

Carlow CDB Rohingya Resettlement Programme

Final Evaluation

Aoife Titley, July 2012

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*Carlow County
Development
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Section 1: Context and Background

1.1 Introduction

This report evaluates the final phase of the Carlow County Development Board Rohingya Resettlement Programme during the period July 2011 - June 2012. The Carlow CDB Rohingya Resettlement Programme supports the integration of 16 Rohingya families in their new lives in Carlow and is funded by Pobal, an intermediary that works on behalf of Government to support communities and local agencies toward achieving social inclusion. Evaluation is a crucial part of any project management and given the complexities involved in the Carlow CDB Rohingya Resettlement Programme, it was important that this evaluation also include an ongoing narrative about the experiences of the stakeholders and families over three years of the programme. Therefore, this report outlines the comparative achievements and challenges of the full lifespan of the resettlement programme as well as assessing the progress made this year against the five main objectives of the project plan:

1. To support the resettlement of the 16 Rohingya families into their new life in Carlow
2. To facilitate the children and young people from the Rohingya community to access education, supports and to integrate within the local community
3. To develop supports for the men and women within their own community and to identify with them areas where they can develop that will aid their resettlement
4. To provide the opportunity for the families to process the past and to develop coping mechanisms to deal with the present and focus on the future
5. To monitor the programme with respect to the programme of actions and finances, evaluate the programme to focus on the mainstreaming activities to ensure that the families are engaged in services and in a position to support themselves after the lifespan of the programme (SC, 2011b).

1.2 The Rohingya Community in Carlow

The Rohingya are a Muslim minority group with origins in North Arakan State in Western Burma. Due to a litany of human rights violations in Burma (ICHR, 2010) including forced labour, deportation, sexual violence and persecution, there was a mass exodus of Rohingya from Burma in 1992. During this time, approximately 270,000 Rohingya sought refuge in the

Cox's Bazar region of Bangladesh and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees established a series of camps to address the needs of the Rohingya. In recent years, the UNHCR has facilitated resettlement programmes for some of these refugees in the UK, Canada, Australia and Ireland. It is important to note that as a conservative Muslim group, major aspects of Rohingya life, such as birth, death, marriage and education are dominated by religious orthodoxy (ICHR, 2010: 133). It is in this context that the experiences of the Rohingya in Carlow should be examined.

1.3 The Resettlement Programme 2009 – 2010

In November 2008, Carlow CDB was asked by the Office of the Minister for Integration to resettle 13 Rohingya families, 7 of whom were female-headed households. The Rohingya arrived in Ireland as programme refugees – *'a person to whom leave to enter and remain for temporary protection or resettlement as part of a group of persons, has been given by the government'* (Refugee Act, 1996). The Community and Enterprise Department of Carlow Local Authorities established an Interagency Resettlement Committee to manage the direction of the Resettlement Programme and to provide resources and support for the process. St. Catherine's Community Services Centre was chosen as the lead agency for the programme. In the summer of 2010, an evaluation of the first year of the Carlow CDB Rohingya Resettlement Programme was commissioned. This evaluation was formative in nature, in that it examined the processes, operations and activities of the Resettlement Programme by outlining the narratives of the Rohingya families and the experiences of Carlow service providers during the initial period of resettlement (June 2009 - August 2010). The research studied the areas of religion, language, education, employment and training, housing, transport, health, welfare, children and young people, volunteers, social and cultural needs and future plans of the families. It also set a broader context for these experiences by looking at the human rights abuses that Rohingya have endured in both Burma and Bangladesh and included some discussion points about the nature of refugee integration. The report documented the initial challenges which presented themselves during the first year of the resettlement process and how the dedication and commitment shown by the Interagency Committee and St. Catherine's Community Services Centre as implementing partner contributed hugely to the success of the project. It also outlined how the Rohingya community should be acknowledged as a unique group in the context of other

migrant communities in Ireland due to the complexities of their cultural history and background, the pervasiveness of their persecution and the intricacies of their identity. At the end of the first year, respondents spoke of the Rohingya community as still demonstrating significant levels of vulnerability, need and dependency despite their resilience and popularity. The report concluded that the heterogeneity of the Rohingya community should be bore in mind when planning for future phases of the Resettlement Programme and that significant levels of ongoing support would be needed for meaningful integration in the broader community.

1.4 The Resettlement Programme 2010 - 2011

While the initial period of the Resettlement Programme was characterised by its constant efforts to bridge the gulf between the ‘perceived needs’ and the ‘actual needs’ of the Rohingya community, the second phase of the programme sought to adopt a more mainstreamed approach to service provision in order to foster greater independence among the community. The evaluation of the second year of the programme outlined improvements in the personal and professional development of the Rohingya community in Carlow, with significant progress being made in the areas of communication, employment/ volunteering and self-esteem. During this time, the Resettlement Team in St. Catherine’s facilitated a series of individual consultations with the families to discuss the future and develop comprehensive family plans. Needs analyses in areas such as housing, social welfare and education were carried out and the data used to inform a mainstream approach to the ongoing work of the resettlement programme. However, the second year of the programme included challenges in the form of a series of interpersonal issues between some members of the community which had a negative impact on the well-being of the group. The second evaluation also included a targeted focus on education, and school teachers and principals were comprehensively surveyed during this time. A major concern of the schools during this period was the imminent departure of the Intercultural Worker from St. Catherine’s, who had been identified as being invaluable as a conduit between the schools and the parents and providing ongoing translation and cultural support. The report concluded that a focus on implementing the mainstreaming strategy, in order to foster greater independence for the families needed to be a priority for the programme in its final year.

1.5 Carlow CDB Rohingya Resettlement Programme 2011 - 2012

During 2009 – 2011, the Rohingya families in Carlow were supported in their everyday lives by a full-time Resettlement Worker and a full-time Intercultural Worker, with additional support provided by the Community Worker and the Director of Services in St. Catherine's Community Services Centre. The period under review is unique as it is the first year of the programme where some of these supports were reduced, the most significant of which being the departure of the Intercultural Worker from St. Catherine's Community Services Centre. Research for this evaluation was carried out in a climate of heightened awareness that the Resettlement Programme was a finite project and that the remainder of supports were due to be withdrawn shortly. Finally, it is important to note that the evaluation covers a highly prolific period for the Steering Committee of the Resettlement Programme and the Lead Agency of St. Catherine's Community Services Centre, as they worked to ensure completion of the existing operational plan and the development of a comprehensive Mainstreaming Strategy for the end of the project.

Section 2: Methodology

The fact that St. Catherine's Community Services Centre has commissioned the same external researcher for the three evaluations of the resettlement programme has allowed for consistency within the methodology. This continuity has ensured that ongoing relationships and connections were developed with service providers, stakeholders and the Rohingya community themselves. It is anticipated that the research findings have benefitted from observations over a three year period and it is further hoped that a reflective element to the evaluation is evident in this final report as a result. The researcher is privileged to have been involved with the Carlow CDB Rohingya Resettlement Programme since 2010 and would like to thank the staff in St. Catherine's Community Services Centre for their ongoing support as well as all the research respondents for their time and contributions over the years.

2.1 Methodological Approach

The methodological approaches to the 2010 and 2011 evaluations were formative in nature, in that the research examined the ongoing processes, operations and activities of the Carlow CDB Rohingya Resettlement Programme. In 2010, a broad fact-finding approach and a wide sampling method allowed for nearly all stakeholders in the resettlement process to be given the opportunity to contribute. In 2011, for the mid-term evaluation, a more targeted approach to respondents was deemed necessary to make the most of the shorter data collection time-frame. This year however, it was important that the methods for the final evaluation were applied in a summative context, in order to ascertain how effective the programme has been in implementing its operational plan over a period of time. In keeping with the methodology of the previous two years, it was decided to continue the work within a qualitative framework, in order to generate rich, deep data from the input of the respondents.

