

DUN LAOGHAIRE REFUGEE PROJECT

DRP

**TIONSCNAMH DHUN LAOGHAIRE UM
DHIDEANAITHE-TDD**

FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT OF ACTIVITIES - 2006

CUIGIÚ TUARASCÁIL BHLIANTÚIL GHNÍOMHAIREACTAÍ - 2006

www.drp.ie & Email/riamhphost: dunlaoghairerefugee@ireland.com

1. Introduction and overview of activities

The Dun Laoghaire Refugee Project (DRP) was established in 2001 to offer practical assistance to members of the recently-arrived asylum community, accommodated then, and later, at:

Sandycove House, Sandycove (opened 2000 and closed 2004);

Old School House, Eblana Avenue, Dún Laoghaire (opened 2000 and closed April 2005);

Glandore Lodge, (opened 2005 and closed February 2006);

Kilmarnock House, Killiney (opened 2002 and closed April 2006).

During this period several thousand asylum seekers passed through the Dún Laoghaire hostels.

While adults and families lived at the hostels, a noteworthy feature was the large number of unaccompanied minors (teenage separated children seeking asylum without a parent or guardian) in Dún Laoghaire. The DRP was able to assist these teenagers in particular by seeing that they were placed in secondary schools in the greater Dún Laoghaire area, where many passed their Leaving Certificate, some with high points. DRP volunteers included from the beginning one former school principal and two secondary school teachers.

The year 2006 has seen major changes - by the end of April all the hostels in the Dún Laoghaire area had been closed. This was in line with the fall in the numbers of persons claiming asylum in Ireland.

In April, the DRP Committee reviewed the new situation and decided, having regard to the experience gained particularly with young asylum seekers and to the general needs in the asylum community, to continue to make available and to develop, as necessary, the services offered by the DRP. The focus of activity remains the young graduates of the Dún Laoghaire hostels now living in the greater Dublin area. The absence of hostels in Dún Laoghaire has meant that the DRP no longer has contact with recently-arrived unaccompanied minors (separated children).

In June of 2005, the DRP weekly meetings with refugees and asylum seekers moved to the Dún Laoghaire Community Training Centre (DLCTC), which serves as a Drop-In Centre. In this way, the DRP keeps in regular touch with clients, especially our young graduates in the asylum community, and organises and funds programmes (especially education and training) to assist them. Since early 2005, the DRP has supported a group of young asylum seekers who have awaited decisions over long periods on their applications for leave to remain. This is the PLUS (*Please Let Us Stay*) Group. During the past year, the PLUS Group has assisted in planning the organisation of the formal part of the weekly meetings at the Drop-In Centre. The Centre also provides the opportunity for one-to-one discussions between DRP volunteers and individual asylum seekers who need advice or assistance. Additionally the weekly business resulting from the administration of programmes, including accounting matters, takes place in the Centre.

We are most grateful to the DLCTC who have allowed us to use their premises at York Road for the Drop-In Centre on Monday evenings every week. The Minister of Education and Science, Mary Hanafin T.D., at a graduation ceremony at the DLCTC on 18 October 2006 referred with approval to the support given by the DLCTC and its staff to the work of the DRP.

The DRP does not rent office space and has NO paid staff, as its policy is that all activities should be efficiently run on a voluntary basis. The DRP had availed of a room for meetings in the premises of the Catholic Young Men’s Society of Ireland (CYMSI), Eblana Ave. since the end of 2002. This has now ended due to redevelopment plans in the area. We are grateful to the CYMSI and to Mons. T. Fehily for their help.

2. Focus of Action by DRP in 2006

The main focus of the DRP’s activities in 2006 was on the following programmes and events:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A. Outreach work at <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Kilmarnock House Hostel, Killiney until closure in April 06 (b) various hostels in the greater Dublin area mainly with graduates of the former Dún Laoghaire/Killiney hostels
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B. Education & Training Support for clients <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) with refugee status/leave to remain and (b) with applications pending for refugee status/leave to remain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C. PLUS (<i>Please Let Us Stay</i>) Campaign for young asylum seekers (arriving before 2005 as teenagers, unaccompanied by a parent or guardian and since then reaching 18 years of age, i.e. becoming “aged-out”) whose applications for leave to remain on humanitarian grounds are pending;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. Drop-In Centre in Dún Laoghaire, as a weekly point of contact for the asylum community, especially youth with links to the former Dún Laoghaire hostels, by way of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) PLUS Group (b) One-to-One Meetings and Administration of DRP Business (c) Young Citizenship Award
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E. Welfare, Recreational and ‘Befriending’
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F. Legal assistance, Judicial Review, prison visits and support at time of reporting for deportation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G. Networking with other refugee organisations, statutory and non-statutory
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H. Contact with the media, political representatives, NGOs and professional bodies to exchange information/highlight issues of concern about asylum policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I. Annual World Refugee Day Commemoration in Dún Laoghaire.

