

Information Pack

Diversity

(Created: Summer 2002)

Contents:

Diversity – An introduction.....	Page 2
Diversity – Legislative Developments.....	Page 2
Childhood Diversity.....	Page 3
Ethnic Minorities.....	Page 3
Children with Disabilities.....	Page 4
Diversity in Early Years Education.....	Page 5
The Traveller Child.....	Page 7
Unaccompanied Minors.....	Page 9
References.....	Page 12
Websites, Contact Details and Resources for further information.....	Page 13

Diversity – an Introduction

The non-homogenous nature of society (which includes many and evolving minority groups as well as the dominant community) gives rise to issues concerning human difference, which together have come to be known as ‘diversity’ issues. The concept of equality between individuals and between groups, involves respect for identity, both personal and cultural identity. ‘Diversity’ involves issues relating to culture, ethnicity, race, colour, nationality, language, gender, ability (disability), marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, membership of the Travelling community and socio-economic circumstances.

Diversity can be a positive enriching source of vitality and growth, but it can also be a source of conflict and hurt. Many differences such as language, ethnicity and social class are linked, as are parallel issues such as identity, educational attainment and the ability to participate fully in the economic and social life within society.

Diversity - Legislative Developments

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of refugees and asylum seekers coming to Ireland. Members of these minority groups have reported experiences of racism. Racism is a form of discrimination usually associated with skin colour or ethnic group. The concept of superiority of one group over another underpins racism. Everyone belongs to an ethnic group. To realize that each group is different and may have different needs or customs is to accept the concept of diversity. This challenges policy makers and society as a whole to find ways to be inclusive and to accept difference. To this end groups have been formed and legislation introduced to combat racism and discrimination, including:

Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities – Established in 1993 it has engaged in an examination of the current status of people with disabilities. It produced a report in 1996 containing 402 recommendations. A progress report on its recommendations was published in 1999.

Refugee Act 1996 – This act introduced a statutory obligation on the Irish state to consider applications from people fleeing persecution in their home countries for refugee status in Ireland. To that end Section 7 of the Act established the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner.

People with Disabilities Ireland – Formed in 1997 it is comprised of people with disabilities, representatives of parents, carers and partners, advocates, local groups of people with disabilities and representatives of special needs organisations. It lobbies government and statutory authorities on the rights of people with special needs.

National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism – Established in 1998 it is a partnership of non-governmental organisations, state agencies, social partners and government departments. Its objectives are to develop an integrated approach against racism and interculturalism.

Equal Status Act – Enacted in 2000 it seeks to outlaw discrimination in the provision of goods and services on grounds of disability, marital status, race, family status, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation, religious belief, age and gender.

Human Rights Commission (2000) - Established following the Good Friday Peace Agreement, among the functions of these dependent bodies (set up North and South) is to challenge discrimination and to develop a strong anti-racism/intercultural dimension to their roles.

Childhood Diversity

There are two main reasons for the importance of diversity in early childhood. The first one relates to the central goal of early childhood: the construction of a confident self-group and identity. This begins from infancy and includes the concept that children are not just individuals but also members of distinct cultural groups. The second reason is the need of civic society to promote each child's interaction with people from diverse backgrounds. The combined intent of these two factors is to empower children to resist the negative impact of racism, prejudice and bias on their development and to grow into adults who are willing and able to work and socially interact with others.

The importance of childhood diversity has been recognized in international and Irish Government policy. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child refers to the principles of diversity and non-discrimination throughout. For example Article 29 says that a child's education should be directed to the "preparation of the child for a responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes and friendship of all among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin".

The National Children's Strategy identifies educational diversity in childhood as an objective.: "Children will be educated and supported to value social and cultural diversity so that all children....achieve their full potential". (Objective K, National Children's Strategy)

One area of human difference that does not involve majority or minority groups is gender – as it involves two 'equal' groups in terms of size. However, sexism is, and will continue to be, an everyday issue in the lives of *all* children and therefore the 'majority' in this case could be said to be people of both genders, i.e. everyone. Gender stereotyping is detrimental to children of both sexes in terms of the kinds of skills that are encouraged and fostered, and in terms of acceptance and expectations concerning emotional development. At times affirmative action is required on the part of adults working with young children, to overcome gender biased tendencies, involving changes in language and attitudes, providing activities and toys that are not gender specific, and encouraging all children to participate in all types of activities available.

