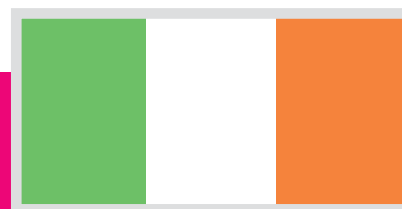


Ireland at a glance



- **Population:** 4,582,769
- **GDP (per capita):** 129 PPS (available for 2011 only)
(PPS=Purchasing Power Standard, based on the EU 27 average of 100)
- **Asylum applications total:** 955 (2012)
- **Positive decisions (including refugee status and subsidiary protection):** 95

2012 data, published by Eurostat in May 2013

The Irish resettlement programme at a glance

Resettlement quota and main actors

Start of ad-hoc or pilot programme: 1998

Current quota: 200

Main national actors: Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration (OPMI) in the Ministry for Justice and Equality, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Garda Síochána (Police), Garda National Immigration Bureau, municipalities.

Resettlement numbers

YEAR	ARRIVALS	NATIONALITY ↔ COUNTRY OF ASYLUM OF LARGEST GROUPS	ETHNIC AND OTHER MINORITIES (IF APPLICABLE)
2013 <i>anticipated</i>	80		
2012	49	DR Congolese (20) ↔ Tanzania;	Bembe
2011	45	Sudanese (23) ↔ Uganda; Iraqi (6); Ethiopian (6)	
2010	20	Burmese (3) ↔ Thailand	Karen
2009	192	Burmese (82) ↔ Bangladesh; DR Congolese (84) ↔ Tanzania;	Rohingya, Bembe

UNHCR Submission categories considered for resettlement –

- Legal and physical protection needs
- Survivors of violence and torture
- Medical needs
- Women and girls at risk
- Family reunification
- Children and adolescents at risk
- Lack of foreseeable alternative solutions

UNHCR Priority levels accepted (with sub-quota where applicable)

- Emergency** *max. 7 days between submission and resettlement*
- Urgent** *within 6 weeks between submission and resettlement*
- 4 urgent medical cases
- Normal** *within 12 months between submission and resettlement*

Ireland's Resettlement Programme

Legal Basis & Background

Section 24 of the **1996 Refugee Act** is the legal basis for resettlement in Ireland. It defines a 'programme refugee' (a refugee resettled to Ireland) as a person to whom leave to enter and remain has been given by the government for temporary protection or resettlement as part of a group of persons. Programme refugees have the same rights and entitlements as other refugees, set out in Section 3 of the Refugee Act.

Resettlement Criteria

Basic criteria

- The primary applicant and all family members included in the application satisfy the definition of 'programme refugee' set out in the legislation.
- UNHCR must verify that the primary applicant and all family members included in the application have a genuine need for resettlement.
- The exclusion criteria of the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees must not apply to the primary applicant or any family members included in the application.



- The primary applicant or a family member may be excluded if he/she is deemed to be a threat to national health, public order or national security, or where there are serious concerns regarding the declared identity of the primary applicant or a family member or of their stated relationship.

Ireland does not accept unaccompanied children or unaccompanied elders for resettlement.

Criteria related to integration

The Irish government considers the integration capacity of local communities, such as the ability to provide services required by special needs cases and the availability of interpreters in the spoken language of the primary applicant and family members, within the resettlement selection process.

Identification and Selection

Ireland considers cases submitted by UNHCR. Since 2008, due to the smaller caseloads accepted, Ireland **does not carry out selection missions**, as recommended by UNHCR. The Minister for Justice and Equality, in consultation with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade and UNHCR, decides on an annual basis the country of origin/refuge of the persons to be resettled.

Where required, relevant government departments and national service

providers are consulted during the selection process. For example, the Health Service Executive is consulted when medical cases are submitted for consideration.

Refugee Status, Permanent Residency & Citizenship

Refugees resettled in Ireland are granted 'programme refugee' status, which carries the same rights and entitlements as persons granted refugee status through the asylum system.

A **Certificate of Registration** valid for one year is issued to all refugees upon arrival and must be renewed annually. Programme refugees may apply for **citizenship** after 3 years of residency in Ireland, a significantly shorter period than the 5 years residency required of citizenship applicants from other migrant groups.

