

Foreign National Young People at Risk Group



**Report and Recommendations of the Seminar held in
Clonliffe College, Dublin 3**

on

3rd October 2008

(The Foreign National Young People at Risk is a sub-group of YPAR)

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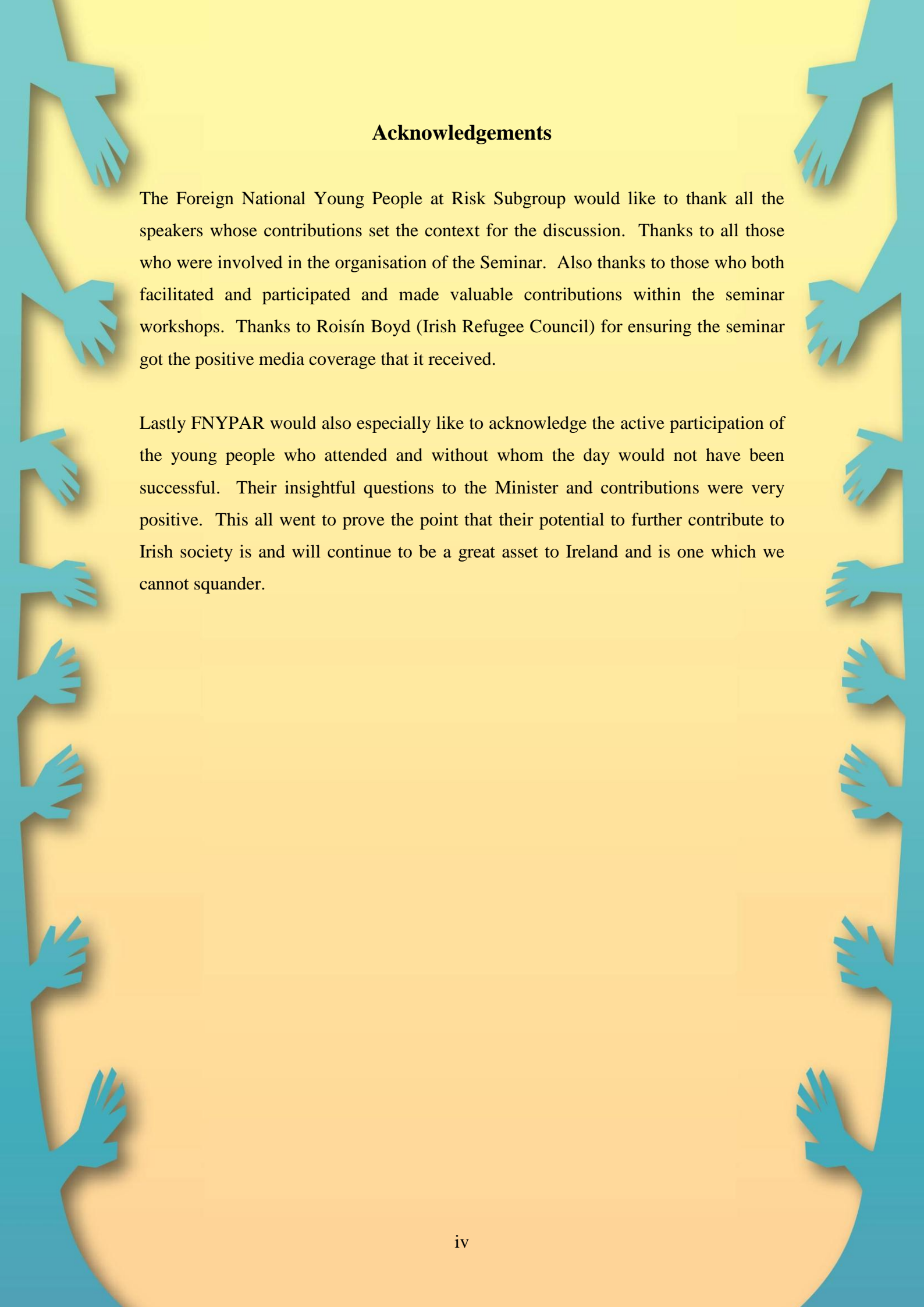
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An Bord Comhairleach um Achtanna na Leanai
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Acknowledgements

The Foreign National Young People at Risk Subgroup would like to thank all the speakers whose contributions set the context for the discussion. Thanks to all those who were involved in the organisation of the Seminar. Also thanks to those who both facilitated and participated and made valuable contributions within the seminar workshops. Thanks to Roisín Boyd (Irish Refugee Council) for ensuring the seminar got the positive media coverage that it received.

Lastly FNYPAR would also especially like to acknowledge the active participation of the young people who attended and without whom the day would not have been successful. Their insightful questions to the Minister and contributions were very positive. This all went to prove the point that their potential to further contribute to Irish society is and will continue to be a great asset to Ireland and is one which we cannot squander.

Foreword: The Context of the FNYPAR Seminar

The Young People At Risk (YPAR) Initiative was set up in 2004 to try to co-ordinate and integrate services dealing with children and young people at risk in the North East Inner City of Dublin. Its goal is to establish appropriate mechanisms and structures to produce better outcomes (see Appendix II).

The Foreign National Young People's group (FNYPAR) is a sub-group of YPAR and it aims to develop a co-ordinated and integrated approach by statutory and community/voluntary organisations to addressing the needs of young people from different parts of the world who are now resident in Ireland. The group consists of Home School Liaison officers, child care and project workers, policy makers, community workers, youth workers, NGO representatives and civil servants, etc. All of which are involved on a regular basis with foreign national young people. Over the last few years the group has organised a number of seminars involving key statutory and community /voluntary organisations including foreign national young people themselves and identified a broad range of inter-agency actions and recommendations that need to implement if the needs of these young people are to be met.

FNYPAR has continued to monitor progress, or lack of it, in relation to these and has been in ongoing liaison with the key state agencies and all the main political parties re developments. The group has involved foreign national young people attending local schools or living locally in new targeted initiatives and residential consultations.

The aims of the seminar were to review progress on recommendations from our previous seminars, examine current service provision for such young people in the north east inner city and further identify key issues including gaps in provision and try and develop appropriate responses and structures.

The prioritised recommendations emerging from workshops are presented in this report. In addition additional and more detailed recommendations from the young people themselves regarding their own service needs will be identified through a number of residential consultation seminars to be held in the near future. The recommendations from the Seminar will form the basis of the actions of FNYPAR going forward.

Members of the YPAR initiative and members of the FNYPAR group, as well as invited politicians and policy makers were invited to the seminar. The seminar was also open to people in the statutory or community /voluntary sectors interested or involved with the issues affecting foreign national young people in the north east inner city.

If you require any further information contact Fergus McCabe or the YPAR coordinator

Yours sincerely

Fergus McCabe
(Chair FNYPAR)

Report of Foreign National Young People at Risk Seminar

The second YPAR Foreign National Young People at Risk Seminar (FNYPAR) took place on the 3rd October 2008 in Clonliffe College. The aims of the seminar were to review progress on recommendations from our previous seminars, examine current service provision for such young people in the north east inner city and to further identify key issues including gaps in provision and try and develop appropriate responses and structures.

Introduction

Fergus McCabe

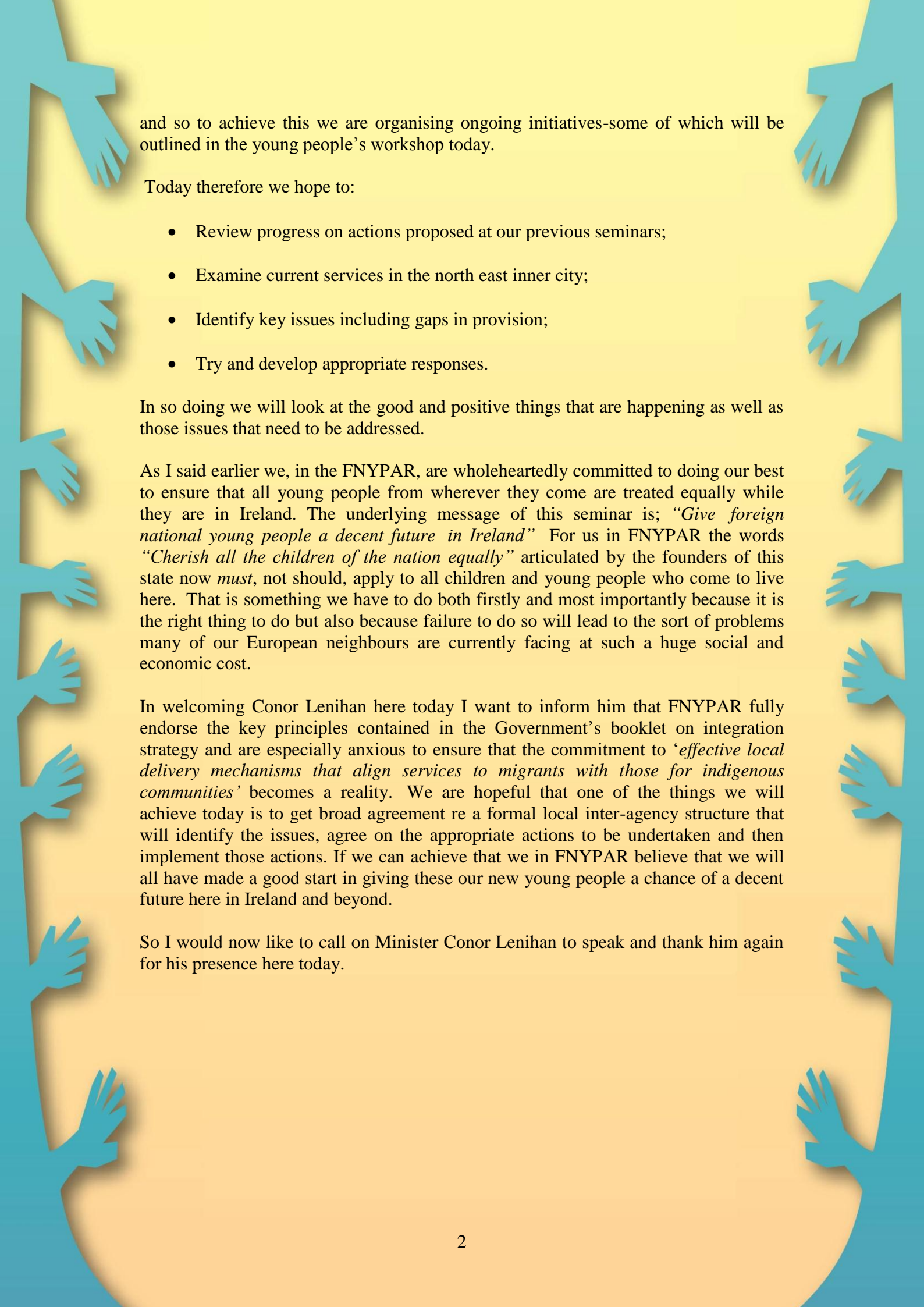
(Chairperson FNYPAR)



Good morning everybody and welcome to this the third seminar organised by the FNYPAR group. This seminar is basically about looking at ways of providing young people who have come to live here in Ireland with the same level of services and supports we would like to see for our own young people and so try and ensure that they have a chance of a decent future here in Ireland. I would like to extend a really warm welcome to all who have come here today and especially to those young people who have come, to our guests from Finland and also to Minister Conor Lenihan.

The Foreign National Young People's¹ group (FNYPAR) is a sub-group of the Young People At Risk initiative in the north inner city and it aims to develop a co-ordinated and integrated approach by statutory and community voluntary organisations to addressing the needs of young people from different parts of the world who are now resident in Ireland. The group consists of people such as youth workers, teachers, home-school liaison officers etc who are involved on a regular basis with foreign national young people. Over the last few years the group has organised a number of seminars involving key statutory and community /voluntary organisations including foreign national young people themselves and have identified actions across a number of agencies that need to be undertaken if the needs of these young people are to be met. I am glad to be able to say that our approach has been supported by all the political parties and has also generally been endorsed by the key statutory agencies. We have also made a real effort to engage with Foreign National young people attending local schools and projects, or living locally in discussions and meetings about what they see as important issues in their lives. Last year on this very date we held a residential seminar especially for young people in the Cavan Centre. We continue to be most anxious that young people are fully engaged in this process

¹ The term 'foreign national', though limited, will be used throughout the document to include all young people either unaccompanied and/or seeking asylum or who are any other nationality, whether EU or non-EU, or are members of a minority ethnic group now resident in Ireland.

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and so to achieve this we are organising ongoing initiatives-some of which will be outlined in the young people's workshop today.

Today therefore we hope to:

- Review progress on actions proposed at our previous seminars;
- Examine current services in the north east inner city;
- Identify key issues including gaps in provision;
- Try and develop appropriate responses.

In so doing we will look at the good and positive things that are happening as well as those issues that need to be addressed.

As I said earlier we, in the FNYPAR, are wholeheartedly committed to doing our best to ensure that all young people from wherever they come are treated equally while they are in Ireland. The underlying message of this seminar is; "*Give foreign national young people a decent future in Ireland*" For us in FNYPAR the words "*Cherish all the children of the nation equally*" articulated by the founders of this state now *must*, not should, apply to all children and young people who come to live here. That is something we have to do both firstly and most importantly because it is the right thing to do but also because failure to do so will lead to the sort of problems many of our European neighbours are currently facing at such a huge social and economic cost.

In welcoming Conor Lenihan here today I want to inform him that FNYPAR fully endorse the key principles contained in the Government's booklet on integration strategy and are especially anxious to ensure that the commitment to '*effective local delivery mechanisms that align services to migrants with those for indigenous communities*' becomes a reality. We are hopeful that one of the things we will achieve today is to get broad agreement re a formal local inter-agency structure that will identify the issues, agree on the appropriate actions to be undertaken and then implement those actions. If we can achieve that we in FNYPAR believe that we will all have made a good start in giving these our new young people a chance of a decent future here in Ireland and beyond.

So I would now like to call on Minister Conor Lenihan to speak and thank him again for his presence here today.

Minister's Address



Conor Lenihan, Minister of State with special responsibility for Integration Policy at the Department of Community, Rural, and Gaeltacht Affairs, the Department of Education and Science, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform

It's a great pleasure to be here this morning at the opening of this seminar organised by the Foreign National Young People's Group which is a sub-group of the Young People at Risk Initiative here in the north inner city. I understand that this is the latest in a series of seminars which have been organised by the group in the last few years.