Further information on each of these activities is set out below. Additionally, the following Annexes are attached:

- Annex I - Definitions**
- Annex II - Asylum Statistics.**
- Annex III – Membership of DRP Trust, DRP Association Committee and Volunteers.**
- Annex IV – List of Donors. (Accounts will be appended when audited)**

The following is a summary of the above activities:

A. Outreach work at (a) Kilmarnock House Hostel, Killiney until closure in April 06 and (b) various hostels in the greater Dublin area particularly with graduates of the former Dún Laoghaire/Killiney hostels.

At the beginning of the year, there were over fifty residents at Kilmarnock House, Killiney, including mothers with children. Until the closure of the hostel in April, the DRP continued to work along the lines set out in the 'Action Plan' formulated by Southside Partnership in 2004, including support of a crèche facility for mothers and young children, and computer use and training facility (a dedicated room with a schedule for use, including teaching the various PC programmes). By early April, however, Kilmarnock House hostel was closed and the residents transferred elsewhere. The DRP assisted cases of particular need during this period of resettlement which was spread over several months.

Since the closure of the Dún Laoghaire Hostels, the DRP has continued to keep in contact with former residents, especially young graduates, in various ways including visits to hostels in Dublin where they are now accommodated. These are mainly Camden Hall, Viking Lodge, North Frederick Street and a newly-opened hostel at Clondalkin; but, as the need arises, visits are made to hostels further afield - e.g. Mosney, where a number of families and aged-out minors now live. One DRP member makes regular visits to Camden Hall Hostel and assists with English language instruction.

DRP members visiting hostels are asked to know and adhere to the house rules (established by the Reception and Integration Agency of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform - DJELR).

There is a small community of persons with refugee status/leave to remain residing in private rented accommodation in Dún Laoghaire and other areas who are in regular contact with the DRP through the Drop-In Centre.

B. Education & Training Support for clients (a) with refugee status/leave to remain and (b) with applications pending for refugee status/leave to remain.

During 2006, the DRP continued to assist with fees for education and training courses and related costs, e.g. transport and text books. In all some 36 young people (refugees with status and asylum seekers at various stages during or after the asylum determination process) were so assisted during the year.

Persons with residency (persons with status or leave to remain) must have been resident in Ireland for at least three years in order to qualify for free third level education. This also applies to persons with Irish nationality. Time spent in the asylum process is not considered as residency in this instance. All others are asked to pay full "economic fees" except for free English language teaching in the case of those still in the asylum process. They can also access free courses provided by NGOs such as Spirasi, the Catherine McAuley Centre, and some other courses under VEC auspices.

By far the largest part of DRP funds in 2006 was allocated to education/training. We would like to acknowledge the generous assistance of our donors, whose contributions make it possible to fund these extremely important education initiatives. We thank also the various colleges/institutions for their cooperation.

In the current year, the DRP has supported education and training courses, as follows:

	Third level plc etc	University Degree	Number attending courses
Refugees/Leave to Remain	8	2	10
Application Pending Leave to Remain	26	0	26
TOTAL	34	2	36

The courses taken include mechanical engineering, electronic engineering, accounting, lab assistant, business studies, nursing, computer maintenance, travel & tourism, hairdressing, care assistant and others. These are all practical subjects with good employment prospects after qualifying.

C. PLUS (*Please Let Us Stay*) Campaign for young asylum seekers (arriving before 2005 as teen-agers, unaccompanied by a parent or guardian and since then reaching 18 years of age, i.e. becoming “aged-out”) whose applications for ‘leave to remain’ on humanitarian grounds are pending:

The DRP continued in 2006 to assist a group of young asylum seekers (single “aged-out” unaccompanied minors) who in 2004 made a submission to the Minister for Justice urging that they be given leave to remain on humanitarian grounds. This is the P+L+U+S (*Please Let Us Stay*) Campaign.

