



International Organization for Migration  
Eagraíocht Idirnáisiúnta Um Imirce

## Mapping Exercise



# NIGERIA



July 2010

IOM Dublin

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International Organisation for Migration

Mission in Ireland

July 2010.

# NIGERIAN MAPPING EXERCISE REPORT

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## **Introduction**

### **1.1. Research Aims and Context**

The Nigerian mapping exercise aims to learn more about the information channels and networks used by the Nigerian Community in Ireland which will enhance and inform the communication strategy of the IOM Dublin office. Specifically it seeks to identify:

- i. The size and geographical distribution of the Nigerian community in Ireland
- ii. The social activities engaged in and networks used by the Nigerian community in Ireland
- iii. The information channels used by the Nigerian community
- iv. Any barriers faced by Nigerians in accessing migration related information

This mapping exercise for the Nigerian community in Ireland was carried out as part of a series of such initiatives following on from the most recent mapping exercises carried out in 2008, when the Georgian and Moldovan communities in Ireland were mapped. The IOM Dublin office intends to conduct further mapping exercises in the coming year.

### **1.2. Methodology and Sample**

The research took place between the end of March and the beginning of June 2010. The research was conducted mainly in Dublin, but this was also supplemented by visits outside Dublin for the purpose of holding focus groups in direct provision accommodation centres and meeting NGOs, service providers and representatives of the Nigerian community in various locations in Ireland including Limerick, Mayo, Longford, Clare, Waterford, and Cork.

A number of research methods were employed:

1. Desk research to review background information including but not limited to Census reports, statistics published by relevant bodies including the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC) and the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA), academic reports and publications, NGO publications.
2. Focus groups with residents of asylum seeker accommodation centres:

Knockalisheen, Co Clare; Kinsale Road, Cork; St Patrick's Monaghan and the Old Convent, Ballyhaunis. 42 Nigerian residents participated in the focus groups in total.

3. A questionnaire was distributed among the Nigerian community, which dealt with media and communications; assistance with immigration issues; community networks and general information.
4. In-depth interviews were conducted with service providers and others. This includes NGOs providing immigration advice and other services to migrants; migrant led groups; Citizens Information Centres; local partnership companies; local authorities and statutory agencies.

### **1.3 Ethics**

Given the sensitive nature of this mapping exercise, ensuring that ethical principles were respected at all stages during the research process was a primary concern for the researcher. Every effort was made to ensure that all participants were able to give their informed consent and that the aim and objectives of the research were clearly explained to focus group and interview participants.

Questionnaires were anonymous and particular care was taken in the design to avoid unnecessary questioning about personal circumstances. The participants in the focus groups were informed that involvement was voluntary. Names of questionnaire respondents, focus group participants and undocumented community members were not recorded by researchers.

### **1.4 Limitations**

The success of the mapping exercise was largely dependent on the willingness of representatives of the Nigerian community to take part in this research.

Undocumented Nigerians are particularly reluctant to make themselves available for research purposes and for this reason the research relied heavily on members of the Nigerian community who have legal status in Ireland or who are in the asylum process.

This research is also reliant on estimates and generalisations given by service providers and community members and cannot be considered an accurate quantitative study. The sample size for the survey is too small to be considered representative of the Nigerian community in Ireland.

In addition, more women than men participated in focus groups and completed questionnaires. One community worker noted that men often leave the accommodation centres during the day (when the focus groups took place) for example to go to the nearby city or town, whereas women, primarily as a result of their childcare responsibilities tended to remain in the centres more.

## 2.0 Overview of Nigerian Nationals in Ireland

### Historical migration

While several authors have noted that there has been an African migrant presence in Ireland since the 18<sup>th</sup> Century (many of these early migrants were soldiers and drummers drafted into a British army regiment based in Dublin)<sup>1</sup>, it is believed that recent Nigerian migration to Ireland first began after Nigerian independence from Britain in 1960. The numbers coming to Ireland continued to be very small until the 1990's though increasing slightly after the civil war in 1970. According to Komolafe, Nigerians who came to Ireland prior to 1981 tended to study, to undergo various kinds of training and to visit. Although there was a slight increase in Nigerian migration after 1981, the number of migrants was still relatively small. From 1996, there was a marked increase in the flow of Nigerian migrants, the majority of those seeking asylum on arrival or shortly after arrival.

### Recent migration

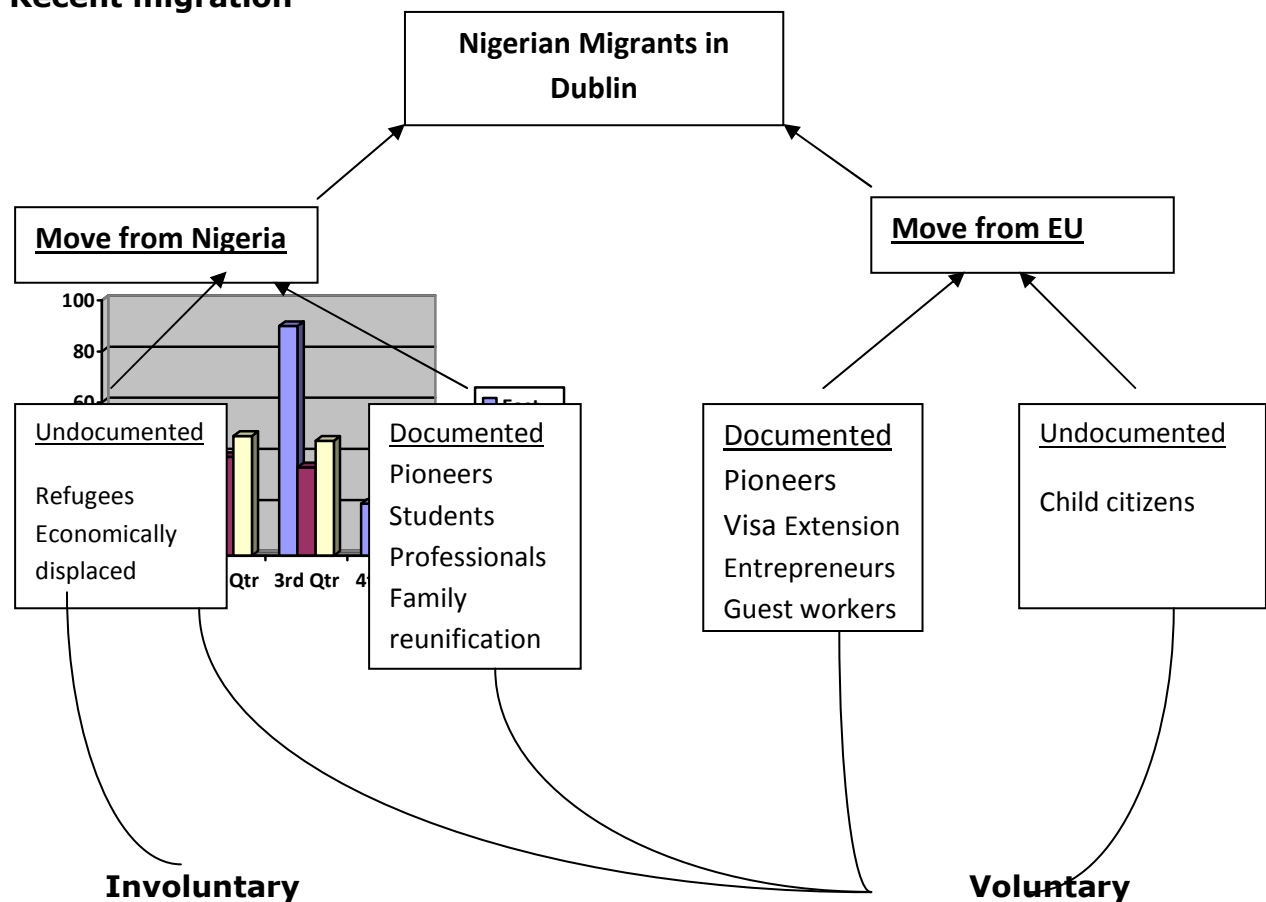


Figure 1: A typology of migration from Nigeria to Dublin<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ugba, *ibid.*,

<sup>2</sup> Taken from Komolafe, Julius, *ibid*, page 238.