2.2 Data Collection

Mixed methods of data collection were employed during the research. Firstly, a comprehensive period of **desk research** was deemed necessary in order to analyse what has been a prolific period of work for the resettlement programme. Data was collected from various primary and secondary sources including reports, planning documents, surveys, minutes of meetings, official papers, reputable online sources and evaluation guidelines from Pobal. Desk research was used effectively to inform the question guide for later stages of the research. It is important to note that the desk research benefitted greatly from the generation of baseline data and excellent record keeping from the staff in St. Catherine's Community Services Centre.

Focus groups were utilised as the primary tool for data collection with the adults from the Rohingya community. Two focus groups were held in St. Catherine's Community Services Centre in May. One focus group was conducted with the men (10) from the community and another one for the women (13). These sessions both lasted 90 minutes and translation was made available throughout. It is important to note that less interpretive support was needed during the group with the Rohingya men. It was decided that group interviews as opposed to focus groups would be a more appropriate tool for exchange with the young people in the Rohingya community. Therefore, 3 smaller group interviews with 9 young people took place during this time as well. These interviews lasted on average 30 minutes each and no translation supports were used. Finally, a series of semi-structured interviews were organised with a number of service providers and key stakeholders (11) in the resettlement process.

2.3 Ethical issues

Conducting the research in an ethical manner was a significant element of the final evaluation. Questions about informed consent, interpretation issues, confidentiality, ownership of data, representation of minority voices and the nature of collaboration were all reflected upon during the research process. The researcher was mindful of the responsibility involved in representing the progress of the programme over a three year period and in meeting the expectations of the varied stakeholders involved. Moreover, this is the first year that research has been undertaken with the Rohingya community where

translation supports were not used in all circumstances. Therefore, efforts were made to ensure that quotes included as a result of interpretive support were represented with due deference to the original context (Marshall and Rossman, 2006).

Finally, it is important to note that the experiences of the Rohingya community in Carlow are more suited to longitudinal research¹ than short-term evaluations. It is hoped in the future that further research into the narratives and practices of the community will be commissioned.

¹ This observation was included in the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Carlow CDB Rohingya Resettlement Programme (2011: 18).

Section 3: Narratives of the Rohingya Community

At the heart of the resettlement process has been the lived experience and personal journeys of the Rohingya community in Carlow. Data collection for this report included a significant emphasis on these stories in order to add coherence and continuity to the final evaluation. Narrative research allows the reader access to the personality, identity and experience of the people involved and endeavours to represent their voices in an authentic way. This section looks at the narratives of the men, women and young people of the Rohingya community in order to explore how they have created meaning for their experiences in Carlow, as both individuals and as a community.

3.1 Language

Language ability and wider communication concerns were the immediate topics discussed in the focus groups. The groups freely identified English language learning as an area where they feel they are still in need of assistance and they expressed their fears about diminishing class hours.

‘Language is still a big barrier’ (Rohingya male, 2012).

‘I had an appointment in a different area than it is usually. I nearly missed the appointment because I didn’t understand’ (Rohingya male, 2012).

‘We are looking for more hours for English. The hours might be cut back more again’ (Rohingya female, 2012).

‘It’s 50/50. I understand 50%. Another 50% needs assistance’² (Rohingya male, 2012).

‘Stress and everyday life means I can’t concentrate on English sometimes’ (Rohingya female, 2012).

In particular, there was a concern among the Rohingya adults about interacting with service providers in instances where a technical or procedural vocabulary might be required.

² It is interesting to consider this quote in the context of another contribution from last year’s evaluation. ‘If you take three parts for example, I understand one part, two parts don’t understand’ (Rohingya female, 2011).

Examples of this included dealings with the GP and the hospital, filling out official forms, understanding changes in social welfare and interacting with the council about tenancy rights and responsibilities. However, efforts were made during the focus groups to ensure there was a balanced discussion in terms of language acquisition and the men and women were encouraged to reflect on their successes and achievements as well.

‘The good thing is that we can communicate with people. We can talk on them on the street, ask them how they are, have basic discussions’ (Rohingya female, 2012).

‘Very happy and proud of achievements’ (Rohingya female, 2012).

‘We feel proud, very afraid at the start, don’t know how to get out, now we are okay saying we know what to do, we know the directions’ (Rohingya female, 2012).

‘Speaking English is our biggest achievement. Because this is the Irish national language and the language that everyone speaks here. If we don’t learn English, how can we stay here? It was very difficult first time we came here, adjusting to weather, society and going out’ (Rohingya male, 2012).

‘English helps (*other people*) understand who you are. Everyone speaks English in Ireland. So to be able to communicate in Ireland. I want to stay here and live here, that is why English is important’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

‘At the beginning it was very difficult. We are trying really hard. Now it is getting easier. We learn from each other and learn a little bit every day’ (Rohingya female, 2012).

‘My language is better than it was. It was very difficult at the start. In school I had no words and some teachers didn’t understand. Hard’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

It is interesting to note that many of the adults referenced their children as a considerable source of support for them in terms of language. It is also important to note that the groups collectively spoke very highly of their English language tutors and their experiences in the VEC. Input from key service providers in relation to language barriers will be outlined in *Section 4: Overview of Main Findings*.

3.2 Education and Training

The Rohingya respondents demonstrated a real interest in further education and training, for both themselves and their children. The Rohingyas placed a lot of value on education as a means to improving their future prospects.

‘For me, formal education is important, going to do the Leaving Cert and get qualification’ (Rohingya male, 2012).

Discussions about education were combined with the discussions about social welfare and employment. It was evident that the Rohingya adults regard education as an essential pathway to avoiding dependency on social welfare and getting a job in the future.

‘Need education and training to get a job’ (Rohingya male, 2012).

Both the men and the women were eager to find out what opportunities would be available to them for further training. While information sessions in this area have already been organised, from their own interactions with relevant agencies, they believed they are still lacking some vital qualifications and experience needed to find gainful employment. In particular, they were very interested in gaining work experience prior to taking up employment and sourcing support for the professional skills they already have. The connections identified between training and employment will be further discussed in *Section 3.4: Employment*.

3.2.1 School

Group interviews with the young people allowed for discussions about their experiences of formal education. It is important to note that while these experiences were mixed, the majority of the young people were very happy in school. This is in keeping with findings from the previous two evaluations.

‘I like school. If have a problem, I tell the teacher’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

‘I like the making Irish friends, I learn English more’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

‘I like school, I like learning all subjects’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

‘In general, like school, happy in school’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

However, discussions with some of the teenage boys revealed lower levels of engagement with the formal education system.

‘We in school messing’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

‘One week was very hard. We mitch and then say it is very hard’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

‘Didn’t like anything, didn’t learn anything in school. VEC was better choice’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).³

The teenage boys were asked about reasons behind their non-attendance at school:

‘Headache, don’t go’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

‘Test at maths, don’t go then’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

‘It takes a long time. It is a long day’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

‘Don’t like it’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

They were also asked what they do while they are not at school:

‘Play cricket’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

‘Hang out with each other’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

‘Play on the computer’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

‘Sometimes smoke’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

In interview, the teenage boys were open about their disconnection from formal education and their apathy towards school. It was evident that they are greatly influenced by each other and that group dynamics are a significant factor in this issue. What was also evident from the interviews with other young people was that the attitudes of the teenage boys towards school are well-known and there is a worrying perception among the Rohingya young people that this is ‘just the way it is’.

‘Rohingya girls go to school, Rohingya boys don’t go to school’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

‘Rohingya girls like school, boys don’t like it’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

The concerns of service providers in relation to this issue will be further discussed in *Section 4.2.3: Teenagers*.