When these young people arrived in Ireland, most of them were aged 16 years or less and so have spent an important and formative part of their lives in this country. The applications for refugee status made by individuals in this group were refused. Some have spent five years or more waiting for a final decision on granting leave to remain on humanitarian grounds.

To send these young people back to major cities such as Conakry (Guinea), Freetown (Sierra Leone), Harare (Zimbabwe), Kinshasa (DR Congo), Kigali (Rwanda), Lagos (Nigeria), Luanda (Angola), Mogadishu (Somalia) where conditions are harsh and dangerous and where in general they have no contacts, family or friends, would be to subject them to extreme hardship. They accordingly asked for leave to remain in Ireland with the opportunity to continue their education, contribute their skills and energy to the Irish economy and build their lives. It is estimated that asylum seekers in this category number not more than 250 in total. During 2006, the PLUS Group continued actively to promote their case with full DRP support.

Website: the DRP website www.drp.ie came into operation in 2006 and we are delighted to say it was constructed by one of our aged-out minors who had received DRP assistance with his education! A copy of the submission entitled “PLUS Appeal – Leave to Remain

for Aged-Out Minor Asylum Seekers” launched in August 2005 is available on the website.

D. Drop-In Centre in Dún Laoghaire, as a weekly point of contact for the asylum community, especially youth with links to the former Dún Laoghaire hostels, by way of (a) PLUS Group; (b) One-to-One Meetings and Administration of DRP Business; (c) Young Citizenship Awards:

Drop-In Sessions

During the year 2006, meetings have been held each Monday from 19.00 to 21.30 at the Dun Laoghaire Community Training Centre (DLCTC). These meetings are under the auspices of the DRP and always attended by DRP Committee members (who include asylum seekers/refugees). During the year, we have encouraged our clients in the PLUS Group to co-organise the meetings, in order to gain practical experience of formal meetings and also to be involved in discussions on political, legal and social issues of concern to them.

What the drop-in centre has provided: The centre offers a much-needed facility where these young people can meet in an informal and relaxed setting to socialise, receive information and support from volunteers and their peers, and organise social and other events.

(a) It has become the focus for the PLUS (*Please Let Us Stay*) Campaign.

Having access to the DLCTC has enabled the DRP to invite politicians and other speakers to meet with the young people and discuss their situation. Celebrations have been organised to mark end of year exams, Halloween etc. Volunteers have also attended graduations of students and, on occasion, Parent/Teacher meetings

During the year visitors included:

Archbishop John Neill, Archbishop of Dublin
Fr. Paul Tighe, representing Archbishop Diarmuid Martin
Cathaoirleach Eugene Regan of the DLRCC;
Sarah Toner, Integrating Ireland
Superintendent Martin Fitzgerald Dun Laoghaire Gardaí
Marion Quinn, RIA, Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform
Ken McCue, SARI (Sports Against Racism in Ireland)
Rachael Mooney, Community Foundation of Ireland
Heilean Rosenstock-Armie, Irish Refugee Council

and a number of other visitors including members of the VEC Transition Support Project based in Parnell Square and set up to provide support for aged-out minors and separated children.

In addition to organising meetings with public representatives and others, volunteers have been in discussion with the young people, arranged a series of events aimed at honing their public speaking skills, teaching about civic life and participation in Ireland, and generally building their confidence. Importantly, the centre provides a neutral space in which people can socialise and relax with their friends, which is otherwise not available to them within their accommodation. Other young asylum seekers in the Dublin hostels are encouraged by the PLUS Group to attend the Drop-In Centre Monday evening

meetings. Those who attend for the first time often come back the next week with friends in the asylum community.

(b) One-to-One Meetings and Other DRP Business

At the same time, one-to-one interviews take place at which experienced DRP members discuss with clients any difficulties or issues of concern to them in privacy. These interviews frequently entail follow-up action by DRP members later in the week. In addition, the ordinary work of the DRP such as the day-to-day administration of programmes (e.g. the Education and Training Programme), accounting etc. is carried on.

In addition to the Monday evening Drop-In sessions, the DRP Committee will hold its monthly meetings from 2007 year at the DLCTC.