According to the 2006 Census, there were 16,300 Nigerians living in Ireland in April 2006.<sup>3</sup> In the past four years, following the 2006 Census, approximately 4,000 Nigerians have applied for asylum. Other Nigerians will have arrived in Ireland to work under the work permit and Green Card schemes, as students, to join family members and for other reasons. In addition, some Nigerian nationals will have left the State for a number of reasons including their visa or other permission to remain has expired.

Some academics have questioned the accuracy of the 2002 Census in exactly measuring the African population in Ireland. Ugba has noted in his research on Africans in Ireland revealed that many 'undocumented' migrants did not 'present themselves for enumeration during the Census for fear of detection and possible deportation'.<sup>4</sup>

The Nigerian community is one of the most well-established migrant communities in Ireland. There is a strong movement towards integration and civic participation among many Nigerians in Ireland. In addition to active involvement with their own community and migrant community organisations, Ugba notes that Nigerians '...have set up more churches than other groups, championed anti-racism struggles and made a far greater foray into electoral politics than most groups'.<sup>5</sup> Nigerians in Ireland have also established themselves in journalism, academia, business and medicine. African shops (the majority of which are owned by Nigerians) are visible evidence of Nigerian entrepreneurs setting up business. The establishment of the Nigerian Irish Chamber of Commerce in 2006 and initiatives such as the first annual Nigerian-Irish Expo in 2009 also point to an active business sector among the Nigerian community in Ireland.

For several decades, Nigerian students have trained as medical professionals in the Royal College of Surgeons and in Trinity College. Nigerian doctors and health professionals are employed by the Health Service Executive (HSE). A recent audit of senior house officers (SHOs), registrars and other non-consultant hospital doctors was carried out by the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland

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<sup>3</sup> Central Statistics Office, (CSO) Census 2006, *Non-Irish Nationals Living in Ireland, Profiles 1-5, UK, Polish, Lithuanian, Nigerian, Latvian*. Available at: <http://www.cso.ie/releasepublications/documents/population/non-Irish/pages23-43.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Ugba, Abel, *A quantitative profile analysis of African immigrants in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Dublin*. <http://www.ethnicracialstudies.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/prelim-findings-2-pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Ugba, Abel, *Active Civic Participation of Immigrants in Ireland*, Country Report prepared for the European research project POLITIS, Oldenburg 2005. Available at: <http://www.politics-europe.uni-oldenburg.de/download/Ireland.pdf>

RCPI) and this revealed of the 2870 respondents to their research, 5% (over 140) of these were Nigerian nationals.<sup>6</sup>

According to interviewees for this mapping exercise, Nigerians have also begun to establish themselves in other professions, for example, banking, accountancy and the legal profession.

## **2.1 Trends in Nigerian migration**

According to Julius Komolafe, two main factors have led to international immigration from Nigeria – economic factors and factors to do with political and ethnic conflicts.

One of the reasons given by Ugba for relatively high rates of African migration to Ireland is its proximity to the UK where there has for some time been 'a larger, more settled population of sub-Saharan Africans' The importance of the linguistic affinity between Ireland and several African countries (including Nigeria) was also seen as a factor influencing their decisions to migrate here.

For more recent Nigerian migrants, there is an established Nigerian community in Ireland, particularly in cities and large towns and networks of support organisations, services including Nigerian shops, hairdressers and beauty salons, the establishment nationwide of Nigerian churches and the ready availability of African and Nigerian media particularly TV through the cable networks.

## **2.2 Legal Status of Nigerians in Ireland**

2.2.1 Refugee status and subsidiary protection. The majority of Nigerians now residing in Ireland have come by way of the asylum process. Between January 2001 and April 2010 inclusive, over 17,000 Nigerian nationals applied for a declaration as a refugee in Ireland – this figure includes adults and children (see Table 1 below). Nigeria has consistently been the single largest country of origin for asylum applicants in Ireland.

There are no statistics available for the number of Nigerians that have been declared a refugee, granted subsidiary protection or granted leave to remain. However the Refugee Appeals Tribunal only granted 3% of asylum appeals lodged by Nigerians in 2009, it is likely that the overall figure is quite low.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland, *National Audit of SHO and Registrar Posts*. Available at: <http://www.rcpi.ie/news/Documents/Audit%20Report%20Final%20-%20May%202008.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> The Irish Times, 'Tribunal rejects 92% of appeals', 27/04/2010

Table 1 Number of Applications for Asylum from Nigerian Nationals<sup>8</sup>.

Year	No of applicants
2001	3,461
2002	4,050
2003	3,110
2004	1,776
2005	1,278
2006	1,038
2007	1,028
2008	1,009
2009	569
2010*	157

\*to end of April 2010 only

According to statistics made available by the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA), there were 1726 Nigerian residents in asylum seeker accommodation centres at the end of February 2010 (the latest date for which statistics were available).<sup>9</sup>

#### 2.2.2 'Leave to remain'

The Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform announced recently that over 12,000 representations to the Minister, where he intends making a deportation order, pursuant to Section 3 of the Immigration Act, 1999 (as amended) are still pending. These representations are often referred to as an application for leave to remain and may be made when the Minister informs an individual that he intends to make a deportation order in respect of him/her. This may occur after a final negative decision on the person's application for a declaration as a refugee or in other circumstances including where the person becomes undocumented for example on the expiry of a Work Permit or Student Visa.

It is unclear how many of these applicants for 'leave to remain' are Nigerian nationals. It could be argued that as approximately 20% of applications for a declaration as a refugee are from Nigerian citizens, they would also account for a significant number of applications for 'leave to remain'.

#### 2.2.3 Persons granted permission to remain under the IBC05 Scheme<sup>10</sup>

Almost 17,000 parents of Irish citizen children were granted permission to remain under the IBC 05 Scheme, 6246 of these were Nigerian nationals.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Figures available from the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC), [www.orac.ie](http://www.orac.ie)

<sup>9</sup> Statistics available from the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) at [www.ria.gov.ie/statistics/2010\\_Statistics/](http://www.ria.gov.ie/statistics/2010_Statistics/)

<sup>10</sup> This was an administrative scheme introduced in January 2005, whereby non parents of Irish children born in Ireland before 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005, could apply for permission to remain on the basis of their Irish citizen child.

#### 2.2.4 Undocumented Nigerian nationals.

It is impossible to estimate how many Nigerian nationals are undocumented in Ireland. Undocumented migrants may have arrived in the State irregularly or became undocumented after a period of lawful residence, for example, a person who remained in the state after his/her work permit expired.

Service providers have indicated that some Nigerian asylum seekers have left their accommodation centres apparently without notice so may become undocumented. Some specialist NGOs have pointed to the fact that there has been an increase in deportations of Nigerian nationals and this has created a situation where many residents are very anxious regarding the outcome of their own case,

Since the ending of the IBC 05 Scheme, relatives of families granted permission to remain on the basis of their Irish citizen child have joined the families irregularly. These relatives were mainly fathers of the Irish children although some siblings also arrived to join their families.

Ruhama have reported an increase in Nigerian women, who were presumed victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation using their service. In 2008, 24 Nigerian women used their service, an increase from 13 in 2007.<sup>12</sup> It is unclear whether these women had legal status in Ireland or were irregular.

Irregular migrants are particularly vulnerable to homelessness, however, organisations working with homeless people in Ireland are not aware of a problem of homelessness among Nigerians. Statistics on homelessness according to nationality are generally available according to 'EU' or 'non-EU', so it is not possible to determine how many if any Nigerian nationals are in fact homeless in Ireland. Some specialist NGOs noted that 'Nigerians look after each other' and would assist a friend who may otherwise be homeless so the problem does not arise in a visible way as for some other nationalities.

### 2.3 Distribution of Nigerians in Ireland

The Nigerian community is one of the most urbanised of migrant communities in Ireland. According to the last census, only 4% lived in rural areas.<sup>13</sup> The majority of Nigerians live in urban areas or large towns, with small towns also proving unpopular. The Census reveals that the majority of Nigerians in Ireland live in Dublin city and suburbs, other cities and their suburbs and towns with populations of over 10,000.