³ It is important to note that although the word ‘choice’ is used, the young people are not offered a choice between school or VEC Adult and Further education classes. The VEC advocate for young people to stay in school beyond the statutory school leaving age and it is only when this has passed and the young people are completely out of school that they may have the option of accessing the Adult and Further Education supports available.

Finally, it was positive to note that all the young people, including those not currently engaging with school, acknowledged the importance of school and getting a good education.

‘School is where your life is. When you grow up it is important. And you have to get a job for that’ (Rohingya young person, 2011).

‘To get a job in the future, important for learning English’ (Rohingya young person, 2011).

‘For future – school is very important. To go to college and study and get a job’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

3.3 Social Welfare

It is interesting to note that data in relation to Social Welfare emerged much more clearly from the focus groups than it did in previous years. Conversations were dominated by a real awareness that continued dependency on social welfare would not be sustainable, especially in the context of recent changes to the system. Their hopes and fears about entering employment were intrinsically linked to social welfare and the men in particular shared some mixed views in this regard. There was a belief that there has been some increased pressure on the community recently to prove they are actively seeking employment and there was some concern about how this might be perceived.

‘People think Rohingyas only want the dole, that is not true, they want to work hard, they have great work experience’ (Rohingya male, 2012).

‘They are now saying that we need to be looking for job, need to show they are making an effort. Some people feel they are not ready to do that yet. Don’t feel ready for a job until finished an education’ (Rohingya male, 2012).

Some other concerns about the topic of social welfare related to a move to a computerised system of signing on, understanding changes to the system in the future and the duration of the holiday period. Finally, it is important to mention that the men and women both articulated their gratitude for the assistance they receive from Social Welfare.

3.4 Employment

Employment was regarded by the men as a significant indicator of integration. The fact that three men are currently in paid employment and that several women have participated in successful volunteering placements was a source of considerable pride for them.

‘Working is an achievement’ (Rohingya male, 2012).

‘Some of us are working now you know’ (Rohingya male, 2012).

The men’s group discussion about employment was characterised by an urgency that was not present in the research in 2010 and 2011. They were very eager to discuss their desire to work, the barriers to employment that still exist and their hopes for training and support in the future.

‘Getting experience is a big problem’ (Rohingya male, 2012).

‘I go for training and they look for cert’ (Rohingya male, 2012).

A lot of time was spent discussing how they could access support for the skills they already have. This desire to have their skills and experience recognised came across very clearly this year.

‘People are very skilled from their experience at home, came from different country, have experience, but it is different type of work’ (Rohingya male, 2012).

‘We have experience.... we would like to use’ (Rohingya male, 2012).

Not as much time was spent discussing employment issues with the women. It appeared that language confidence had an impact on their readiness to take up paid employment.

‘Yes, I would like to work. But I don’t feel ready yet. Need more language, need more training and then I would like to work in the future’ (Rohingya female, 2012).

‘Can communicate with (*Resettlement Worker*), we know her, she knows our body language, the person in the shop might not know. Buying something in the shop and working in the shop is still very different’ (Rohingya female, 2012).

‘Again language difficulties for job, the way we speak our English is very different. We need more time’ (Rohingya female, 2012).

The women also expressed a desire for some directional support about what types of employment might be available to them in the future.

The Rohingya young people spoke with great positivity about their future employment prospects during their group interviews. They spoke of getting a part-time job while undertaking further study in a few years and mentioned many diverse career choices such as working in a halal shop, working in a restaurant, playing cricket professionally and joining an Garda Síochána.

3.5 Religion

In the 2010 and 2011 evaluations, the Rohingya community, in particular the women demonstrated an overwhelming preoccupation with issues pertaining to religious practice. This year was no exception. In the focus groups, the lack of an official mosque, burial site and access to religious study were constantly raised and the groups spoke quite animatedly about their opinions on these issues. So much so, that despite conscious efforts on the part of the facilitator to move the discussion on, these issues were brought up even when the question had been in relation to a different topic. Similarly, both groups were given an open section at the end of the focus group to discuss whatever they wanted, and these periods were also dominated by the same issue of religious rights.

While there is a mosque in Carlow, the Rohingya community maintain that it is too small, in an inconvenient location, does not have a minaret and there are some ongoing issues with access on certain days. The Rohingyas used the opportunity of the focus group to reiterate their concerns about the lack of appropriate facilities for Muslims in Carlow.

‘We need a mosque here, we need a burial place and religious study. Our religious practice is why we had to leave our country and come to Ireland. We still have not got proper mosque or graveyard’ (Rohingya female, 2012).

‘If someone died, they cannot be buried at home. Once they die, have to buried in same day’ (Rohingya female, 2012).

‘The existing mosque is not a mosque, it is a house and it is small and inconvenient’ (Rohingya male, 2012).

‘The young children are not getting religious study here’ (Rohingya female, 2012).

‘I hope for son to become a religious Imam. Don’t have the facilities here, how will I fulfil that hope? Looking for more opportunities in Carlow’ (Rohingya female, 2012).

A lot of the stress and frustration they feel about this issue appears to originate from a belief they were assured there was a mosque in Carlow before they arrived in Ireland.

‘They all saying about the mosque and the graveyard, they knew this at the start, why are they taking so long to give it to us? If you want us to be happy, this is what we want’ (Rohingya female, 2012).

‘We came here for protection, came here for happiness, they knew this, they should provide these two things for us. We would be very happy to live in Carlow’ (Rohingya female, 2012).

‘People have been here many times and we told them. We told you (*the researcher*) before as well. Did we get any answer from the report?’ (Rohingya female, 2012).

During the session, the Rohingya community identified what they saw as the main barriers to building a mosque or graveyard in Carlow. The immediate obstacle was in relation to the potential site for the mosque. Anecdotal evidence suggested that there are few suitable venues in the town centre to house a new mosque and there are some disagreements among the wider Muslim community about where such a mosque should be located. If they were to look outside of the town centre for a location, the geographical distance might be too far and parking and transport problems would arise. Finding landlords willing to rent a space for a mosque was also recognised as a potential stumbling block by the families, given that the space would be used for religious teaching and this might impact on the type of licence they would need. Access to funding to lease the premises and having enough money to maintain the rental payments was also a huge concern for the community.

The young people also discussed their religion and religious identity during their interviews, although not in as much detail as their parents. They began very positively by speaking about their informal religious study with a volunteer from the community and how much they enjoyed these classes. They also revealed how their teachers and classmates in school often ask them about their religion and encourage them to share information about their beliefs. This was something they really appreciated and felt ‘happy to share’. They also spoke about how they enjoyed interacting with the wider Muslim population in Carlow and meeting people from countries like Sudan, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Before long however, they too focused on what they regarded as a lack of appropriate facilities for their religious practice in Carlow.

‘It is a little bit difficult to practice religion in Carlow’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

‘No mosque for religious classes, we read (*the Koran*) at home. It is important for Allah. To study and not to forget your religion’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

‘We would love if there was mosque, would go every day and be so happy’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

‘Because when we get big, when we have our own children we can teach them about Allah, that is very important to us’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

Recommendations in the evaluations in 2010 and 2011 outlined how the Rohingya community should be supported in their efforts to engage in consultation with members of the wider Muslim community in Carlow on this issue. It is positive to note that there has been some movement on this issue this year. The adults were asked in the focus group about this collaboration. While progress has been slow to determine specific actions, there have been numerous meetings with representatives of other communities in Carlow and the Rohingyas have begun to save money in a central fund to use towards this campaign.

‘We have had lots of meetings so far, but nothing has happened yet. We link with other cultures in Carlow’ (Rohingya male, 2012).