For many young people the prospect of moving to a new country can be very exciting- it can offer new educational, sporting and leisure experiences. It can provide opportunities to meet others who have a different background and perspective on life- it can be, and indeed is for many, a very enriching experience;

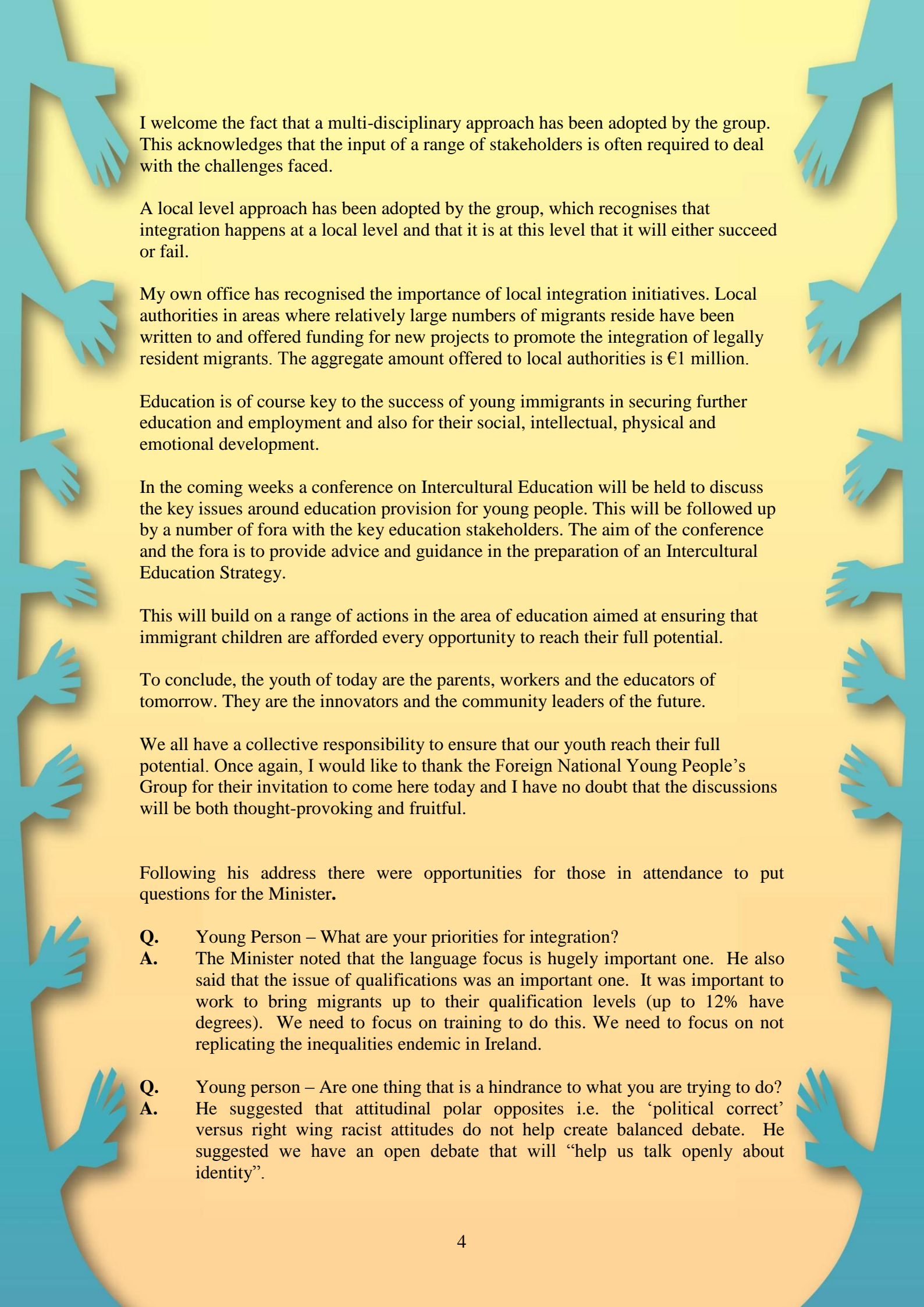
Notwithstanding all of the positives, the adjustment can also be fraught with difficulties- learning a new language, coping with new accents, trying to make new friends, a different school- all of these things can be a source of frustration and confusion;

And while many children and young people often deal with the transition more easily than older adults, others may feel a sense of isolation. The importance of getting youth involved in activities in the community cannot be overemphasised. It is for this reason that my office has committed funding to the key sporting bodies to assist in this objective.

It is very important that services providers can effectively engage with immigrant children and young people.

While many of the issues that are experienced by immigrant youth are the same as those of the host population, these issues are often compounded by language, cultural beliefs and different parenting practices. Also, immigrant children are not a homogeneous group and some will deal with the difficulties that they face differently to others.

The Foreign National Young People's Group have sought to actively engage with young people and have sought to establish mechanisms and structures to produce better outcomes for immigrant children. For this they must be commended.



I welcome the fact that a multi-disciplinary approach has been adopted by the group. This acknowledges that the input of a range of stakeholders is often required to deal with the challenges faced.

A local level approach has been adopted by the group, which recognises that integration happens at a local level and that it is at this level that it will either succeed or fail.

My own office has recognised the importance of local integration initiatives. Local authorities in areas where relatively large numbers of migrants reside have been written to and offered funding for new projects to promote the integration of legally resident migrants. The aggregate amount offered to local authorities is €1 million.

Education is of course key to the success of young immigrants in securing further education and employment and also for their social, intellectual, physical and emotional development.

In the coming weeks a conference on Intercultural Education will be held to discuss the key issues around education provision for young people. This will be followed up by a number of fora with the key education stakeholders. The aim of the conference and the fora is to provide advice and guidance in the preparation of an Intercultural Education Strategy.

This will build on a range of actions in the area of education aimed at ensuring that immigrant children are afforded every opportunity to reach their full potential.

To conclude, the youth of today are the parents, workers and the educators of tomorrow. They are the innovators and the community leaders of the future.

We all have a collective responsibility to ensure that our youth reach their full potential. Once again, I would like to thank the Foreign National Young People's Group for their invitation to come here today and I have no doubt that the discussions will be both thought-provoking and fruitful.

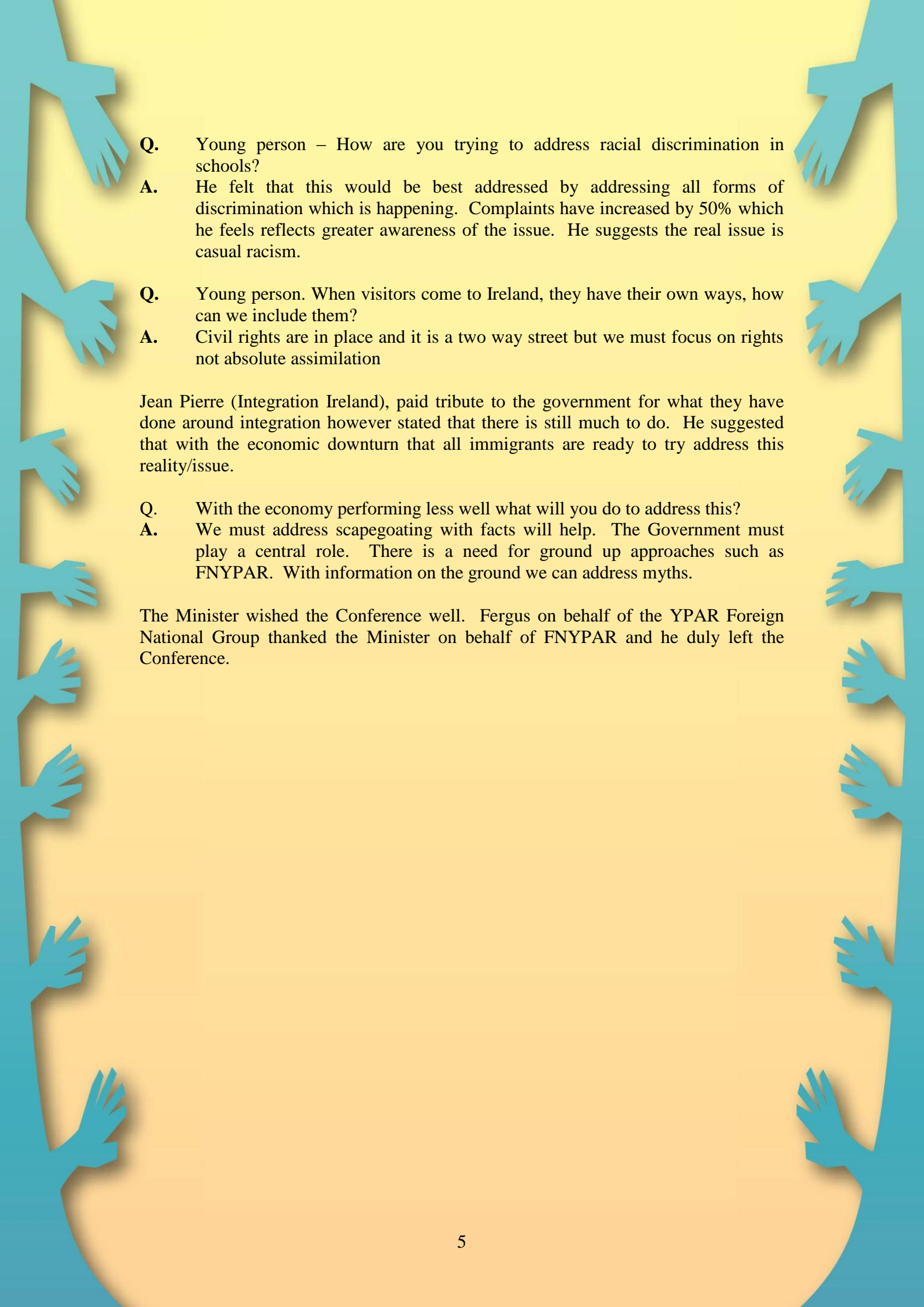
Following his address there were opportunities for those in attendance to put questions for the Minister.

Q. Young Person – What are your priorities for integration?

A. The Minister noted that the language focus is hugely important one. He also said that the issue of qualifications was an important one. It was important to work to bring migrants up to their qualification levels (up to 12% have degrees). We need to focus on training to do this. We need to focus on not replicating the inequalities endemic in Ireland.

Q. Young person – Are one thing that is a hindrance to what you are trying to do?

A. He suggested that attitudinal polar opposites i.e. the 'political correct' versus right wing racist attitudes do not help create balanced debate. He suggested we have an open debate that will "help us talk openly about identity".



Q. Young person – How are you trying to address racial discrimination in schools?

A. He felt that this would be best addressed by addressing all forms of discrimination which is happening. Complaints have increased by 50% which he feels reflects greater awareness of the issue. He suggests the real issue is casual racism.

Q. Young person. When visitors come to Ireland, they have their own ways, how can we include them?

A. Civil rights are in place and it is a two way street but we must focus on rights not absolute assimilation

Jean Pierre (Integration Ireland), paid tribute to the government for what they have done around integration however stated that there is still much to do. He suggested that with the economic downturn that all immigrants are ready to try address this reality/issue.

Q. With the economy performing less well what will you do to address this?

A. We must address scapegoating with facts will help. The Government must play a central role. There is a need for ground up approaches such as FNYPAR. With information on the ground we can address myths.

The Minister wished the Conference well. Fergus on behalf of the YPAR Foreign National Group thanked the Minister on behalf of FNYPAR and he duly left the Conference.

Presentations

The presentations were focused on issues for foreign national young people relating to Health and Social Services, Education and Justice

Issue 1: Health and Social Services

Fergus McCabe introduced this topic.

Paul Flynn

(Crosscare Young Adult Support Services and FNYPAR)



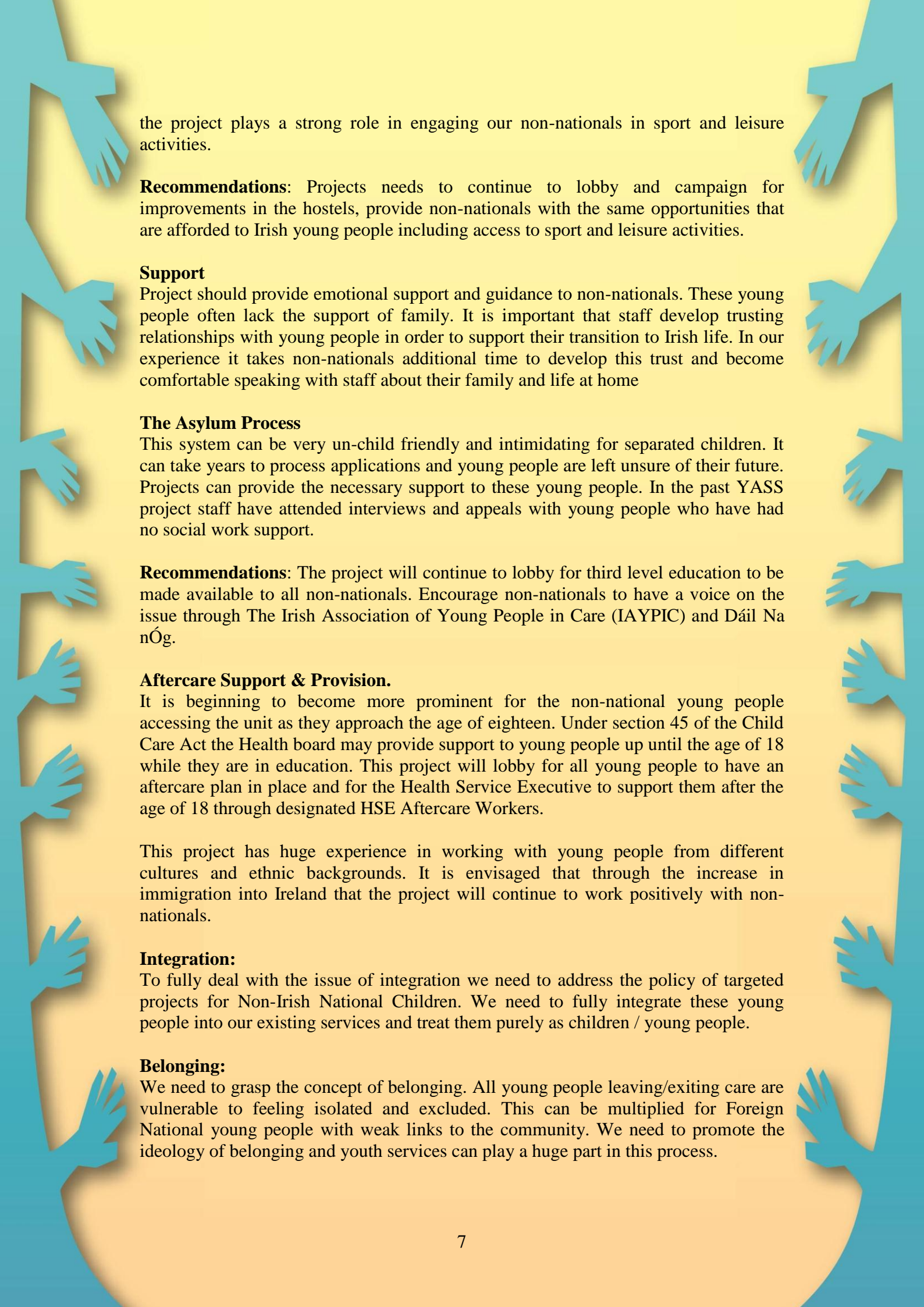
Working with Refugee / Foreign National Young People

Over the last number of years Crosscare Young Adult Support Service has worked with a large number of non-national young people. Included in this are separated children and those reunited with family members. The Project firmly believes that all non-Irish national children should be treated with the same respect and dignity as Irish children and are entitled to the same rights. Separated / refugee children are protected under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 2: Protection against discrimination) and the National Children's Strategy 2000.

At all times staff aim to treat non-nationals with the same respect and dignity afforded to other young people in care. The project believes that non-nationals should be integrated into existing services rather than targeted services. Non-nationals have become fully integrated into the project. This has been achieved by making other young people aware of different cultures, an anti racism programmes and staff training on the issues. Non-national children face particular challenges including an absence of family support, restricted access to leisure activities and the stress associated with the asylum process. They also share many of the "normal" challenges brought about by the transition to adulthood and those challenges experienced by young people in care and they present with similar needs to Irish young people.

Social Integration

The project actively encourages non-nationals to become integrated into Irish society and to develop social networks within their own community and their wider peer group. Those who reside in non-national hostels are susceptible to feelings of stress and isolation due to their accommodation. As these hostels have few leisure activities



the project plays a strong role in engaging our non-nationals in sport and leisure activities.

Recommendations: Projects needs to continue to lobby and campaign for improvements in the hostels, provide non-nationals with the same opportunities that are afforded to Irish young people including access to sport and leisure activities.

Support

Project should provide emotional support and guidance to non-nationals. These young people often lack the support of family. It is important that staff develop trusting relationships with young people in order to support their transition to Irish life. In our experience it takes non-nationals additional time to develop this trust and become comfortable speaking with staff about their family and life at home

The Asylum Process

This system can be very un-child friendly and intimidating for separated children. It can take years to process applications and young people are left unsure of their future. Projects can provide the necessary support to these young people. In the past YASS project staff have attended interviews and appeals with young people who have had no social work support.

Recommendations: The project will continue to lobby for third level education to be made available to all non-nationals. Encourage non-nationals to have a voice on the issue through The Irish Association of Young People in Care (IAYPIC) and Dáil Na nÓg.

Aftercare Support & Provision.

It is beginning to become more prominent for the non-national young people accessing the unit as they approach the age of eighteen. Under section 45 of the Child Care Act the Health board may provide support to young people up until the age of 18 while they are in education. This project will lobby for all young people to have an aftercare plan in place and for the Health Service Executive to support them after the age of 18 through designated HSE Aftercare Workers.

This project has huge experience in working with young people from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds. It is envisaged that through the increase in immigration into Ireland that the project will continue to work positively with non-nationals.

Integration:

To fully deal with the issue of integration we need to address the policy of targeted projects for Non-Irish National Children. We need to fully integrate these young people into our existing services and treat them purely as children / young people.

Belonging:

We need to grasp the concept of belonging. All young people leaving/exiting care are vulnerable to feeling isolated and excluded. This can be multiplied for Foreign National young people with weak links to the community. We need to promote the ideology of belonging and youth services can play a huge part in this process.

Aidan Waterstone
(National Specialist Children and Family Services, HSE)



Presentation

HSE services for children and families are going through a process of change and development. We are coming to the end of an era where child protection concerns have dominated the agenda for statutory service providers in Ireland and abroad. We are now focusing on the need to constructively address child and family needs through the provision of comprehensive family support services. This raises a whole range of issues for us in terms of how we plan and deliver services for children and families.