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<sup>11</sup> Figures available for the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform

<sup>12</sup> Ruhama, *Biennial Report 2009*, Available at:

[http://www.ruhame.ie/easyedit/files/Biennial\\_Report\\_2007-2008.pdf](http://www.ruhame.ie/easyedit/files/Biennial_Report_2007-2008.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Census 2006 – Non-Irish nationals living in Ireland. Available at:

<http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/documents/population/non-Irish/pages23-43.pdf>

## Distribution of Nigerians in Ireland

- Dublin city and suburbs
- Other cities and suburbs
- Towns with population over 10,000
- Towns between 5,000-9,999
- Towns between 1,500-4,999
- Rural

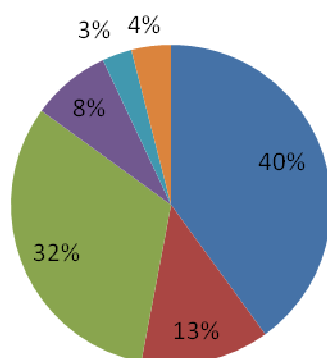


Figure 3: Distribution of Nigerians in Ireland – Census 2006

The Census recorded that 6,372 Nigerians lived in Dublin City and suburbs. The first Nigerian immigrants tended to live in inner city Dublin but over the years, increasing numbers of Nigerians have moved to suburbs including Clondalkin, Tallaght and Blanchardstown. Nigerians have also moved in relatively large numbers to large towns in North county Dublin including Balbriggan and Swords. A clear majority of the Nigerian community reside in Leinster, with Meath, Louth and Kildare providing popular.

A quarter of Nigerians were aged under 15 and 15% were in their 20's. The single largest age group of Nigerians in Ireland is the 30's with over 40% being in their 30's at the time of the Census.

The majority of Nigerian households in Ireland are comprised of a couple with children. See chart below.

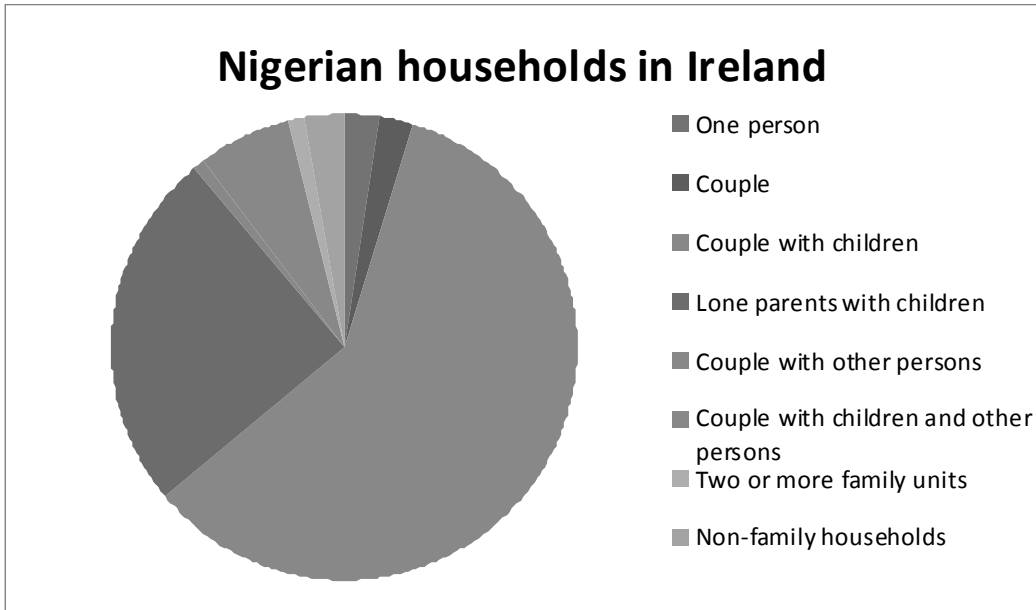


Figure 4: Composition of Nigerian households in Ireland (Census 2006)

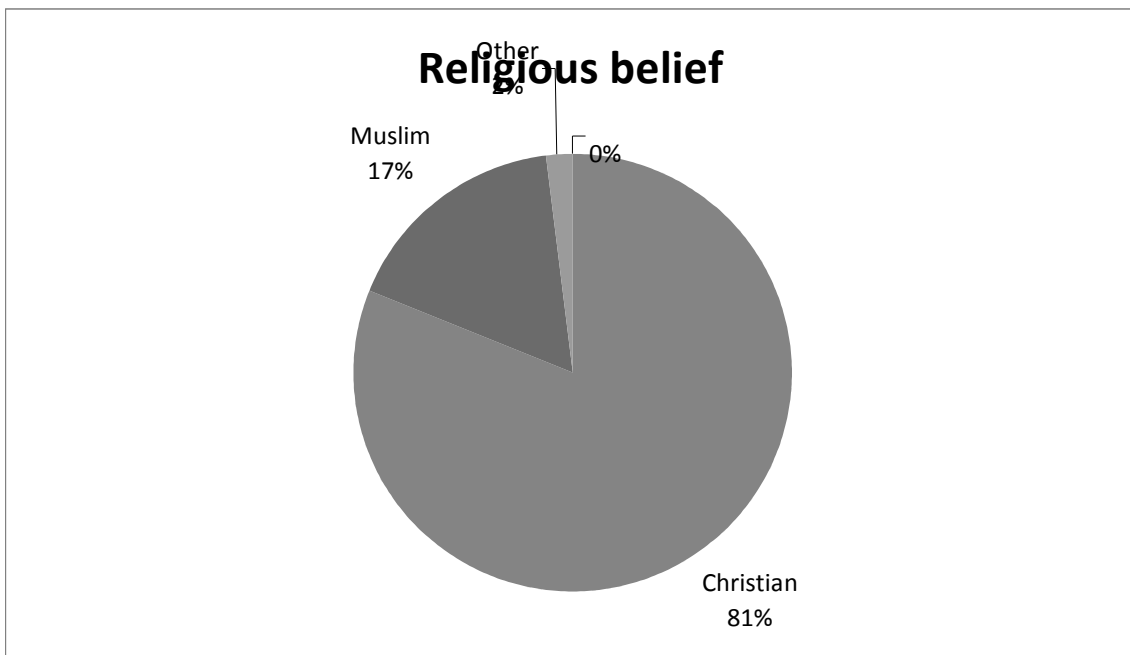


Figure 5: Religious belief among Nigerians in Ireland 1996-2000<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Komolafe, Julius, Nigerians in Dublin ca. 1980-2000, patterns and processes of migration. M Litt (Geography) Thesis 2003 (unpublished), page 87.

