

ABOUT THIS LEAFLET

This leaflet challenges the negative myths about African immigrants in Ireland (i.e. welfare suckers, job snatchers, spongers, beneficiaries of houses, mobile phones and cars from the state, etc.). It is important that people become more aware of how African immigrants have made many positive contributions to Irish society. Some of these contributions include cultural diversity, entrepreneurship, reduction of labour shortages and creation of employment. African immigrants have also increased revenue through visa fees, citizenship fees, taxes, Pay Related Social Service Insurance (PRSI), and tuition fees.

The more Irish and African immigrants know about each other, the more we can appreciate working and living together and can create a more acceptable, equal, progressive and multicultural Ireland.



Africa is a continent comprising of 55 countries. It is the world's second largest continent and second most populous continent after Asia with a population of over one billion as of 2009 (United Nations, 2010).

REASONS FOR MIGRATION TO IRELAND

Push Factors:

where someone is forced to migrate due to family problems, beliefs, persecution, poverty, war, political climate, poor working conditions and pay, natural disasters (flood, earthquake, hurricanes, famine, etc).

Pull Factors:

where someone migrates for positive reasons such as, going to study, better job, travel for better life, family reunification, marriage, etc.

CATEGORIES OF IMMIGRANTS

Migrant Worker - A person who works in a country he/she is not a national. Most Africans are migrant workers here, as Irish people are migrant workers in African countries too.

- **Work Permit** - allows a migrant worker to be employed in a specific job for a period of 2 years and is renewable for 3 years. The employer must provide evidence that no Irish or EU national is available for the same job before employing a migrant worker. The number of new/renewed work permits issued for 2010/11 stood at 10,627. Only 625 of the permits were issued to Africans. Africans can also be issued green card visa, which is for selected professional jobs with annual salary of up to €60,000.

Family Reunification - this applies to immigrants allowed to join their families, resident in the state.

Student - A migrant student is allowed to live and study in Ireland with permission to engage in part time work for 20 hours per week during term times and 40 hours a week during normal college vacations. At the end of March 2011, a total of 657 student visas were approved but only 44 were issued to Africans.

Undocumented Immigrants- Most undocumented immigrants legally entered the state but due to various reasons; overstaying visas, exploitation in employment, delays in processing resident permit applications and failed asylum applicants, these immigrants are now classified undocumented.

Asylum Seeker - Someone who fled their own country and is seeking a refugee status in another country.

UN Declaration of Human Rights, Article 14;1-Everyone has the right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from protection

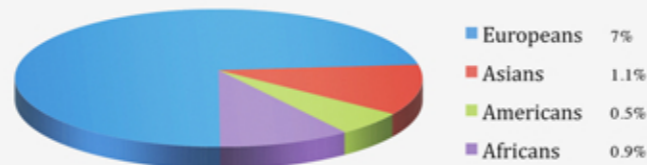
Refugee - Someone who has a well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside his/her country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to avail him/herself the protection of that country or return there because of fear of persecution.

Leave to Remain- Where an asylum seeker fails to be recognised as a refugee but with the Justice and Equality minister's discretion, is allowed to remain in the state for a specified period. Someone under this category is issued stamp 4 by Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB), which permits the person to work in the state for the period he/she is allowed to remain. The permit to remain in the state is renewable on expiration. Only 759 people were granted Leave to Remain between January and September 2010.

"I was an activist and a member of a political party in my country of origin before seeking Asylum in Ireland. I seek asylum for my safety because of threats to my life including assassination attempts by my government. Since I got my refugee status I set up my own business employing Irish and other nationalities. There are many Africans refugees like me in Ireland today who are good citizens working in the public and private sector and paying their taxes for the development of Ireland" (Anonymous African Refugee living in Ireland)

Citizenship/Naturalisation for Migrants

According to the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act, 1956, as amended, an application for naturalisation is made to the Minister for Justice and Law Reform. For an African immigrant to apply, the person must be over 18 years or born in the state after January 2005. Other criteria states that the person is expected to have been a permanent resident in the state for 5 years, of good character and self supporting 3 years prior to application.



Total Population in Ireland(2006)	4,234,925
Total Non Irish Nationals	420,000
Total Africans in Ireland	42,000
Total Africans in Labour Force	23,780
Africans under 15yrs+unemployed+ asylum seekers (2006 Census,CSO,2008)	16,220

African immigrants are hard working, law abiding, contributing positively to development of Ireland through various skills and increasing diversity. Their rich cultural values which they share with the wider society, if well managed, will improve the tourism industry. With the higher number of African migrants in employment, majority in health care and social work sector, it is very clear that they contribute more to taxes, and PRSI than they receive in social welfare.

IRISH MIGRANT WORKERS ARE CALLED EXPATS IN AFRICA WHILE THEIR EQUIVALENTS FROM AFRICA IN IRELAND ARE CALLED AFRICAN MIGRANT WORKERS. WHY DIFFERENT TITLES?

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE (2010) REPORT, STATES THAT THERE IS DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT AGAINST IMMIGRANTS IN IRELAND. IRISH NAMES ARE TWICE AS LIKELY TO BE SHORTLISTED FOR JOB INTERVIEWS THAN CANDIDATES WITH NON- IRISH NAMES

ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (2010) AGREED THAT MIGRANTS CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO THE ECONOMIC GROWTH OF THEIR HOST COUNTRIES IN MANY WAYS AND CALLED FOR INCREASED AWARENESS OF THESE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PUBLIC IN ORDER TO HELP CREATE A MORE BALANCED DISCUSSION ON IMMIGRATION

REALITIES OF LIVING AS AN ASYLUM SEEKER

Asylum seekers in Ireland are kept in accommodation centres under Direct Provision Accommodation (DPA), a policy of the government. Under this policy, they are provided with basic needs and a weekly allowance of €19.10 for adults, and €9.60 for children, which has not been reviewed since its introduction in 2001. They are entitled to free health care services. Asylum seekers in Ireland are expected to remain in the accommodation centres until a decision is made on their applications. They are not allowed to work or avail of third level education.