We need to reconsider our roles, our structures, our skills, our relationships with voluntary and community agencies. We need, most significantly to reconsider what outcomes we want to achieve for children and families for whom we are responsible.

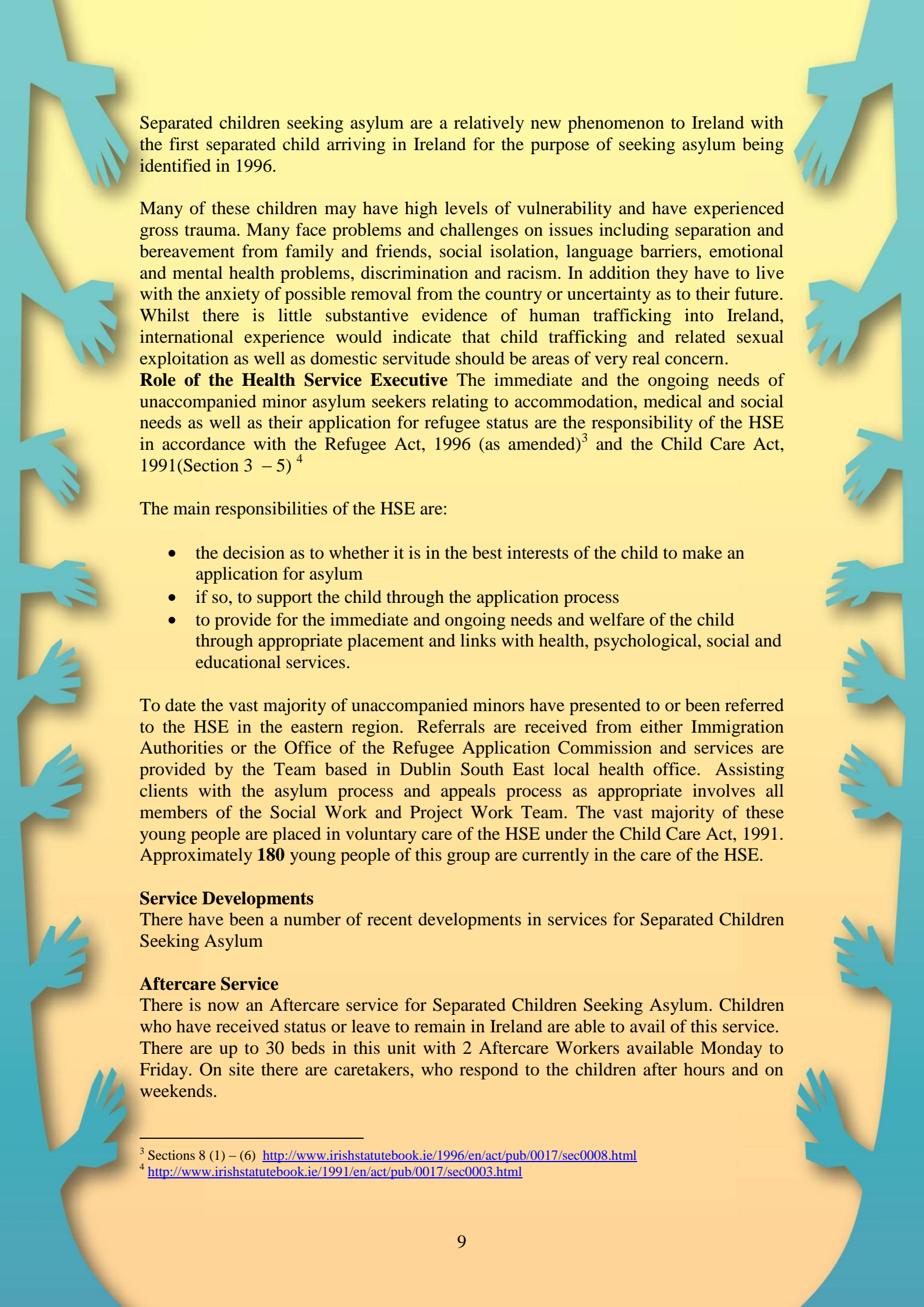
The strategic direction and key goals of public policy in relation to children's health and social services in Ireland are being set by the Agenda for Children's Services which is part of a fundamental change now underway in how Government policy in relation to children is formulated and delivered.

We are now committed to providing services that are evidence based and focus on better outcomes. We are now committed to providing services that focus on the whole child. We are now committed to providing services that are more effective because they are coordinated and integrated.^{an objectives}

It is anticipated that *The Agenda for Children's Services*² will serve as a broad policy framework document, which will enable, as required, the development of new or revised policies and services for children and families, including Separated Children Seeking Asylum.

Separated children seeking asylum are defined as "children under eighteen years of age who are outside their country of origin, who have applied for asylum and are separated from their parents or their legal/customary care giver".

² The Agenda for Children a Policy Handbook (OMCYA/Department of Health and Children 2007)
http://www.omcya.ie/documents/publications/CS_handbook%5BENGLISH%5Dlowres.pdf

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Separated children seeking asylum are a relatively new phenomenon to Ireland with the first separated child arriving in Ireland for the purpose of seeking asylum being identified in 1996.

Many of these children may have high levels of vulnerability and have experienced gross trauma. Many face problems and challenges on issues including separation and bereavement from family and friends, social isolation, language barriers, emotional and mental health problems, discrimination and racism. In addition they have to live with the anxiety of possible removal from the country or uncertainty as to their future. Whilst there is little substantive evidence of human trafficking into Ireland, international experience would indicate that child trafficking and related sexual exploitation as well as domestic servitude should be areas of very real concern.

Role of the Health Service Executive The immediate and the ongoing needs of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers relating to accommodation, medical and social needs as well as their application for refugee status are the responsibility of the HSE in accordance with the Refugee Act, 1996 (as amended)³ and the Child Care Act, 1991(Section 3 – 5)⁴

The main responsibilities of the HSE are:

- the decision as to whether it is in the best interests of the child to make an application for asylum
- if so, to support the child through the application process
- to provide for the immediate and ongoing needs and welfare of the child through appropriate placement and links with health, psychological, social and educational services.

To date the vast majority of unaccompanied minors have presented to or been referred to the HSE in the eastern region. Referrals are received from either Immigration Authorities or the Office of the Refugee Application Commission and services are provided by the Team based in Dublin South East local health office. Assisting clients with the asylum process and appeals process as appropriate involves all members of the Social Work and Project Work Team. The vast majority of these young people are placed in voluntary care of the HSE under the Child Care Act, 1991. Approximately **180** young people of this group are currently in the care of the HSE.

Service Developments

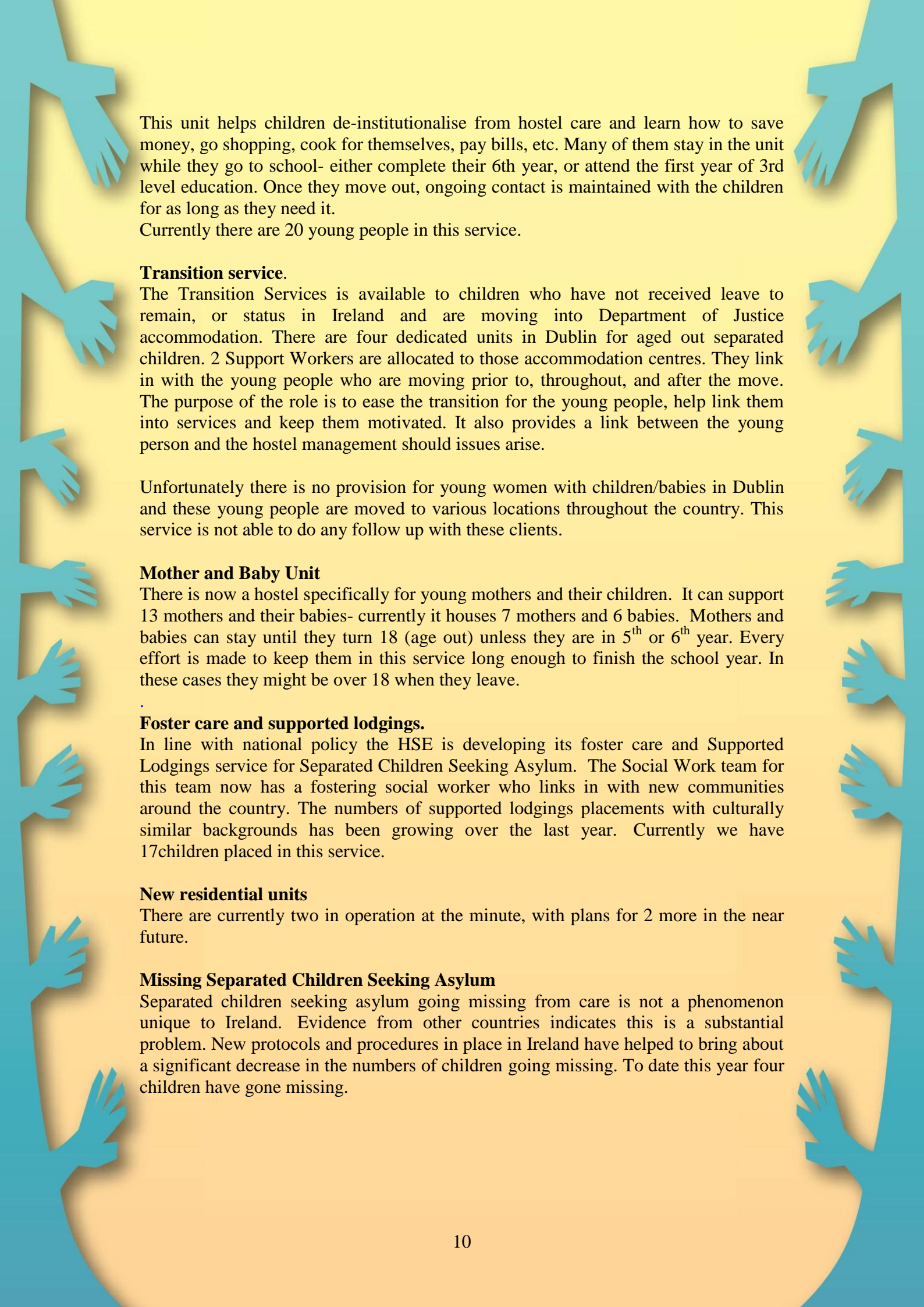
There have been a number of recent developments in services for Separated Children Seeking Asylum

Aftercare Service

There is now an Aftercare service for Separated Children Seeking Asylum. Children who have received status or leave to remain in Ireland are able to avail of this service. There are up to 30 beds in this unit with 2 Aftercare Workers available Monday to Friday. On site there are caretakers, who respond to the children after hours and on weekends.

³ Sections 8 (1) – (6) <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1996/en/act/pub/0017/sec0008.html>

⁴ <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1991/en/act/pub/0017/sec0003.html>



This unit helps children de-institutionalise from hostel care and learn how to save money, go shopping, cook for themselves, pay bills, etc. Many of them stay in the unit while they go to school- either complete their 6th year, or attend the first year of 3rd level education. Once they move out, ongoing contact is maintained with the children for as long as they need it.

Currently there are 20 young people in this service.

Transition service.

The Transition Services is available to children who have not received leave to remain, or status in Ireland and are moving into Department of Justice accommodation. There are four dedicated units in Dublin for aged out separated children. 2 Support Workers are allocated to those accommodation centres. They link in with the young people who are moving prior to, throughout, and after the move. The purpose of the role is to ease the transition for the young people, help link them into services and keep them motivated. It also provides a link between the young person and the hostel management should issues arise.

Unfortunately there is no provision for young women with children/babies in Dublin and these young people are moved to various locations throughout the country. This service is not able to do any follow up with these clients.

Mother and Baby Unit

There is now a hostel specifically for young mothers and their children. It can support 13 mothers and their babies- currently it houses 7 mothers and 6 babies. Mothers and babies can stay until they turn 18 (age out) unless they are in 5th or 6th year. Every effort is made to keep them in this service long enough to finish the school year. In these cases they might be over 18 when they leave.

Foster care and supported lodgings.

In line with national policy the HSE is developing its foster care and Supported Lodgings service for Separated Children Seeking Asylum. The Social Work team for this team now has a fostering social worker who links in with new communities around the country. The numbers of supported lodgings placements with culturally similar backgrounds has been growing over the last year. Currently we have 17 children placed in this service.

New residential units

There are currently two in operation at the minute, with plans for 2 more in the near future.

Missing Separated Children Seeking Asylum

Separated children seeking asylum going missing from care is not a phenomenon unique to Ireland. Evidence from other countries indicates this is a substantial problem. New protocols and procedures in place in Ireland have helped to bring about a significant decrease in the numbers of children going missing. To date this year four children have gone missing.

Reporting Procedures

Most Separated Children Seeking Asylum in Ireland are placed in the care of the Health Service Executive under section 4 of the Child Care Act, 1991. The HSE takes all necessary steps to ensure the safety and welfare of these young people. The 2001 “Policy on Absence without Leave” is being followed in respect of these children

In this regard each child who goes missing is reported, (on an agreed template with photograph and physical description), to the following:

- Local Garda Station
- Garda National Immigration Bureau
- Child Care Manager (for circulation throughout the country)
- Supt. Community Welfare Officer, Asylum Seekers Unit (for flagging on the National Social Welfare record system)
- Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (for circulation to other relevant asylum process agencies)
- Local services notified (in the Southern Area)

In order to enhance protective and safeguarding measures the H.S.E. and An Garda Síochána are in the process of finalising a Joint Protocol on Children Missing from care including separated children seeking asylum. The protocol will outline an agreed procedure between the H.S.E. and An Garda Síochána and clarify roles and requirements of both agencies.

HSE Operational Policy

The HSE is currently developing a National Operational Policy for separated children seeking asylum. The aim of the policy is to achieve equity and equality of services afforded to separated children seeking asylum vis a vis indigenous or resident children and to ensure there is no differentiation of care provision, care practices, care priorities, standards or protocols.

Our international obligations and legislative basis makes no distinction between indigenous or resident children and separated children seeking asylum. Thus to differentiate service provision in terms of equality or equity of treatment is untenable. The purpose and policy objective is thus to ensure equitable treatment of separated children through assessment of need and provision of alternative care options that are of high standard and comply with the regulatory framework.

3. Arber Sula (Young Adult Support Services)



Final speaker was a young person, Arber Sula, who has direct experience of services, who told his story:

“I have been seven years in Ireland. I arrived from Albania in 2001 and went straight into residential accommodation in Crosscare in Eccles Street. The first priority for them was to ensure I learned English and attended school and a homework club. O’Connell’s school was very important in putting English lessons in place for me.

In Crosscare I was encouraged to become involved in other activities including drama. I also became involved in Dáil na nÓg which was a very good experience for me. I then went on to do the Leaving Cert. Studying and preparing for the exam without refugee status was a big problem for me. However in the end I did get leave to remain four months before my exams and this helped me get a good result. After that I was not sure whether I would be able to go on to 3rd level. I achieved a good result with support from YASS who arranged tutors in subjects that I was less strong in. I later moved on to hostel accommodation but still had support from YASS. I am now reunited with my sister and am living in Dublin.

The direct provision rate of €19.10 per week is too little! So it was important for me to get help from YASS to buy other things. I now go to college which is a good experience for me and I am treated well by the college. I am still involved in a drama group, Calypso and also was in a drama programme in school, Tower of Babel. The drama group is now 50% Irish and 50% other nationalities. At the start it was all other nationalities. Drama has been a very positive influence for me.

I have just returned from a family visit to Albania which I hadn’t seen for seven years as I now have the freedom to travel now that I have refugee status. However I now see Ireland as home.

Although I myself have had a positive experience of Ireland and services, there is still room to make things better! Finally, the stress of awaiting legal status and doing exams or going to 3rd level needs to be sorted out. I think €19.10 direct provision is too small.”

Session 2

Following the break the second session was chaired by Eoin Ryan (MEP)



Key Issue 2: Education

Michael Kilbride of O'Connell Schools Secondary Schools on behalf of FNYPAR introduced the topic and a number of brief case histories stories were given.

Michael Vardis (OCS)

Michael gave his story. Michael arrived from Poland with very little English when he arrived. He was offered language support when he first attended the school. He completed the Junior Cert. He is now doing the leaving certificate which will include Polish. He thinks that it is easier for EU nationals to integrate in Ireland than for people from outside the EU.