Ethnic Minorities

Mass media has the potential to reach millions and is often guilty of presenting negative images of members of minority groups as a problem or as inferior. This has important implications for majority communities that may have little or no first-hand experience of minorities.

Communities that have no (or very few) black people, for example, can easily form a negative or stereotyped view of this minority group where the media is their only source of information. The same may be said of the Traveller community.

In Ireland today there are a number of minority groups whose first language is not English, including Irish speakers and recent immigrants. There are also a number of indigenous minority groups such as Travellers. Many such minorities identify strongly with their ethnic origins. One consequence of living a 'minority' experience is the denial of personal identity in order to avoid racism. This may involve a child's language, name, where he or she lives, the family structure, a parent's sexual orientation, religious practices, or even the way he or she dresses.

Children with Disabilities

The needs of disabled children include help in developing social or relationship skills, someone to talk to about being disabled and opportunities to meet disabled and non-disabled children. However evidence suggests that for many disabled children, social contact is limited. This can be down to a number of factors including negative attitudes towards disability within society at large. In addition, certain aspects of children's environment, abilities and behaviour can make interactions more difficult.

Environmental issues include the safety and play opportunities available in a child's home, neighbourhood and school. Disabled children who attend special schools far away from their homes can be restricted in forming contacts in their neighbourhood. This contrasts with research that shows that social contacts of school-aged able-bodied children are most often with children who attend the same school. The level of a child's development can be an indication of the particular problems faced by children with learning disabilities. Children prefer play partners of similar developmental age level. However this can make suitable playmates, for children with special needs, difficult to find.

However there are ways in which children's social lives can be enriched. One way is through family-based respite and befriending schemes. These involve spending a night with another family or going for tea or an outing. Research shows that children using family-based schemes enjoy the time to relax and play that is afforded by short-term breaks. Children need to talk about their experiences. Homesickness and worries about parents are issues for many children. Children value carers and preparation for the child and parent is vital as is contact and cooperation between parents and carers.

Separate Provision

Separate provision or as it was usually referred to special provision left society in general off the hook. We could all continue to live in, and develop, a society where people with differing needs or people who required different responses to their needs were not involved. Not alone have we now to factor into our every day week a consideration of how to appropriately respond to children with disabilities (mainstreaming) but we have to be conscious of other issues at the same time. Firstly the range and extent of disabilities in a mainstreaming environment and secondly the impact on the family unit, i.e. siblings and parents.

There is already a shift away from the idea of a service-providing organisation seeing itself as the provider of all services from the cradle to the grave without any meaningful recourse, or challenge, to the broader community. While voluntary disability organisations will continue to be at the centre of support and service provision they will do so more and more as supporters of and guarantors of mainstreaming and community responsibility. As this shift is taking place there is a complimentary shift in the way in which organisations with a remit to support children outside of a specific disability context see their work develop. No longer is it a valid starting point to construct the issue of supporting children on the basis that there are children with disabilities and there are other children. The Government policy of mainstreaming has also acknowledged that such a starting point is not acceptable. All organisations must work hand in glove with each other to give children with disabilities and disabling conditions the support they need and the support their families need to develop within the community.

Seeing a child with a disability as having one need area in their life, i.e. the amelioration of the effects of the disability, can lead to a profound short selling of the rights of that child with his or her range of strengths and weaknesses, potential and limitations. Yet we can't treat disability as if it does not exist or as if it were straightforward and one-dimensional. If anything it is a never-ending process of balance and re balance.

As well as focusing on the disabled child we must solely or exclusively focus on the child with the disability. His or her brothers or sisters must also be considered. It cannot be assumed that their development may not be hindered if too much responsibility is thrust upon them or if they consider that they too are not at the heart of their parent's consideration, love and affection. Likewise, parents need encouragement, emotional support and a range of practical supports.

A quote from chapter one of the 1996 report by the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities summarises what people with disabilities – both adults and children expect from society: "People with disabilities do not want to be pitied nor do they want their disabilities to be dismissed as of little importance. All that is required is a little respect and basic needs and rights. Surely this is not too much to ask?"

