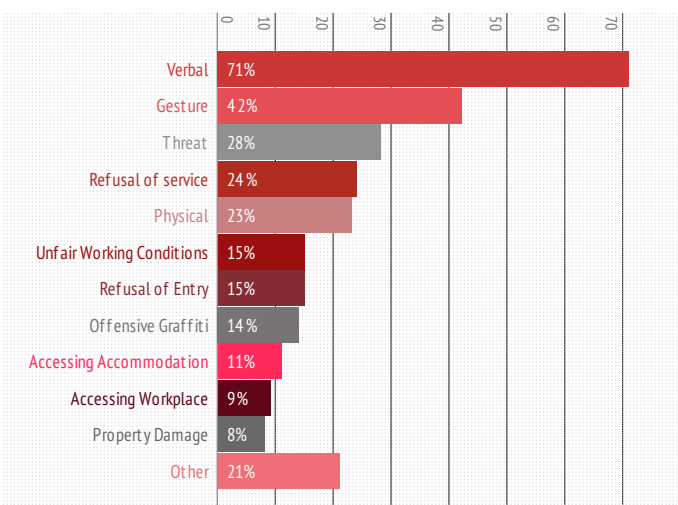
### Perpetrators

In response to the question from the follow-up interviews which asked ‘who are the perpetrators of such racism?’ there was a wide range of responses. The respondents identified the perpetrators of racism/discrimination as: the general public, both adults and young people; direct provision hostel managers; educators; university staff; teachers; health professionals; hospital staff; local politicians; community welfare officers; employers; Gardaí; the judiciary; solicitors; people in the media; those working in shops, petrol stations, cinemas, restaurants, and night clubs. Thus, the perpetrators of racism are men and women, adults, teenagers and children and those working in a wide range of public and private services and businesses. They include those who are expected to legislate and implement legislation and law enforcement as well as those providing essential services such as health, education, social welfare, housing and personal social services.

### Type of Incident

A wide variety of racist incidents were reported, including verbal, physical, damage to property, overt denial of services and more subtle types of discrimination. From a total of 66 respondents the incident was described as verbal attack (47); gesture (28); threat (19); refusal of service (16); physical attack (15); unfair working conditions (10); refusal of entry to a premises (10); offensive graffiti (9); accessing accommodation (7); accessing workplace (6); property damage (5) and other (14).

**Table 6: Type of incident**



## Reporting

Under-reporting of racist incidents is an issue throughout Ireland. The evidence gathered by this research indicates that reporting for many is associated with fear, not knowing how to report and a belief that nothing will be done anyway. Of the respondents who witnessed racism and discrimination, 80% said they did not report the incidents. Some of the reasons given for not reporting included not knowing where to report, lack of confidence in officials, including the Gardaí, an acceptance that racism exists and is tolerated, vulnerability because awaiting 'status'.

The lack of awareness about reporting is demonstrated by the experience of a white Irish female in her fifties who witnessed racist incidents more than once said she did not report because it did not occur to her at the time.

An Asian man in his thirties who witnessed racism in a direct provision hostel, a public house and workplace explained he didn't report the incident because he felt too vulnerable. This man draws direct links between immigration/residency status and the capacity to report:

*"I have no status, so I didn't report it."*

The experience of an African man in his thirties who witnessed and experienced racism more than once indicates the complex overlaps between various factors including fear, a sense of resignation because of the widespread prevalence of racism to the extent that it has become part of everyday life, seemingly leading to a disenfranchisement/disentitlement in the depiction of himself as intruder, including being stoned. He responded to why he did not report it saying:

*"I felt there is no need since it is a common experience for my African friends. Sometimes out of fear, because I see myself as intruder."*

An Afghan male in his twenties, who witnessed and experienced racism more than once on the street explained:

*"I didn't report it because I don't know who said it to me, so how can I report it? Even if I report it, it is not going to be sorted out"*