(c) Young Citizenship Awards

2006 was the Year of Citizenship Through Education and the President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, presented Young Citizens Awards. The PLUS Group were recipients of a Certificate which was presented at a special ceremony organised by Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and which took place in County Hall. The Certificate was presented, on behalf of the President, by the Cathaoirleach, Eugene Regan. To quote from the Certificate “.....presented in recognition of your active citizenship in the community...” The DRP and the PLUS group were honoured to accept the award.

E. Welfare, Recreation and ‘Befriending’

Welfare: this includes small grants or loans to assist in hardship cases where social welfare assistance is not available or not available until after a considerable delay, e.g. while showing proof of compliance with the *habitual residency* requirement. Such help in 2006 included mothers with children who were adapting to the change from hostel accommodation to providing their own accommodation on being granted residency. Assistance has also included small grants made towards mobile phone credits and other basic welfare items to members of the asylum community without funds. The total amount spent is small, but is important for individuals who survive on a weekly allowance of €19.10 for all needs except food and accommodation.

Recreation: With the closure of the Dún Laoghaire hostels, the Social, Recreational and Cultural Programme that had been organised for asylum seekers accommodated in the Dún Laoghaire area hostels was phased out. In the past, that programme served its purpose well, when there was often a succession of newly-arrived asylum seekers including unaccompanied minors, married couples and children being accommodated in the hostels. The DRP wishes to single out Niall Coleman, trustee and founder member, who devoted such great energy, time and effort into helping so many asylum seekers after arrival in Dún Laoghaire to feel welcome and befriended. Niall has also been our major fund-raiser, a vital job in any voluntary organisation.

The Plus Group organise their own sporting events. The DRP helps with funding. For instance, sporting gear for the football team was purchased in the summer with the assistance of a grant from the Bank of Ireland. Such team sports include the Dún Laoghaire Football Club and cooperation with Dalkey United, the Fairview Park Sunday football league and participation in events organised by SARI.

Young members have also been involved in the following during 2006:

Making presentations to the Gardaí on the situation for asylum seekers as part of Garda training programmes
Participation in Comhlámh events
Participation in Dún Laoghaire Community Horseshow
Volunteering with the International Festival of World Cultures
Presentation to the TCD Branch of Amnesty International

Befriending: the *ad hoc* contacts (often to solve a problem that has arisen) of one kind or another that have developed between DRP members and individual asylum seekers have been formalised and extended to become more continuous and more inclusive. One DRP member agrees to “befriend” an individual asylum seeker/s and to give ongoing support where possible.

F. Legal assistance, Judicial Review, prison visits and support at time of reporting for deportation

1. The DRP has contributed small amounts towards legal fees of solicitors, attended with clients at meetings with solicitors and barristers and has been present at the Garda National Immigration Bureau, where unsuccessful asylum seekers who have been issued with deportation orders must report at regular intervals. In some cases, clients have been ordered to report at regular intervals for over two years. In the case of a number of clients, Judicial Reviews have been obtained resulting in a court finding that the recommendation by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commission (ORAC) was invalid and ordering ORAC to re-interview the client. In several other cases, Judicial Reviews are pending. In one case, the DRP continued to support a young man who was threatened with deportation to a country that was not his country of origin. *At the time of going to press we have learned that this young man has been given Leave to Remain in Ireland*

2 As to what happens to asylum seekers after deportation, the DRP wrote to the Minister of State for Development Assistance and Human Rights, Mr. Conor Lenihan TD, on 23 August 2005, expressing concern for the safety of young people returned to their countries of birth. The Minister replied that the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (DJELR) was dealing with the matter and would communicate with the DRP. The DRP has heard nothing further but notes that the International Organisation for Migration, with the assistance of the DJELR, has organised a programme to monitor such returnees. A commitment by our Government to provide such assistance was made in the Nigerian-Irish Agreement on Repatriations of August 2001. While this is a positive measure, the DRP would still like the official overseas development assistance programme (“Irish Aid/Cúnamh Eireann”) to select and fund reliable non-governmental child/youth welfare organisations in countries such as Nigeria that provide shelter capacity for trafficking victims, rehabilitation by way of vocational skills-training and anti-trafficking public awareness education campaigns targeting vulnerable children and their families. We intend to pursue this question further.