Diversity in Early Years Education

Children pick up notions about black or ethnic minority people from radio and television, from books and magazines, from parents and family members, from teachers, from neighbours and communities. Children, who have no first hand experience, depend totally on these sources of information if they are to develop an opinion or have an image of such groups. There is evidence also, that children who *do* have first hand experience, for example a black child in their class in school, may be quite capable of having a positive and close friendly relationship with that child.

Awareness of diversity is important in early years education. All adults working with young children need to be aware of the difficulties involved for children from ethnic groups. Negative messages about their home culture, language, background can impede their educational progress.

Early years practitioners should assist children from the majority group in developing a positive self-identity without feeling superior to others.

Adults and pre-school service providers play an important role in diversity education. They need to challenge myths and misconceptions which may be held by children about their peers from a different ethnic or cultural background. If children see that someone in their group is different because of their ethnicity, disability etc, children may assimilate the differences as part of their world view.

Early years practitioners should work to develop positive self-identity for all children, and encourage and support all children to value and respect all cultures and ethnic groups. Carers should have equal expectations of all children, free of stereotyping and labelling, in terms of development and formal learning. Where assumptions that reveal prejudiced expectations of children from a minority group are shown to exist, anti-racist training should be recommended and implemented, in order to avoid long-term consequences for those children. Children of colour may internalise racist messages of inferiority and white children, if not given positive information and taught to respect other cultures, languages and traditions, may develop disrespectful and negative attitudes and will always have internalised an attitude of superiority that needs to be unlearned as an active process.

The first step to an inclusive early years system for all children is the development of policies and guidelines for early education training settings in relation to diversity issues. Among the aims of any training carried out should be to:

- Examine trainees attitudes and assumptions concerning diversity issues
- Examine anti-racism and anti-discrimination practice
- Develop individual and group identities in young children
- Understand stereotyping and the ideology of racism.
- Develop knowledge about diverse childhood practices, cultural values, interpersonal relations and languages.

In order to achieve an inclusive early years system for all children the development of policies and guidelines for early education training settings in relation to diversity issues, is necessary. Collette Murray and Annie O’Doherty in their 2001 report “éist” identified a number of approaches to developing a curriculum in diversity education. They include:

Multicultural approach – This celebrates difference and recognises the need to celebrate this difference. It encourages this through activities that highlight different lifestyles and customs. It accepts the need to reduce prejudice and overcome discrimination. It focuses on reflecting minority cultural practices in such a way as to raise self-esteem for minority children and so encourage academic success.

Intercultural approach – This holds the belief that culture and equity are both minority and majority issues. It sees the importance of assisting all people to become aware of their own culture and critiquing racism and power relations and challenging stereotyping. It aims to foster awareness and insight into cultural difference and to encourage mutual respect and a sympathetic and critical understanding of diversity, believing that this diversity enriches our society.

The anti-bias approach – This focuses on addressing inequalities. It enables every child to have a confident self-identity, to develop comfortable, empathic interaction with diversity, to develop critical thinking and the skills to stand up for oneself and others in difficult situations. It

is rooted in the belief that all people have a right to their human rights, equality, liberty and justice.

Murray and O'Doherty come down in favour of the anti-bias approach. They regard it as the most effective means of addressing the root causes of prejudice, discrimination and racism. However they accept that implementing it can be challenging but that its benefits should not be underestimated.

The Traveller Child

The Traveller child should be viewed within the context of his/her world. The quality of life of Traveller children is influenced by a wide variety of factors, including their status within society and the restricted range of opportunities available to Travellers in Irish society. It is necessary to understand the Traveller child within an historical, cultural and political context, rather than in isolation. We must take account of Traveller attitudes, values, and the structures within the Traveller community, as well as considering 'settled' attitudes and values. Only then will we be in a position to appreciate how policy develops to influence the provision of services, which in turn will impact directly on the lives of Travellers and their children.