Sandra's Story⁵

This was given by Majella McEvoy of H.S.C.L of Marino College. Sandra came in 2006 to Marino College. Her father has originally come alone in 2002. She left her mother in Cameroon. Sandra's family is now happily united and living in Ireland. She sought a school place in Lusk, where she lived, but all schools were reported to be full. She then went to Marino and successfully completed the Leaving Cert. She got enough points to get a college place. Her parents are at stage IV of the residency process which is almost completed and are able to work. However it seems that due to an anomaly she is still classed technically as an Asylum Seeker and so is unable to seek employment. The college, UCD to which she has successfully applied, has now requested that she must pay €14,000 up front to register. She has no right to a grant as a resident. Her parents have borrowed €8,000 which is not enough to avail of the place. She is in an impossible situation. She would love to work with an NGO in the future, following completing an Economics and Maths Degree. Like many other international students she wishes to positively contribute to Irish society and economy. Both her parents are working and contribute tax.

⁵ Not her real name

Rory McDaid
(Researcher St Patrick's College)



Rory is formally a primary school teacher in the North West Inner City but now works as an educational researcher in St Patrick's Teacher Training College in Drumcondra.

He revisited a number of the recommendation that were made at a previous FNYPAR Seminar and noted their progress.

The allocation of two language support teachers per school has moved forward now based on numbers up to 6 per school based on numbers. The ration has increased. There is access to language support over 2 year period (not as previously) this is based on certain criteria including an assessment.

He noted that we need to differentiate between English (as communication) as apposed to English of an Academic Standard (more than 2 years cut off has to be looked at).

Teachers still need more in-service to deal with kids who don't speak English. They need to identify and develop other methods and tools to do this e.g. maths. He noted that the Department of education and Science (DES) did respond to some of these recommendations positively. However there are a number of other issues to be addressed. For example learning a mother tongue is considered very important. Parents do acknowledge the need to speak English however they also see the need to get mother tongue support also for children. Not acquiring or losing own language of family of origin can create problems in the future culturally and between generations. Also there are issues of self esteem, relationship, identity and cultural enrichment. He stated that there is a need to state that linguistic diversity is a resource not a negative. Not recognising this can create linguistic racism. He stated that research shows that language diversity does not in itself lead to inequality. He acknowledges that although language issues are important, it is only one of many other issues that need to be addressed.

Racism and discrimination practices (low level racism) factors need to be addressed particularly with schools in relation to curriculum issues; class; culture, colour etc. Intercultural guidelines welcome but in service training not in place. It is vital to ensure that the contact of school; parents and community need to closely maintained. The Home School Community Liaison teachers have a key role in this.

He gave an example of good practice in this regard. The pilot Schools Cultural Mediation Project⁶. The project was situated in schools in the North West Inner City and ensured that parents of minority language student were supported and facilitated to participate in the life of the school. A number of key school and document were produced in a range of minority ethnic languages and parents at meeting were offered translation. Other steps aimed to mediate cultural difference. An evaluation showed that the pilot programme worked well but shamefully the pilot has not received further main stream funding.

Breda Naughton

(Principal office in the Central Policy Unit of the Department of Education and Science)



She reported that €120m is the annual budget in trying to respond to these issues outlined above. The main priority is English language support and provision of English language support teachers. She noted the two levels of English; general day to day and academic English. Within primary school a language proficiency assessment tool is in place. Regarding the issue of mother tongue, she noted that there are people from 188 countries now living in Ireland with some 250 languages; a daunting reality. She said a number of students are receiving mother tongue tutoring e.g. Polish in Leaving Certificate. She noted that in general the new international students are generally high achievers in education. She responded to Rory McDaid and the schools mediation project saying there was not a budget for mainstreaming the project from DES. Regarding racism within schools she noted that bullying includes racism and clear policies in individual schools need to be in place. She stated that Dympna Devine's research (ESRI) noted that bullying goes on in 1200 schools.

She also underlined the important role of parents Role, such as the National parent's council working on this in areas such as Blanchardstown. New community parents want to and have been involved on an increasing basis. This has raised the bar for Irish parents. There is an EU debate on migration education in which the department is taking full part. A document outlining Principles of intercultural education will be drawn up defaults of consultation will be circulated before Christmas.

⁶ Report on Cultural Mediation Project available at http://www.dicp.ie/pdfs/Evaluation_Report_final_draft_june_2008.doc

Key Issue 3: Justice

Michael Kilbride (Home School Liaison O'Connell's School) gave a short introduction to the topic and introduced a number of young people who would give short accounts of their stories from their lived experience.



Julio spoke on behalf of his classmate, P. from Mauritius, who attends O'Connell's Schools. P's father has now been told to remove his children and send them to private school, get private medical insurance etc. or be sent back to Mauritius. His father pays tax to the Irish government.

A Romanian young person spoke of his family's situation, similarly his family live in very poor accommodation and do not get benefits as they are not EU citizens. His parents both are employed and pay tax.

Jyothi Kanics

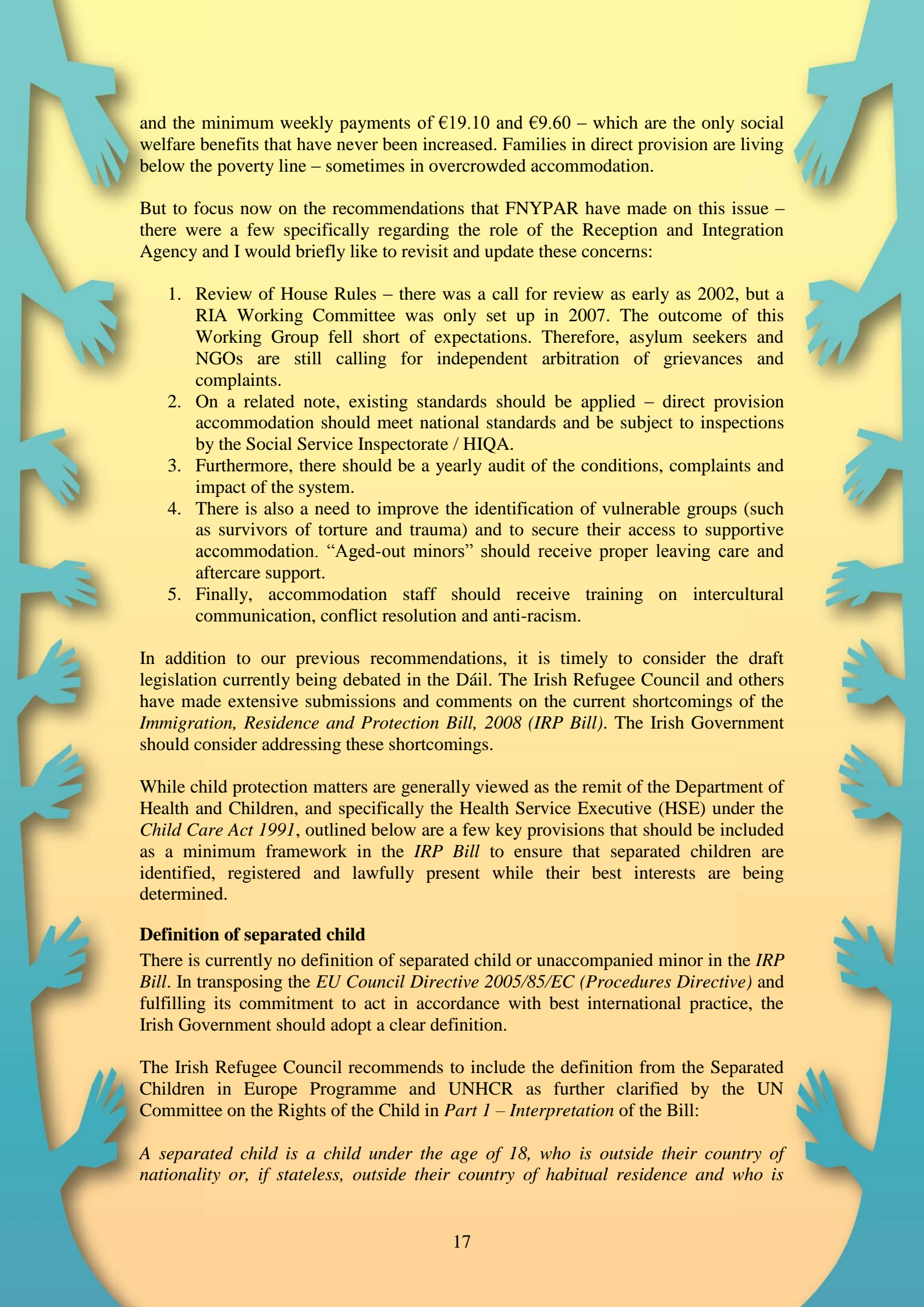
(Separated Children's Officer Irish Refugee Council/FNYPAR)



One main aim of today's conference is to review the recommendations previously made by the FNYPAR group. A key issue of concern, which falls in the DJELR's remit and which was previously examined by FNYPAR, is how the system of direct provision for asylum seekers affects children and their families. Unfortunately, there has been little progress in this area, despite the fact that the number of asylum seekers is falling, many families continue to live in the direct provision system for years and the system has not improved.

There are currently more than 6000 people living in the direct provision system – roughly 1/3 of these are children and there are serious concerns that the conditions in some centres have a negative impact on these children's welfare.

While The DJELR is responsible for the direct provision system, there is an overlap of responsibility with health and social welfare – such as the denial of child benefit



and the minimum weekly payments of €19.10 and €9.60 – which are the only social welfare benefits that have never been increased. Families in direct provision are living below the poverty line – sometimes in overcrowded accommodation.

But to focus now on the recommendations that FNYPAR have made on this issue – there were a few specifically regarding the role of the Reception and Integration Agency and I would briefly like to revisit and update these concerns:

1. Review of House Rules – there was a call for review as early as 2002, but a RIA Working Committee was only set up in 2007. The outcome of this Working Group fell short of expectations. Therefore, asylum seekers and NGOs are still calling for independent arbitration of grievances and complaints.
2. On a related note, existing standards should be applied – direct provision accommodation should meet national standards and be subject to inspections by the Social Service Inspectorate / HIQA.
3. Furthermore, there should be a yearly audit of the conditions, complaints and impact of the system.
4. There is also a need to improve the identification of vulnerable groups (such as survivors of torture and trauma) and to secure their access to supportive accommodation. “Aged-out minors” should receive proper leaving care and aftercare support.
5. Finally, accommodation staff should receive training on intercultural communication, conflict resolution and anti-racism.

In addition to our previous recommendations, it is timely to consider the draft legislation currently being debated in the Dáil. The Irish Refugee Council and others have made extensive submissions and comments on the current shortcomings of the *Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill, 2008 (IRP Bill)*. The Irish Government should consider addressing these shortcomings.

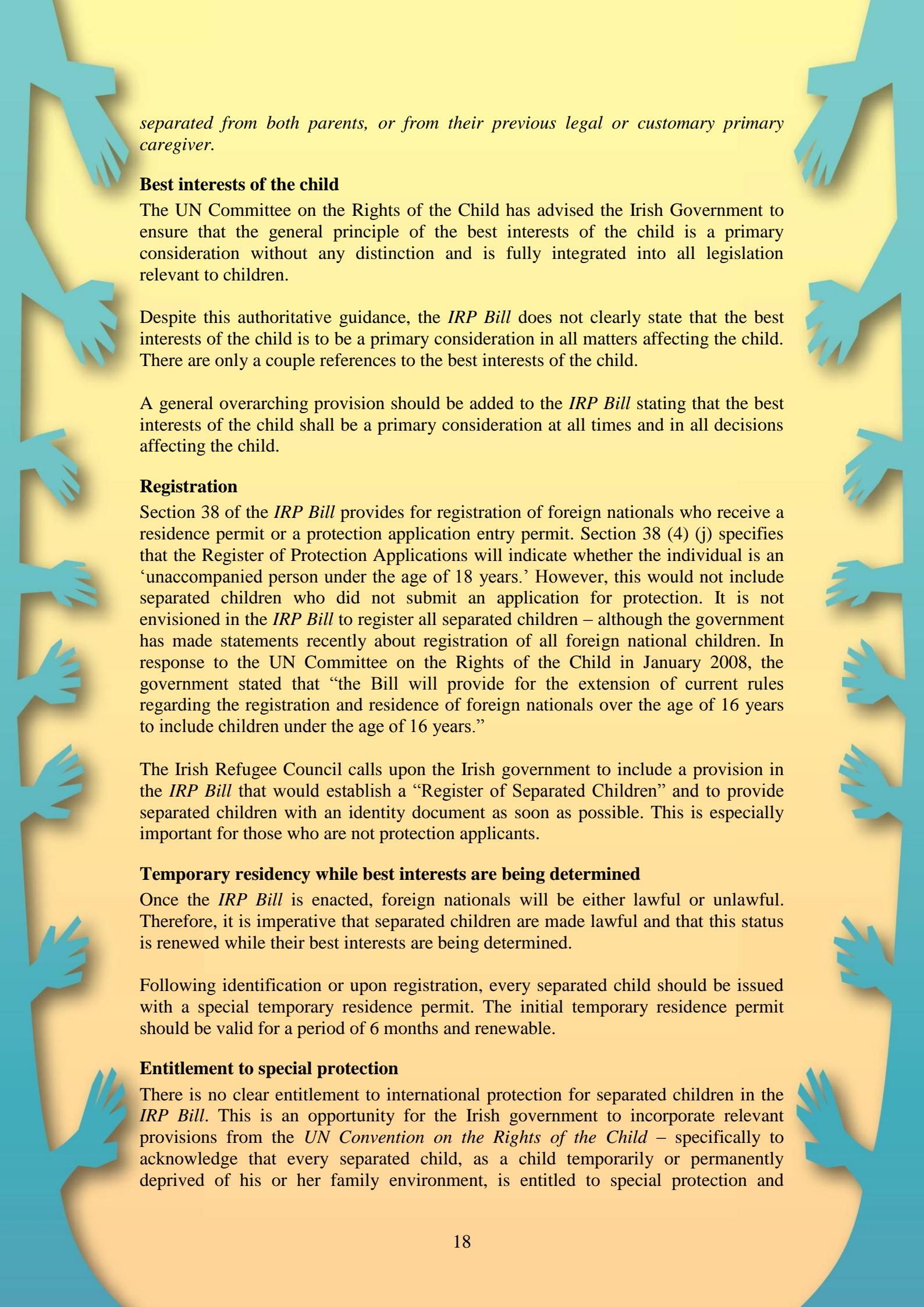
While child protection matters are generally viewed as the remit of the Department of Health and Children, and specifically the Health Service Executive (HSE) under the *Child Care Act 1991*, outlined below are a few key provisions that should be included as a minimum framework in the *IRP Bill* to ensure that separated children are identified, registered and lawfully present while their best interests are being determined.

Definition of separated child

There is currently no definition of separated child or unaccompanied minor in the *IRP Bill*. In transposing the *EU Council Directive 2005/85/EC (Procedures Directive)* and fulfilling its commitment to act in accordance with best international practice, the Irish Government should adopt a clear definition.

The Irish Refugee Council recommends to include the definition from the Separated Children in Europe Programme and UNHCR as further clarified by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in *Part 1 – Interpretation of the Bill*:

A separated child is a child under the age of 18, who is outside their country of nationality or, if stateless, outside their country of habitual residence and who is

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separated from both parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver.

Best interests of the child

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has advised the Irish Government to ensure that the general principle of the best interests of the child is a primary consideration without any distinction and is fully integrated into all legislation relevant to children.

Despite this authoritative guidance, the *IRP Bill* does not clearly state that the best interests of the child is to be a primary consideration in all matters affecting the child. There are only a couple references to the best interests of the child.

A general overarching provision should be added to the *IRP Bill* stating that the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration at all times and in all decisions affecting the child.

Registration

Section 38 of the *IRP Bill* provides for registration of foreign nationals who receive a residence permit or a protection application entry permit. Section 38 (4) (j) specifies that the Register of Protection Applications will indicate whether the individual is an ‘unaccompanied person under the age of 18 years.’ However, this would not include separated children who did not submit an application for protection. It is not envisioned in the *IRP Bill* to register all separated children – although the government has made statements recently about registration of all foreign national children. In response to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in January 2008, the government stated that “the Bill will provide for the extension of current rules regarding the registration and residence of foreign nationals over the age of 16 years to include children under the age of 16 years.”

The Irish Refugee Council calls upon the Irish government to include a provision in the *IRP Bill* that would establish a “Register of Separated Children” and to provide separated children with an identity document as soon as possible. This is especially important for those who are not protection applicants.

