

Count Me In



Making a Living:

The experiences of Migrants,
Travellers and Refugees in
Ennis and County Clare

Making a Living

In our research we interviewed members of three groups. We interviewed recent immigrants, many from new member countries of the European Union, who have arrived to work mainly in hotels, businesses and industries in Ennis and County Clare. We interviewed members of the Traveller community living in Ennis and we interviewed asylum seekers and refugees

We asked the immigrants who have arrived in Ireland to take up work here about the kind of work they do.

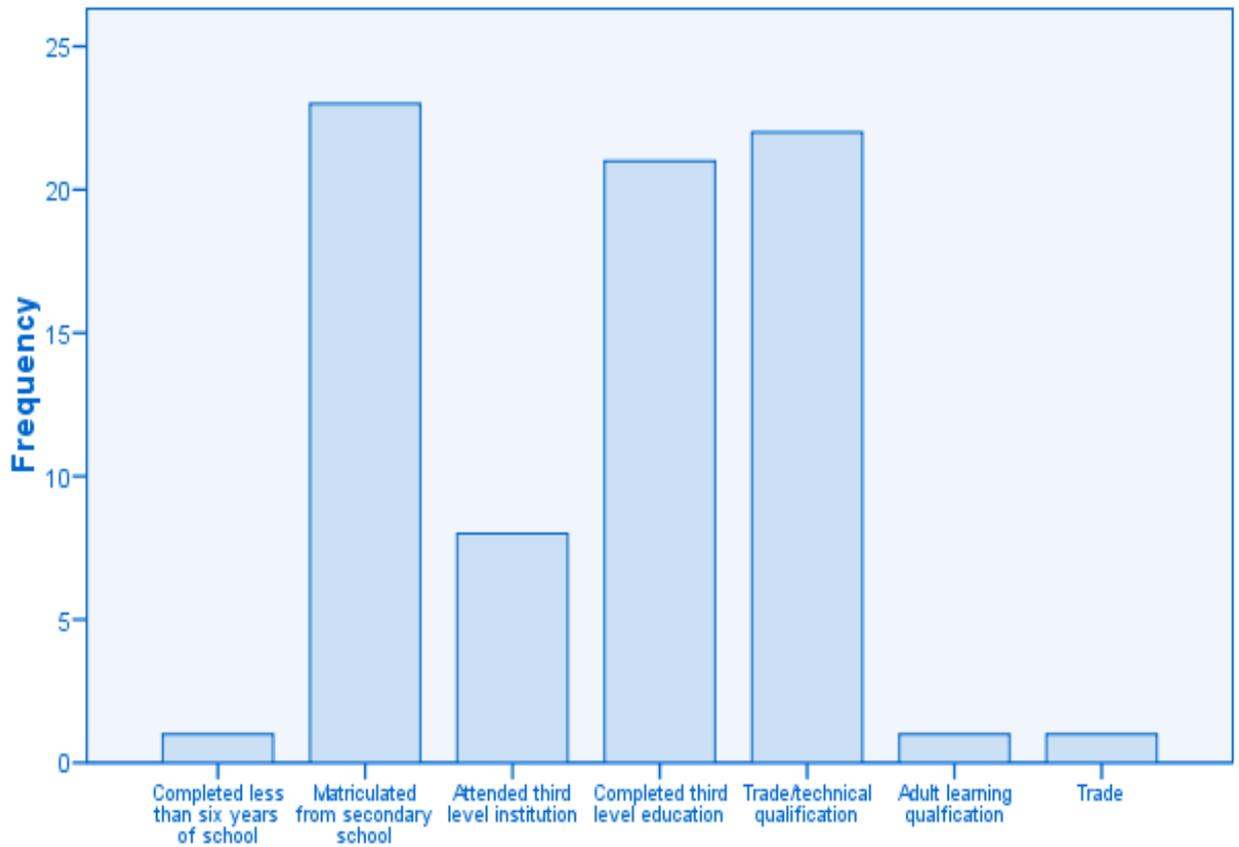
- We asked them about their qualifications and their educational background.
- How does the work they do in Ireland compare with the jobs they did at home?
- What about the longer term?
- Would they like to stay in Ireland?
- Would they like to obtain more qualifications?
- Would they like to do different work?