Family reunification

A resettled refugee may apply for family reunification for a member of their family under the same terms and conditions as a persons granted asylum under the Geneva Convention. A member of the family is a spouse, and children under 18 years of age who are not married. There is Ministerial discretion to admit parents or grandparents, siblings, children or grandchildren, a ward or guardian of the

applicant who is dependent on the refugee or is suffering from a mental or physical disability to such an extent that is not reasonable for him or her to maintain themselves fully.

Resettlement in Practice

Linking Phases

How is information transferred between selection and reception of refugees in order to prepare for their arrival?

Briefing stakeholders after selection through missions or dossiers selection

During the selection phase, a profile of the group due to arrive is compiled, including information about individual families and the history of the conflict that led to the particular refugee situation. This information is shared with the national Resettlement Inter-Departmental Working Group led by the OPMI and with the local service providers and support agencies.

Forwarding pertinent information from Refugee Referral Form (RRF) to integration actors

The resettlement programme is coordinated at a national level by the Resettlement Unit of the

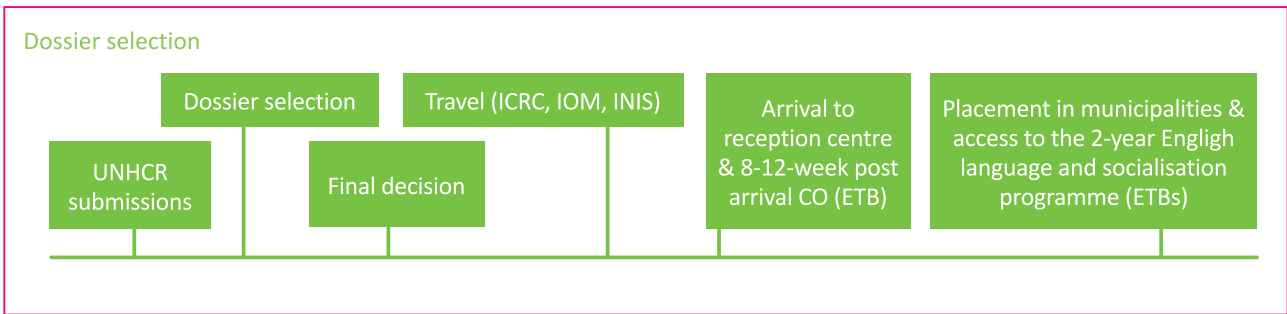
Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration (OPMI) in the Ministry for Justice and Equality, which passes case profiles, background information on the specific refugee situation and a broad overview of special needs amongst the refugee group to local actors in the receiving municipality. Medical and other professionals in the reception centre pass information through their own networks to local practitioners.

Sharing of information gathered during Cultural Orientation (CO)

Refugees receive a post-arrival CO programme in the reception centre (see 'Reception', below) comprising 8-12 weeks of language and orientation courses delivered by the Education and Training Boards (ETBs). As part of this work, the ETB develops educational profiles of all participants and passes these to local education professionals.

Special Needs

The OPMI passes all information with regard to special needs to relevant service providers, generally pre-arrival. Where cases are accepted on the basis of medical needs, special arrangements are made by the OPMI in advance of arrival to ensure that prompt pre-arrival assessments and urgent treatment are provided.



Pre-departure

- Cultural Orientation:** cases are selected on a dossier basis only, and do not receive pre-departure CO.
- Medical Exam:** IOM (health screening and ‘fit-to-fly’ examinations).
- Travel arrangements:** ICRC issues travel documents for refugees selected for resettlement on behalf of the Irish government. IOM organise flights, exit visas and in-transit assistance. Irish entry visas are processed by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of the Department of Justice and Equality and are issued by the closest Irish embassy in the region.

Integration in Practice

Reception

All resettled refugees are initially accommodated in a **reception centre** for a period of 8-12 weeks before they

travel to more permanent housing in municipalities. During this time, new arrivals are provided with an 8-12 week **post-arrival CO programme**, delivered by the ETB and comprising cultural, civic and language courses.

Previously resettled refugees may have the opportunity to visit the new arrivals during their stay in the reception centre to exchange their experiences of resettlement and life in Ireland. Where refugees are being resettled outside of the Capital, they are taken to visit their future resettlement town while resident in the centre. This gives them the opportunity to ask questions and gather information about their new home.