3 In response to a letter from the Refugee Legal Service to the DRP in connection with the PLUS document we quote from part of the DRP response (August 2006) as this is a matter that continues to concern us:

“.....In this regard, I would point out the fact that unaccompanied and unrecognised minors without a next friend appear to be consistently denied legal aid by the RLS/LAB for the purpose of instituting judicial review proceedings in the High Court. We understand that, while the Civil Legal Aid Regulations require a minor - when legal aid is required for judicial review proceedings - to apply for legal aid by a next friend, we further understand that, even though such a requirement can be waived by the Board, there has been for some time, and continues to be, a Board policy decision not to exercise such a discretion. We have also been advised that, while the Rules of the Superior Courts require a minor, as a general rule, to institute proceedings by a next friend, this should not in and of itself necessarily justify such a policy of refusing legal aid to minors who do not have a next friend. The fact that separated children in Ireland do not have, as a rule, access to the Courts for judicial review proceedings is, in our view, unjust and unfair. This situation is, arguably, in clear breach of their constitutional and Convention rights of access to the Courts, of an effective legal remedy, and of non-discrimination. It is of concern to us that the RLS, as the legal body effectively providing legal services to all such children, does not appear to be able to do anything about it.”

G. Networking with other refugee organisations, statutory and non-statutory

The DRP maintains contact with the main official bodies concerned with the asylum application and integration processes, e.g., the Reception & Integration Agency (RIA), FAS, VEC and the Gardaí. At times, it acts as an intermediary between the asylum seeker community and one or other of these bodies.

The DRP participates in the bi-monthly meetings of the Churches' Asylum Network (CAN) and at meetings between CAN and the RIA. The DRP is also a member of the Children's Rights Alliance and of Integrating Ireland. The DRP is affiliated to the Southside Partnership Unite Project. Contact is also maintained with other NGOs such as the Vincentian Refugee Centre, Spirasi etc. Such contact ensures useful exchange of information on asylum law and practice as well as practical coordination, e.g. in regard to services provided to asylum seekers.

At local level in Dún Laoghaire, the DRP is involved with the UNITE social inclusion group. Other members include Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, the HSE, RAPID and Southside Partnership etc.

H. Contact with the media, political representatives, NGOs and professional bodies to exchange information/highlight issues of concern about asylum.

The DRP continues as in the past to maintain contacts with policy makers and policy influencers. Since the arrival of large numbers of legal immigrants from Eastern European countries as a result of the enlargement of the EU in 2004, the asylum issue has tended to get less publicity than previously. We feel that it is important that the special concerns of refugees and asylum seekers should continue to be placed before the public, especially as the worsening human rights and security situation in many parts of the world (Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, Somalia, Sudan/Darfur to mention some) is causing yet more people to seek refuge outside their own countries.

I. Annual World Refugee Day Commemoration at Dún Laoghaire – 20 June 2006

The DRP, Southside Partnership and Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council organised an event to celebrate World Refugee Day. The theme for the day was 'Hope'. The event was held in County Hall and was opened by the Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council's Cathaoirleach Eugene Regan. The evening was a huge success with plenty of colour, music and dance. Annie Nyambura handed over a beautiful wall hanging to Southside Partnership, which was made by the ladies who lived in Kilmarnock House. This is now displayed in Southside Partnership office.

The DRP received a very moving tribute from people who have received support and friendship over the past 5 years.

The Discovery Choir soloist Sarah Byrne sang the PLUS anthem; 'please let us stay' and many of the PLUS group were involved in the event.

4. Irish Asylum Law and Practice and Social Conditions

(a) Subsidiary Protection

One noteworthy development was the coming into effect on 10 October 2006 of the European Union "Qualification Directive". In addition to defining minimum standards as to Refugees, the Directive deals also with "subsidiary protection" in the case of persons who do not qualify as Refugees (using the definition in the UN Refugee Convention). Any such persons must be given protection if they would face a real risk of suffering "serious harm" (defined as death-penalty/execution, torture etc. or threat to life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict) if returned to their country of origin. The provision for "subsidiary protection" will be incorporated into the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill currently under consideration. We welcome the recognition for the first time of the need for subsidiary protection of refugees under Irish law but we hold that the *existing* provisions for leave to remain on humanitarian and other grounds as set out in the Immigration Act 1999 (Section 3) should continue, also, to be applicable to asylum seekers, as there may be threat situations outside the scope of the definition of "serious harm" that may arise in individual cases. As in the case of humanitarian 'leave to remain', we feel that decisions (taken at the discretion of the MJELR without any right of appeal) should be made transparent and subject to review.