This statement speaks of a sense of being overwhelmed by the prevalence of racism and the difficulty of pinning it down, converging with disillusionment with authorities. The vagueness regarding the perpetrators is reflected in the vagueness as to remedies and responsibility for responding. This is very clearly and concisely communicated by the following respondent. A Middle Eastern man in his twenties, who experienced racism more than once, did not report it because:

*"I'm new here. I didn't know where to."*

Those who did report the racist incident did so to authorities or organisations and professionals deemed in a position to act. These included a library manager, a school principal, ENAR, a solicitor, the Gardaí, university security and Doras Luimní. For example, an Afghan man in his twenties who experienced racism in direct provision accommodation reported to a solicitor what he viewed as 'systematic, institutionalised racism'. An Irish male in his forties, who witnessed a person being refused service in a shop, said that he had intervened personally.

## Qualitative Evidence: Accounts of Racism and Discrimination

In addition to the quantitative evidence gained from the respondents to the survey there were a number of accounts of racism which were submitted by respondents. These accounts give a qualitative understanding of the impact of racism on those who witness and experience it. The following examples were drawn from combined responses to open-ended survey questions as well as data gathered in the 9 telephone and face-to-face interviews. The quotes presented below are selected as illustrative examples of various types of racism and discrimination raised by the survey respondents.

### Racism as Part of Everyday Life

There is a certain feeling of isolation and exclusion that is part of the impact of racism on those who experience it. An African man in his forties:

*"You feel it every day. In the bus no one sits next to you if you are black. They stare at you. If you are black and you ask for directions or information they just pass you. They don't answer. In many ways, in the church, in X Parish, when you should greet each other, you give your hand and they don't take it. They distance themselves from you".*

An Irish woman in her thirties witnessed racist behaviour in a series of locations, including in the park, street, hospital, health centre, social welfare office, and in services such as shops, and in her workplace. She explained how such racism includes: 'Black' jokes, 'Traveller' jokes and drunken abuse of random people after night clubs. She described examples of 'everyday discrimination' arising from racism where people did not want black/Asian doctors treating them and also examples of people avoiding black taxi drivers. She said that it is common to be told jokes about race but not in the presence of people of that race.

An African man in his twenties has witnessed many incidents including people being told to:

*"Go back to your black country".*

An Irish man in his thirties, who has witnessed racism more than once, in the street, school, college, and workplace said:

*"Name calling, discrimination based on ethnicity, racist jokes; these are all part of 'normal' everyday life".*

An Anglo Irish American man in his forties provides a picture of the hidden world of racism by describing conversations where racism and discrimination are part of in-group behaviour :

*"Racism - not racial discrimination. Frequent general verbal racial bias against any non-white racial groups. It is based in typical stereotypes and aggressively toned verbal outbursts about a particular race. However, although nearly a daily occurrence, I have never witnessed it directly delivered, in person, to the person or group of the other race. It is always only in the presence of white people".*

The descriptions illustrate that to many of those who have experienced racism there is a belief that in Ireland there is a resignation that racism is part of everyday life in Irish society.

## Verbal Abuse

Verbal abuse was by far the most common expression of racism identified in the surveys. Out of those who had experienced or witnessed a racist incident/s verbal abuse was the most common; cited by 71% of the respondents.

A white woman in her twenties has witnessed people:

*"Shouting racial comments at Chinese students waiting for the bus ... the verbal abuse of staff in take-away restaurants late at night (e.g. Indian-operated/owned restaurants)".*

An Asian man in his forties refers to:

*"The general slurs, accent mocking, and comments arising from stereotypes".*

An African man in his twenties explains that more than once:

*"On the street someone yelled at 3 of us. He shouted 'go back'".*

A white Irish man in his thirties lists several instances of racist or discriminatory behaviour which he witnessed at locations including in the street, social welfare office and, public house refers to:

*"The use of the term 'nigger' along with intimidating physical behaviour towards a black person. The use of the word 'coloureds' to describe a group of black people. Asking when are 'they' going home to a black Irish person".*

An Irish woman in her fifties witnessed racist behaviour more than once, in the street and hospital. This included verbal attacks, threats, and gestures.