Temporary residency while best interests are being determined

Once the *IRP Bill* is enacted, foreign nationals will be either lawful or unlawful. Therefore, it is imperative that separated children are made lawful and that this status is renewed while their best interests are being determined.

Following identification or upon registration, every separated child should be issued with a special temporary residence permit. The initial temporary residence permit should be valid for a period of 6 months and renewable.

Entitlement to special protection

There is no clear entitlement to international protection for separated children in the *IRP Bill*. This is an opportunity for the Irish government to incorporate relevant provisions from the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* – specifically to acknowledge that every separated child, as a child temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment, is entitled to special protection and

assistance provided by the State (*UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 20*). The *IRP Bill* should be amended so that separated children are granted a clear entitlement to protection in the State.

Alternative path to residency

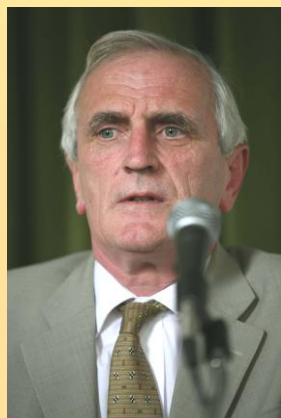
The right of separated children to temporary residence while waiting for a decision on their best interests is not included in the *IRP Bill*. There is a lack of child appropriate alternatives to the protection application. If a protection application is not made the child has no legal basis to remain in the State and can therefore be removed without consideration of whether this is in his/her best interest. *IRP Bill* provides that protection applicants, who are not entitled to refugee status, subsidiary protection or protection from refoulement, may be granted residence for *compelling reasons*. However it is unclear who would meet the *compelling reasons* criterion and whether or not residence criteria (at Section 31) will also be applied.

The *IRP Bill* should allow for an alternative protection status for separated children, granting temporary residency in a timely manner when it is deemed in a child's best interests. This temporary status should be renewable and reckonable towards applying for long-term residency.

The drafting of the *IRP Bill* is an historic opportunity to introduce necessary measures to protect separated children in primary legislation and we urge the Irish Government to incorporate necessary amendments to the *IRP Bill* before it is enacted.

Dermott Cole


(Assistant Secretary Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform)



Mr. Cole gave his background which is largely in the field of Justice specifically. He informed the meeting that the new legislation is still being discussed.

In relation to direct provision which is overseen by RIA, he felt that it is 'here to stay' and the issue is how can it be improved.

Regarding the issue of access to third level education ongoing discussion are taking place. He noted that there is €1m specifically available to DCC and other local authority areas where there are high numbers of 'foreign nationals'. This fund is for integration at local levels.



Comment

A comment came from the floor that often young people are coming before the court on foot of criminal behaviour where sometimes more information or care response is needed of desirable. The need for local responses to the needs of Foreign National young people at risk (including schools, youth services, social work services etc) was stressed.

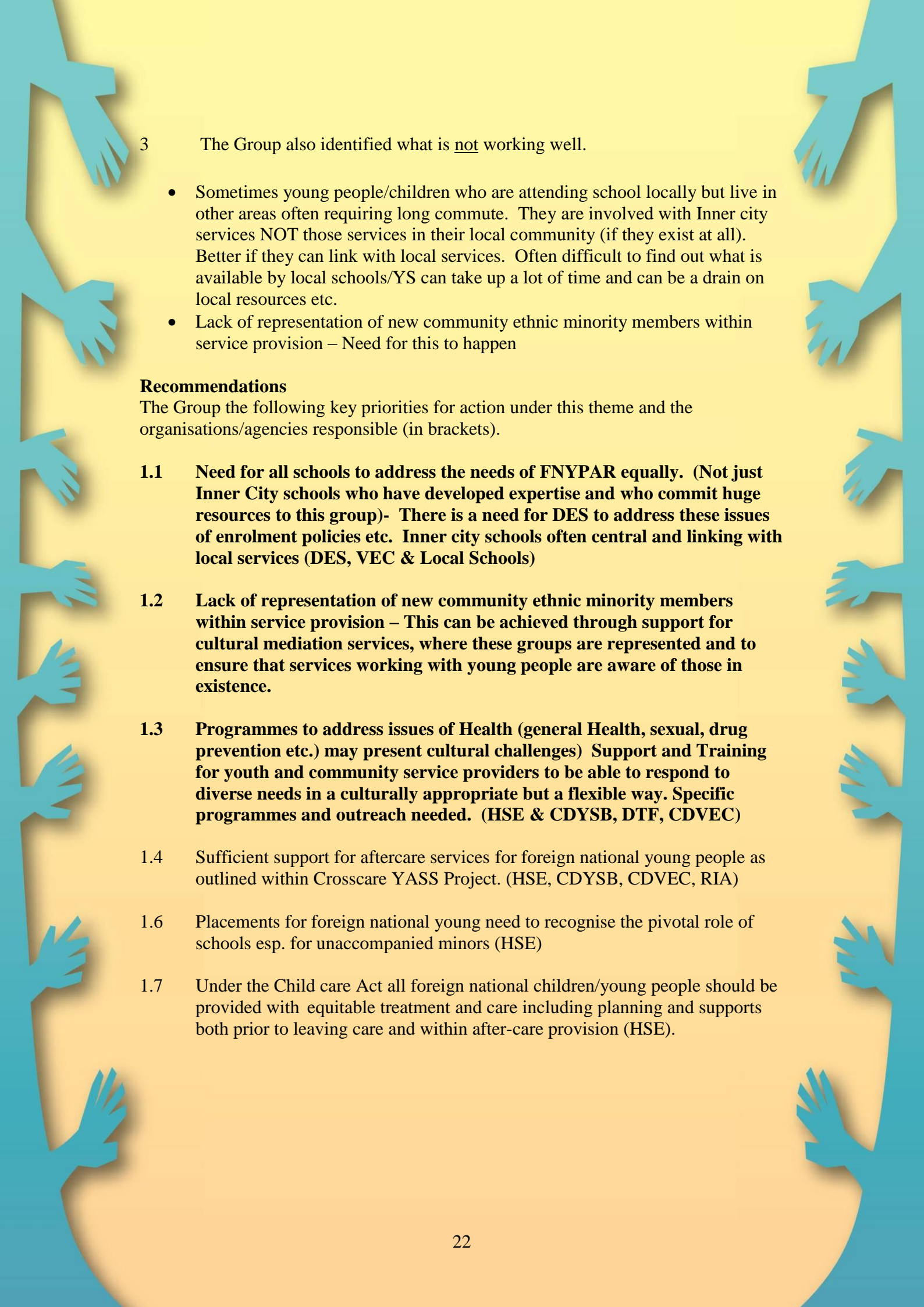
Afternoon Workshop Reports and Recommendations

1. Health and Social Care Workshop

- 1 The Group identified a number of additional issues that they felt were not addressed in the morning presentations.
 - Issues relating to class are evident of new community members going to schools in Working Class or disadvantaged communities. Educational disparities exist and can Create tensions etc.
 - Need to address the issue within the context of Educational Disadvantage.
 - ‘Foreign National’ – can include very different and disparate groups.
 - Need to explore issues relating to aftercare and better resourced services (*in light of the input from Arber Sula in the morning*)
 - Inadequacy of hostel accommodation may further lead to homelessness/crime with foreign national community.⁷

2. The Group identified what is working well; positive developments or examples of best practice for services dealing with foreign national young people at risk.
 - A number of cultural mediation programmes in relation to health and social services have operated very successfully or are still around – Need to make groups aware of their existence.
 - i.e.
 - Access Ireland – Cultural Mediation Programme.
 - Roma Cultural Mediation Programme Pilot (which is now gone due to lack of mainstream funding)
 - North West Cultural Mediation Project (which is now gone due to lack of funding)
 - Provision of Info on Internet in various languages.
 - Support specific Projects if proven to have positive outcomes - North West Cultural Mediation Project (which is now gone due to lack of funding)
 - Support for culturally appropriate foster placements as example of good practice (see above).
 - Locally developed inks in North East Inner City where schools, special youth projects (NYPs) youth services and other service link around needs of the child/young people.

⁷ Aidan Waterstone informed the meeting that HSE is promoting and planning for more culturally appropriate foster care placements to be in place for FNYP in the future. Members of minority ethnic families, similar to the Travellers Shared Rearing Project, will foster children as appropriate

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- 3 The Group also identified what is not working well.
- Sometimes young people/children who are attending school locally but live in other areas often requiring long commute. They are involved with Inner city services NOT those services in their local community (if they exist at all). Better if they can link with local services. Often difficult to find out what is available by local schools/YS can take up a lot of time and can be a drain on local resources etc.
 - Lack of representation of new community ethnic minority members within service provision – Need for this to happen

Recommendations

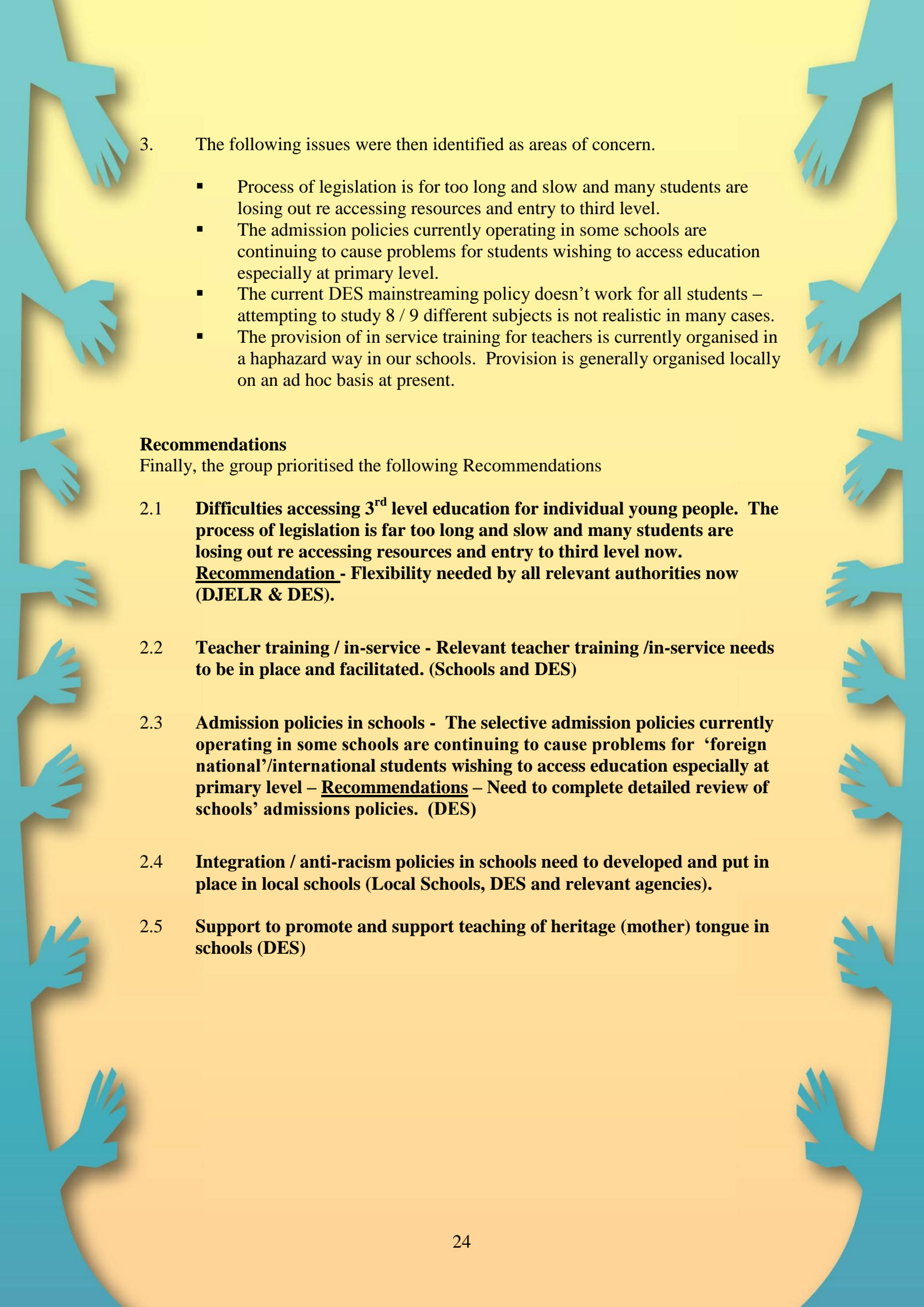
The Group the following key priorities for action under this theme and the organisations/agencies responsible (in brackets).

- 1.1 Need for all schools to address the needs of FNYPAR equally. (Not just Inner City schools who have developed expertise and who commit huge resources to this group)- There is a need for DES to address these issues of enrolment policies etc. Inner city schools often central and linking with local services (DES, VEC & Local Schools)**
- 1.2 Lack of representation of new community ethnic minority members within service provision – This can be achieved through support for cultural mediation services, where these groups are represented and to ensure that services working with young people are aware of those in existence.**
- 1.3 Programmes to address issues of Health (general Health, sexual, drug prevention etc.) may present cultural challenges) Support and Training for youth and community service providers to be able to respond to diverse needs in a culturally appropriate but a flexible way. Specific programmes and outreach needed. (HSE & CDYSB, DTF, CDVEC)**
- 1.4 Sufficient support for aftercare services for foreign national young people as outlined within Crosscare YASS Project. (HSE, CDYSB, CDVEC, RIA)
- 1.6 Placements for foreign national young need to recognise the pivotal role of schools esp. for unaccompanied minors (HSE)
- 1.7 Under the Child care Act all foreign national children/young people should be provided with equitable treatment and care including planning and supports both prior to leaving care and within after-care provision (HSE).

2. Education Workshop

1. The group identified the following issues, which they felt were not addressed in the seminar. These were:-
 - Racism, bullying and negative attitudes towards young foreign national people in schools.
 - Lack of adequate resources to administer and fund psychological / educational assessments in schools.
 - The range of difficulties facing students who wish to access 3rd level which include:
 - Students with Leave to Remain status may still have difficulties such as accessing third level education unless they are in a position to pay full fees.
 - The Habitual Residence Condition (HRC)⁸ may also present problems to those trying to access 3rd Level Education
 - Even with full status accessing 3rd level can be difficult or impossible.
 - TEFL is not recognised by the DES as a specific teaching post.
 - The teaching qualifications of teachers from other countries are not always recognised. It can be hugely beneficial to the wider school community to have teachers from other countries teach in our school.
 - The qualifications of parents are not always recognised. This may have a negative effect on students who see their parents working at jobs for which they are over-qualified – disincentive to perform well in school.
2. The group then identified what is working well in their schools / organisations with regard to the integration of FNYP. These include:-
 - Immersion classes
 - Increased allocation of TEFL (English language) teachers
 - International students are a very positive addition to the school population
 - Dedicating a small number of teachers to international students is very helpful (students only deal with a few accents) although it can cause problems when students enter the main-stream system.
 - Renewed interest in the Irish language among Irish students
 - Very positive response by schools / organisations that are planning responding and acting in an effort to meet the needs of international students.

⁸ <http://www.welfare.ie/EN/OperationalGuidelines/Pages/habres.aspx> The HRC also affects Irish who are returning from abroad see: http://www.ciic-usa.org/news_fromireland.html

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3. The following issues were then identified as areas of concern.
- Process of legislation is for too long and slow and many students are losing out re accessing resources and entry to third level.
 - The admission policies currently operating in some schools are continuing to cause problems for students wishing to access education especially at primary level.
 - The current DES mainstreaming policy doesn't work for all students – attempting to study 8 / 9 different subjects is not realistic in many cases.
 - The provision of in service training for teachers is currently organised in a haphazard way in our schools. Provision is generally organised locally on an ad hoc basis at present.

Recommendations

Finally, the group prioritised the following Recommendations

- 2.1 **Difficulties accessing 3rd level education for individual young people. The process of legislation is far too long and slow and many students are losing out re accessing resources and entry to third level now. Recommendation - Flexibility needed by all relevant authorities now (DJELR & DES).**
- 2.2 **Teacher training / in-service - Relevant teacher training /in-service needs to be in place and facilitated. (Schools and DES)**
- 2.3 **Admission policies in schools - The selective admission policies currently operating in some schools are continuing to cause problems for 'foreign national'/international students wishing to access education especially at primary level – Recommendations – Need to complete detailed review of schools' admissions policies. (DES)**
- 2.4 **Integration / anti-racism policies in schools need to developed and put in place in local schools (Local Schools, DES and relevant agencies).**
- 2.5 **Support to promote and support teaching of heritage (mother) tongue in schools (DES)**

3 Justice Workshop

Key issues identified for action during Justice working group discussion:

1 Charge for Garda National Immigration Bureau Registration (GNIB)⁹

The charge for the GNIB registration card has gone up to €150 and can only be paid by laser card. This means that some youths must borrow money and some also must ask someone else to pay by card – sometimes having to pay an extra fee (i.e. youth may have to pay €200).