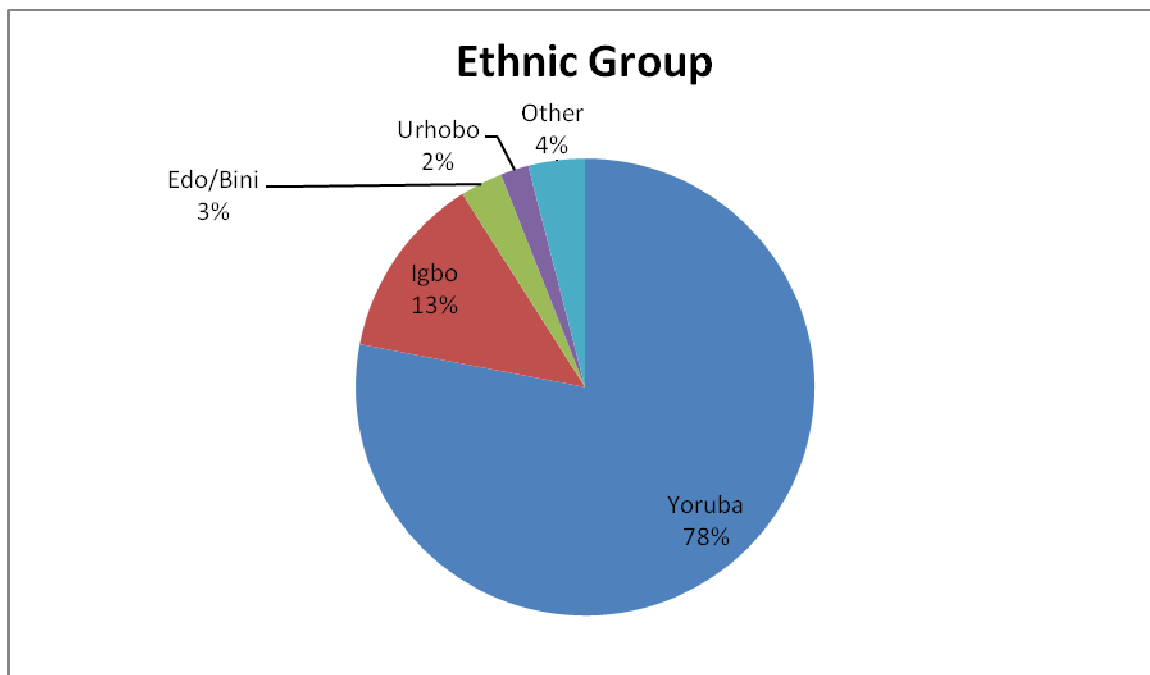


Figure 6: Ethnic composition of Nigerian community in Ireland 1996-2000<sup>15</sup>

A number of factors identified in the Census are significant in relation to providing information to the Nigerian population. Most reside in urban areas or in large towns which makes the task of distributing information easier. 53% of Nigerians in Ireland are urban dwellers, living in either Dublin and its suburbs or other cities and their suburbs with a further 32% living in large towns. Information channels including specialist NGOs, migrant led groups, African churches and shops and service providers are much more likely to be located in larger cities and towns and migrants also have more access to the internet through the existence of internet cafes, libraries and organisations such as the New Communities Partnership (NCP).

Research on Nigerian migration to Ireland has demonstrated that Nigerians identify themselves as being part of an ethnic group and the main Nigerian ethnic groups in Ireland (the Yoruba, Igbo and Edo/Bini communities) as well as some of the smaller groups have formed organisation to support and provide information to their communities. The majority of Nigerians living in Ireland are Christian and there are Nigerian/African churches based throughout Ireland. There is also a significant number of Nigerian Muslims in Ireland.

<sup>15</sup> Komolafe, Julius, *ibid*, page 78.

### **3.0 Overview of Information channels**

#### **3.1 Migrant led organisations**

Nigerian organisations are primarily divided according to ethnicity, for example, the Bini Community in Ireland and the Igbo Progressive Union and by location for example the Association of Nigerians in Galway. Many of the smaller Nigerian community groups are members of the Nigerian Association Network in Ireland (NANI), of migrant led networks including AkiDwA and the New Communities Partnership and of wider community networks including the Integration Centre.

Many Nigerians are also involved in African community organisations, including the Africa Centre, the African Cultural Awareness Project and the Integration of African Children in Ireland.

As the Immigrant Council have pointed out, some migrant led organisations are well established and others are more informal.<sup>16</sup> These groups provide a range of services and supports despite for the most part being poorly resourced or completely voluntary. Many migrant led organisations provide information to their members either informally through word of mouth or formally through providing information sessions sometimes in conjunction with national organisations and on their websites, for example the Bini Community website, [www.binicommunityireland.org](http://www.binicommunityireland.org)

Another important role played by migrant led groups is organising community and celebratory events. These include events in relation to Africa Day or Nigerian Independence Day and social, cultural, sporting and business initiatives such as the Miss Nigeria Ireland competition, the Africa Centre Mini World Cup tournament and Nigerian Irish Expo. These events are usually well attended by Nigerians and provide the community with the opportunity to meet and exchange information.

Many respondents indicated that they trusted migrant led groups and the information they received from these groups. 'Trust' was the word most often heard among Nigerians interviewees and focus group participants in relation to migrant led organisations. They also often believe that migrant led organisations understand their situation better in particular in relation to issues such as return (whether voluntary or forced).

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<sup>16</sup> Immigration Council of Ireland, *Directory of Migrant Led Organisations*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Available at [www.immigrantcouncil.ie/images/9108\\_MLODirectory0509.pdf](http://www.immigrantcouncil.ie/images/9108_MLODirectory0509.pdf).

### **3.2 Churches**

There has been a significant growth in the number of African/Nigerian churches in Ireland in recent years. These churches are generally Evangelical or Pentecostal and often have ecclesiastical links to churches in Nigeria or the United States. Church membership plays a key part in the lives of Nigerians. Nigerian churches do not simply fulfil the religious needs of the community; they also provide a range of religious, social and cultural activities and facilities.

Nigerian Church membership in Ireland cuts across ethnic and political divisions: while many Nigerian organisations are divided along ethnic lines, members of different ethnic groups will attend the same church. According to Komolafe, Muslim Nigerians often attend church activities.

Churches have become formal and informal communication channels as information can be spread directly through the church or by word of mouth as people meet each other in church or other faith based activities. The Mosques play a similar role in the lives of many Muslim Nigerians.

### **3.3 Specialist NGOs**

There are well established specialist immigration/asylum NGOs in Dublin, other main cities and some large towns. While all the specialist NGOs interviewed indicated that they had Nigerian clients, some said that the numbers have decreased in recent years. This is most likely to be as a result in the decline in the number of Nigerian migrants coming to Ireland. A specialist NGO representative in Dublin city said that she believed the decline in numbers was due to Nigerians moving to suburbs rather than residing in the inner city as was usual until recently.

While specialist NGOs were traditionally one of the main sources of information for migrants, that no longer seems to be the case for the majority of Nigerians that participated in this research. Those that did consult specialist NGOs tend to also rely on other sources of information. The majority depend on information from Nigerian or African led community groups, friends and family.

### **3.4 Service Providers**

There are a number of service providers that provide services to migrants and the wider community nationwide. In terms of information the Citizens Information Services is the most significant with 42 CISs providing information services in 268 locations. While respondents indicated that Nigerians use these services, use of the CIC services among Nigerians is less than among some other national groups

One Nigerian information worker explained the lack of uptake of these services and those of NGOs in terms of lack of awareness. 'If you come from Nigeria, you do not have a culture of these services so you don't look for them'.

### **3.5 Mainstream organisations**

In recent years, mainstream organisations that work on social exclusion issues or with vulnerable or marginalised groups have increasingly targeted migrants. These include Partnership and Local Development Companies, Community Development Projects (CDPs), Family Resource Centres and Women's Resource Centres. Similarly NGOs that work on issues such as homelessness and mental health find that their work with migrant communities is increasing.

Of the 14 Partnerships and Local Development Companies that responded, 13 indicated that they worked with migrants including in most cases Nigerian nationals. This work includes capacity building with migrant led groups, leadership training, community work with asylum seekers in an accommodation centre, organising women's groups and maintaining a Facebook page with information for migrants living in the local community.

### **3.6 Internet/Facebook and other electronic sources**

The majority of Nigerians (with the exception of residents of asylum seeker accommodation centres) and representatives of NGOs and migrant led organisations noted the importance of Facebook as a social networking site for Nigerians in Ireland. They can keep in contact easily with family and friends in Nigeria and in Ireland. In addition, many specialist NGOs are also on Facebook.

Although some questionnaire respondents have indicated that they use Nigerian social networking sites, these do not appear as popular as Facebook among Nigerians.

Most specialist NGOs and some migrant led organisations have websites which contain a wide range of information that is useful to migrants. This can range from Information provided by the State and State Agencies including the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Services (INIS) and the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC), specialist NGOs, service providers and migrant led groups.

A number of websites, online magazines and blogs have been set up by migrants. The Galway Asylum Seekers Community Newsletter was established by residents in the Eglinton Hotel on the outskirts of Galway city. It is a regular online magazine containing information on a range of issues of interest to the

asylum seeker community in Galway. It is available n <http://galwayasylumseekers.blogspot.com>

The African Community Online Interactive Portal, which won a Social Entrepreneurs Ireland award is another example of an initiative founded by African migrants in Ireland and provides opportunities for community interaction, knowledge sharing and support to members of the African community in Ireland.