What kinds of work did immigrants do when they lived in their home countries?

At school	11	Self employed	10
Unemployed	1	Clerical/sales	11
Housewife	6	Professional	14
Manual work	2	Civil servant	4
Machinist	4	Lawyer/accountant	6
Farmer	2	Site supervisor	3
Hairdresser	2	Physiotherapist	3
Craftsman/woman	2	Other	9

Educational Experience

Can you tell me about your educational experience?



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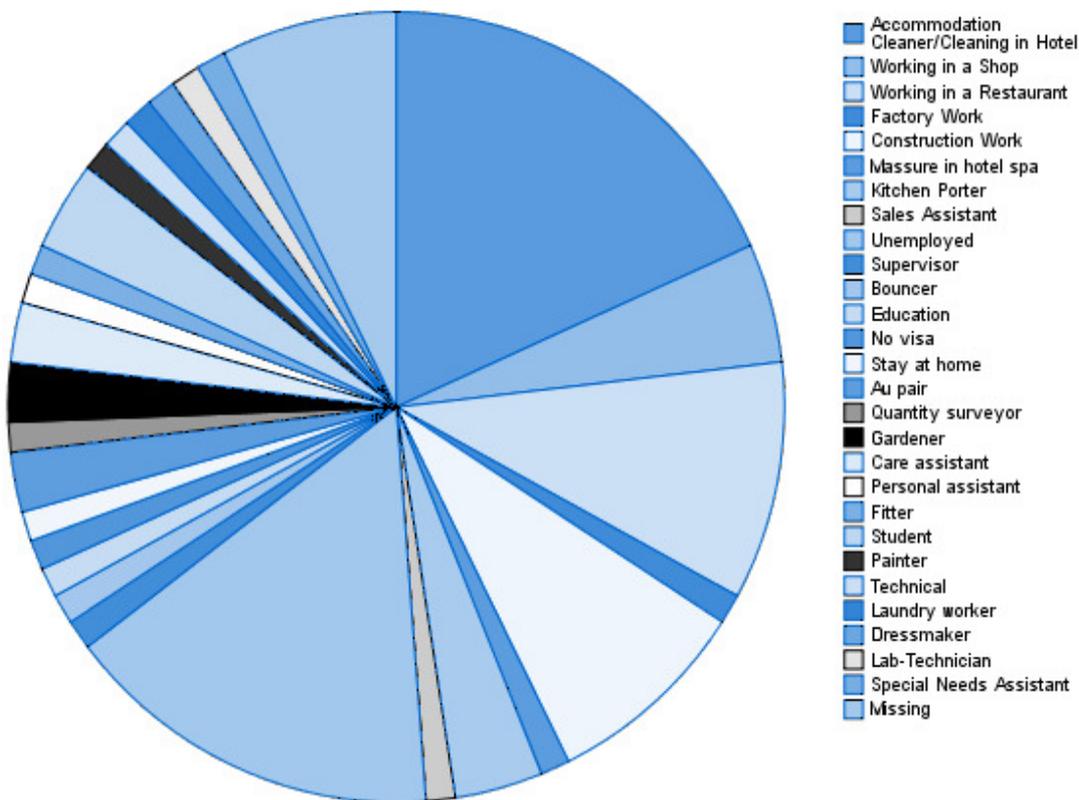
Migrants

Generally, the migrants who work in Clare are well educated. 21 out of the 77 who gave us details about their education had completed third-level education and another 8 had attended universities or colleges. Another 22 had technical or trade qualifications.

What kind of work do the migrants we interviewed do now?

- The largest group, 33, work in the service sector, in shops, in hotels and in restaurants.
- Very few are engaged in professional occupations.
- Seven work in construction.
- Thirteen are unemployed.

What kind of work are you doing in Ireland?



Making a Living

Among this group people are often qualified and experienced in work that is much more skilful than the work they are now doing in Ireland. This is clear, for example, when you look at the people with third level qualifications.

Twelve of the people we interviewed had university degrees. Of these two were working as hotel cleaners, two in restaurants, one as a shop-assistant. Only one was working in a field in which they were using their qualifications.