3.6 The Future

In the focus groups, the participants were asked about their main concerns now that the official programme was coming to an end. It was evident that the families feel they are still in need of assistance in certain areas of their lives and their apprehension about the withdrawal of formal supports was obvious.

‘Very afraid. We are not independent yet; still have a lot to learn. Three years is a short period, we need more support. Especially in the hospital and doctor’s office. In three years we have learnt a lot, but sometimes letters come from child benefit, letters coming from other areas, we need support in those kind of areas’ (Rohingya male, 2012).

‘Feeling very stressed, very worried. We are finishing everything, going into blind world now. Example, if a letter comes, I bring it here if I don’t understand. They will help me’ (Rohingya male, 2012).

‘St. Catherine’s are friends of the Rohingya family. Any sort of problem or trouble, St. Catherine’s is the place we get help’ (Rohingya female, 2012).

The families spoke in particular about their appreciation for the Resettlement Worker, about the mutual understanding and respect that exists between the worker and the families and their anxiety about her departure from St. Catherine’s.

‘Don’t know what will happen when she goes’ (Rohingya female, 2012).

‘Will miss the help and support’ (Rohingya female, 2012).

‘She understands us’ (Rohingya female, 2012).

It was very interesting to note that while the young people were not concerned about the end of the programme at a personal level, they all expressed fears about the impact it would have on their parents.

‘Yeah, very worried. My mother not understand, little bit understand. She gets help from St. Catherine’s’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

‘Mother needs more support, she goes to St. Catherine’s a lot’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

3.6.1 Integration

In the focus groups and interviews, there were many interesting discussions about integration. The adults spoke about their understanding of the word integration, how they feel about integration and what integration would look like for the Rohingya community in Carlow. As discussed earlier, employment was seen as a significant indicator of integration. In addition, the respondents discussed the social aspects of integration.

‘Very happy, feel integrated with neighbours, know them. Except some language difficulties, neighbours very good. Happy to integrate with everyone’ (Rohingya female, 2012).

‘It is very good, because of language difficulties, they like to talk to us, sometimes we cannot explain ourselves and express ourselves, but they love our food’ (Rohingya female, 2012).

‘We are really proud, think we have done very well. We are here, making friends, other people in the community, especially the women are working as volunteers. They are doing shopping, going out, things they would never do in our own country’ (Rohingya male, 2012).

Citizenship applications and receiving an Irish passport were extremely important for both the adults and the young people when it came to the idea of integration. Having an Irish passport is something the group are looking forward to and the young people in particular expressed a hope that they might make a return visit to Bangladesh once this process was completed. Maintaining links with their indigenous culture and country of origin was also significant to the group and as a result, they referenced how cultural exchange can play a part in successful integration.

‘Recently, we are trying to let them know our culture as well and want to know Irish culture. Give and take’ (Rohingya male, 2012).

Participation in the arts festival and the art exhibition in VISUAL was a positive example of cultural exchange and something that the community was immensely proud of.

‘Participated in that, even if we cannot communicate in words, we can communicate through art’ (Rohingya male, 2012).

It was interesting to note that the men also expressed a desire to set up a Network or Organisation for Rohingyas in Ireland. They spoke anecdotally about the Rohingya in Australia, UK and Canada and the achievements they have made there in their personal and professional lives. They believe that establishing a support group for Rohingyas in Ireland along the same lines as they have in those countries would be beneficial for the long-term integration of their community. They requested support in establishing such a group, especially for operational elements such as articulating a mission statement, deciding on aims and objectives and putting appropriate governance structures in place.

‘Ireland is a small country, if we get support to set it up, we can continue it ourselves’ (Rohingya male, 2012).

3.6.2 Well-being and ongoing support

In the women’s focus group, issues relating to happiness, self-esteem and confidence were discussed. There was general consensus that everybody was very happy in Carlow and felt they were in a safe space. In previous evaluations, concern about anti-social behaviour towards the Rohingya community in Carlow had been documented. While some women mentioned there have been a few ongoing problems, the majority agreed that this had improved.

‘Things are much better than it used to be. There used to be a lot more anti-social behaviour, but it is much better now’ (Rohingya male, 2012).

‘Problems are better. Not as bad as they were at the start’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

‘First time when we go out, they don’t know us, they call us (*names*). They don’t understand. Now a little bit better not that people know us’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

The respondents spoke of their desire to stay in Carlow in the future.

‘I like Carlow, not lots of people like in Dublin’ (Rohingya young person, 2012).

‘I like it in Carlow, I like living here’ (Rohingya female, 2012).

However, there was further consensus among the group about what supports would need to be in place in Carlow for them to remain in the county in the long-term.

‘We want to live here forever but need two things. Need a mosque and need a graveyard. Children are growing up here, other people need to learn more so their children can also grow up here and live a happy and peaceful life’ (Rohingya female, 2012).

‘Other nationalities are different. Make money and go back to other countries. Rohingya came here for all their lives. We will stay here forever. That’s why need a mosque’ (Rohingya female, 2012).

Finally, the group also spoke about their interest in getting further support and information around the issue of family reunification.

In February 2012, the Integration Centre (McCafferty, 2012) facilitated a PLA session with members of the Rohingya community in St. Catherine’s Community Services Centre. Similarly, Carlow Regional Youth Services arranged an in-depth consultation with the young people about their needs for the future. It is interesting to note that many of the findings outlined in this section; such as wellbeing of their children, concerns around English language, the development of a Rohingya network and a preoccupation with religious rights; are in keeping with the main issues raised during the IA PLA session and the CRYC consultation.

3.7 Official requests from the Rohingya community

Research reveals that certainly at a surface level, the Rohingya community were more empowered, more confident and more focused on the future than they seemed in previous years. The adults appeared to better understand the nature of the research and the function of the final evaluation. As a result, it is interesting to note that they were eager to ensure this report clearly reflected their input on certain issues and have officially requested that the following points be included in this section.

1. The Rohingya community have requested a meeting with a representative from Carlow County Council to discuss the nature of their potential support for a campaign to build a mosque in the county.
2. The Rohingya community would like the final evaluation report to be disseminated among the group so that they can highlight the section on religion rights and send copies to key officials and government representatives.
3. The Rohingya community would like national organisations who advocate for migrant rights to meet with them to discuss support for the establishment of a Rohingya Network in Ireland.
4. The Rohingya community would like to meet with local representatives from the Social Enterprise Board for information regarding future entrepreneurial endeavours.

Section 4: Overview of Main Findings

This section provides an account of some of the main findings and developments in the Carlow CDB Rohingya Resettlement Programme this year. It looks at both the main achievements and successes in its work to date and introduces some discussion points in relation to ongoing challenges and areas of concern for the future.

4.1 Achievements

4.1.1 Increased independence

In keeping with the findings from the 2011 evaluation, a visible achievement of the Resettlement Programme this year was the increased independence of the families and greater control over their own affairs in a day to day context. Anecdotally, service providers spoke of seeing a difference in how the Rohingya community interacted with others on an everyday basis and recognised a discernible improvement in their confidence and self-esteem levels. Quantitatively, this decreased dependency on the Resettlement Team can be seen in the records of St. Catherine's, in that fewer queries and lower levels of support were charted over the course of this year in comparison to previous years of the programme.

'Having no interpretation gave them a greater realisation that the support was being phased out. They were not relying on St. Catherine's and they did a lot themselves. They were small developments for the families, but they were things they had never done for themselves before so they represented great achievements' (Service Provider, 2012).