### **3.7 Word of Mouth**

The majority of Nigerians surveyed for this research (through individual interviews, focus groups or questionnaires) have said that word of mouth is the most important information channel for Nigerians living in Ireland and Nigerian community groups will inform members who will then inform other friends and relatives.

### **3.8 Media**

Metro Eireann is a well established weekly multicultural newspaper founded by Chinedu Onyejelem and Abel Ugba in April 2000. This is reasonably widely available and popular with the Nigerian community, however, people living in rural areas and in accommodation centres were unable to get Metro Eireann on a regular basis. The African Voice is a monthly multicultural newspaper distributed through community groups, NGOs, service providers and others and is not generally available outside large centres of population. Whereas these newspapers focus on migrant and general issues, Nigerian Scene is a recently founded newspaper aimed at the Nigerian community in Ireland. There have been three editions to date and it is distributed through Nigerian community groups, NGOs and others.

There are several Nigerian magazines that are popular with Nigerians residing in urban areas. According to respondents, these magazines are only available in Dublin and to a lesser extent in other cities. The most popular are Bold & Beautiful and Xclusive. Some respondents have indicated that Nigerians in Ireland also read local free newspapers and other Irish newspapers if there are articles of interest for example dealing with immigration.

African and Nigerian TV stations widely available through the cable TV networks are popular with Nigerians in particular AIT and Ben TV.

Other information channels include African shops and businesses including hairdressers, internet providers and money transfer bureau. Community celebrations including Nigerian Independence Day, Africa Day and events celebrated by Nigerian minority ethnic communities are also useful informal information channels.

## **4.0 Findings**

### **4.1 Interviews**

#### *Knowledge of Nigerian/African media in Ireland*

Nigerian groups were more aware of African and Nigerian media not produced in Ireland. One Nigerian community worker noted that the key concern for Nigerians in relation to media is news from home, second is news in Ireland that is relevant to them (around immigration etc) and then general news from Ireland. This therefore influenced their choice of media.

Many interviewees emphasised the importance of the internet in particular Facebook. It was generally agreed that many people were on Facebook and according to Nigerian interviewees, it was very useful also for keeping in contact with people at home in addition to friends in Ireland.

Respondents agreed that it is quite difficult to get African papers like Metro Eireann and the African Voice in cities and towns outside Dublin, however people would pass them on among their friends though. According to some respondents, the Nigerian community tend to read free local newspapers but do not buy Irish papers, unless for example they saw a headline that was relevant to them.

#### *Information channels – formal and informal, used by the Nigerian community in their area and in Ireland generally*

Information was often spread informally through the Nigerian community through word of mouth including emails and texts. Nigerian community groups interviewed said that they spread information to their community by formal means including their website and less formal means such as phone, emails and texts.

Some specialist NGOs and service providers reported an increase in Nigerian clients if they had staff from Nigeria. Events such as Nigeria Independence Day, Africa Day and the Bold & Beautiful Awards were also opportunities for people to come together, network and exchange information

#### *Community groups – local and national*

Community groups can be categorised as follows:

1. African/migrant community groups. These include well established national groups including AkiDWA, the Africa Centre and the New Communities Partnership. Nigerians play an active part all these organisations according to interviewees. The work of these groups includes capacity building,

integration activities and information provision. This can include information on events of interest to migrant communities and information on immigration issues in particular when there are changes in the law or in procedure.

2. Nigerian community groups. These are often organised on the basis of ethnicity. A representative of the Bini (Edo) community described the work of his organisation as 1. Integration. It works with the community in relation to how they can best integrate in Ireland, giving something back, participating in the host community. 2. Providing solidarity and support for each other 3. Providing information on issues like education which is very important to the Bini Community. Many try to further their education in Ireland and the organisation tries to obtain useful information for members seeking to further their education 4. Engaging with the local community through cultural events, e.g. an African Drumming Session held in a secondary school in Finglas.

### *Best way of spreading information to the Nigerian community locally and nationally*

Most respondents said that in their view the best way of spreading information among the Nigerian community would be to contact community leaders/community groups and they would spread the information among their contacts/members/friends. People also trusted what they heard from community leaders. Interviewees believed that it would be necessary to identify key community leaders/community groups in each area and they indicated that NGOs could assist in identifying these groups.

Some participants believed that the CICs would be a good way of spreading information, in particular in areas where there are no NGOs and people will use the CICs in these areas. Other information channels mentioned included African shops and hairdressers, Nigerian churches, Mosques, and at community events. These events are usually well advertised within the community and are often well attended. These events include the Nigerian Irish Expo which was launched last year and one of the organiser interviewed hoped that this would become an annual event. In addition the Nigerian Association Network of Ireland are also planning a conference for Summer 2010 which they envisage will be widely attended. Added to these are events organised by SARI, the Africa Centre, AkiDwA and other groups. Nigerian ethnic minority groups also organise events and celebrate festivals relevant to their group, for example, the Bini community organise a Bini Cultural Day each year around July.

### *Overview of Regional Nigerian communities*

Outside Dublin and other cities such as Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford, there are sizable Nigerian communities in Louth, Meath and Kildare and also in Longford and Portlaoise.

## 4.2 Questionnaire

### *Languages Spoken*

The majority of Nigerian nationals that completed the questionnaire indicated that their level of English was 'fluent' or 'very good'.

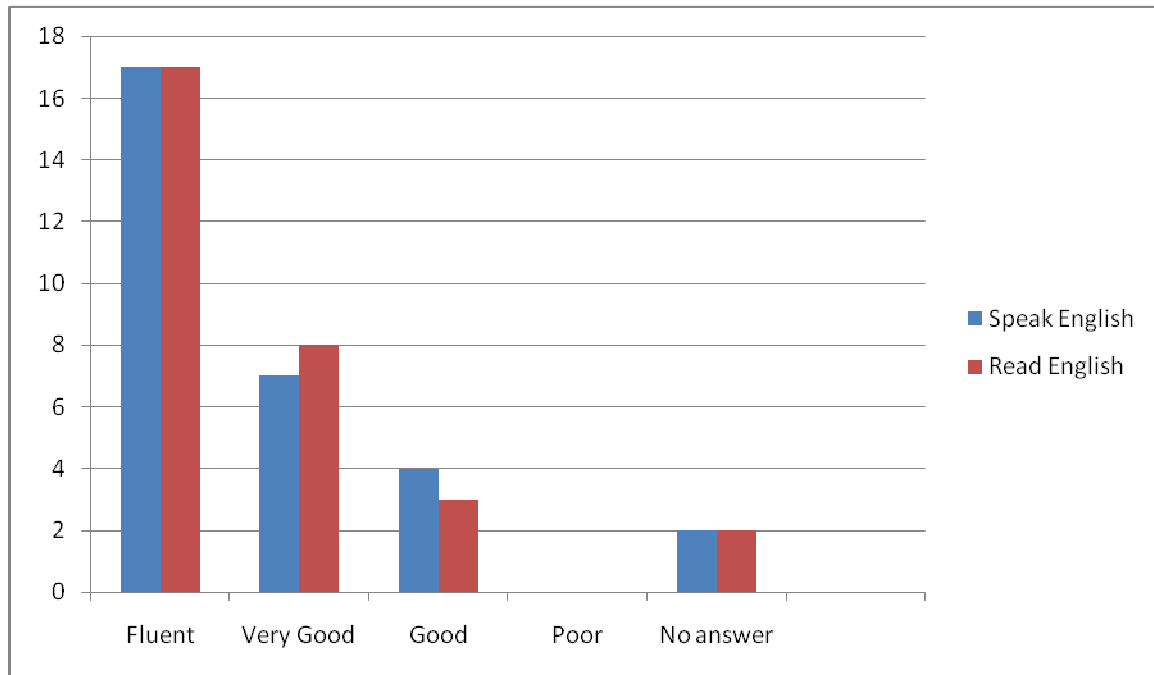


Figure 6: Levels of ability to speak and read English among respondents

The most common Nigerian language spoken among the Nigerian community in Ireland is Yoruba, followed by Igbo, Hausa and Edo. The majority of respondents were able to speak or read more than one Nigerian language with varying degrees of fluency.