Traveller children represent a minority within a minority and can suffer all the ill effects of inadequate accommodation, poor living standards and discrimination that the community as a whole experiences. From the limited information, which exists, we know that Traveller children are especially vulnerable to ill health and poor physical development. According to a press release issued by the Department of Education and Science in September 2000 some 4,300 Traveller children (or 90%) of the primary school age group are currently attending school., as few as 1,500 children participate in second level education. Participation is about much more than attendance, however, and these children need acknowledgment, understanding and support to access a curriculum, which was developed from a majority perspective. The reality for a lively, bright Traveller child, who enters the formal dominant society through school at age 4, can be an experience that is detrimental to the continuing development of self-esteem and pride in Traveller culture

Outside the school context, Traveller children have inadequate and unsafe spaces to play, and experiences of accident and injury are commonplace. These factors combined, amount to considerable experience of disadvantage early in life. Irish society still has a long way to go in embracing the Traveller child in its service provision as 'dominant' attitudes prevail at both personal and institutional levels. While undoubtedly there have been improvements at policy and at local levels, ongoing gaps are evident in translating policy into effective change which will affect the everyday lives of the Traveller child through quality and culturally appropriate service provision.

Children are raised within Traveller culture that traditionally included them as part of the economic and social unit rather than viewing childhood as a distinct period of dependence, with economic and social costs. Often Traveller cultural values relating to children and young people come into conflict with 'majority' values, particularly in relation to the formal system of

education, which generally requires a Traveller child to adapt to the system as it exists, rather than requiring the system to meet the particular needs of this minority group.

Children need to be encouraged to be proud of their identities and secure in their own culture and to have a positive acceptance of 'other' cultures. Depending on the social status of the group to which a child belongs, s/he may develop a feeling of inferiority or superiority. In the case of the former a problem often arises where children feel a need to conceal or deny their identity. A child from the dominant section of society, however, can internalise notions of superiority at a young age. Where there is a general belief that one group is more superior to another, there exists a core ideology of racism.

Policy Development

There have been 3 major reports on Travellers over the years that have informed policy-making in relation to the Traveller community:

- *Report of the Commission on Itinerancy* (1963)
- *Report of the Travelling People Review Body* (1983)
- *Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community* (1995)

These reports were informed by the prevailing thinking, perceptions and understanding of the Travellers, their culture and traditions. The policies that emanated from the analysis and recommendations had and continue to have a direct effect on Traveller children, their quality of life and overall development.

The rationale behind the 1963 and 1983 reports indicates that intervention was necessary for the sake of the Traveller (itinerant) child. Recognition of Nomadism as a valid way of life was never actually considered, being seen only as detrimental to the child's physical well being and as a barrier in accessing school. Settlement was viewed as a legitimate way to educate Traveller children out of their way of life. The needs of children were viewed in terms of normative models of childhood, although culturally inappropriate and more inventive forms of service provision compatible with the nomadic life of families and children were not considered. The earlier reports describe parents as having great affection for their children, however, also described them as inadequate in terms of socialisation of their children.

The most recent and most comprehensive report to address Traveller issues, *The Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community* (1995), has brought a new analysis to official policy-making. Unlike previous reports, the analysis here offers recognition of the cultural integrity of the Traveller community. The focus on integration and assimilation has been replaced with an alternative focus on inclusion and recognition of identity, equal status and rights for Travellers in a diverse Irish society.

As we have seen in the above outline of Traveller relations with the majority community, Travellers are affected by the prevailing societal biases that inform policies. Traveller children do not live in a vacuum and are affected by the hostility from the majority community and the services they access. Below we look at Traveller childhood past and present, how discrimination manifests itself, how it affects the life of the child, service provision and the challenges for the future.

Traveller Childhood: The Past

Traditionally Traveller children have been fully part of adult society speaking freely and frankly within adult company. Common space for work, home and children was not segregated and gender roles were clearly defined. From the earliest age children were integrated into the family work unit, learning skills by apprenticeship in homemaking, childminding and the economic domains, such as bartering, call back begging, trading, etc. Boys worked with men, girls with women. Parental control was strict but lessened for boys as they moved into mid-childhood and interacted more frequently in the wider society. However, it increased for girls who were restricted by household chores and childminding duties. Girls were also carefully chaperoned once they entered adolescence. Rough play in children was tolerated, and play activities not seen as particularly relevant. These life skills and practices were part of the preparation needed for survival and for managing vital relations with the dominant society. Children were highly valued and loved. When necessary, childcare was always supplied by the extended family circle. Traveller children were needed and essential to the family's survival and operation, often appearing mature beyond their years to a settled person's novice eye.