Some of the tangible examples where improvements had been made included the completion of social welfare forms which had been quite labour intensive in the past, better upkeep and maintenance of houses, coping with reduced drop-in hours in St. Catherine's, greater responsibility for managing interpersonal issues in the community and increased competence in sourcing necessary products and services for themselves. The fact that one member of the group has received a full-driving license and many of the other members have obtained cars was also seen as a significant achievement for the community and one with positive ramifications for future independence. The Resettlement team observed that a

lot of the same issues which used to arise were not cropping up with the same regularity that they had in previous years (Service Provider, 2012).

4.1.2 Long-term Integration

The European Council on Refugees and Exiles regard the long-term integration of refugees as a 'dynamic two-way process'. The approach taken to the resettlement process is therefore crucial for determining a positive outcome of the integration efforts. During the research, it emerged that safeguarding elements of the Rohingya culture and affording the community opportunities for cultural exchange was an important factor in the success of the programme.

The **re-establishment of the Cricket Club** in Carlow in April 2011 is a good example of this and a success story that many respondents were eager to share during the research. Carlow Local Authority, assisted by St Catherine's Community Services, the Carlow Regional Youth Services and the local Carlow County Sports Partnership applied for basic funding to support the club and made links with the local rugby club to use their grounds for games.

'Membership of the club is open to any and all, regardless of previous cricketing experience, age, gender or cultural background. A cohort of regular players, both adults and children met every week during summer 2011 to train and learn how to play cricket on the grounds of County Carlow Football (Rugby) Club...The Cricket Club has been at the forefront of integration in Carlow' (Carlow Cricket Club, 2012).

The re-establishment of the Cricket club was regarded by many respondents as an effective way for many of the Rohingya community to preserve a valuable part of their cultural identity, as well as promoting an active and healthy lifestyle. The Rohingya community has successfully engaged with the club as both members and coaches. Such has been the success of this endeavour, the Carlow Rugby Club was awarded First Prize in the Sports category of the 'Diverse Ireland Awards' organised by the Integration Centre in December 2011 (<http://www.integrationcentre.ie/Diverse-Ireland-Awards.aspx>).

Non-formal education supports through the **Men and Women's Groups** also play an integral role in shaping the long-term integration of the Rohingya Community in Carlow. These groups contributed to a core objective: 'To develop supports for the men and women within their own community and to identify with them areas where they can develop that will aid

their resettlement' (SC, 2011: 2). Both groups met regularly during the year with the facilitators noting high levels of attendance and engagement from the men and women.

In the men's group, work began with an art project where they were asked to reflect on life in Burma and the journey to Ireland. They were supported in their work by an art therapist and end products were deemed to be of an extremely high standard. The artwork was framed and a very successful exhibition took place in the VISUAL Centre for Contemporary Art in Carlow. At the launch, one man and one woman from the Rohingya community spoke and explained the motivations behind the pieces. The significance of this exhibition for the community themselves was introduced in Section 3.

Other activities for the men's group included significant collaboration on a community garden. After consultation with the group to identify areas of interest, links were made with the local branch of the Irish Wheelchair Association and space was provided for raised flower beds and vegetable plots. The men showed great enterprise through their work on the garden and were committed to dividing up the responsibilities amongst themselves and keeping the project going. There are plans to sell some of the vegetables from the plot in St. Catherine's in the coming weeks.

In addition to the garden project, a six week enterprise course was also arranged for the groups in order for them to learn more about setting up their own business and the strategies involved in that. Attendance was lower for the enterprise course than for the other activities, which echoes previous findings that there is a greater appetite for practical or more skills-based initiatives than those that are focused on theory.

The women's group continued to be supported by the Carlow County Development Partnership (CCDP) this year. Activities were organised for 15 women on a weekly basis for two hours at a time in St. Catherine's Community Services Centre. Attendance and time-keeping was good. After consultation with the women, a focus on practical-based work and enterprise was also chosen, so that the skills honed during these sessions could be transferable to the workplace in the future. This consultation and input into the planned activities meant the women had more ownership over the group and this was considered an important factor in its success. Personal development and increase in self-confidence as a result of the group was evident to the tutor. The women were reported to be eager to voice

their opinions and mixed well amongst each other in the broader group. They were 'more relaxed in themselves this year' (Service provider, 2012). The greater emphasis on the development of practical skills led to activities such as machine sewing, embroidery, mosaics and jewellery making being undertaken during the year.

'They seemed to excel in crafts and any work with their hands. They are good at these kinds of skills because they can see what is going on and they can learn from what they see. Previous activities that relied on more verbal instruction were not as successful. But the skills-based activities work very well' (Service provider, 2012).

As in previous years, language and communication were still sometimes a challenge in the women's group. It is further important to note the crucial role that access to childcare plays in the success of the women's group.

The further development of these groups for both the men and women is uncertain at the moment. It is positive to note that St. Catherine's have agreed to continue to support the men's group and the CCDP will continue to support the women's group. However, the extent to which this will be possible remains to be seen. During interview, service providers spoke of the importance of maintaining the groups and sourcing support for the Rohingyas to form their own group in the future. It was suggested that the VEC tutor scheme or various enterprise grants were some of the avenues the groups could explore. The groups were regarded as not only being important for skills development, but also for the social development and mental health of the Rohingya community.

Frequent interaction between migrants and the indigenous population is a fundamental mechanism for integration. In a wider context, it is positive to note that the **Carlow Integration Forum** was established last year and 'identified an increasing need for actions to promote integration in the wider community'. Its vision is that of a county that 'values the diverse cultures and identities that influence and enrich the lives of all those who make Carlow their home' (CIIF, 2011). While there is some development needed in terms of how the forum will operate in the county, it is hoped that it will act as a tool for bringing diverse cultures together and to provide a space for dialogue and shared learning. Given that two members of the Rohingya community are represented on the forum, it could be an ideal

opportunity to foster meaningful relationships with the wider community and integration in the long-term.

It is important to note how the contributing partnership of Carlow Regional Youth Services (CRYS) in the Resettlement Programme has supported integration for the young people in the Rohingya community. Similarly to other service providers working with the Resettlement Programme, CRYS have also had a busy and productive year in their work with the Rohingya community. A comprehensive series of interventions and planned programmes during the year ensured that the complex needs of the Rohingya young people were looked after by Carlow Regional Youth Services. To provide additional support in navigating the formal education system, an Afterschools project was organised in St. Catherine's Community Services Centre for primary students (12) and in the Vault for post-primary students (12). This ran every week during the year. In spite of low levels of engagement with school in the case of some of the teenagers, attendance was reported to be 'excellent' for these Afterschools (Service provider, 2012). The subsequent participation of the 10 primary age young people in mainstream Afterschools is a real indication of the success of these projects.

In addition to Afterschools, a popular mentoring service for the young people was also provided. Young people from the local community in Carlow who had been trained in youth leadership were paired up with members of the Rohingya community and encouraged to meet at weekends to provide peer support and friendship. Boys' and girls' groups also continued during the year, providing the young people with a safe space to discuss some of the challenges that have arisen in their new lives in Carlow and to help identify and achieve some of their goals and aspirations for the future. The 'Youth at Risk Project' also provided one to one support and advocacy for 5 Rohingya teenagers. This involved working with young people to increase their capacity to recognise, manage and reduce their "at risk behaviour" as well as to guide them towards activities which would be beneficial to their social and personal development. Finally, a series of seasonal youth programmes, run during school holidays also provided the Rohingya young people with a range of activities and ongoing English language support. It is important to note that throughout the programme, the young people also engaged in mainstream youth initiatives provided by Carlow Regional

Youth Service with their peers from the local community. These separate programmes involved fashion, soccer, arts and crafts and Zumba dancing.

CRYS reported a number of achievements in their work with the Rohingya young people this year. Foremost among these achievements were the positive relationships that developed between the young people and individual youth workers in the centre. The youth workers forged great connections with the young people and provided them with guidance, advocacy and practical support where needed. Record keeping from CRYS suggests that even when the Afterschools and seasonal programmes were completed the young people continued to call into the Vault for 'drop in' and regard it as the central 'hub' for their social activities (Service Provider, 2012).