*"I witnessed youths calling abusive remarks to a group of girls who appeared to be South American in origin. I also overheard abusive remarks being called in a hospital waiting area".*

An Asian male in his thirties who experienced verbal attacks said:

*"In shops or public areas, people watch strangely or say something about my skin colour".*

While verbal abuse was the most common instance they were not isolated incidents. In some cases verbal abuse was accompanied by physical abuse. For example an African man in his forties recounts:

*"Most of these boys called us names like 'Monkey', they throw stones and bottles sometimes. Even when you are at some shop to buy things the way they behave to you is somehow bad. You will see it in their attitude".*

## Physical Abuse

According to the respondents 23% reported incidents which involved physical abuse. These included the throwing of stones, eggs and physical assault. The accounts below highlight incidents in which people felt they were physically abused because of their ethnic identity. Some of the physical assaults described included people throwing stones, bottles and other objects at the victims, as well as pushing and physically assaulting. An African man in his thirties experienced racism several times, in the street, Garda station and in direct provision accommodation. This has taken the form of verbal attacks, threats and facial gestures. He experienced racism when accessing accommodation.

*"People stoned me and my friends on Limerick streets. On one particular occasion, my friend was stoned by a very little boy of not more than 5yrs old. And in another, a person in one particular petrol station made some awkward remarks to me, simply because I wanted to pay him with coins".*

An Irish woman in her sixties reported:

*"Students had eggs thrown at them at a bus stop."*

An Asian man in his thirties, experienced racism in the bus, street and college:

*"They threw glass coke bottles at us. Spitting and hitting us with plastic bottles when travelling by bus, yelling inappropriate words, and 'get out of this country', pushing us off the pavement when walking".*

An African male in his forties recounted:

*"They were teenage boys. They didn't behave nice towards me. They ask why we are here and told us to 'go back'. They would push me. Because it always happened in a pub, it must have been because of alcohol".*

One respondent argued that in his experience women and men took different approaches, with women being more subtle and men more openly aggressive. Some of the physical aggression recounted included:

*"I have heard about it from my friend who lives with me as he's been beaten. Another friend who worked in pizza delivery, he's been stubbed (with a cigarette) a few times with no reason, just because he didn't want to give them free pizza which is weird".*

### Other Forms of Abuse or Discrimination

Beyond the physical and verbal manifestations of racism and discrimination some of the respondents also identified 'other' forms of abuse. These include examples such as online abuse, refusal of entry into a premises or generally trying to exclude someone based on their ethnic identity.

An Irish female in her twenties said that she was a witness to hate speech or verbal expressions of racism regarding Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers and Muslims. This was both online but occasionally in person (more commonly with regard to Travellers). She also referred to the prevalence of anti-immigrant graffiti.

An Irish man in his twenties explained:

*"Four of us (3 white and 1 black) were in a pub in Limerick. My black friend went to the toilet and a few locals told him he ought to leave. We figured it would be easier to move on".*

A European male in his fifties refers to:

*"Irish people, drunk, shouting abuse at immigrants (against me personally, when for example walking down a street speaking another European language with friends and visitors). Many of our Asian students at a third-level institution have been harassed by people in their late teens to early 20s, with abusive language and sometimes physically poked at".*



An Asian woman in her twenties describes incidents where she is excluded young people based on her identity:

*"There are a few Irish teenagers who always try to make fun of the Asian. I met four girls in a shop once and they were trying to ask me to give my bag to them and exchange shoes with them".*

An Asian male in his thirties experienced racism in direct provision and on the street. He highlights an incident of islamophobia where the perpetrator instantly associated the victim with the Taliban:

*"Once I travelled on a bus towards the city centre and there was an Irish guy who came straight to me and started saying "Taliban, terrorist go back to your country" and so many F words. I didn't take any notice and kept quiet and after a while he went back to his seat. He also provoked me to fight him when we get off in city centre".*

An Irish woman in her thirties identified a number of instances of anti-Traveller discrimination:

*"I have seen a Traveller girl accused by teachers of theft and punished without evidence by the school on the basis of her being a Traveller. It was later discovered that the guilty party was someone else but no apology or redress was offered. I heard teachers say (openly) 'sure she's guilty of something'".*

She recounts on another occasion:

*"I have seen a Traveller woman and her family treated atrociously in a hospital (I was a patient on the same ward). She was bullied into treatment, spoken to as if she were a child, her family were not allowed keep the same visiting hours as other families, despite being impeccably behaved. This treatment was at the hands of Irish nurses and care assistants. The non-Irish doctors treating her were as respectful to the family as they were to everyone else".*

She continues:

*"I witnessed a male black student having racist abuse shouted at him from a car full of young lads outside campus. I have heard countless racist remarks about Travellers from co-workers, university staff at all levels, health professionals, IT professionals, educators, local politicians - anti-Traveller sentiment is 'normal' in Ireland, not just Limerick. There is differentiation in the delivery of universal services; discrimination in education, educational exclusion, institutional racism and ignorance".*

Similarly, an African man in his forties experienced racism, as he explains:

*"In the street from people in cars shouting 'Hey Nigger' or 'Blackman go home'".*

Several respondents described being refused entry to nightclubs in Limerick. Several African men in their twenties and thirties reported being refused entry more than once to night clubs.

A Middle Eastern man in his twenties, who has been in Limerick less than a year, explains how he has been refused entry:

*"It happened three times that we weren't let into clubs and pubs. They didn't tell us why".*



## Workplace Racism and Discrimination

Many respondents reported either experiencing or witnessing racism in the workplace. A male Asian in his thirties reported unfair workplace conditions which he felt were because he did not have 'status' and he didn't report it for the same reason:

*"No status, that's why the working place was worse. I was verbally abused and they tried to force me to do the work".*

An Irish male in his forties, believes that in the workplace there is:

*"A tendency to believe foreigners are all on the take, scheming to get benefits not due them, compensation claims for fictive accidents and a negative tendency towards all non-Irish".*

## Institutional Racism and Discrimination

The respondents in this study reported many incidents of such racism and discrimination in a wide range of services and settings. A white Irish woman in her twenties reported incidents of racism in a hospital where she felt:

*"There was a lack of understanding and awareness of cultural differences. Staff at the hospital passing comments about patients' food choice and the food that they had brought into hospital. People at reception areas making little effort to communicate or support people who do not have English as their first language".*

An African man in his thirties explains he has experienced racism in the street and direct provision accommodation. He felt that the direct provision system was an example of institutional racism when he described his experiences in the centre, recounting:

*"When you talk you feel that they treat you as a second class person. If you need help, they don't give it to you".*

An African woman refers to the prevalence of institutional racism:

*"Some social services are not available to asylum seekers for example, the right to work, third-level education, being locked up in direct provision for unspecified periods of time, denying them family rights, and isolating them from public life and integration".*

She refers to service providers, providing inferior services, giving her experience in direct provision as an example of how asylum seekers are excluded from Irish society:

*"Under rated services, e.g. transporting asylum seekers in buses that don't have proper documentation and labelling products such as milk food products toiletries specifically for asylum seekers".*

An African woman in her thirties, who identified herself as an Irish citizen experienced racism in institutional settings such as a health centre, Garda station, social welfare office and, other government departments and explains:

*"I personally have experienced racism/racial discrimination in Limerick from some Gardaí, lawyers, judges and some members of the public".*

Institutional racism was also identified by one respondent as taking place in schools. An African woman in her thirties described her experience as well as that of her son when faced with racism and discrimination in a school where she felt there was an inadequate response to bullying:

*"I feel my 8 year old son experiences it at school. There is a lot of bullying in the school. When a foreigner is the victim of bullying they don't do much about it. The teachers do nothing about it".*

The experience of the mother and her 8 year old son above was echoed by an Irish man who works in education when he explains:

*"I work in education. I would say that it is an issue that is there. I witnessed low level incidences of racism in particular. I never witnessed any physical abuse or direct name calling. I saw students being ostracised in secondary school, students with different skin colour, nationality. I would equally include Eastern Europeans, students from Asia and South America and Africa, by other students, low level insinuation and comments but very subtle. There is no policy other than anti-bullying policies to deal with this. There is a need for a clear emphatic policy. More than goodwill is necessary. Training in particular is missing. Especially in large second level schools. I don't think any second level school (very few) put themselves forward for yellow flag programme. Institutional prejudice against Traveller kids, any training for teachers should include travellers. I am in a big school. I don't think any of our schools have done it. In other schools huge racism/segregation along racial lines. I would think it is something the VEC could take on, bringing on training for staff, policy package, visibility of documentation, lack of resources".*

An Irish man in his sixties witnessed verbal abuse, threats and refusal of service. He was particularly aware of racist attitudes towards Travellers. He explains how his work involves working with Travellers. He explained that almost on a weekly basis Travellers describe to him treatment from a particular State agency office that they experience as racist. He continues:

*"The incidents are reported to me but permission to document them is refused out of fear that the complainant will be denied benefits as a consequence. I encounter racism mostly with poor Travellers, trying to access benefits. The complaints I get indicate there is a serious problem with those working in Housing, the Local Authority and the Department of Social Protection. The stories I am told show patterns of behaviour, usually a person will be trying to access services for a long time, no decision is made, the process is blocked, they are told no. There are so many similar stories that there must be a basis for truth. In all of the agencies, staff have been trained. Training is not enough. There is a serious issue with language. Formal language register with the front line agency is different to that spoken in people's homes. Lack of understanding can lead to raised voices and perceptions of aggression. Language register, training in this area could avoid a lot of misunderstanding as there is a perception of what is said".*

The Irish man involved in education went on to explain that while education is seen as a solution, a more holistic societal solution to the problems of racism and discrimination are needed:

*"It works both ways. I have seen terrible things happening to Travellers and new migrants. It is a mind set. There are some like 'Mississippi Burning'. I worked as a teacher for years and had a good relationship with Travellers. In the school where*

*I worked everyone was very welcoming, parents, pupils, teachers, all wanted to reach out. It comes from the heart. It is to do with respect. There are always some who can generate racism. Anti-racism training in schools wouldn't go to waste. However, what is taught in school sometimes does not go beyond the school gates. If it improves even one person's life, it is worth it. The thing about anti-racism in schools, those in there must have their voices heard. Anti-racism can be built into anti-bullying. We have discrimination in any society. It is a journey".*

## Discussion

This study was undertaken in Limerick on behalf of Doras Luimní in the summer of 2013. 122 respondents completed an online questionnaire and of these nine participated in follow-up interviews, in person or by telephone. What emerges is evidence that racism exists in Limerick, as in other regions. It takes different forms, is multi-faceted and complex. What is more is the extent of racism as it is hidden and underreported. These include verbal: name calling and abusive comments; physical, including spitting and bottle throwing; denial of access to premises including places of leisure and entertainment. There is evidence of institutional racism in places of education, health services, social welfare services, direct provision and other accommodation, law enforcement agencies and the Non-Governmental sector. Perpetrators of racism include men, women and children, professionals and the general public. This study shows that men, women and children experience racist incidents on the street, in parks, church, shops, on the bus, in taxis and in the workplace.

Racist incidents are under-reported for several reasons: people do not know where to report to; who to report (the identity of the perpetrator); do not have confidence in the system to respond appropriately and are prevented from reporting because of the fear associated with their vulnerability of being 'without status'.