Apprenticeship-based education was seen as having a far superior value for Travellers than the formal education system. The acquisition of essential skills supported the positive identity of children. In the past Travellers saw value in the formal education system in terms of transmitting literacy skill, the sacraments (Holy Communion and Confirmation) and as necessary to keep social services happy. However, the downside is an educational system that could effectively damage the self-worth of the Traveller child.

Traveller Childhood: The Present

Not unlike the settled community, Traveller childhood has changed. However, many Traveller parents still maintain many of their traditional principles although modified. Traveller family size is the most significant change in recent years – while remaining high in relation to the settled community – Traveller families now average around 3.5 children per family. Children are still very much active participants, confident and mature in adult company. Apprenticeship home education skills are still vital and valued, however, Traveller children are accessing school more frequently with some remaining into the early stages of the second level system. Girls are less restricted by childminding duties, yet continue to be monitored in early adolescence. Many Traveller women are now accessing training courses or employment, mainly in the voluntary sector, which often includes a childcare facility. Therefore, Traveller girls have less regular responsibility of caring for the younger children.

Conclusion

There are many challenges for Irish society at national, regional and local levels to ensure that Traveller children have equality of access, participation and outcomes in order that they have opportunities to achieve their full potential. Recognition of their ethnicity and distinct cultural identity is a prerequisite to the Traveller child being fully respected and included in the wider society. The development of services that are truly intercultural and anti-discriminatory is essential. Cultural diversity rather than domination by one group should be seen as the 'norm'

Unaccompanied Minors

During the last decade, there has been an unprecedented increase in the number of people seeking asylum in Ireland. In 1992, 37 people applied for refugee status in the country; by the end of 2000, the number had risen to 10,900. Ireland has traditionally been more noted for its

out-migration than for the in-migration of non-nationals, with the result that the first substantial legislation relating to refugees and asylum seekers was not implemented until the enactment in 2000 of the 1996 Refugee Act (as amended). In the last few years, concern has grown about a particular group within the asylum process: unaccompanied minors or separated children. According to the UNHCR, an unaccompanied minor is a person who is under the age of 18 or the legal age of majority, is separated from both parents and is not with or being cared for by a guardian or other adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for him or her.

Their situation has started to attract notice both in Ireland and throughout the EU, partly because it is becoming more and more common for young children to present themselves to immigration officials as unaccompanied asylum seekers, but also because of the circumstances that lead to their seeking refugee status. According to the Separated Children in Europe Programme, unaccompanied minors may be seeking asylum as a result of fear of persecution or lack of protection arising from human rights violations, armed conflict or disturbances in their own country. They may be the victims of trafficking for sexual or other exploitation, or they may have travelled to Europe to escape conditions of serious deprivation

Many refugee and asylum-seeking children will have left behind difficult and sometimes traumatic situations, which places them in a particularly vulnerable position. Children can easily become separated from their parents in situations of conflict or flight.

The rights of unaccompanied minors

Specific mention has been made of the rights of unaccompanied minors in various international conventions and resolutions, in recognition of their particular vulnerability. Foremost among these is the

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The CRC, which was ratified by Ireland in 1992, contains several articles that refer, both directly and indirectly, to unaccompanied minors.

The only Irish legislation concerning unaccompanied minors, their rights and the treatment they should receive is contained in sections 8(5) and 18 of the 1996 Refugee Act (as amended). Section 8(5)(a) states that if an immigration officer or authorised officer believes that a person under 18 years of age who is not in the custody of another person has arrived at the frontiers or in the State, s/he should inform the relevant health board as soon as possible. The minor will then be looked after according to the provisions set out in the 1991 Child Care Act. Section 8(5)(b) states that if the health board believes that the child needs to apply for refugee status, it should appoint someone who can make the application on behalf of the child. The health board is responsible for all costs, excluding legal ones, of any application that is made.