While the aforementioned programmes were targeted specifically at the Rohingya young people, service providers reported that these activities have also been used as a 'springboard' to participation in other community endeavours. Many of the young people have gone on to be involved in other summer camps around the town as well as numerous sporting and hobby clubs. One such notable activity was the 'Embracing Diversity' project undertaken by Rohingya primary school students, whereby they designed and delivered a presentation about their culture to another Afterschools group in the area. Understandably, these successes have led to noticeable improvements in the personal development of the Rohingya young people. Recent English language assessments have shown a marked improvement in progress in the majority of their results (Service provider, 2012).

4.1.3 Interagency approach and Mainstreaming Strategy

In 2010 and 2011, the success of the interagency approach to the Carlow CDB Rohingya Resettlement Programme emerged as a significant finding in both evaluations. This year is no exception, as frontline service providers in Carlow continued to demonstrate commitment to their responsibilities to the Rohingya community and to collaborate with colleagues in an effective way. The Steering Committee continued to meet regularly during the year and was acknowledged to be working towards their objectives in a very targeted and efficient manner (Service Provider, 2012).

The Council of Europe regard mainstreaming integration policies and measures as an important consideration in public-policy formation and implementation and for the Resettlement Committee in Carlow, the mainstreaming plan was regarded as the main tool through which to achieve independent living for the families. Realisation of this plan meant a lot of work and collaboration. To begin with, an intensive round of consultation with relevant agencies was undertaken in November 2011 to ensure that a comprehensive, yet realistic strategy was devised. As outlined in the project plan (SC, 2011) the aim was to provide clear examples of targets and initiatives to be carried out in year 2 to make links between mainstream services and beneficiaries in a sustainable way. There was good attendance and a 'fantastic response' at these consultation meetings (Service provider, 2012) with many organisations taking a proactive yet flexible approach to suggested interventions and actions in their areas of expertise. The manner in which the mainstreaming plan was devised was recognised to be very open. With Carlow being a small area, members of the steering committee were familiar with their colleagues on the steering committee and had an understanding of the remit of each other's organisations. This benefitted the working relationships. Such was the success of their work on the programme that two key service providers were invited to represent Ireland at an EU Resettlement Programme Skills Share Day in Brussels in May 2012. At this conference, the work of the Carlow CDB Rohingya Resettlement Programme was referenced as an example of best practice (Cody and Moore, 2012).

Service providers themselves also spoke highly of the interagency approach to this work:

'Representatives kept coming back to the focus of the families. There was a lot of good will there and they were extremely committed to trying to support the families and trying to address the issues that came up. The focus of the work and the targeted approach is what made it a success' (Service provider, 2012).

'Everyone was there for the good of the Rohingyas' (Service provider, 2012).

This strategic approach with an emphasis on 'needs-driven' activities ensured a very productive year for the key personnel involved in the programme.

Findings and recommendations from the previous two evaluations indicted a real need for 'refresher courses' for the Rohingya community in a variety of social, economic and cultural areas. This was deemed necessary in order to deal with the perceived 'overload of

information' the families had received when getting accustomed to their new lives (Tittley, 2010 and 2011). Successful information sessions were organised on the topics of:

- Social Welfare entitlements (Social Welfare)
- Housing schemes and tenancy rights and responsibilities (Carlow County Council)
- The citizenship application process (St. Catherine's)
- Child protection (Barnardos)
- Citizenship responsibilities and the Justice system (An Garda Síochána)
- Information dissemination from MABS and Citizens Information Board
- Parenting support and ongoing therapeutic sessions (HSE Child Psychology Service)

St. Catherine's have also been working on the development of a 'user-friendly' directory of services for Carlow town, which will be distributed to the community at the end of the programme.

As has already been outlined, a significant achievement of the programme this year was the comprehensive forward thinking by service providers to plan for the official end of the programme. Connected to this, was the effective way in which the Resettlement Team in St. Catherine's communicated the end of the programme to the Rohingya families and enabled the 'beneficiaries to be aware of the end of the project' (SC 2011: 20). Staff ensured that all information regarding the end of the programme was related back to the families and that they were fully attentive to the changes afoot. As outlined in Section 3, the keen awareness among the Rohingya community about the programme coming to an end was very evident during the focus groups.

In their annual report (2011), Pobal indicate some emerging trends of outcomes which refugee projects should focus on. The work of the Carlow CDB Rohingya Resettlement Programme certainly reflects development and advancement in all of the following areas:

- Enhanced life skills and personal development of refugees
- Improved capacity to access services
- Improved skills/ capacities of statutory and community and voluntary bodies in their interaction with target groups

- Enhanced day to day interaction with the community (ERF, 2011)

4.2 Challenges

4.2.1 Language and Communication

In keeping with the previous evaluations, ongoing issues in relation to language and communication arose for many respondents. The basic integration principles of the Council of the European Union outline how knowledge of the host society's language is indispensable to integration and enabling migrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration. The Rohingya community were again supported in their language learning this year by the Co. Carlow VEC. It is important to stress, that in language learning, much like in all other areas of their social and cultural life, the Rohingya community are not a homogenous group and individual levels of language attainment vary greatly among the community. The adults were enrolled in multi-lingual, multi-level class groups, with some of the community participating in Vocational Training Opportunities Schemes (VTOS) or Back to Education Initiatives (BTEI). The Rohingya adults progressed very well in adult education and demonstrated great determination to succeed with the classes. In addition they have demonstrated willingness to participate in computer classes and informal conversation classes, also run by the VEC.

However, there are still massive needs to be addressed in the area of language learning and the community were acknowledged to be 'the least advantaged group I have ever encountered in terms of education' by one service provider (2012). Ongoing work in fostering expression, writing skills and maintaining progress will be needed when they return to adult literacy classes in September.

The transversal nature of language competency means it has been referenced already in several sections of the evaluation. Sufficient levels of English among the community will be needed for them to access employment, social welfare, housing, education and other services in the future. Service providers are concerned that there will be significant problems communicating with certain members of the community as a result of ongoing language issues.

Anecdotally, there seems to be greater concerns about the women in this regard:

‘Some of the women have good English, but some still have very basic English. They will find it very hard when they are out and about if they don’t have someone with them to help them. I would be worried about some of them getting left behind; the ones that still rely on their friend for translation for example. Also, understanding letters or engaging with services will be very hard for them without the formal supports’ (Service provider, 2012).

‘Male heads of house seem often to take on a directional and representative role, and this can sometimes impact on the progress of the women’s learning. In some houses, there is an over-reliance on one person for translation supports’ (Service provider, 2012).

It is important to note that ongoing language supports will also be needed for the young people, in order for them to have the confidence to express themselves and achieve meaningful levels of integration in the wider community (Service provider, 2012).

4.2.2 Ongoing vulnerability

Resettled refugees experience a relatively high rate of both physical and mental health problems as a result of their pre-migratory experiences (UNHCR, 2009). Many of the specific issues relating to the Rohingya experience, have been outlined in the aforementioned evaluations (Tittley, 2010 and 2011) but it is fair to say that their previous experiences of persecution and harassment has had a profound effect on them to this day. A core objective of the programme is to ‘provide the opportunity for the families to process the past and to develop coping mechanisms to deal with the present and focus on the future’ (SC, 2011: 2) and work in this area represented a significant part of the programme this year.

Individual and group counselling was offered and delivered to the families this year in order to support them to overcome/ cope with their previous trauma. A major concern of service providers however, is that the adults do not have sufficiently developed proficiency in English to engage with therapeutic services in a meaningful way.