Also, it was mentioned that international students should not have to renew and pay each year, but should receive a card for the duration of their enrolment.

2 Children in conflict with the law

- Lacking documents / no ID – Hence they often become criminalised
- Problems with age assessment
- Child welfare issues v immigration /juvenile justice

Recommendations:

3.1 Lobby to create the possibility to waive administrative fees when a person is unable to pay In addition to make changes re: granting of student visas in line with length of enrolment – so that individuals do not have to renew multiple times and pay extra fees (GNIB/DJELR).

3.2 Improve co-operation between HSE and GNIB in particular at points of entry and to improve referral of separated children into care (HSE, GNIB)

3.3 Improve age assessment process in line with international good practice (HSE/DJELR/GNIB/ORAC¹⁰ /INIS¹¹).

3.4 When separated/unaccompanied children are identified, the Child Care Act should apply and take priority over immigration control measures (HSE, Gardaí, and DJELR)

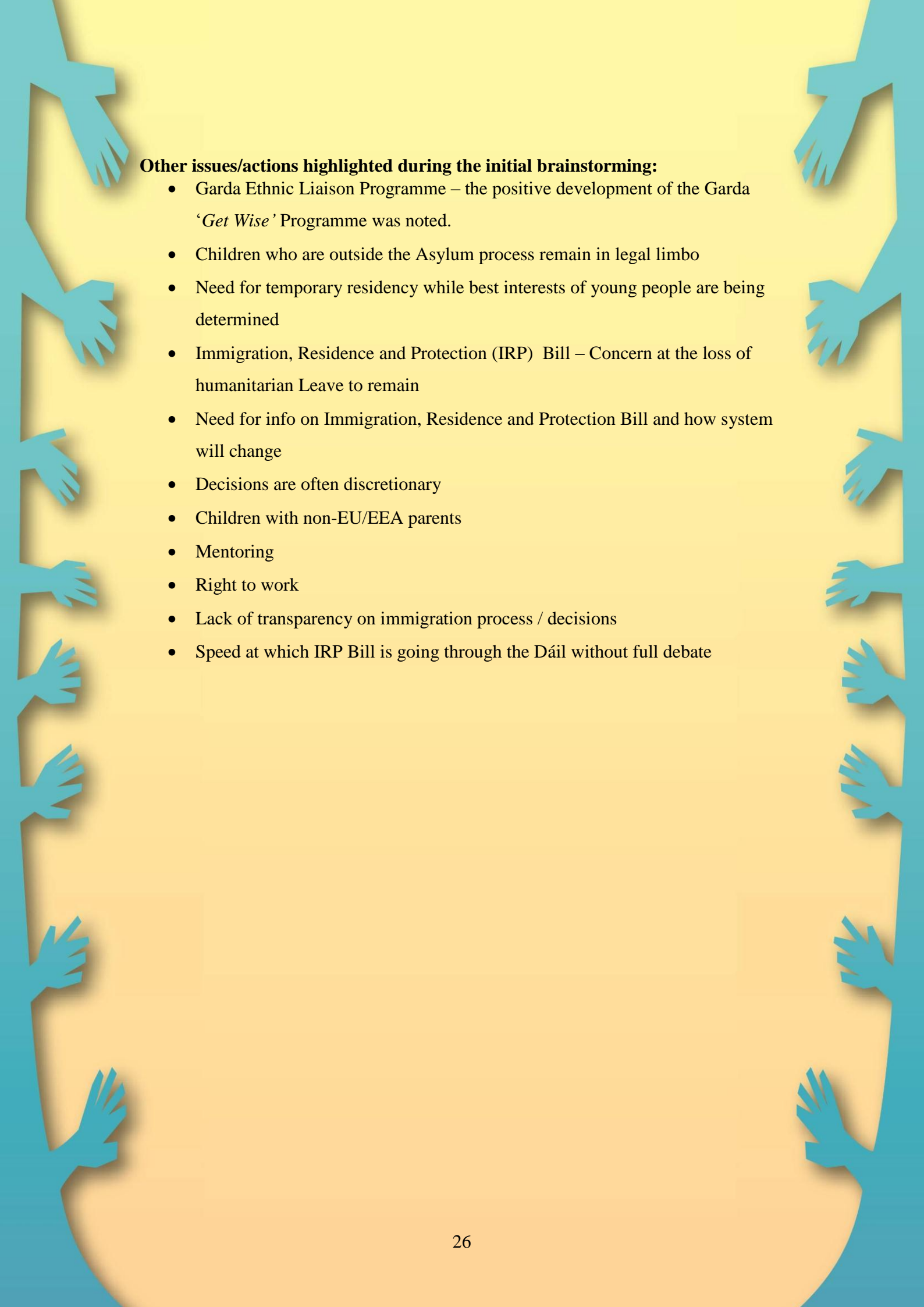
3.5 There needs to be more appropriate and targeted training for Staff dealing with foreign national young people (HSE, An Garda Síochána).

3.6 24 hour social work service should be established to provide proper support and protection to children and young people during out-of-hours (HSE).

⁹ Section 9 of the Immigration Act 2004 sets out the legal requirement for non-EEA nationals to register with the Garda National Immigration Bureau. If successful a Registration Cert is issued and is called a GNIB card

¹⁰ Office of the Refugee Application Commissioner

¹¹ the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service



Other issues/actions highlighted during the initial brainstorming:

- Garda Ethnic Liaison Programme – the positive development of the Garda ‘*Get Wise*’ Programme was noted.
- Children who are outside the Asylum process remain in legal limbo
- Need for temporary residency while best interests of young people are being determined
- Immigration, Residence and Protection (IRP) Bill – Concern at the loss of humanitarian Leave to remain
- Need for info on Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill and how system will change
- Decisions are often discretionary
- Children with non-EU/EEA parents
- Mentoring
- Right to work
- Lack of transparency on immigration process / decisions
- Speed at which IRP Bill is going through the Dáil without full debate

4 Integrated Responses Workshop

1 The following issues were then identified as areas of concern.

Issues

- Trust between agencies can be lacking. The issue of ‘data protection’ at times used inappropriately due to this distrust;
- Need for Child centred service provision;
- Common language between professionals, i.e. shared definition of what constitutes a child at risk;
- Interagency versus multi-agency – support for those approaches where agencies are working together versus those where they are working in isolation of one another;
- Lead agency may not turn up at Meetings and therefore no decision can be made;
- Lack of advocates for foreign national children on top of social worker.

A number of Recommendations Solutions were identified:

- 4.1 Need to Formalise and expand of YPAR Interagency Protocol in relation to foreign national young people. Protocol will aid in building more trusting professional relations; (YPAR, All Statutory Services and local services)**
- 4.2 Children First Guidelines¹² will assist in the development of a common language**
- 4.3 Greater cultural awareness -through training by service providers. (All agencies)**

¹² Children First Guidelines;: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (1999) c.f. http://www.dohc.ie/publications/children_first.html

5 Young People's Issues Workshop



Young People's Feedback From the FNYPAR Seminar

1 Young people identified what the issues were for them. These were:

Racism and bullying in school:

This was seen as the single biggest problem by the participants. This theme was strong and came up for a number of young people in the group and for a number of friends of young people in the group.

- The racism was experienced by the young people from both adults and young people in the schools, also adults in hospitals. The young people felt that there was a lot of stereotyping.
- From the feedback it seems that racism is a bigger issue in some schools than in others. Some of the young people from the same school told me they face very little racism. In other schools racism seems to be a big problem, and it is not only based on the colour of the skin as it seems to apply to white and black people indifferently.
- Two students stated that in their school there is a teacher who is openly racist ((s)he said in front of the class that it's pretty bad there are international students in the class as it slows down the progress of native children). Another teacher at another school never asks questions to international students.
- Young people said that reporting racism and bullying in the school to the principal of the school doesn't get results and has led to situations where the young person is seen as a "telltale".
- It also happens that some young people are racist at school and very friendly out of school. The source of racism among youths is being seen as coming from the parents.

Language difficulties:

Sometimes when the young people spoke in their classes in their mother tongue this has resulted in misunderstandings where other young people thought they were

talking about them. The teachers also do not let the young people speak their first language in any circumstances in the class.

Social welfare entitlements:

No access to universal entitlements for non EU or Ref & AS parents (Romanian students brought this up)

Hostel Accommodation

The young people didn't feel at home in hostel accommodation. It is very difficult to settle into the system.

The young people prioritised 2 of these issues for action

1. Combating Racism
2. Addressing the lack of access to third level education for asylum seekers.

Solutions:

Many of the young people felt that there are no straight solutions to this problem.

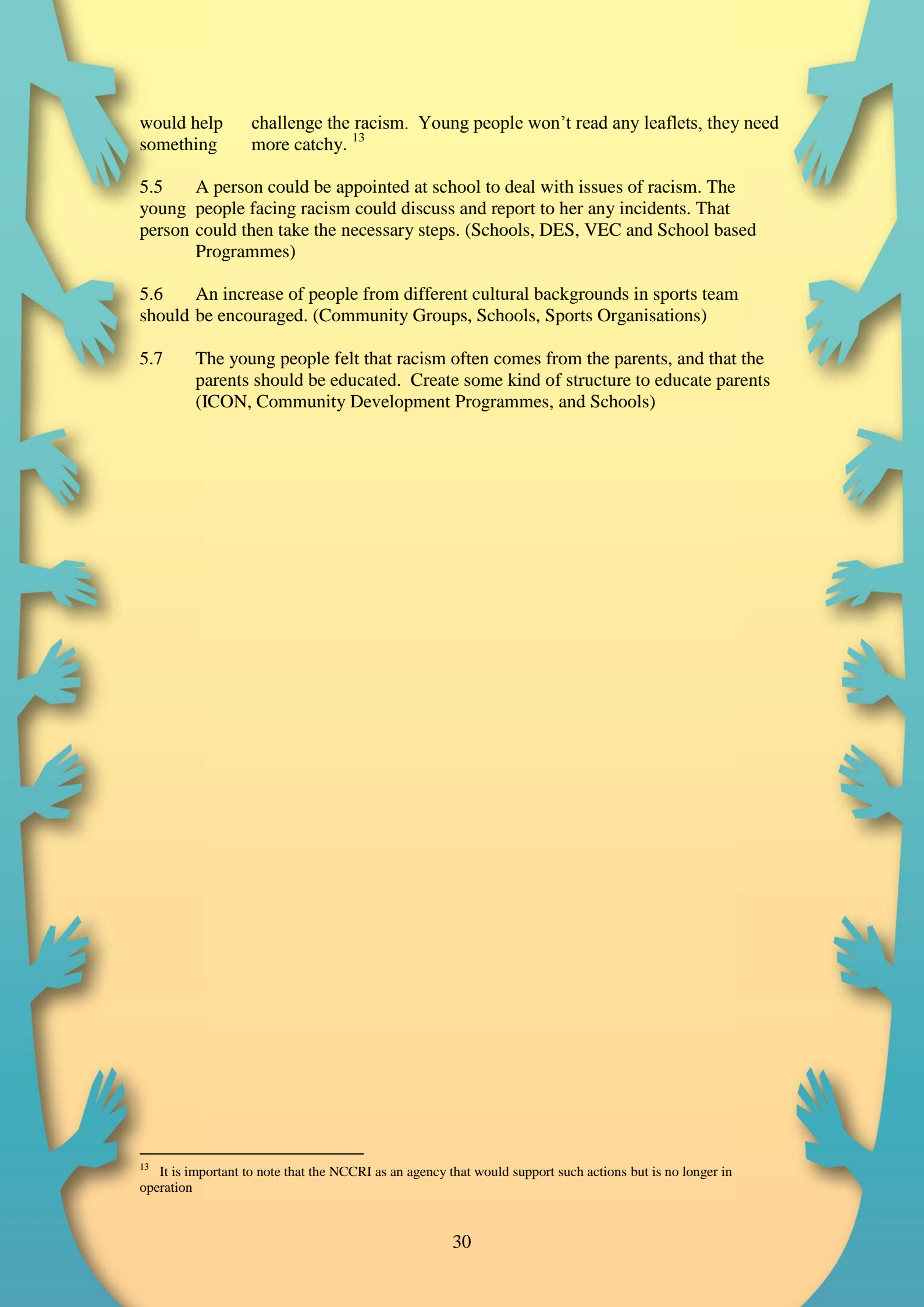
Politics - The minister seems to be unable to change anything or to understand the problem (the young people were very frustrated by the speech of the Minister and the fact he didn't really answers to the questions asked by them).

They are also more generally frustrated by politics ("Many words but few actions").

To the issue of racism in schools and communities, some of the participants said that the only way to be respected is to fight back although not everybody agreed. Some admit that sometimes "violence works".

Recommended Actions

- 5.1 2nd and 3rd level education- Support for asylum seekers must be given - not enough money to live on- lack of access to third level education (HSE, DES, DJELR and all Agencies)
- 5.2 A need to change laws to allow young people to continue in 3rd level education. They felt they can take a role in this through non-violent protests, letters, getting schools involved. (all agencies and DJELR)
- 5.3 The young people also felt that as an interim approach to the situation of young people not being able to go on to third level, i.e. special training programs/ apprenticeships for students who can't go on to 3rd level education should be established. (DES DJELR and CDVEC)
- 5.4 Participants believed that putting in place a nationwide anti-racism campaign in different schools around the country, involving pop stars, football players, boxers, hip hop dancers, and other people who may influence young people



would help challenge the racism. Young people won't read any leaflets, they need something more catchy.¹³

5.5 A person could be appointed at school to deal with issues of racism. The young people facing racism could discuss and report to her any incidents. That person could then take the necessary steps. (Schools, DES, VEC and School based Programmes)

5.6 An increase of people from different cultural backgrounds in sports team should be encouraged. (Community Groups, Schools, Sports Organisations)

5.7 The young people felt that racism often comes from the parents, and that the parents should be educated. Create some kind of structure to educate parents (ICON, Community Development Programmes, and Schools)

¹³ It is important to note that the NCCRI as an agency that would support such actions but is no longer in operation

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Conclusion

Overall FNYPAR recommends an integrated approach by all Government Departments and Statutory and Voluntary Agencies to address the needs of foreign national young people both at local and policy levels nationally. Moreover FNYPAR at a later date will make recommendations regarding structures at local level to facilitate integration. The Seminar underlined the importance of an interagency approach, versus multi-agency, versus agencies working in isolation of one another;

This Report will be circulated to all relevant Government Departments and agencies with a view to ensuring that these recommendations are acted upon.

APPENDIX I

Priority Recommendations from FNYPAR Seminar (January 2005)


1 Both statutory and voluntary agencies should provide their staff with the skills necessary to work in an appropriate way with ethnic minorities. The skills training staff receive should be up to the standard of the N.C.C.R.I/the National Youth Council at a minimum.

2 Agencies should work in more co-ordinated ways to ensure that the totality of Foreign national Young People's needs are being met. A monitoring group should be established to oversee the implementation of this recommendation.

1. Recommendations for the Department of Education and Science:

1.1 The two-year provision made for primary and secondary students for English language support should be increased. Provision should continue until the level of English achieved by students enables them to participate fully in mainstream classes. The limit of two English language support teachers per secondary school should be removed and language teachers should be allocated on the basis of need. The policy of denying over-quota secondary schools provision for English language support should also be changed. The status, pay and conditions of English language teachers must be improved both in order to improve quality of the service and to promote the integration of the service within the schools as a whole. This issue is currently being dealt with by LENS who are in talks with the Minister of Education and Science.

1.2 The DES should reconsider the policy of allocating resources to schools on the basis of student enrolment by the 30th of September each year. This policy discriminates against transitory groups and groups arriving into an area at different times of year. Many foreign national families fall into this category. This policy deters schools from accepting refugees and asylum seekers, which leads to a concentration of the latter in particular schools. The resources of these schools are stretched to the limit to support these students.



1.3 A national interagency tracking system¹⁴ should be put in place to track the movements between schools of children from the day they start school.

1.4 Integrate Ireland Language & Training (an organisation established by the Dept. of Education & Science to co-ordinate language support for refugees and others) should be provided with adequate resources to produce and disseminate suitable Irish-based language materials for language support teachers.