(b) Social Conditions

Conditions at the hostels with which we have had contact have caused some problems - a view relayed to us by residents themselves. As in the past, more attention should be paid to certain cultural/religious aspects e.g. religious dietary norms.

5. Legal Status of DRP Trust and DRP Association; Deed of Trust and Constitution

- **The DRP is made up of two legal bodies:** (a) the DRP Trust and (b) the DRP Association, governed respectively by a Deed of Trust and a Constitution. By way of a “Scheme of Incorporation under the Charities Act 1973”, the Trust was established as a Body Corporate by the Charity Commissioners on 14 April 2003. Joint meetings of the Trust and of the Association Committee were held monthly in 2006.
- **Charities Regulation Bill:** the DRP welcomes the proposed legislation to update the regulation of Charities, which will include for the first time the legal registration of charities. The DRP will review its structure and organisation in the light of the new legislation.

6. DRP Trustees, DRP Association Committee Members and Volunteers (Ordinary Members) and Sub-Committees

The names of (and offices held by) the DRP Trustees and of the members of the Committee of the DRP Association and of ordinary members (volunteers who are not members of the Committee) of the Association are listed in Annex III. Mr. David Fitzpatrick was co-opted as a Trustee in accordance with the Deed of Trust in May and appointed Treasurer. This is the only change as to the Trustees. We are very grateful to David for his hard work on the accounts. The Committee now includes a number of members of the asylum seeker/refugee community. There are no DRP Association Sub-Committees functioning at present.

7. Funding, Accounts

A summary of the DRP Accounts for 2006 will be available when the audit is complete.

(a) Donors: During 2006, we have been assisted by generous grants from: Dublin Bar Association, Vodafone Foundation and for the third year running by Cosgrave Developments as also The Ireland Funds, Treasury Holdings and Archbishop John Neill and from many generous citizens. Special attention is paid to the wishes of the donors as to the allocation of funds and reporting. As to official funding, an application was made in November to the RIA (Small Projects Scheme) for education support for clients with residency: asylum seekers and persons awaiting decisions on leave to remain are excluded under this Scheme. We were informed in January 2007 that the DRP did not fit the RIA criteria and no funding was given.

(b) Annual Audit: CDK Associates, Accountants and Registered Auditors, Dún Laoghaire have audited the DRP Trust Accounts since 2002. The signed Audited Financial Statements and the Report of the Auditors for 2005 were furnished to the Charity Commissioners and to the Revenue Commissioners during the year.

(c) Eligible Charity for Tax Relief on Donations Received: The DRP is recognized as an ‘eligible charity’ for donations (Section 848A Taxes Consolidation Act, 1997). Donations were received in 2006 that benefited from such tax relief.

(d) DRP Property at Kilmarnock House/Eblana Ave.: the four computers purchased were given to four refugees when the hostel closed. Some equipment purchased for the crèche by the DRP (with funding received from RAPID) was returned to RAPID or given to the mothers that used it. As to the DRP assets (filing cabinets etc.) at the premises of the Catholic Young Men’s Society of Ireland (CYMSI), Eblana Ave. these have been disposed of and an explanatory note will appear in the accounts.

8. Annual Programme of Activities and Budget for 2007

In accordance with Article 12 of the DRP Constitution, the Committee will consider its Annual Programme of Activities and Budget Estimates for the Year 2007 at its next meeting. The Committee will also review its fund-raising strategy for 2007. The main thrust of the Programme for 2007 will be to continue the various forms of assistance already under way as set out in this Report.

In general, the emphasis of the work of the DRP will be on education and training as well as the daily needs of asylum seekers/refugees, especially the Plus Group, that have contact with the DRP through the Drop-In Centre. For clients who move to other parts of Ireland or leave Ireland by way of deportation, voluntary return or otherwise, the role of the DRP is limited by scarce resources. However, we will do what we can where help is needed. The DRP Committee will continue to monitor and evaluate each of our programmes as to cost effectiveness periodically throughout the coming year.