Every young person who is referred to the health board as an unaccompanied minor is seen on the day of referral by a social worker, who carries out an immediate needs assessment that covers topics such as diet and accommodation. The social worker's first priority is to establish if the minor has family members who are already in the country. If so, steps are immediately taken to facilitate reunification. If the minor is alone, s/he is placed in designated accommodation. The health board then decides whether or not to proceed with making an asylum application on behalf of the minor. The Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner has introduced a number of child-specific features for the processing of applications from unaccompanied minors, including the requirement that minors may only be interviewed in the presence of a health board representative

The entitlements of unaccompanied minors

Accommodation: Unaccompanied minors may be placed in any of the following: foster care, hostels, residential units, B&Bs, or hotels. Any placements of unaccompanied minors made by the health boards are decided according to the age and needs of the individual. In the case of unaccompanied minors aged up to 12 years, attempts are made to place them with foster parents. Older teenagers may be placed with a foster carer or in supported lodging.

Income support: Unaccompanied minors receive either direct provision or supplementary welfare allowance, depending on where they are living. Unaccompanied minors living in B&B or hostel accommodation where meals are not provided receive a supplementary welfare allowance to cover expenses for food, clothing, travel, etc. Those who are in full-time education are entitled to receive Child Benefit. In addition, they may be entitled to such benefits as travel subsidies and the Back-to-School Clothing and Footwear Allowance. Their eligibility for these benefits is decided on the basis of individual needs assessments, which are carried out by Community Welfare Officers.

Medical Services: All unaccompanied minors are entitled to free access to medical care and free medication, should they require it. They are issued with a medical card application form by their social worker and, if necessary, given assistance with filling it in. They are then assigned to a GP in the area where they are staying, who completes the form. Voluntary health screening is available for all asylum seekers. In the case of unaccompanied minors who are under age 16 and who request or require screening, the health board must apply to the court to gain permission for the screening to take place. Testing for TB and Hepatitis B is offered to all asylum applicants, but is not compulsory. At present, unaccompanied minors are referred to the existing Area Medical Officer Service if necessary.

Education: As is the case for Irish children, unaccompanied minors are entitled to attend primary and post-primary schools up to age 18. Unaccompanied minors aged between 15 and 18 who have not completed upper secondary education and whose circumstances mean that school is not a viable option for them may be eligible for admission to Youthreach. As is the case for other asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors are not entitled to receive student maintenance grants. In addition, they are not eligible for free tuition in third level colleges. All asylum seekers, including unaccompanied minors, are entitled to attend the educational courses that are provided on a voluntary basis by various organisations

The problems that unaccompanied minors may face on their arrival in Ireland

Among the problems experienced by unaccompanied minors when they come to Ireland are racism and associated hostility, the risks of marginalisation, and insecurity and anxiety within the asylum process

Culture shock can pose a big problem for unaccompanied minors. The term is used to describe the disorientation and distress people feel when they are placed in unfamiliar surroundings. It can particularly affect refugees and asylum seekers whose general way of life is very different to that of the host community into which they arrive. Typical reactions of unaccompanied minors who have experienced trauma and separation include depression, mood swings, increased levels of aggression and psychosomatic symptoms.

Unaccompanied minors coming to Ireland have been known to experience racism, with some experiencing racist verbal abuse. Some minors have expressed confusion about their entitlements and about the role of the various bodies and organisations with which they had been in contact.

They felt that it was unnecessarily difficult to access education, but all believed that education was essential and that they required extra support in this area. Most of them did not practise any sport or participate in any leisure activities provided by schools: they stated that the main obstacles to their integration were a lack of information and language difficulties. Among the positive aspects of their life in Ireland listed by the unaccompanied minors were the invaluable support they received from individuals and some social workers and the support that those who were attending school had received from schools and teachers.

Conclusions

As stated earlier there has been an increase in the number of unaccompanied minors seeking asylum in Ireland in recent years. However they may find themselves very isolated from mainstream Irish society, especially if they are not native English speakers and are not enrolled in educational courses. To date, some minors have found it difficult to source educational courses on their own. Both voluntary groups and statutory organisations can play an important role by informing minors about the various options available to them, establishing contact between them and the relevant educational bodies, and providing them with support and advice throughout the course.

In order to ensure that the rights of unaccompanied minors as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the National Children's Strategy are respected, changes in current reception and integration policies need to be implemented, increased consultation with minors on matters concerning their daily lives and the needs that they may have is necessary in order to ensure that their rights as children are upheld and to facilitate their inclusion into Irish society.