Placement policies

The OPMI chairs an Inter-Departmental Working Group on Resettlement and Integration (IDWG) to plan and oversee post-arrival arrangements for resettlement. Using a broad range of criteria, including population size, availability of services and future employment opportunities, the OPMI

selects the resettlement location. One of the key features of the resettlement programme is the establishment of a local **Resettlement Inter-Agency Working Group** in the receiving municipality, mirroring the structure of the national Working Group, to coordinate the planning and operation of the local resettlement programme. The Chair of the Working Group also acts as the point of local contact with the OPMI in both the pre and post-arrival phases of the programme.

The OPMI provides municipalities with funding for an interpreter for the initial period after refugees' arrival. Where resettlement is taking place in a small community, funding is provided by the OPMI for a full/part time Resettlement Support Worker. In addition funding may also be provided for a full/part time Intercultural Worker who can act as an intercultural and language interpreter where the resettled group is considered to be particularly vulnerable.

Receiving municipalities are generally smaller towns with populations of 4-10,000 people. Placement is also driven by the Irish government's belief that smaller communities can offer a better welcome and support to resettled refugees. To date, refugees have been resettled in 18 different towns and cities, 17 of which are outside the capital city Dublin. The

OPMI aims to promote better long-term integration by allocating one arrival group of the same national, ethnic and/or cultural background at a time to a local community. Generally, Irish municipalities receive just one arrival group each, although second and third resettlements have exceptionally taken place in the same community in cases where refugees from the same country of origin or with a common language are being resettled.

When selecting a receiving community, OPMI considers if all services required by new arrivals will be available to them. Serious medical cases are generally placed in a city close to a hospital, and individual cases are also usually resettled in a city where they can develop links with other communities from their region. Persons with special needs are placed as close as possible to the service(s) they require, while persons admitted as part of a group of five or more families are generally placed in a town outside of the capital.

Integration services & support

Length: up to 18 months

Components: Following the **cultural, civic and language course** provided during the first 8-12 weeks in the reception centre, and the subsequent move to municipalities, integration



services and support for resettled refugees are mainstreamed into wider provision for other refugees and third-country nationals in Ireland. These programmes and measures are delivered via national initiatives such as the Intercultural Education Strategy, Intercultural Health Strategy, the Garda (Police) Diversity Strategy, including the setting up of the Racial, Intercultural and Diversity Office in addition to anti-racism and diversity strategies, and support networks and forums developed by municipalities.

During the first 12 – 18 months post arrival, resettled refugees are assigned to a specific **resettlement support worker** who functions as their central point of contact for advice, information and support. The support worker assists the refugees to negotiate with service providers and ensures that they receive services appropriately. The resettlement support worker is encouraged not to act on behalf of, but rather to build the capacity of the refugee so that the refugee can gradually take responsibility for managing their own affairs. Where issues arise with regard to service provision, the resettlement support worker may seek the assistance of the local resettlement inter-agency working group to resolve the issues for the particular individual and to initiate organisational change at a local level.

As other refugees in Ireland, resettled refugees are entitled to a 2-year programme of English language tuition and ‘socialisation’ (cultural orientation) via the national ‘**Refugee & Socialisation Programme**’. The programme is provided by **Education and Training Boards (ETBs)**, a network of 16 public education authorities responsible for adult education and training, and some elements of primary and secondary education, in cities and counties across Ireland. Local ETBs shape their provision for resettled refugees according to the overall needs of the specific group and of the individual adults within it. For example, some ETBs have provided specialist language tuition for those not literate in their first language, and home-based, one-to-one tuition for families with pre-school age children. Resettled refugees are not obligated to attend ETB classes or take up offers of other types of provision from the ETB.

Arrangements for **housing** vary across localities, but in general housing for resettled refugees is rented accommodation owned by the municipality and/or local private landlords. Some municipalities have placed resettled refugees on mainstream waiting lists for social housing and provided temporary housing for the intervening period. In others, notably Carlow County, municipalities have made use of long-term contracts with private landlords to

which resettled refugees could effectively be added as a third party after their arrival.

Resettled refugees are eligible for the same welfare assistance as Irish citizens. Welfare payments include financial assistance to cover daily living costs while seeking employment, specific assistance for those with disabilities and/or illnesses, child benefit and assistance with rental costs. Ongoing eligibility for welfare assistance does not depend on attendance at language or social orientation classes provided by the ETB.

Several municipalities have implemented specific integration initiatives designed to increase mutual understanding between resettled refugees and wider local communities. These have included programmes such as befriending schemes, after-schools clubs, sports activities and art exhibitions and recruitment of local people as volunteer mentors, to encourage participation at a local level.