9. Thanks

Sincere and grateful thanks and gratitude to our many asylum seeker friends for allowing us to share their sad and happy times, who have shown courage in difficult situations, and who have responded with generosity and good humour to our requests for involvement in local events. We have learned much from you all!

We thank all those who gave support at Kilmarnock House and the other Dún Laoghaire hostels over the years. Sincere and grateful thanks to Gerry and Catherine of the DLCTC without whose support we would not be able to operate.

We thank the various official bodies for their assistance including the staff of the RIA, and DLR County Council (especially Torry Schellhorn). Special thanks to Garda Paul Durkan and Garda Cian Long, Garda Ethnic Liaison Officers, Dún Laoghaire; to the Churches/religious, to official and institutional funds, to business firms and to many private citizens. We are especially grateful to John Neill, Archbishop of Dublin.

Conor O Briain, Aisling Ryan, Albert Llussa, and Tunney O'Leary & Co. Solicitors, Tallaght have given generous and helpful assistance with legal matters. The Children's Rights Alliance (thank you Maria Corbett) and the Churches Asylum Network assisted generously throughout the year. The Irish Refugee Council has constantly responded to our numerous requests for advice. Southside Partnership (Aileen, Sandra and the staff) and the EQUAL Transition Support Project of the City of Dublin VEC (Itayi, Manuela and Andrew) have always been available to provide their expertise and support. We gratefully acknowledge Dublin Bus for support not only under their Community Support Programme but also with bus tickets for our students. And there have been many others.

Finally, nothing of what has been achieved would have been possible without the generous, good-humoured and unstinting support of our volunteers – both for the asylum seekers and each other.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh as bhúr gcabhair, bhúr ndíocas agus bhúr mórchróí!

Mary King, Chairperson, 20th February 2007

ANNEX I DEFINITIONS

An annex to the Fourth Annual Report of the DRP defined the main technical and legal terms used in respect of asylum seekers and refugees. Some of the terms include:

Refugee under the Irish Refugee Act (1996) – and also the UN Geneva Refugee Convention - means a person who “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religious, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his or her nationality and is unable, or, owing to such a fear, is unwilling to avail him/herself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his or her former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such a fear, is unwilling to return to it...”. The general and loosely used term “political refugee” sums up the position quite well.

Asylum seeker is someone who has applied for asylum in the State under the terms of the Refugee Act (1996).

Asylum Determination Process: a person seeking a declaration as a refugee under Irish law must go through a determination process, which is made up of

-at first instance by the **Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC)**;

-at appeal (if such an appeal is made) by the **Refugee Appeals Tribunal (RAT)**;

-and finally based on the recommendation of the Refugee Applications Commissioner/ Refugee Appeals Tribunal a decision is taken by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (MJELR) to declare the applicant to be a refugee or to refuse to give the applicant a declaration.

Persons so declared have rights like resident Irish citizens: such rights include family reunion.

Leave to Remain: Under the Immigration Act 1999 (Section 3) the MJELR may decide to grant “permission to remain” in the State to an unsuccessful asylum seeker in respect of whom an order to deport has been issued, (and only *after* the issue of such an order) on various grounds including ‘humanitarian considerations’. Such LTR (which is an *immigration* and not an *asylum* measure) is temporary, but may be renewed subject to proof of economic viability, being of good character with no criminal record and there is no right to family reunification.

Subsidiary Protection: since October 06, EU law applies in Ireland covering persons who do not qualify as a refugee but who “would face a real risk of suffering serious harm” if returned home: such persons may qualify for *subsidiary protection* at the discretion of the MJELR .

Residency: persons granted refugee status or leave to remain are said to have ‘residency’. While refugees have a special status, all such persons may find paid employment and access full social welfare benefits, provided that they are *habitually resident* in the State.

Separated Children/Unaccompanied Minors/ “Aged Out” Minors: under the Refugee Act (as amended) a child under 18 years of age who has arrived at the Irish frontiers or entered the State and is not in the custody of any person must be referred to the Health Services Executive and thereupon the provisions of the Child Care Act, 1991 apply. Such a child may apply for asylum. On reached 18, these young people are considered to be ‘aged out’ i.e. adults.