‘The group present with a huge complexity of issues. They have suffered enormous trauma. They have poor education standards and poor language skills. There are issues in relation to school attendance as well as conflict between parents and children’ (Service provider, 2012).

Two interpreters were engaged during the year to work with the families in sessions relating to health and mental health. A specific budget line was availed of to provide interpretive support for sessions in Women's Aid and HSE Child Psychology Services, GP visits and some meetings with social workers. Service providers in these areas expressed a concern that it will be difficult to independently source and pay for interpreters to travel to Carlow next year and it would be poor practice to have translation for therapeutic sessions provided over the phone. They did not regard it to be possible to work effectively with the families without an interpreter. Access to ongoing translation supports to work with the community was therefore the primary concern of service providers in this area who believe that funded interpretation should be made available for the families regardless of whether the official programme is continuing.

'Even for the adults who have good English, they could still sometimes struggle to explain the core of the pain that they have. It is very hard to express yourself properly in a language that you are not fluent in' (Service provider, 2012).

Similarly, issues relating to low educational attainment also pose a challenge for work in this area. Several service providers spoke of poor attention spans and low retention of information and how many sessions were used to go back over material or recap the information covered.

The heterogeneity of the community is again very relevant when considering the issue of vulnerability. Many of the families are doing very well and are well-equipped to deal with the challenges of independent living in the coming year (Service providers, 2012). It must be noted however that varying levels of need undoubtedly exist among the group. Key stakeholders have expressed unease at the capacity of certain members of the Rohingya community to cope with the imminent withdrawal of supports. Areas such as home support, child protection, health issues, household management and language ability will still be problematic for certain individuals. While agencies have been made aware of these cases, there is still a fear that they might 'slip through the cracks' in certain instances. If there is a lack of coherent structure supporting these problems, there is concern that referrals to more targeted services will be needed in the future.

'There is still a huge level of need there, they are very vulnerable. You can't expect integration to happen quickly and without problems. It could take ten years and

even then some people may never fully recover from their experiences' (Service provider, 2012).

4.2.3 Teenagers

The two previous evaluations of the Resettlement Programme have raised issues in relation to the disengagement and potential marginalisation of some of the teenage boys in the Rohingya community. Research in 2012 reveals many stakeholders in the process still believe this sub-group of the community are in serious need of ongoing support and targeted interventions.

'The biggest challenge is still the teenage boys and the concerns about where they are heading. They are not attending school and we are trying to understand that. There was no real flexibility around education for them; school was not a good fit for them. They are disenfranchised' (Service provider, 2012).

Many respondents cited the practice of placing students in age-appropriate classes instead of level-appropriate classes as a significant starting point for some of the problems with the teenage boys. The young people were not able to effectively navigate the secondary school system and therefore were unable to engage fully with the opportunities that school presented for them. Previous evaluations outlined how fewer behavioural issues presented for Rohingya young people at primary level, whereas many of the teenagers had a challenging time dealing with complex identity issues at post-primary level. Upon arrival in school in 2009, the young people found it hard to communicate with their peers, express themselves, understand their teachers or follow the material.

'We need to be more flexible about education. From 12 onwards we need to look at education and provide an alternative for those for whom mainstream is not working. It's not about passing responsibility; it's about recognising an inappropriate system for young people who cannot cope with it because of their history' (Service provider, 2012).

'Low self-esteem, self-harm and depression are risks with older teenagers who are displaced, have experienced trauma and have been living in dysfunctional environments even if excellent supports are provided on arrival in the resettlement country. They are an extremely vulnerable group on arrival and a small setback can have a dramatic effect on how they integrate' (Thematic Evaluation 1: 2012).

Service providers are eager to prevent similar issues arising for some of the younger boys in the Rohingya community who are currently engaging well with the school system. There was a fear that there might be a 'knock-on' effect on some of the younger boys who enjoy

school, but might be influenced by the older boys. As was outlined in Section 3, there is also a perceived acceptance of their disengagement with formal education and service providers are mindful of the need for early intervention to prevent the situation from becoming more serious.

Some of the young boys who have left school have begun to participate in the VEC adult education programme and service providers note that this has been a positive move for them and they are coping very well in a multi-lingual environment. The basic principles of integration as identified by the EU emphasise how efforts in education are critical to preparing migrants and 'particularly their descendants to be more successful and more active participants in society' (1999). The Adult Refugee education programme in the VEC has been very successful for the adults and many service providers feel it may be an appropriate fit for some of the teenage boys as well. A targeted approach to this particular demographic has been included in the Mainstreaming Strategy and it is hoped that implementation of these interventions will lead to improved relationships with the teenage boys and key stakeholders in the future.

Broader concerns about the behaviour of some of the teenage boys were issues that the CRYs encountered and liaised with their interagency colleagues about during this period. Occasionally, interpersonal relationships between the community as a whole would also filter down to the young people and have a negative effect on planned programmes or attendance. While sexual health workshops were run during the year for the young people, anecdotal evidence would suggest further access to information in this area is needed for the community. Service providers working in this area also revealed some ongoing concerns for the young people in the future in relation to social isolation and a need for support to deal with racism or discrimination they may be exposed to. It is important to note that some concerns about the welfare of the teenage girls have also emerged this year. A targeted approach to work with this growing demographic has also been included in the mainstreaming plan.

Youth services will play a vital role in the long-term integration of the Rohingya young people. The interventions and support that CRYs has provided to the young people over the lifetime of the Resettlement Programme have been vital in terms of their social and

personal development. Youth workers continue to act as an important link between the young people and other opportunities in the community as a whole and their commitment to this work is ongoing, despite the official end of the Resettlement Programme.

4.2.4 Workplan

As has been referenced already, the period between July 2011 and June 2012 was a prolific one for the frontline staff and other stakeholders in the resettlement programme. Priorities for the programme included the development of a comprehensive mainstreaming strategy, ongoing work on the core objectives and the completion of an ambitious workplan for the final year. This period under review also included the immediate aftermath of the departure of the Intercultural Worker, which had a knock-on effect on the workload of the Resettlement Worker and resulted in a short-term standstill in the progress of the families. While this settled down in the medium-term, it was a significant period of adjustment which should not be understated.

Apart from the general preparation for the end of the programme, there has been a huge administrative workload for the frontline staff. Internal monitoring and evaluation against expected outcomes, record keeping, development of family plans, assistance with citizenship applications and regular reporting to stakeholders were quite time-consuming for those involved. The series of consultations for the mainstreaming strategy in addition to regular steering committee meetings involved a lot of central coordination on the part of the Resettlement Worker to support the collaboration in an effective way. Certain service providers worried that without this central coordination, the ongoing interagency work will not run as smoothly next year.

Section 5: Learning from the Carlow CDB Rohingya Resettlement Programme

In addition to providing an assessment of the final year of the project, it was envisioned that this evaluation would also document some of the main learning from the Carlow CDB Rohingya Resettlement Programme with a view to informing work on future resettlement programmes. A recent skills share day organised by the ERF (Cody and Moore, 2012) outlined how many resettlement programmes in Europe are still unstandardized and inputs and workshops on the day emphasised the importance of shared learning as a means to improving the design and implementation of upcoming projects. While the Resettlement Programme remained accountable to its core aims and objectives, there was also a sense that it was a learning exercise, a developmental process which could highlight challenges and celebrate good practice. It should be noted that given the unique nature of the Rohingya Resettlement Programme in Carlow, the original evaluations should be consulted for an in-depth account of the experience⁴. However, for wider observations about the structure and organisation of a resettlement programme, this section outlines some of the common points identified by respondents over the last three years.