### *Newspapers, Internet and other Media*

Over 77% of respondents indicated that they read one or more Irish newspapers. Only three participants said that they read Irish newspapers 'a lot' and a further 14 or 45% indicated that they read Irish newspapers 'often'. The choice of newspapers range from local free newspapers to national broadsheets and Irish editions of UK tabloids. There was no consistent pattern in readership and no papers proved particularly popular with respondents, however, the Irish Times, the Irish Independent and the Irish Daily Mail were the most popular with each having four readers among the respondents. These findings also correspond to those from the interviews which indicated that many Nigerians did not buy an Irish newspaper on a regular basis due often to the prohibitive cost (particularly of the broadsheets) and tended only to buy them if there was an

article about immigration for example. Almost 13% of respondents said they read African newspapers 'a lot' or 'often'. This may be indicative of the difficulties experienced in accessing these papers outside Dublin and other large centres of population. A further 55% said that they read African papers but 'not often'. The African Voice with a readership of 23% was the most popular African paper, followed by Metro Eireann, both of which are published in Ireland. Respondents also mentioned newspapers and magazines published outside Ireland including Economium, Punch and Alawiye. Only 1 respondent said that s/he read a Nigerian newspaper 'a lot' and a further 6 respondents (19%) said that they read Nigerian papers 'often'. Again the relatively low readership could be explained by lack of availability and some of those who read Nigerian papers indicated that they did so online. Less than 10% of respondents said that they read a newspaper in a language other than English.

Over 70% of respondents said that they listened to radio 'a lot' or 'often', with 32% saying they listened to 2FM and 29% to RTE. Other popular radio stations were Today FM, Newstalk and local stations such as Midwest Radio, Clare FM, Limerick Live and Red FM and C103 in Cork. While 77% of participants also indicated that they listened to programmes targeted at migrants, none mentioned a specific programme.

#### *Internet use*

The majority of questionnaire respondents indicated that they used the internet with most respondents using it relatively frequently (2 respondents did not answer this question). This finding confirms the findings of interviews with Nigerian community groups and service providers that the internet is very important for Nigerians in Ireland as a channel of communications with friends and relatives and a source of information in particular on events in Nigeria.

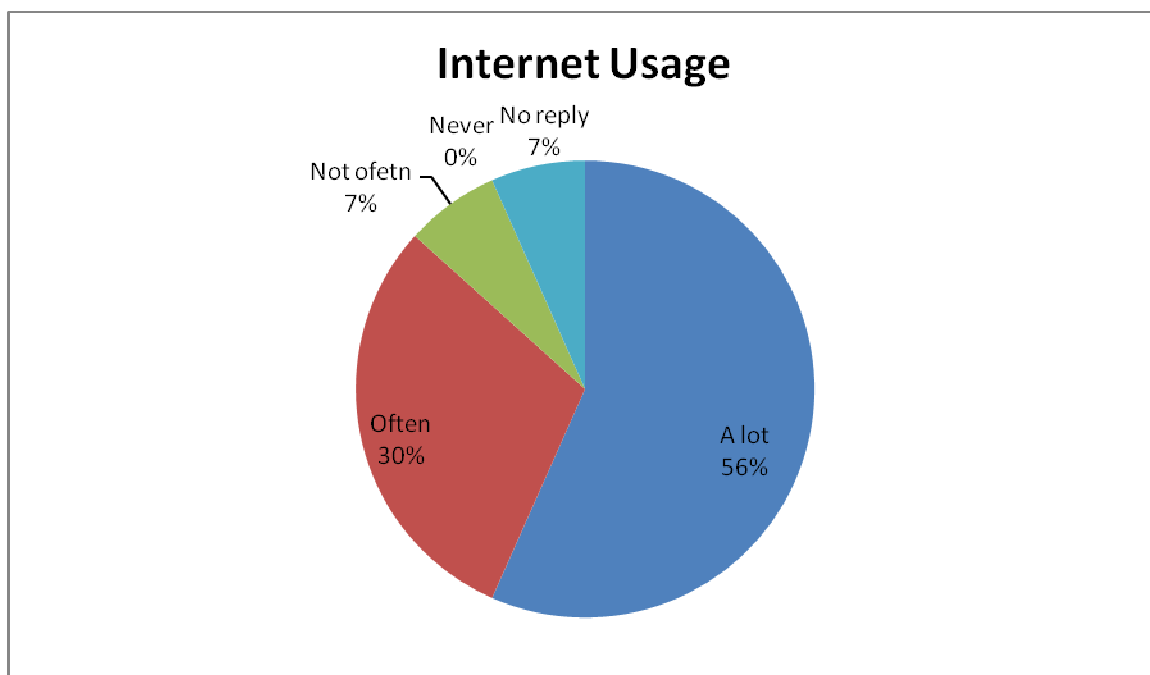


Figure 9: Levels of internet use among respondents

Almost 39% of respondents said that they used Nigerian social forums/networks on the internet 'a lot' or 'often' and Facebook was the most popular social forum used by respondents, again confirming the interview findings. Others mentioned were Naija pals ([www.naijapals.com](http://www.naijapals.com)), Online Nigeria ([www.onlinenigeria.com](http://www.onlinenigeria.com)), Bini Community Ireland Forum, Naijatube and Twitter.

#### *Information about Nigeria and the Nigerian community in Ireland*

In response to the question 'Where do you find out information about the Nigerian community in Ireland (e.g. events run by the community)?', a diverse range of responses were provided including other Nigerians; Nigerian Embassy Website, friends, family, local support group, New Communities Partnership, Citizens Information Service, word of mouth, church, Irish Refugee Council, local Women's Network, Evening Herald, Internet, Nigerian community groups and African Daily.

Respondents relied on three main sources for news from Nigeria: TV, the internet and friends and family. The internet was the single most important source of information with 60% of respondents confirming that they found out about news from home through the internet. TV stations included AIT TV, Ben TV, NTA and Hi TV, some respondents answered African TV or Nigerian TV without specifying a particular channel or programme.

Most respondents (55%) took part in local community activities with the majority finding out about these events through friends. Other sources of

information about these events included the local women’s network, local shops newsletters, emails and posters. Some respondents that lived in asylum seeker accommodation centres said that they got information about community activities from other residents. Organisations including specialist NGOs, Partnerships and migrant led organisations email their members or people on their mailing list regarding upcoming events and some of these organisations produce a newsletter or e-Bulletin with information updates including forthcoming events.