It is worth recalling Taylor's observation that 'hate crimes can have a particular and significant impact on self esteem and personal confidence. Alongside this hate crimes are also 'message crimes' more widely: they seek to send a message to a community of identity about who belongs, who is an insider and who is an outsider. In doing so they can undermine community cohesion and solidarity' (2010:11). Hate crimes can contribute to developing negative community relations between peoples of diverse identities:

They can undermine both individual and community safety. They can threaten community trust and confidence in public services if they are tolerated and not responded to rigorously and robustly. The response to hate crimes can be taken as a litmus test of society's commitment to building unity through diversity. It is important to bear in mind these particular features of hate crimes, their victim and community impacts as we consider the provisions and proposed provisions in Ireland (Taylor, 2010:11).

Respondents in the study have also suggested measures how racism can be tackled. They acknowledge that good work exists but needs to be embedded in policy, for example in education. Many respondents acknowledged the need to be more pro-active in reaching out to excluded groups. Based on the survey responses and the one-to-one interviews the respondents had a genuine desire to be a part of Irish society, but felt that institutional and everyday racism made them feel increasingly excluded. Furthermore the instruments that were designed to help fight racism, such as reporting, legislation and action by public authorities were often given little by way of support from the Irish state.

## Concluding Remarks

Based on the evidence presented by this report and the research conducted by Dr. Patricia Kennedy, Doras Luimní has included a series of recommendations to try and address the challenges presented by the manifestation of racism and discrimination in Ireland. It is clear from the surveys and the stories of those who have experienced racism that it is a challenge for the development of integration in Limerick and the creation of an intercultural Ireland.

The European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), established by the Council of Europe as an independent human rights monitoring body specialising in questions relating to racism and intolerance, urge Ireland to strengthen protections against racism and racial discrimination in its 2013 report. It outlines the steps needed to achieve this, including raising awareness about how to report racist incidents, improved measures for monitoring and combating discrimination in employment, the establishment of an independent authority to deal with cases of discrimination in the provision of goods and services, and ratification of Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights on the general prohibition of discrimination.

In July 2013 ENAR Ireland launched a new mechanism to streamline the reporting process for all organisations and individuals. iReport.ie is the first national reporting mechanism in Ireland that can be used by organisations and individuals to combat racism and ensures that the reporting process is coordinated nationally and inclusive of all of the groups working with migrants and others who face racism. The central aim of iReport is to promote accessibility, so that anyone can report racism via a desktop, laptop, or smartphone. Rather than replace reporting racist incidents to the Gardaí, the iReport system is designed to complement formal reporting of racist crime.

Based on this evidence Doras Luimní proposes a number of recommendations which will help lead the way to develop and implement an anti-racist strategy in Limerick City and County and in the Mid-West. While Doras Luimní is already part of an extensive network of organisations attempting to report and combat racism the following recommendations will help further efforts to address racism in Limerick and Ireland as a whole.

## Recommendations

### Law Reform

- The ratification of Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights enshrining anti-discrimination in Law.
- The bringing forth of new legislation creating a category of Racially (or 'bias') Aggravated Offence which goes beyond current provisions for 'incitement' to hatred.
- The review of the 1989 Incitement to Hatred Act to include the prohibition of speech, broadcasting or the publication of material, including on-line material, of a biased nature likely to stir up hatred against one of the named groups.
- Make provision for judges to consider racial (or 'bias') motivation at sentencing, and provide for the sentence to be 'uplifted' accordingly.
- Ensure greater awareness of the relevant legislation including by those responsible for its implementation and also by both victims and potential perpetrators of racist crime.
- That the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill put in place one procedure for dealing with applications for asylum and subsidiary protection, introduce a long-term residence status (granting same rights as those enjoyed by nationals in the field of university education) and introduce procedures for registration of non-national minors under 16.