“Provision for mother culture support should be provided on an area basis for children enrolled in schools in that area”. *This recommendation needs to be further developed before it can be included in the final list.*

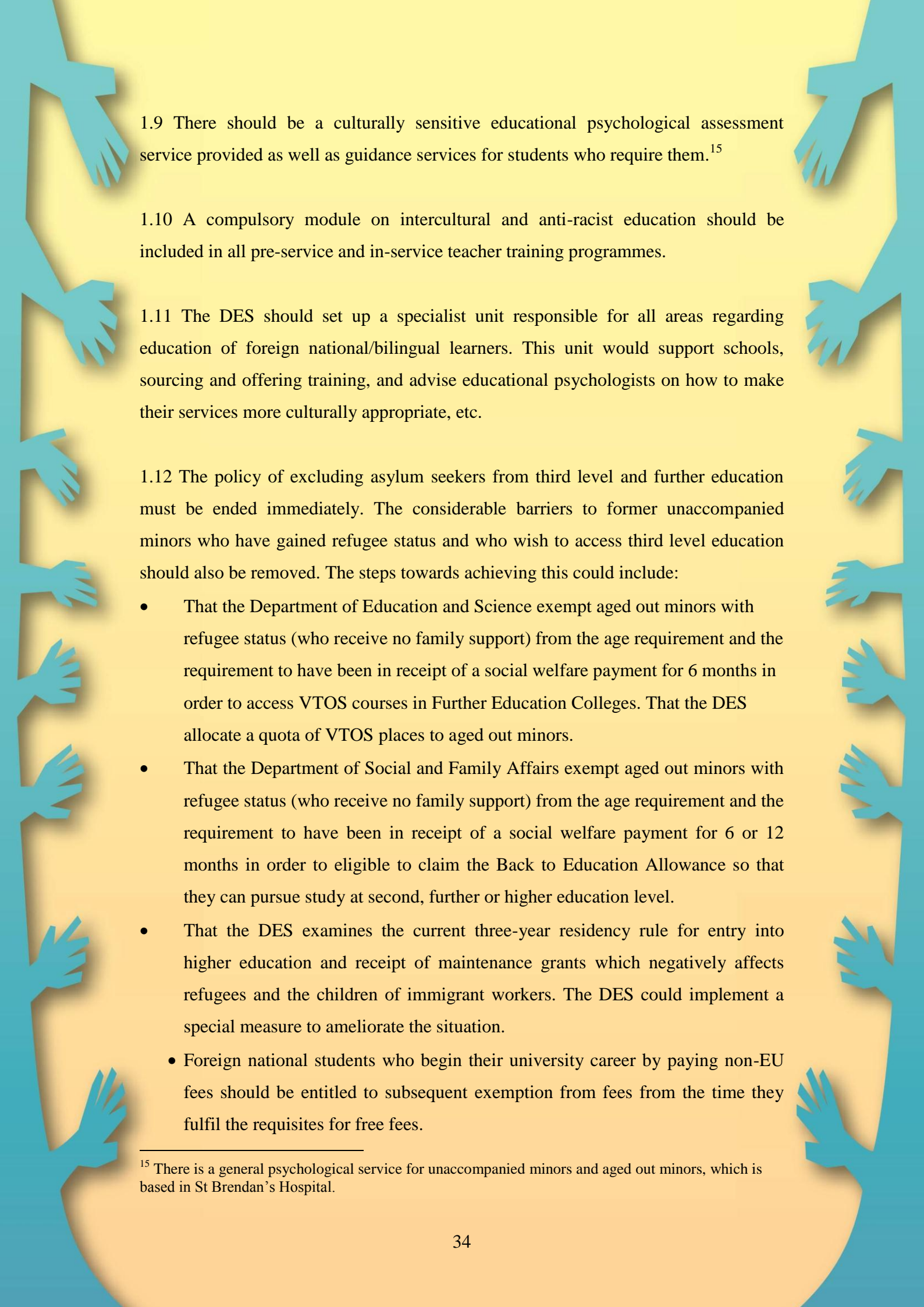
1.5 Schools should be obliged and resourced to include as part of their school plan an organisational commitment to implement anti-racist and intercultural practice. This should encompass anti-racism and intercultural training for all staff, a policy of presenting positive images of ethnic minorities and procedures to deal with racist incidents.

1.6 All staff, including language support teachers, should receive training in language-aware teaching and second level acquisition.

1.7 Trained interpreters should be available to foreign national parents in dealing with schools and teachers. DES should cooperate with schools in providing induction courses in the Irish education system for foreign national parents. Interpreters should be available to foreign national parents in dealing with schools and teachers.

1.8 An education support service for ethnic minority students should be put in place, modelled on the Home School Liaison service or the Visiting Teacher for Travellers service. The purpose of this service would be to improve relationships between foreign national parents and schools and to address issues arising from socio-cultural diversity, and to meet the particular needs of foreign national students.

¹⁴ A cross agency recommendation for the D.E.S., RIA, Dept. of Justice, & the Dept. of Health.



1.9 There should be a culturally sensitive educational psychological assessment service provided as well as guidance services for students who require them.¹⁵

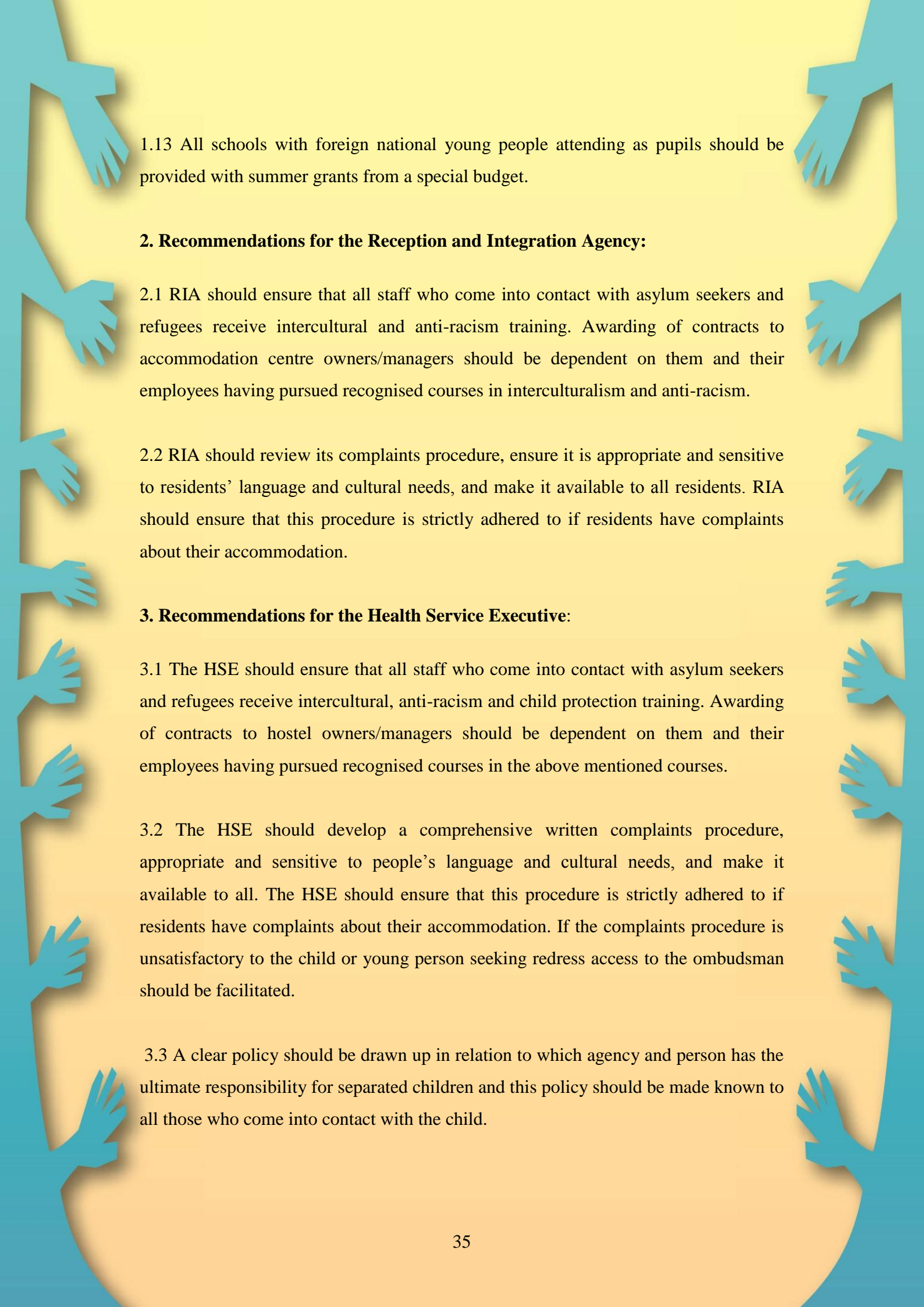
1.10 A compulsory module on intercultural and anti-racist education should be included in all pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes.

1.11 The DES should set up a specialist unit responsible for all areas regarding education of foreign national/bilingual learners. This unit would support schools, sourcing and offering training, and advise educational psychologists on how to make their services more culturally appropriate, etc.

1.12 The policy of excluding asylum seekers from third level and further education must be ended immediately. The considerable barriers to former unaccompanied minors who have gained refugee status and who wish to access third level education should also be removed. The steps towards achieving this could include:

- That the Department of Education and Science exempt aged out minors with refugee status (who receive no family support) from the age requirement and the requirement to have been in receipt of a social welfare payment for 6 months in order to access VTOS courses in Further Education Colleges. That the DES allocate a quota of VTOS places to aged out minors.
- That the Department of Social and Family Affairs exempt aged out minors with refugee status (who receive no family support) from the age requirement and the requirement to have been in receipt of a social welfare payment for 6 or 12 months in order to be eligible to claim the Back to Education Allowance so that they can pursue study at second, further or higher education level.
- That the DES examines the current three-year residency rule for entry into higher education and receipt of maintenance grants which negatively affects refugees and the children of immigrant workers. The DES could implement a special measure to ameliorate the situation.
- Foreign national students who begin their university career by paying non-EU fees should be entitled to subsequent exemption from fees from the time they fulfil the requisites for free fees.

¹⁵ There is a general psychological service for unaccompanied minors and aged out minors, which is based in St Brendan's Hospital.

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1.13 All schools with foreign national young people attending as pupils should be provided with summer grants from a special budget.

2. Recommendations for the Reception and Integration Agency:

2.1 RIA should ensure that all staff who come into contact with asylum seekers and refugees receive intercultural and anti-racism training. Awarding of contracts to accommodation centre owners/managers should be dependent on them and their employees having pursued recognised courses in interculturalism and anti-racism.

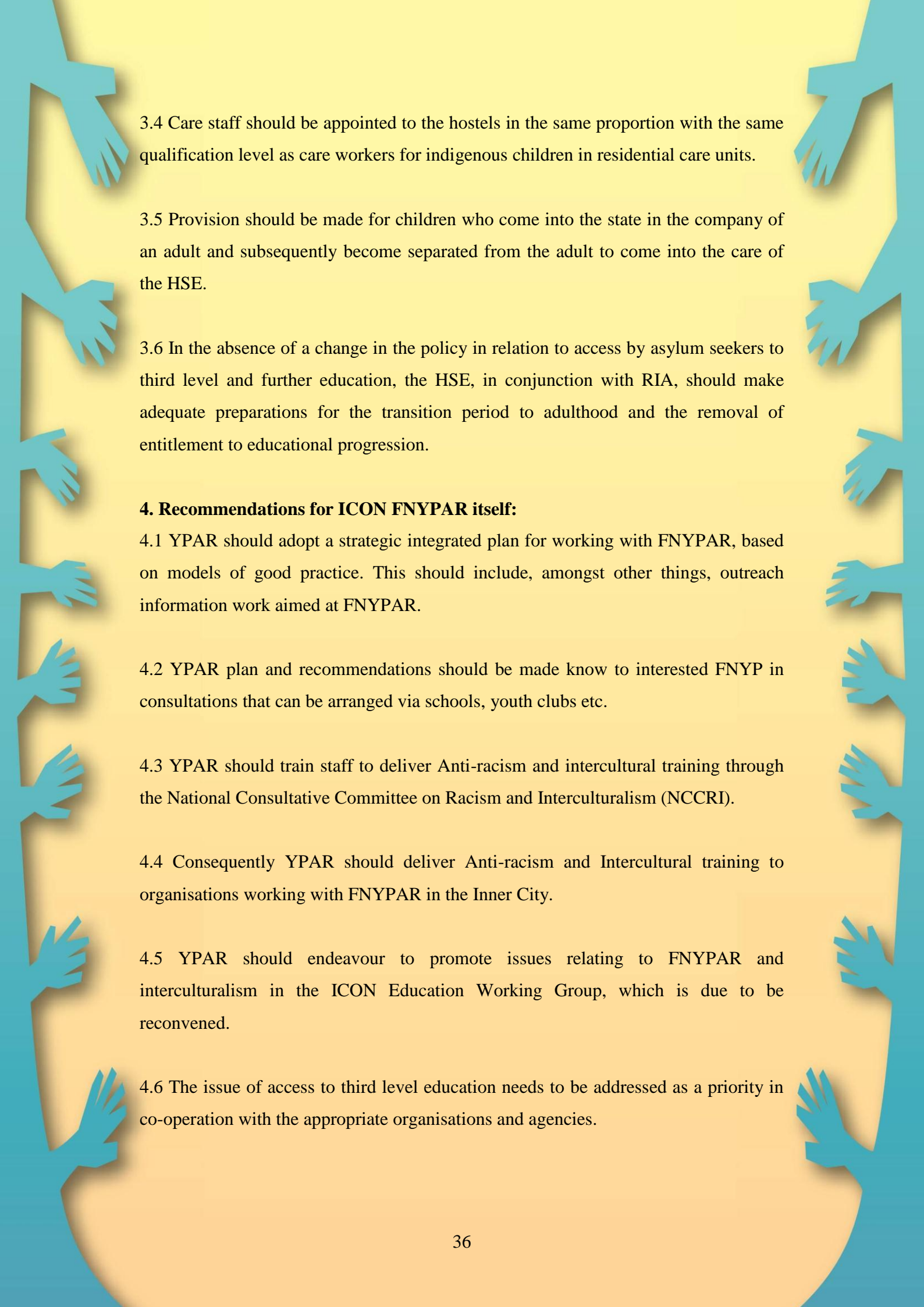
2.2 RIA should review its complaints procedure, ensure it is appropriate and sensitive to residents' language and cultural needs, and make it available to all residents. RIA should ensure that this procedure is strictly adhered to if residents have complaints about their accommodation.

3. Recommendations for the Health Service Executive:

3.1 The HSE should ensure that all staff who come into contact with asylum seekers and refugees receive intercultural, anti-racism and child protection training. Awarding of contracts to hostel owners/managers should be dependent on them and their employees having pursued recognised courses in the above mentioned courses.

3.2 The HSE should develop a comprehensive written complaints procedure, appropriate and sensitive to people's language and cultural needs, and make it available to all. The HSE should ensure that this procedure is strictly adhered to if residents have complaints about their accommodation. If the complaints procedure is unsatisfactory to the child or young person seeking redress access to the ombudsman should be facilitated.

3.3 A clear policy should be drawn up in relation to which agency and person has the ultimate responsibility for separated children and this policy should be made known to all those who come into contact with the child.

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3.4 Care staff should be appointed to the hostels in the same proportion with the same qualification level as care workers for indigenous children in residential care units.

3.5 Provision should be made for children who come into the state in the company of an adult and subsequently become separated from the adult to come into the care of the HSE.

3.6 In the absence of a change in the policy in relation to access by asylum seekers to third level and further education, the HSE, in conjunction with RIA, should make adequate preparations for the transition period to adulthood and the removal of entitlement to educational progression.

4. Recommendations for ICON FNYPAR itself:

4.1 YPAR should adopt a strategic integrated plan for working with FNYPAR, based on models of good practice. This should include, amongst other things, outreach information work aimed at FNYPAR.

4.2 YPAR plan and recommendations should be made know to interested FNYP in consultations that can be arranged via schools, youth clubs etc.

4.3 YPAR should train staff to deliver Anti-racism and intercultural training through the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI).

4.4 Consequently YPAR should deliver Anti-racism and Intercultural training to organisations working with FNYPAR in the Inner City.

4.5 YPAR should endeavour to promote issues relating to FNYPAR and interculturalism in the ICON Education Working Group, which is due to be reconvened.

4.6 The issue of access to third level education needs to be addressed as a priority in co-operation with the appropriate organisations and agencies.