Not surprisingly, the majority of the migrants in our group would like to do different work from the work they do at present.

Travellers

What about the Travellers who live in Ennis?

What kind of work do they do?

Are they using their qualifications?

Would they like to have different work?

Fifty seven Travellers gave us information about their work.

Only eight members from the Travellers we spoke had jobs and 41 were registered as unemployed, receiving the job-seekers' allowance. Three more were disabled. Two were self employed businessmen/women.

For many, a lack of educational qualifications makes finding work very difficult. Amongst the 55 Travellers we interviewed 12 had diplomas or adult education certificates but none of these were at third level. Eight had junior certificates and five had school leavers certificates as their highest qualification. Twenty one had no educational qualifications at all.

Most of the Travellers we spoke to wanted to obtain more education. Thirteen felt they needed help to acquire reading and writing skills and another ten felt they would benefit from basic elementary education. Another twenty would like trade or vocational training.

Most of the Travellers would like to have proper jobs and many have very precise ideas about what kind of work they would like to do. For example, five of the people we spoke to would like to work as receptionists, two as hairdressers. Six would like to run their own businesses, and six would like to be tradesmen or women. Only two said they would like to do what they are doing at present.

Only three of the Travellers we had spoken to said they had encountered any racism or discrimination when they were looking for work. However in conversations, our researchers did encounter a widespread perception that there was prejudice against Travellers amongst employers.

Under Irish law, people with Refugee status are permitted to work but asylum seekers are not allowed employment.

Among the group we interviewed in Ennis, 37 people in the group had employment rights either as refugees or as parents of Irish-born children.

What kinds of work did refugees and asylum seekers do when they lived in their home countries?

- The biggest group were self employed
- 19 businessmen/women.;
- 9 were professionals, including two teachers.
- 7 were in clerical or sales occupations.
- 7 were unemployed.

As with the migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers often possess advanced educational qualifications. In our group, out of 55, 13 had university degrees and three more had been to university. Eight had diplomas. All except one had been educated through secondary school.

Making a Living

Unfortunately we don't know as much as we would like to about the Irish work experience of the refugees. Our questionnaire focused on the situation of asylum seekers who can't work.

We do know that only 9 of the refugees are working, that is, less than a third. Seven told us that they had experienced racial discrimination when seeking employment.

Most of the asylum seekers and refugees would like to be employed and many of them hope to get work in which they can use their qualifications.

Conclusions

- The migrants were generally well qualified and often skilled, though in Ireland they were often doing relatively unskilled and low paid work. That is quite common among recently immigrant communities. In other countries, immigrants often obtain better work later on, after their first employment, especially if they are well qualified.
- The other groups were much more likely to be unemployed and more likely to experience discrimination. In seeking work, Travellers were especially at a disadvantage because of a lack of educational skills and formal qualifications.
- We did this research in 2007. Since the time we did our research, jobs have become harder to find and for many Travellers and refugees the prospects for finding paid work in Ennis or County Clare must be very poor indeed.

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FÁS (Ennis Office)

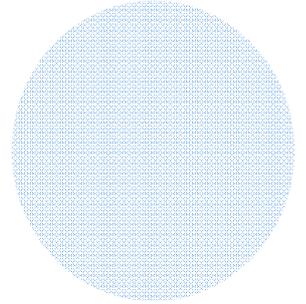
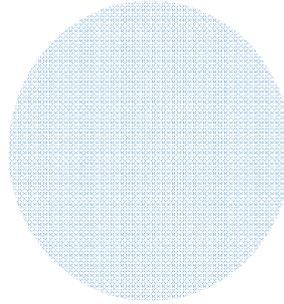
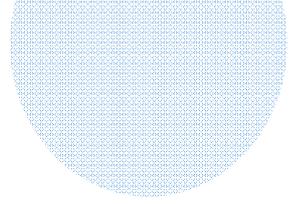
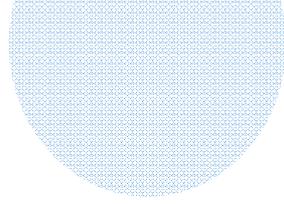
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Department of Social & Family Affairs

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

Notes





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