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# Ireland 'to remain multicultural' well

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2010/0701/1224273706998.html>

JAMIE SMYTH Social Affairs Correspondent

IRELAND WILL remain a multicultural country into the future despite the end of a period of mass immigration and it needs to fundamentally review its policies to reflect this, a major study on migration trends has said.

The Trinity Immigration Initiative, a three-year research project, found migrants generally enjoy living in the Republic. However, many face challenges such as racism, language issues and poor delivery of services from the State.

Immigrants primarily decide to come to the country for economic reasons but the longer they stay here, the more likely they are to develop friendships and social networks that persuade them to stay regardless of the economy, it says.

Many migrants find Irish life attractive. "Quite apart from the wages, some find Irish workplaces less authoritarian and more personally rewarding than those in their country of origin," says the report, *Current and Future Reality of Ireland's Multicultural Status* .

But it acknowledges immigration impacts on the employment sector in negative as well as positive ways. "In the hospitality sector, for example, Irish employers used the availability of a plentiful supply of labour to casualise its workforce."

This has had the consequence of marginalising a long-standing State-backed system of wage regulation, reducing trade union membership and State-backed vocational training programmes in the sector, it says.

The report highlights successes in integrating first generation immigrants but warns that young people, in particular, face major challenges in adapting to Irish life.

Proficiency in the English language is of critical importance to migrants to help them integrate but there is inadequate support for schoolchildren, it says.

The report says teachers have identified serious deficits in the system, in particular a lack of language learning materials related to different curriculum subjects.

"The provision of English language support was poorly co-ordinated and in some, it was haphazard. There was a widespread tendency to assume that newcomer students belong in the same category as students with special needs," says the report, which was conducted before the recent cutback in English support teachers.

Migrants now make up 7 per cent of primary school students and 5 per cent of post-primary students. The number of English language support teachers in schools has fallen this year to 1,550, down from a peak of 2,180 in 2008-9.

The report says migrant children experience racism and bullying across all age ranges in schools.

“The research shows prejudice ranging from milder forms of ethnocentrism to much more aggressive, hostile attitudes and actions,” says the report, which also notes migrants have very limited social lives outside of school compared to their local peers.

“Young people who arrive in Ireland in their teens can have particular problems. They may have greater difficulty learning new languages and accents. They have fewer friends because of having missed primary school. They may also find differences between the style and content of their education in their home country and Ireland,” it says.

Prof Robbie Gilligan, of the school of social work and social policy at TCD, said there was a need for the authorities to promote a new approach to language in the curriculum.

This would benefit students from marginalised communities, who also experience problems understanding academic language, as well as new migrants.

He said the system for allocating language support teachers was “appalling” and there was a real danger that the children of migrants would become disaffected and alienated adults due to the way their peers and the system treated them in the Republic.

A research project under way on the criminal justice system has also identified major problems with the workings of the District Court in relation to its treatment of migrants and people from marginalised communities.

The report draws on a series of long-term surveys of immigrants, schools and migrant network projects.

## **MULTICULTURAL IRELAND HERE TO STAY**

\* The era of mass inward migration is over but the immigrants have not “all gone home” and multicultural Ireland is here to stay.

\* Migrants find Irish lifestyle attractive and workplaces less authoritarian and more rewarding than in their country of origin.

\* Immigration has had a negative impact on some employment sectors, reducing wages, lowering trade union membership and reducing State-backed training.

\* English language support for migrants who don’t speak English as a first language is poorly co-ordinated and haphazard in schools.

\* Young migrants are highly motivated and have a strong sense of education but face challenges of language, racism and bullying.

\* Many 'local' young people display indifference to people from other cultural backgrounds, a standoffishness, a separateness and a tendency to stay with what is more comfortable and familiar.

\* A fundamental review of policy and delivery in the areas of housing, social security, healthcare, education and criminal justice is required due to the scale and fast pace of immigration.

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/study-migrant-young-people-bullied-in-schools-123882.html>

## Study: Migrant young people bullied in schools

*By Juno McEnroe*

Thursday, July 01, 2010

NEW research has warned of the "potential for conflict" between immigrant and native Irish children as young foreign people in Ireland battle with language barriers.

Migrant children are experiencing racism and bullying and even more aggressive attitudes and actions, according to research by the Trinity Immigration Initiative. Multiple studies from the college also looked at how migrants were coping with work, integration as well as the courts.

Professor Robbie Gilligan, who looked at the experiences of children in seven primary schools in Dublin's inner city, said he was struck by the enthusiasm of migrant students. He warned, however, of "the potential for conflict" between foreign youngsters and Irish children, particularly because they were not mixing in the same groups and incidents were occurring away from schools.

Researchers from Trinity College Dublin spoke to children in 20 classrooms about their experiences. Migrant children were facing tough conditions while living in affordable homes in marginalised areas, the study found. Foreign youngsters could remain alienated into adulthood because of bullying and racism, Prof Gilligan warned.

Up to 169 immigrants aged 15 to 71 were involved in the research. One female teenager from sub-Saharan Africa told researchers how "they pick on you for anything really. If you're smart they'll pick on you, if you're quiet they'll pick on you, if you're mad or really sound, they'll pick on you. Just pick on her because she's black – just have a laugh, just pick on her".

The research also found "prejudice" against foreign young children ranging from milder forms of ethnocentrism to much more aggressive hostile actions. "Such phenomena are harmful to all those involved," it said.

Researchers also suggested that children in need of language support were being put in the same category as those with special needs.

Some language support in schools was "appalling", said Prof David Little.

*This story appeared in the printed version of the Irish Examiner Thursday, July 01, 2010*

Read more: <http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/study-migrant-young-people-bullied-in-schools-123882.html#ixzz0sR3pKhSi>

# Immigrants stay put despite recession

<http://www.independent.ie/national-news/immigrants-stay-put-despite-recession-2241327.html>

By Louise Hogan

Thursday July 01 2010

A MASSIVE 'exodus' of immigrants who made Ireland their home has not materialised due to the recession, new research has found.

However, unemployment has been rising faster amongst new EU member state migrants than amongst Irish workers, the study from the Trinity Immigration Research Programme revealed.

"With the recession, new mass immigration to Ireland has ended. However, contrary to some expectations, the immigrants have not gone home," said Professor James Wickham, chairman of the Trinity Immigration Initiative.

He said the findings of the report showed the past 10 years had "changed Ireland irreversibly into a much more diverse society".

Prof Wickham said a realistic migration policy was needed that was concerned with more than managing "labour supply".

Also, one of the biggest challenges posed by immigration is ensuring the children of immigrants can access mainstream education, the report said.

This comes as teachers warn against further erosion of English-language support for children.

Figures show the number of extra teaching support staff to help children whose first language is not English has been slashed by nearly 500 in primary schools over the past year.

- Louise Hogan

*Irish Independent*