APPENDIX II

The Young People at Risk Initiative YPAR

The **Young People at Risk Initiative** (YPAR) started working in Dublin North-East Inner City in January 2004. For Background on the Process to date see the Appendix below.

YPAR has defined a child at-risk as:

“Primarily a child/young person aged 0 to18 years experiencing severe personal, family, educational or social problems (which could benefit from outside support).”

Risk Factors include early school leaving, anti-social behaviour and crime, drug and alcohol abuse.

Partners are; Inner City Organisations Network, Health Service Executive Northern Region, Dept. of Education and Science , City of Dublin Youth Service Board, National Education Welfare Board, An Garda Síochána, the Irish Youth Foundation, voluntary and community groups operating in the North-East Inner City of Dublin are represented at Steering Level. YPAR also has full support and involvement of statutory agencies and Initiatives including the Local Drug Task Force, Dublin Inner City Partnership and Community Policing Forum etc.

Mission

YPAR’s Mission is:

“ To promote and develop a principled and integrated approach to working with young people that serves their needs and realises their dreams.”

Main Goals are:

- To establish **an integrated, interagency structure** for children and youth at risk
- To **improve the quality and delivery of services** for children and youth at risk
- To **establish appropriate mechanisms to co-ordinate and integrate services** for children and youth at risk
- To support young people at risk in **accessing services, education, training and employment**
- To **ensure anti-discriminatory and accessible policies and practices** in services for young people at risk
- To **support children and youth** at risk to develop the skills and capacities needed **to become active members of the community**
- To **ensure the voices and views of young people at risk to be heard**
- To **evaluate the intervention** from the very beginning in order to monitor progress and to learn what works and what doesn’t.

Structures

A Steering Committee manages the Initiative, made up of representatives of the key players involved in integration process; Statutory, Voluntary and Community representatives including local young people.

Working Groups

YPAR operates through a number of Working Groups that have been set up to address specific prioritised issues or gaps. The Working Groups are the means through which representatives of agencies can input into the YPAR process and forward the Strategic Plan (see below). Working Groups *include* the Foreign National Young People Working Group, Youth participation Working Groups and Early Years Working Groups.

YPAR Strategic Plan

YPAR is currently at the end of its 2005 – 2008 Plan which has been reviewed on a six monthly basis. A Final six monthly review will take place in the Autumn. It is noted that much of its agreed actions have been completed. The Steering Group will also undertake some preliminary work on a new three year Strategic Plan will begin in the autumn.

Key Objectives of YPAR Strategic Plan

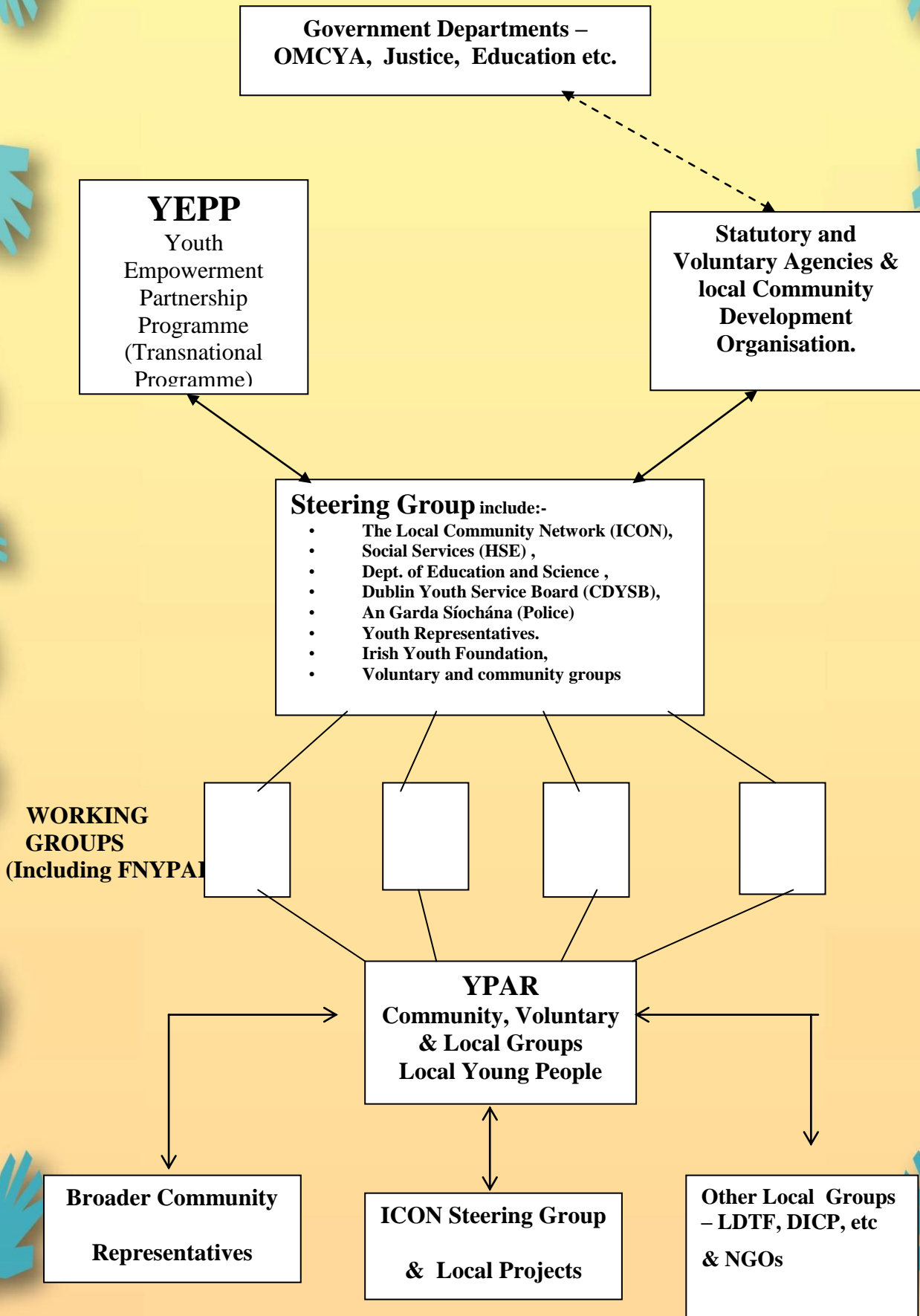
- Developing the Process of Integration at local level with agencies and community groups through the identification of common principles, codes of practice, and protocols etc.
- The maximising of Information and Communication between local key agencies re integrated approach and ownership of Strategic Plan
- A Number of Areas of Need and Gaps in Services have been identified – These include - After-hours/Weekend services,
- The full involvement of Young People in the process is a key element;
- To Influence Policy and lobby to promote integrated and interagency work at appropriate levels; Govt. Department, agency levels and local levels.
- Evaluation and Research To try to creatively measure the outcomes and impact of early interventions; through case histories, case conference outcomes tracking;

YEPP

YPAR is a partner site of the transnational Youth Empowerment Partnership Programme (YEPP). The overall goal of this joint initiative is to promote systemic change for equitable and democratic societies and sustainable human development through:

- youth and community empowerment,
- holistic and community-based solutions, and
- cross-sectoral partnerships on local, national, and trans-national levels.

YPAR Structures



APPENDIX III

Attendance List

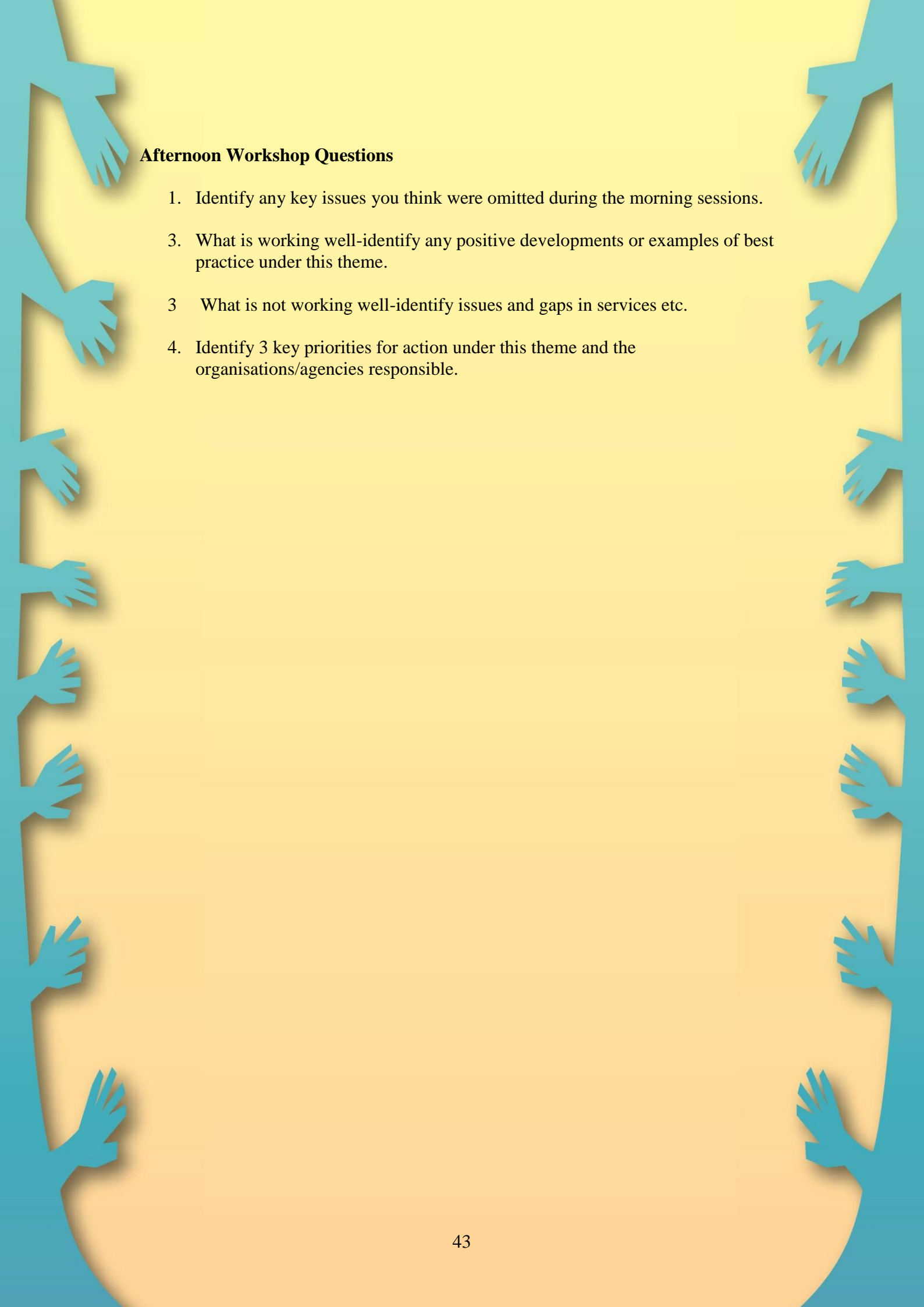
Robin Hannon	Irish Refugee Council
Marty Clancy	DCC
Ruadhán Mac Adjani	
Medb Magee	Cork City Partnership
Margaret Hayes	YPAR/CDYSB
Nadette Foley	Dublin Multicultural Resource Centre
Cyprian Brady TD	TD
Mari Mtalh	
Lungi Tati	Team for Separated Children
Bashir	Ethnic Minority Forum
Abdul Yusuf	NCP
Denise Purcell	Probation Service
Mairead Mahon	SWAN YS
Nuala Smith	Headstrong
Manus de Barra	Ombudsman for Children's Office
Jean-Pierre Eyanga	Integrating Ireland
Denise O'Brien	Larkin Community College
Gabriel	NYP2
Emma Ní Suatman	
Aoife Bairéad	Student Social Work Department
Joanne Coss	Bernardo's Family Resource Centre
Christy Loughheed	FAI
Sheena O'Brien	Cavan Centre
Breda Naughton	Department Education and Science
Vivienne McCann	Southside Partnership
Taiwo Falloyede	Refugee Info Service
Eva Dobrowolska	CAAB
Michael Quinlan	Irish Refugee Council
Robert Radocoriu	Pobalscoil Rosmini
Madaleine Dreita	Pobalscoil Rosmini
Pascal Donohue	Seanad Eireann
Lynsey Holmes	The Base
Elizabeth Fitzgerald	Youthreach
Elizabeth Murphy	Curam Family Centre
Biddy Ajayi	ISPCC
Emma Heffernan	Crosscare
Laurent Aldenhoo	Irish Refugee Council
Anne O'Connor	HSCLO
Amel Yacef	The Base Youth Service, D 11
Joe Grennell	DICP
Balnic Givers	Community Policing Forum
Zoë Hughes	Focus Ireland
Sheila O'Sullivan	HSCLO Rosmini Community School
Jennifer Moore	Aosóg Child and Family Project

Niall Smyth	HSCLO, Gabriel's NS, D. 7
Cliodhna Mahony	Talbot Centre
Mary McGagh	Probation Service
Philip Margetson	Griffith College
Francis Scott	Youth Matters KCCP
Dolly Ngadonye	ISPCC
Paul Madden	NYP1
Jennifer Carton	NYP1
Sharon Byrne	Young Adult Support Service (Crosscare)
Carina Fitzgerald	NCCRI
Owen Binchy	Nascadh CDP (E Wall)
Mick Cowman	Irish Refugee Council
Aidan Waterson	HSE
Breda Naughton	DES
Dermot Cole	Department Justice Equality and Law Reform
Young People	
Linda Ewansia	Marino College
Deividas Barisas	O'Connell's School
Jankauskas Awydas	O'Connell's School
Gediminas Buika	O'Connell's School
Tomas Babka	Marino College
Ayhan Sahin	Marino College
Chidera Ayagwa	Marino College
Antaneta Begles	Marino College
Gemma Bogdonaite	Marino College
Sandra Rosca	Marino College
Julia Gorskova	Marino College
Vadim Kolkovski	Marino College
Hashib Khan	Rutland Street
Kingsly	Itaye
Jideofar	O'Connell's School
Julius Bielicushas	O'Connell's School
Maria Antonia	Rosmini Community School
Mbimbola Mkenkesi	Larkin Community College
Oonagh Rosu	Larkin Community College
Oumarou	O'Connell's School
Ann Walsh	Nat Youth Council
Elaine McCann	NYP2 (Organisers/FNYPAR)
Fergus McCabe	NYP2 HSE (Organisers/FNYPAR)
Paul Flynn	Crosscare (Organisers/FNYPAR)
Ciara Cunningham	SWAN YS (Organisers/FNYPAR)
Jyothi Kanics	Irish Refugee Council (Organisers/FNYPAR)
Majella McEvoy	Marino College (Organisers/FNYPAR)
Michael Kilbride	O'Connell's S (Organisers/FNYPAR)
Grainne McGill	CAAB (Organisers/FNYPAR)
Roisín Boyd	Irish Refugee Council (Organisers/FNYPAR)
Eric Collins	NYP2 (Organisers/FNYPAR)
Celine Burke	Cavan Centre (Organisers/FNYPAR)

APPENDIX IV

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

9.00 am	REGISTRATION/TEA/COFFEE
9.15 am	Introduction to conference - Fergus McCabe - Chair YPAR Foreign National Working Group
9.20 am	Official opening: - Conor Lenihan TD, Minister for Integration
9.30 am	Key Issues: Education Breda Naughton (Dept Education & Science), Rory McDaid (FNYPAR) and young person (to be confirmed)
10.00 am	Questions/comments
10.15 am	Key Issue: Health Paul Flynn (Crosscare/FNYPAR), Aidan Waterstone (HSE) and Arber Sula (Young person)
10.45am	Questions/comments
11.00 am	TEA/COFFEE
11.15 am	Key Issues Justice Dermot Cole (Dept Justice, Equality & Law Reform), Jyothi Kanics (Irish Refugee Council/FNYPAR) & Young person (To be confirmed)
11.45am	Questions /comments
12.15 pm	LUNCH
1.15 pm	Introduction to workshops
1.30pm	Workshops: Justice; Health; Education; Integrated Responses and Young Peoples' issues (<i>for foreign national young people only</i>)
2.45 pm	TEA/COFFEE
3.00 pm	Feedback from workshops
3.15 pm	Panel Response to feedback, open forum and final remarks.
4.00pm	Close of Conference

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Afternoon Workshop Questions

1. Identify any key issues you think were omitted during the morning sessions.
3. What is working well-identify any positive developments or examples of best practice under this theme.
- 3 What is not working well-identify issues and gaps in services etc.
4. Identify 3 key priorities for action under this theme and the organisations/agencies responsible.