Refugee Integration Agency (RIA) - Adult asylum seekers come under the auspices of the RIA, an agency of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (DJELR). Official policy aims to concentrate adult asylum seekers (with some exceptions e.g. for serious medical reasons and also for some families with children) within the ‘direct provision’ system. This means lodging and full board at a designated hostel with an allowance of €19.10 per week for adults and €9.60 per week for dependants. This small cash allowance has not been increased since 1999.

Right to Work: asylum seekers and persons waiting decisions on leave to remain legally have no right to paid work. Ireland is not party to the EU Reception Directive which stipulates that asylum seekers awaiting such decisions for more than two years may work legally.

ANNEX II STATISTICS

	ASYLUM SEEKERS IN IRELAND	YEAR 1999	YEAR 2000	YEAR 2001	YEAR 2002	YEAR 2003	YEAR 2004	YEAR 2005	YEAR 2006
1.	<i>Number Claiming Asylum in Ireland</i>	7,724	10,983	10,325	11,634	7,900	4,766	4,323	4314
2.	<i>Unaccompanied minors in care</i>	74	273	603	287	276	174	201	156 (to Nov 2006)
3.	<i>Granted refugee status(first instance + appeal)=Total</i>	(166+351) =517	(211+395)? =606	(456+478) =934	(893+1,097) =1,990	(343+829) =1,174	(430+702) =1,132	(455+511) =966	(397+251) =648
4.	<i>Granted 'leave to remain'*</i>	38	19	70	?	?	75	137	
5.	<i>Refugee Family members reunited in Ireland</i>	78	69	162	358	270	576	893	1625
6.	<i>Deportations –no. deported (orders signed)</i>	6	187	365	521	590	599 (2,866)	396 (2,005)	302
7.	<i>Voluntary Assisted Returns</i>	37	248	356	506	762	611	335	
8.	<i>Refused permission to land</i>				4,417	4,827	4,477	4,893	
9.	<i>Returned to 'safe country of origin'/ Accelerate Procedure</i>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	288	297	
10.	<i>Family reunion Applications (dependents)</i>						317 (567)	556 (1,338)	483 (1159)

* (4) includes asylum seekers and other categories e.g. overstay visas but excludes parents of Irish-born children. Exceptionally in 2005, 16,693 parents of Irish-born children - of whom 10,032 had been asylum seekers– were granted leave to remain under the “Irish-born Child” scheme.

Some figures may be provisional, subject to change (e.g. unaccompanied minors) and different methods of calculation.

Sources: ORAC, RAT, DJELR, HSE, ECRE. Final figures for 2006 not available at time of publication.

ANNEX III

**MEMBERSHIP DRP TRUST & DRP ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE
AS ON 30/12/2006**

It is with sadness that we record the sudden death of one of our volunteers during the year. Brother John Mahady was much loved and valued during his time with us. All appreciated his kindness and understanding towards the young people and we shall miss his guiding hand. May his gentle soul rest in peace.

TRUSTEES	COMMITTEE	OFFICE HELD	VOLUNTEERS (not Committee members) acting under the auspices of the DRP
Mary King	Mary King	Chair	Eric Goodbody
Niall Coleman	Niall Coleman	Secretary	David Hicks
Joan Dobbyn	Joan Dobbyn		Peggy Lawlor
David Fitzpatrick	David Fitzpatrick	Treasurer	Bryan McMahon
Maureen McCullagh	Maureen McCullagh		Sara Connington
Liam Ryder	Jean Paul Habimana	Representing PLUS	Anthony Wilkie
	Brian Gallagher		Véronique Piales-Quinn
	Joan Gallagher	Record Secretary	
	Abraham Abdul Wahid		
	Liam Ryder		
	Bridget Shannon Sr.		
	Laura Peelo, Sr		
	Suleiman Oyerinde	Representing PLUS	
	Diane Methu	Representing PLUS	
	Andrew McDonnell		

ANNEX IV

SUMMARY OF DRP ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR 2006

LIST OF DONORS

MAJOR DONORS 2006	
Community Foundation of Ireland	500
Dublin Bar Association	8,585
Cosgrave Developments*	10,000
Irish Youth Foundation (The Ireland Funds)	1,600
South Side Partnership	5,000
Vodafone Foundation	10,600
	(Value)
Dublin Bus (bus tickets)	1,000
Most Rev Dr John Neill, Archbishop of Dublin	1,000