5.1 Lead Agency and Resettlement Team

- The employment of a designated Resettlement Worker is an integral part of any Resettlement Programme. This person should act as a conduit between families and the wider community and support the Interagency approach through central coordination.
- The addition of an Intercultural Worker to provide appropriate and culturally sensitive interpretive support is essential in resettlement programmes with refugees for whom English is not a first language.
- A context-appropriate approach should be adopted when choosing the lead agency for the Resettlement Programme. In the case of the Carlow CDB Rohingya Resettlement Programme, the choice of a community centre which also houses

⁴ For the full text of the previous evaluation reports, please see: http://www.catherines.ie/images/Carlow_Rohingya_Resettlement_Programme_Evaluation_2010.pdf

other relevant service providers ensured a coherent base for the families during their initial period of adjustment.

- The use of Volunteer and Mentoring programmes, when resourced and supported by the Resettlement team can have a positive effect on the wider integration of the refugees into the community.

5.2 Interagency approach

- Central coordination of the interagency approach is essential for effective working relationships among stakeholders.
- Advanced planning, early commitment and structured collaboration among relevant service providers is central to the success of multi-agency workings.
- The work of the Steering Committee should focus on the context-specific needs of the people involved in the programme and avoid regarding the participants as a homogenous collective.
- There is a demonstrated need for flexibility of approaches to service provision within an interagency approach, in particular in relation to appropriate placements for young people in formal and informal education supports.

5.3 Mainstreaming Plan

- Planning for a Mainstreaming Plan or Exit Strategy should begin in the first year of any resettlement programme.
- A series of consultations with key stakeholders in the resettlement process should be arranged before the first draft of the Mainstreaming Plan is devised.
- A collaborative approach to the mainstreaming strategy should be promoted to ensure effective exchange of information.
- The final draft of the Mainstreaming Plan should be advertised and disseminated widely among the key stakeholders referenced in the plan.

5.4 Duration and nature of programme

- Pre-departure meetings between representatives of the Resettlement Team and resettlement participants in their country of origin should be organised where feasible.

- Dissemination of pre-departure information to the Resettlement Team, in particular in relation to specific cultural or religious needs, is essential in order to provide an effective welcome upon arrival in the host country.
- A realistic period of preparation time⁵ should be given to the host community prior to the arrival of the programme refugees.
- The duration of the Resettlement Programme should be decided on the basis of the complexity of needs evident among the programme participants. An initial period of one year's funding should be guaranteed, with a view to determining whether a three year plan is necessary.
- The finite nature of the resettlement programme should be clearly communicated to the participants and refugees should be supported in their understanding of what provisions are available to them during this time. A phased withdrawal of supports is recommended.

5.5 Partnership with participants

- At the centre of the Resettlement Programme should be a respect for the indigenous culture, heterogeneity and individuality of the programme participants.
- Programme participants should be engaged in all levels of the resettlement programme, including design, delivery and evaluation, through active consultation on a regular basis.
- A partnership approach to planning and decision making should be taken in order to promote co-operation between stakeholders and to ensure that all activities on the programme are culturally appropriate.
- Efforts should be made to empower programme participants through art, sport, music, leadership programmes and other opportunities for intercultural exchange.
- Longitudinal research into the experiences of the resettled refugees should be commissioned where possible.

⁵ A common recommendation from respondents was for a preparation period of six months, prior to programme participant's arrival in the host community.

Section 6: Conclusion

‘Research determines what can be done, needs assessment determines what should be done and evaluation determines how well something has been done’
(Mendenhall, 1973).

This report endeavours to represent a systematic collection of information from the research, needs assessments and evaluations that have been utilised by the Carlow CDB Rohingya Resettlement Programme in their work over the last few years. However, a Resettlement Programme is much more than just a workplan. It is an ethical and essential response from countries to the plight of the most vulnerable, traumatised and marginalised people in the world. Ireland maintains a positive reputation internationally (ERF, 2012) for its responsibilities to programme refugees and the Carlow CDB Rohingya Resettlement Programme is an excellent example of this. The arrival of the Rohingya community in Carlow in 2009 heralded the beginning of a challenging period of time for frontline service providers in the county. Nobody could have anticipated the impact they would have in the locality or the skills that would need to be developed by stakeholders to engage with their unique experiences and complexity of needs.

Integration is not a static concept; it is a complex process that takes many social and cultural considerations into account. Given the abstract nature of integration, it can be sometimes difficult to adequately quantify or account for progress in the area. However, findings from three separate evaluations have clearly demonstrated that the Carlow Rohingya CDB Resettlement Programme, ably led by St. Catherine’s Community Services Centre has provided high quality reception and integration support for the Rohingya community over the last few years. Frontline service providers have all demonstrated immense levels of commitment to their work on the Resettlement Programme, while operating within a broader national climate of constrained resources and ongoing cutbacks to core funding. The Resettlement Team in St. Catherine’s Community Services Centre have repeatedly gone above and beyond their responsibilities to the key deliverables and worked tirelessly to foster a shared sense of belonging for the families in Carlow. The dedication of all agencies involved in the Steering Committee has ensured that a new and safe home has been created for Rohingya community in Carlow. It must also be noted that the Rohingya community

themselves, in spite of having to cope with significant changes in all spheres of their life, have embraced the resettlement process and been willing partners in the work.

Central to this success of the programme was the three-year duration of supports. Research reveals that it would simply not have been possible to deliver a resettlement programme to the Rohingya community in less than this time and key stakeholders have expressed gratitude to Pobal for their sustained funding and support for the programme. However, as has been outlined in the body of the report, despite these successes, the level of need that still exists among the families should not be underestimated. Much work is still necessary in order to bring the families to a level where they can cope with the cultural and linguistic changes they still encounter on a daily basis and find context-appropriate ways of dealing with stress and pressure. It is essential that an understanding of the ongoing vulnerability of some of the Rohingya community is fostered among service providers in Carlow and that further supports are made available to both the families and the frontline providers as they continue their work on implementing the Mainstreaming Strategy.

It is evident from the experiences of the Carlow CDB Rohingya Resettlement Programme that resettlement is not a process that simply ends with the initial transfer of a refugee and their family to a host country. Neither is resettlement something that will end simply because the official programme of supports is finished. The integration that happens from now on is crucial to ensure that programme participants are empowered to become independent and productive members of society. The comprehensive Mainstreaming Strategy has ensured that key stakeholders are equipped with the tools to move forward in their work with the community from now on. However, mainstreaming is not about a 'one size fits all' approach, but more that the awareness of different needs and different models of service provision become central to the way the agencies operate. It is essential that key stakeholders in Carlow continue to collaborate effectively and be mindful of their responsibilities to meet the ongoing needs of the Rohingya community in an inclusive way for the years to come.

Section 7: References

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Appendix 1: List of agencies represented on the Steering Committee

- Carlow Local Authorities
- Carlow County Development Partnership
- St Catherine’s Community Services Centre
- Department of Social and Family Affairs
- Carlow Regional Youth Services
- Health Service Executive
- Carlow County Childcare Committee
- Department of Education and Skills
- An Garda Síochána
- Carlow Women’s Aid
- Barnardos
- County Carlow VEC
- Carlow and South Leinster Rape Crisis Centre
- National Education Welfare Board
- MABS
- Integration Centre
- Carlow Adult Learning Centre
- Carlow Women’s Aid
- Department of Social and Family Affairs
- Carlow Citizen’s Information Centre
- Primary Care & Child Psychology Service

Appendix 2: Profile of the Rohingya community in Carlow

	On arrival (2009)	2010	2011	2012
Adults (over 18)	23	22	27	30
Teenagers (ages 13 - 18)	14	16	15	12
Children (ages 2 – 12)	23	22	22	24
Babies (under 2)	4	5	5	5
Total	64	65	69	71