## Reporting and Recording

- Improved data collection of incidents of racism, looking at best practice from England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- An improved data system be developed to supplement the existing arrangements for collecting data on racist incidents and the follow-up given to them by the criminal justice system.
- The development of a more comprehensive monitoring function in the field of discrimination on grounds of ethnic origin, colour, citizenship, religion and language (with data from the police, the criminal justice system, the tribunals and courts, local authorities and NGOs).
- NGOs, the Gardaí and state bodies should encourage those who witness or experience a racist incident to report to the Gardaí, and/or through Doras Luimní / ENAR Ireland's iReport, ie reporting mechanism.

## Policy and Good Practice

- That the Irish government acknowledge the need for a body to fill the gap left by the NCCRI and that the functions of monitoring and reporting be included in the development of a new human rights body following the merger of the Equality Authority and Irish Human Rights Commission.
- All public and private bodies should develop an Anti-Racism Policy that addresses Equality and Discrimination which enforces a zero tolerance rule and includes a formal complaints procedure.
- Codes of conduct in regard to the portrayal of migrants should be developed and adopted by all political parties to avoid potentially inflammatory political scapegoating.
- That the Irish government strengthen the protection provided by the Irish Constitution against racism and discrimination.
- That the Irish government continue to monitor the situation in order to combat direct and indirect racial discrimination in employment in cooperation with the key partners in this area and in particular the trade unions and employers organisations.
- Make available a fund to support local groups to develop anti-racism campaigns and provide grants for anti-racism initiatives.

## Behaviour

- One of the best ways to reduce racism and discrimination is for 'leaders' to show behaviour that demonstrates disapproval of discriminatory treatment. We recommend and encourage leaders and management to set the tone for employees, who often emulate the positive work habits leaders exhibit.

## Training

- That public and private bodies to continue to implement best intercultural communication practice in their interaction with the public and the delivery of services.
- That all public and private sector bodies facilitate intercultural awareness training and provide guidance and materials on nondiscrimination. This is the first stage in breaking down the institutional racism which arises when cultural differences are not acknowledged or accommodated and needs are not responded to appropriately.

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## Appendix: Survey

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The purpose of this study is to investigate if and how people experience racism and racial discrimination in the Limerick region.

Racism is behaviour that uses physical markers of difference, for example colour or dress as the basis of assumed inferiority and as a reason for less favourable treatment, through verbal or physical abuse and through denying opportunities or denying access to services.

The term racial discrimination is defined as "any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin, which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life".

An Garda Síochána has defined a racist incident as "Any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person".

1. What is your age today?

- 18-24
- 25-29
- 30-34
- 35-39
- 40-44
- 45-49
- 50-54
- 55-59
- over 60

2. What is your ethnicity?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Gender

- Male
- Female

4. How long have you lived in Limerick?

- less than a year
- between one and two years
- between two and five years
- more than five years

5. Have you experienced or witnessed racism/ racial discrimination in Limerick?

- Never
- Once
- More than once

Please use the box to detail your experiences. You may describe multiple incidents (please include a description of those involved in the incident/s)

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6. Did the incident/s occur in a public place?

Where?

- park street
- hospital
- health centre
- school
- college
- library
- garda station
- social welfare
- other government department
- voluntary organisation
- direct provision

Other (please specify)

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8. How would you best describe the incident/s of racism/racial discrimination?

- verbal attack
- physical attack
- threat
- facial gesture
- offensive graffiti
- refusal of service
- property damage
- accessing accommodation
- accessing workplace
- unfair workplace conditions
- refusal of entrance to a premises
- other

Other (please specify)

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7. Did the incident/s occur in a private place?

Where?

- shop
- cinema
- restaurant
- public house
- bed and breakfast
- hotel
- workplace

Other (please specify)

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9. Did you report the incident/s?

- Yes
- No

10. Are you willing to participate in a confidential follow up interview to discuss your experience of racism/racial discrimination?

- Yes
- No

Contact details if you are willing to be contacted by a researcher

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_