Addressing their concerns from the outset would help to diminish the risk of their becoming a marginalised group and make it easier for them to begin a new life in Ireland.

References:

National Children's Resource Centre (2002) - Diversity in early childhood a collection of essays. Dublin: National Children's Resource Centre

Murray, C and O'Doherty, A (2001) - éist: Respecting diversity in early childhood care, education and training. Dublin: Pavee Point

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (2001) – Raising awareness diversity and racism.

King, Dervla (2001) - Unaccompanied minors: an information booklet. Dublin: National Children's Resource Centre

Beresford, B, Sloper, P, Baldwin, S and Newman, T. (1996) What works in services for families with a disabled child? Essex: Barnardos

National Children's Resource Centre: ChildLinks, Issue No. 1 Spring/Summer 2000

Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities (October 1996) A strategy for equality: report of the commission on the status of people with disabilities (www.empowermentzone.com/equality.txt)

Websites, Contact Details and Resources for further information

Barnardos National Children's Resource Centres:
Christchurch Square, Dublin 8.
Tel: 01 4549699
Fax: 01 4530300
Email: ncrc@barnardos.ie

18 Patrick's Hill, Cork
Tel: 021 4552100
Fax: 021 4552120
Email: ncrc@cork.barnardos.ie

10 Sarsfield St, Limerick
Tel: 061 208680
Fax: 061 440214
Email: ncrc@midwest.barnardos.ie

River Court, Golden Island, Athlone
Tel: 0902 79584
Fax: 0902 79585
Email: ncrc@athlone.barnardos.ie

41 – 43 Prospect Hill, Galway
Tel: 091 565058
Fax: 091 565060
Email: ncrc@galway.barnardos.ie

<http://www.barnardos.ie/>

The National Children's Resource Centre library database can be searched through the library section of the Barnardos website. Copies of "Unaccompanied Minors – an Information Booklet" by Dervla King are available free of charge (please send an A5 SAE with 60c for postage); copies of "Diversity in Early Childhood" are also available free of charge (please send A5 SAE 92c for postage). As well as a library and information service, the NCRC also offers training on all aspects of childcare including diversity. Contact Bronagh McCluskey, Training Co-Ordinator at the above address for further information.

Pavee Point
46 North Great Charles Street,
Dublin 1,
Ireland
Telephone: (01) 8780255
Fax: (01) 8742626
Email: pavee@iol.ie

<http://www.paveepoint.ie/>

Pavee Point is a partnership of Irish Travellers and settled people working together to improve the lives of Irish Travellers through working towards social justice, solidarity, socio-economic development and human rights.

The National Anti-Racism Awareness Programme
Room 502
43-49 Mespil Road
Dublin 4

Telephone: (01) 6632615/ 6632694/ 6632695

Fax: (01) 6670366

Email: info@antiracism.gov.ie

<http://www.knowracism.ie>

The National Anti-Racism Awareness Programme aims to contribute to creating the conditions for building an inclusive and intercultural society in Ireland, where racism is addressed and cultural diversity valued.

National Disability Authority

25 Clyde Road, Dublin 4

Tel/Minicom: 01-6080400

Fax : 01-6609935

Email: nda@nda.ie

<http://www.nda.ie>

The National Disability Authority (NDA) is an independent agency established under the aegis of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to provide a key focal point for disability in the mainstream.

The Irish Refugee Council

40 Lower Dominick St.,

Dublin 1

Tel.: 353-1-8730042

Fax: 353-1-8730088

E-mail: refugee@iol.ie

<http://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie/>

The Irish Refugee Council (IRC) is an independent non-governmental organisation (NGO) which was set up in 1992. It examines policy, research, legal, networking and information components as well as dealing with a broad range of issues affecting refugees in Ireland.

Separated Children in Europe Programme

Kate Halvorsen,

Senior Regional Advisor

Tel: +32 2 627 1759 (direct)

+32 2 649 0153 (switch board)

E-mail: halvorse@UNHCR.CH

http://www.sce.gla.ac.uk/Global/English/home_en.htm

The Separated Children in Europe Programme was established in 1997 as a response to the rise in the number of children arriving in Europe. It seeks to improve the situation of these children through research, policy analysis and advocacy at national and regional levels.