*Information on/assistance with immigration/asylum issues*

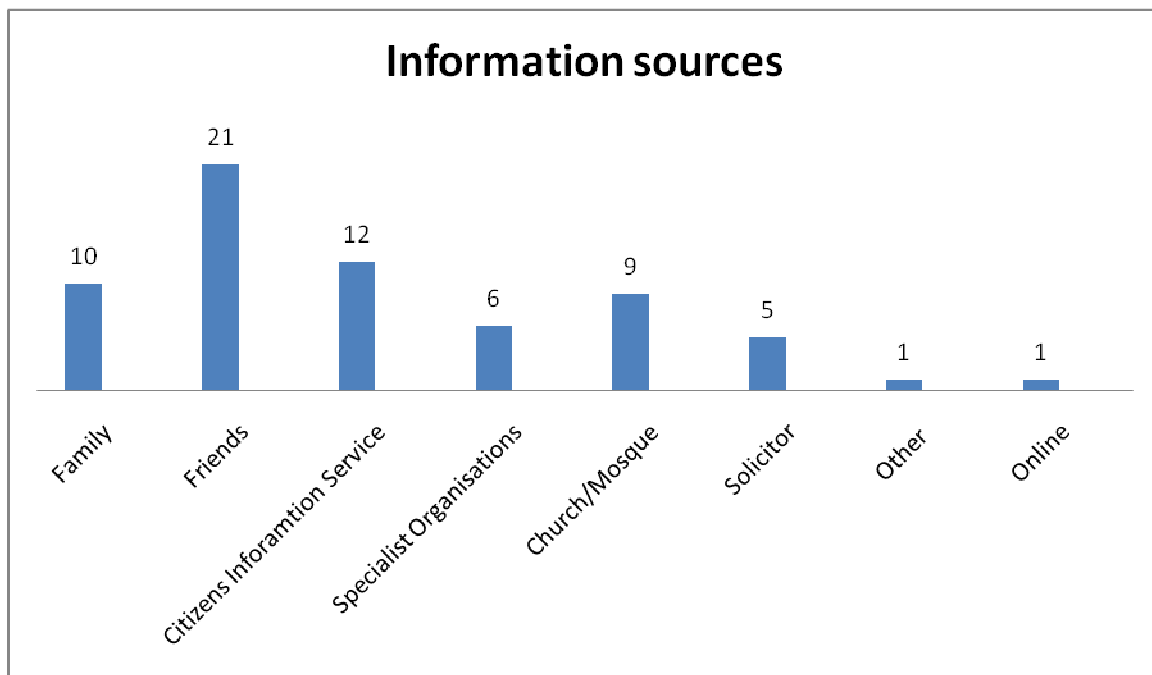


Figure 10: Sources of information on immigration related issues

Most respondents relied on several sources of information on immigration issues, however the single most important source of information on these issues is friends, followed by the Citizens Information Service, family and the Church or Mosque. Less than 20% of respondents consulted specialist organisations for information on immigration and only 16% got legal advice from a solicitor. In the latter case, migrants who are not in the asylum process do not appear to consult a solicitor, one of the reasons being the cost for some individuals at least. Many specialist organisations are based in large cities and may not be convenient for some respondents.

From the responses given to this question, it appears that most Nigerians rely primarily on individuals and groups in their own community for advice on immigration issues and this is also borne out by the interview findings.

The majority of respondents were familiar with organisations in Ireland that give advice and assistance on immigration and asylum, and over half said that they had contacted at least one such organisation. Organisations listed include Irish Refugee Council, AkiDwA, Legal Aid, Citizens Information Centre, Doras Luimni, Nasc, Le Cheile, Immigrant Council of Ireland, New Communities Partnership and local Partnership. Those who did not contact organisations giving advice on immigration/asylum issues gave the following reason for not so doing: they get advice through family and friends; they do not think such organisations could help them and they do not have legal status in Ireland, they got advice from their solicitor or they did not know enough about these organisations 42% of respondents said that they consulted websites for information about immigration with Government websites including [www.inis.gov.ie](http://www.inis.gov.ie) and [www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie) being the most popular. Some respondents also consulted the Citizens Information website – [www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie), NGO websites and Nigerian community group website such as [www.binicommunityireland.com](http://www.binicommunityireland.com). Just over half of all respondents indicated that they would like to receive more information on immigration issues.

#### *Community and local services*

Over 60% of respondents said that they knew at least 50 other Nigerians living in Ireland. Interview respondents from the Nigerian community noted the tendency of Nigerians to live the same areas of large cities for example Dooradoyle in Limerick; Blackpool, Ballincollig and Carrigaline in Cork and suburbs such as Blanchardstown in Dublin.

Most respondents (67%) met other Nigerians through attending Church or the Mosque or other faith based activities. A slightly lesser number met fellow country people through events organised by Nigerian community groups and through family events. Smaller numbers met through sporting events or through other means such as local support groups or African shops.

Respondents were aware of a number of social and cultural events organised for the Nigerian community in Ireland, these included New Yam Festival; Nigerian Association events; Nigeria Day; Africa Day; Events to give information about residency, multicultural events, Bini Festival and St Patricks Day.

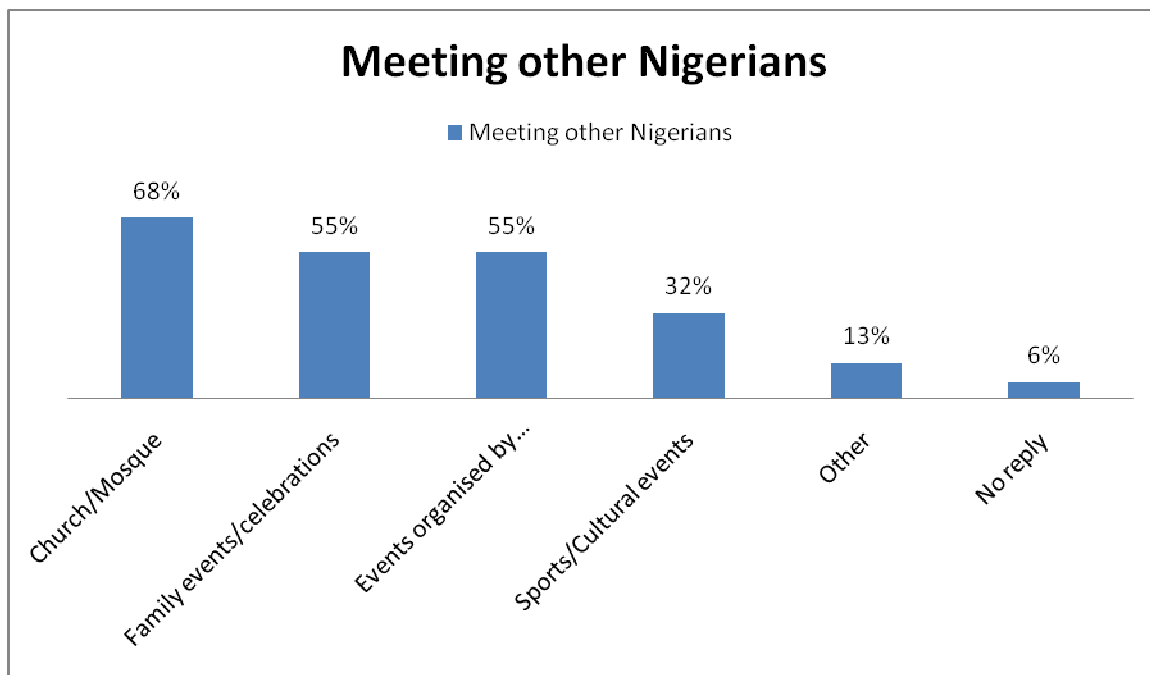


Figure 11: Ways in which respondents met other Nigerians living in Ireland

Respondents did not agree on how best to get information to Nigerians living in Ireland. The suggestions included Media and TV; African Shops; African Churches, Children's school, local support groups, Facebook; Word of Mouth through the (Nigerian) community; Email; Nigerian Associations; ; Internet; Church/Mosque; Local Shops; Door to Door and Newsletter;

### *Local services*

The majority of respondents use Nigerian and African services frequently. Over 60% shop in African/Nigerian shops 'a lot' or 'often'. Over 70% of respondents indicated that they attend church or the Mosque 'a lot' or 'often'. The most widely attended church was the Redeemed Christian Church of God, with 32% of participants stating that they attend this church. Other African and local churches were also attended by respondents.

Only 32% of respondents dined in African restaurants and then only rarely. Only one respondent indicated that s/he dined 'often' in an African restaurant. This may be explained by fact that while African shops are common in most cities and large towns, other African services including restaurants are still relatively rare. Those who responded said that they ate in restaurants in Dublin and Cork cities. More respondents attended African/Nigerian hairdressers but less than 10% said that they attended often. Other African/Nigerian services used include Money Transfer Bureau, and internet services.

## *General Information*

Approximately 17% of respondents did not complete this section, some respondents left the section completely unanswered and some only completed some of the questions. It is likely that as this section asked general questions about status and future intentions as well as the age and gender of the respondent that some people may have been worried that they could be identified in some way, despite reassurances provided by letter to each respondent.

The majority of respondents indicated that they were in the 25-44 age bracket (71%). The majority of those who completed the questionnaire were female and respondents were in the State between two and eleven years. Although the majority of respondents expressed a desire to stay in Ireland (61%), despite having legal status in Ireland, almost 20% of respondents indicated that they were not sure where they would like to be in five years from now or they would like to return to Nigeria. This uncertainty may reflect the challenges due to the current economic crisis.