Based on the needs of each group, several municipalities have extended the initial one-year period of specific integration support to 2 or 3 years. These extensions have been funded by the European Refugee Fund (ERF), co-financed by the OPMI. The OPMI continues to provide mentoring support to local communities involved

in resettlement, including for example technical assistance to municipalities to complete applications for ERF funding.

In most municipalities, support for long-term integration is **mainstreamed** into service provision for the general population, with emphasis placed on enabling refugees to become self-sufficient. In Kilkenny, for example, the municipality established a permanent local Integration Forum and invited contributions from the local community, service providers and the Sudanese Association formed by resettled refugees.

Use of the European Refugee Fund (ERF)

Persons resettled using 2012 ERF funding

- Persons resettled under a Regional Protection Programme
- Unaccompanied minors
- Women and children at risk; particularly from psychological physical or sexual violence or exploitation
- Persons with serious medical needs that can only be addressed through resettlement

Pledges made to resettle under ERF specific categories for 2013

- Persons resettled from a country or region designated for the implementation of a Regional Protection Programme



- Women and children at risk
- Unaccompanied minors
- Survivors of torture and violence
- Persons with serious medical needs that can only be addressed through resettlement
- Persons in need of emergency resettlement or urgent resettlement for legal or physical protection needs

Pledges made to resettle under ERF resettlement common EU priorities for 2013

- Congolese refugees in the Great Lakes Region
- Refugees from Iraq in Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan
- Afghan refugees in Turkey, Pakistan, Iran
- Somali refugees in Ethiopia
- Burmese refugees in Bangladesh, Malaysia and Thailand
- Eritrean refugees in Eastern Sudan

Evaluations

Several evaluations of the Irish resettlement programme have been carried out. One evaluation was completed in 2008 in the framework of Ireland's participation in **MOST**⁴⁴, a transnational project funded by the European Refugee Fund and led by the Ministry of Labour in Finland. The final project report made several recommendations

44 Modelling of Orientation, Services & Training related to the Resettlement & Reception of Refugees

for pre-departure orientation that have since been implemented, and highlighted the positive impact of mentoring, befriending and sports initiatives for long-term integration.

Another evaluation, completed in 2011, was commissioned by Carlow Council Development Board to provide a 'systematic assessment of the **Carlow Rohingya Resettlement Programme**'.⁴⁵ In-depth interviews with resettled refugees and local service providers highlighted successful aspects of the programme including strong local partnerships, volunteering and befriending and the positive engagement of local media. Interviews also highlighted factors that presented challenges for refugees' integration, including inadequate interpreting resources (particularly for health services) and specific challenges for older refugee teenagers.

Strengths & Challenges

Strengths:

- Ahead of resettled refugees' arrival the OPMI supports the establishment of a local Resettlement Inter-Agency Working Group comprising service providers and other stakeholders in the resettlement process. This approach ensures existing **local**

45 Titley, A Carlow Rohingya Resettlement Programme Evaluation 2010, 2011

partnerships are mobilised for the benefit of resettlement, that the local community takes responsibility for the integration process, and that new partners that have not previously collaborated are brought together to address issues as they arise using a partnership approach. It also provides a clear, single point of contact for local resettlement support workers and for central government, and can constitute a vehicle for joint funding bids and evaluation exercises

- The national and local Working Groups provide an ongoing framework for interagency working after refugees' arrival, facilitating early notification of challenges and problems and enabling timely joint responses by all partners.

Challenges:

- Due to the financial crisis, the number of resettled refugees received by Ireland has decreased substantially in recent years, from 192 in 2009 to 49 in 2012. While the Irish government has increased numbers to be resettled to 80 refugees during 2013, the ongoing impact of the financial crisis provides an extremely challenging context for the future of the Irish resettlement programme.

New Developments

For 2013, 80 refugees will be accepted for resettlement to Ireland. This total comprises 50 persons under the annual quota, including four families (approximately 20 persons) accepted under the medical resettlement programme, and a further 30 persons in response to a UNHCR appeal for resettlement places for non-Iraqi refugees resident in Syria. The resettlement of the latter group of 30 will be funded by the EU Preparatory Action for Emergency Resettlement.

A further 10 Somali refugees will arrive from Malta as part of intra-EU relocation, bringing the total number relocated from Malta since 2007 to 40 persons.