

Working with Refugees: Research Perspectives

IASW/UCD Webinar on Working with Refugees

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Terminology

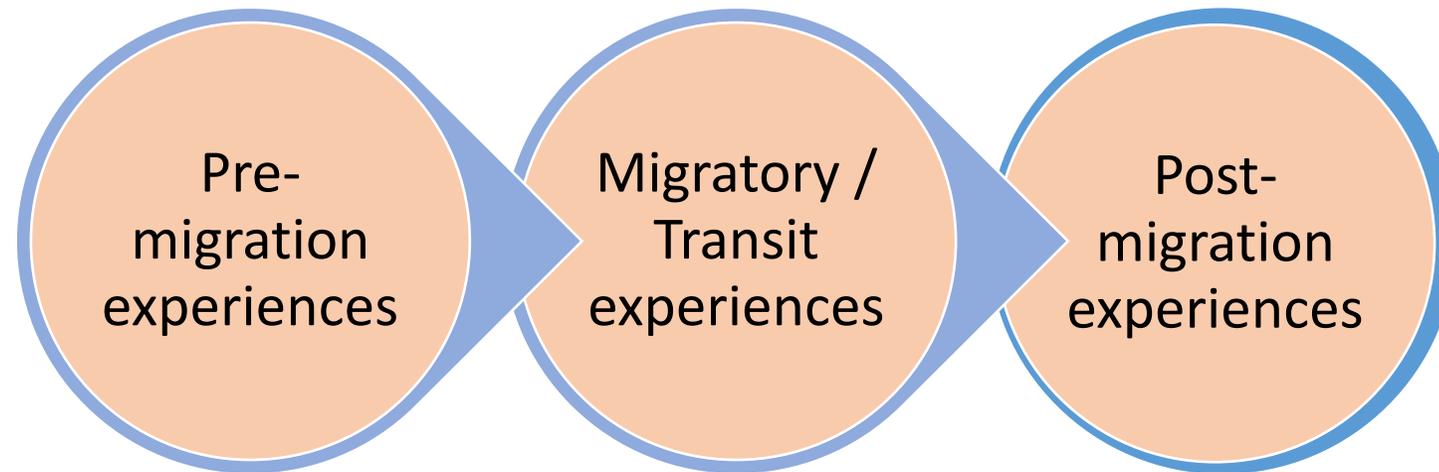
International Protection Applicant

Refugee Status and Subsidiary Protection

Programme Refugees

Temporary Protection Mechanism

Experiences of Refugees



Post-Migration Experiences (1): Accommodation Arrangements

Congregated
Settings

'Host'
arrangements

Overcrowded
accommodation

Key Learning from Direct Provision (DP) Research

- Significant negative impact of DP on mental health and well being (Murphy et al. 2018; Afri/MASI report 2022)
- Parents feeling disempowered (Ogbu et al., 2014); Children and teenagers worried about their parents and taking on parenting roles (Ombudsman for Children's Office, 2020)
- 'State sanctioned' poverty and exclusion (Arnold, 2012; Dalekini, 2022)
- Over-representation of children in direct provision in referrals to Tusla (HIQA, 2013)
- Evidence of challenges transitioning from direct provision also (Ní Raghallaigh, Foreman et al., 2016)

Staffing

Over-involvement of staff in the lives of residents – inappropriate use of power

e.g. Evidence of **problematism and regulation of parenting practices** by reception centre staff (Ní Raghallaigh et al., 2020).

Need to consider the challenging nature of the role; the potential vulnerability of the residents; and the power and lack of power involved

Post-Migration Experiences (2): Separation from Family

Detrimental impact of separation on well-being and on integration

(Rousseau et al., 2001; Wilmsen, 2013; Choummanivong et al., 2014; Alemi, James and Montgomery, 2016; Hinds, 2018)

Restrictive reunification policies and bureaucratic procedures

‘Western administrative violence’ (Rousseau et al. 2001)

Challenges in re-establishing family relationships following protracted separation – little support

(Smith, Ní Raghallaigh, Johnson & Izzeddin, 2020; Mackey, 2013; Marsden, 2018)

Re-establishing Family Relationships

- **“Like at home it was really hard for her because I wasn’t able to give her enough support because I was here now. So now that I am here with her it's good.” (Refugee sponsor)**
- **“So [my daughter] wasn’t really close to me anymore, I think because of the time. But it’s something that is still work-in-progress, I’m still trying to get around. And even my son you could see that he's not really used to me, but it's still work-in-progress.” (Refugee sponsor)**

Cited in Smith et al., 2020

Post Migration Experiences (3): Social Bonds; Social Bridges and Social Links

Social Bonds: Connections with people of a shared sense of identity

Social Bridges: Connections with people of a different background

Social Links: Connections with institutions

Trust and mistrust (Dalikeni, 2022; Ní Raghallaigh, 2013)
Need for relationship-based individualised support, with attention to the uncertain and challenging context;
Instrumental support / Nurturant support (Cutrona, 2000)

Social Bonds and Social Bridges

- “...because there was a few people, like Syrian people with me, so we were like families together....That was really perfect for me....Then when I moved to here it’s like—I’m just like I spend lots of times alone...” (Young person cited in Smith et al., 2020a)
- “When you get to Ireland it’s good for you to get friends...it’s so good to have a friend. I have lots of friends who are Irish...they help me in the school so much.” (Young person cited in Smith et al., 2020a)
- “We make a point of trying not to delve into their past....The curiosity that we all have, or my curious nature would be to ask, 'well, tell me what has brought you to here'? But, in a sense, we feel that we have to respect their need for privacy ...” (Foster Carer in Ní Raghallaigh, 2013)

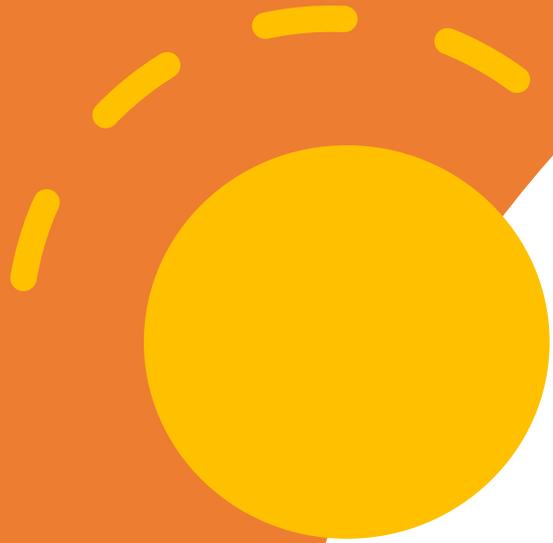
To Conclude: Key Pointers for Practice

- Adopting a contextual, reflexive, relationship-based approach
 - Adopting a “Not-knowing stance”
 - Ongoing reflexivity, with attention to power relations
 - Individualised approach that is led by the client’s needs
- Engaging in anti-racist practice which attends to structural racism experienced by refugees and international protection applicants

“People who are also asylum seekers or refugees”

“The label ‘refugee’ cannot say all about the person who bears it. Being or becoming an asylum seeker, or a refugee, is a critical life event. It is not the only one though, and it cannot subsume all of the identities, interests, life projects and concerns of people who are also asylum seekers or refugees.”

(Boaccagni and Righard, 2020:378)



Go Raibh Maith Agaibh! Questions?

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