45% of respondents said that they lived in urban areas (either city or town). While 29% of respondents indicated that they lived in the countryside, a significantly larger figure than the Census average for Nigerians of 4%, this may be explained by all participants who said they lived in the countryside being in the asylum process.

### **4.3 Focus Groups**

#### 4.3.1 Format

During May 2010, focus groups were conducted at four asylum seeker direct provision accommodation centres throughout Ireland. The focus group discussions centred on the following:

- Experiences of Nigerian residents in accessing information (in relation to immigration and more generally)
- Information channels used by Nigerians (both formal and informal)
- Nigerian networks, community groups and community leaders
- On line networks and websites used by Nigerians
- Interaction of Nigerian residents in the accommodation centres with the wider Nigerian community, with the wider migrant community and the host community

### 4.3.2 Rationale and Method

The focus groups took place in the following centres: Knockalisheen Centre, Co Clare; Kinsale Road Centre, Cork City; St Patricks Centre, Dromgoask, Co Monaghan and the Old Convent, Ballyhaunis.

Confidentiality of the exercise was emphasised and the exercise was explained in terms of obtaining a general profile of the information needs of the community, and an identification of the best channels to use to ensure information is provided to the community regarding potentially relevant services available to them.

### 4.3.3 Findings

#### *Experiences of Nigerian residents in accessing information (in relation to immigration and more generally)*

The views of participants in relation to their experiences in accessing information varied considerably. Some participants were very confused as their rights and the majority of participants believed more could be done both by the State and by NGOs to ensure that information was provided to all. However others, particularly those living near large population centres, indicated that they had no problems in accessing information.

Participants in one centre said that there were few sources of information available to them and the residents were very confused as to their rights and entitlements, for example in relation to opening a bank account, applying for asylum for their children and the amount of exceptional needs payment from the CWO. According to participants in one centre, they did not have source of information that they can trust. This centre was quite isolated and there were very few information services in the vicinity.

Some residents believed that service providers were also quite confused about the rights of asylum seekers and that also led to confusion

#### *Information channels used by Nigerians (both formal and informal)*

The main formal sources of information used by residents were migrant led groups such as the New Communities Partnership and Nigerian groups. In addition to providing information and support, residents in Knockalisheen noted that the NCP also provided internet use in its offices in Limerick city. Women in some accommodation centres also mentioned women's groups such as Women of the World and Cork African Women's group. Specialist NGOs were also an important source of information in particular in the large cities.

A free bus service ran from 3 of the Centres to bring residents to the local city or town. Without this service, it would prove more difficult for residents to travel to the local city or town. This was particularly important for residents in Knockalisheen and Kinsale Road as the regular bus service enabled them to avail of services in Limerick and Cork cities respectively. The experiences of residents in St Patricks was somewhat different in that while a bus service exists between the centre and Monaghan town, there are few channels of information or networks in the town.

The Old Covent is located in the town of Ballyhaunis and according to residents, no free bus service exists between the centre and any of the larger towns such as Castlebar. There is no local support group in Ballyhaunis nor other services used by Nigerians such as African shops and the Citizens Information Service.

#### *Nigerian networks, community groups and community leaders*

Here again the experiences of residents in different centres were very different depending often on the size of the Nigerian population and resultant services in the local community. Participants in Kinsale Road mentioned several groups including well established organisations like NASC and Cois Tine but also migrant led groups such as Women of the World and Cork African Women's Group. These groups organised various activities, for example, Cois Tine's Cultural Week which according to participants, was very well attended by residents.

In Monaghan however, there are very few Nigerians residing in the surrounding area and as a result, there is no African shop in Monaghan town so the informal information channels and networks (the Nigerian/African population outside the centres, African churches etc) are not available to the residents in St Patricks. As there are no African shops and no strong NGO presence in the area, the residents only very rarely see African/Nigerian papers and magazines. A similar situation exists in Ballyhaunis. According to residents, the only Nigerian family living in the town moved last year and there are very few other Africans in the other area. One participant noted 'When we get our papers, we leave, we do not stay here'. There are no African shops and few other facilities. The only internet access residents have is through the Family Resource Centre and that is limited.

#### *On line networks and websites used by Nigerians*

Most focus group participants said that they had only limited access to the internet and therefore on-line networks and websites were not as important to them as a source of information as for Nigerians residing in the community. Some participants also mentioned that a lot of migrant community groups had their own website and these were updated when any changes in the immigration process occurred.

Some participants used Facebook but again, use appeared to be more sporadic than among Nigerians outside the accommodation centres. Participants that used the internet, did so for the most part outside the accommodation centre, and a number of organisations facilitated this including the New Communities partnership.

*Interaction of Nigerian residents in the accommodation centres with the wider Nigerian community, with the wider migrant community and the host community.*

This is largely dependent on the location of the accommodation centre. Residents in centres located near larger population centres had much more interaction with the wider Nigerian and migrant community. This had an important impact on how residents received information. Cork and Limerick cities have both have established Nigerian and other African communities. As a result there is much more possibility for interaction between accommodation centre residents and the wider migrant community. In addition because there is an established Nigerian community in both cities, there are a number of African shops and other services such as hairdressers. These businesses facilitate the exchange of information in informal ways but also in more formal ways by stocking African/Nigerian newspapers and magazines. There are several African churches in each city.

By contrast, there are very few Nigerian nationals or other Africans living in Monaghan town or the surrounding area. As a result there are no African shops or churches with residents rarely being able to access newspapers such as Metro Eireann. The majority of participants believed that many in the local community were hostile to them and believed that racism was 'rampant' in the area. There appeared to be very little positive interaction between the residents and local people. Residents in Ballyhaunis reported similar experiences and interacted very rarely with the local community. Although Ballyhaunis has a tradition of migrant communities since the establishment of a *halal* factory there in the 1970's, the relationship between local people and the Old Covent residents appeared to be suspicious and negative – residents alleged that they suffered verbal abuse for example.

## **5.0 Barriers to accessing information**

One of the main barriers facing most migrants in accessing information – lack of English is not a difficulty for most Nigerians. Most Nigerians in Ireland have a sufficient level of English to access spoken and written information. While many Nigerians converse with each other in their native language or languages

(Yoruba being the most widespread in Ireland), Nigerian and African newspapers and magazines available in Ireland are in English.

The main barriers to accessing information for Nigerians as identified in the research are as follows:

### **Location**

This is one of the most significant barriers to accessing information for Nigerians. Those living in smaller towns and rural areas report difficulties in accessing NGOs and services as well as a lack of availability of African/Nigerian newspapers and magazines. Many of the specialist NGOs are located in Dublin or other large cities and most have either limited or no outreach services (except by phone or email). In addition, most Nigerians live in cities or large towns so Nigerians living in small towns and rural areas are often isolated from the broader Nigerian community.

### **Direct provision**

People living in direct provision centres sometimes have limited access to the internet and residents of accommodation centres that have participated in the focus groups do not use the internet (including information websites and social networking sites) to the same extent as Nigerians with legal status living in the community.

Residents in direct provision centres outside main centres of population are often not in a position to access national specialist NGOs which are mainly based in Dublin or other large cities. While Community Welfare Officers (CWOs) will generally cover transport for an asylum seeker to consult his/her legal representative, there is generally no assistance available for people who want to consult NGOs or other service providers.

### **Gender**

According to the Census, almost 12,000 Nigerians lived in households with children and over 3,000 live in lone parent households. Child care responsibilities may serve to prohibit some women or some lone parents from accessing information services, in particular those which are not locally based. Female focus group participants noted that the lack of childcare in the centres limited their participation in networks and courses. Although some centres have a crèche, there was a long waiting period for admission or the crèche only opened for limited periods. In addition, women in one centre noted that the crèche in their centres previously accepted more children but they believed this was now limited due to the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme.

## **Situations of vulnerability**

It is unclear how many of Nigerians are in these situations e.g. people experiencing homelessness, domestic violence, irregular status, trafficking for sexual exploitation and other reasons. Research has not established what if any information channels and networks used in general by these individuals. However it does not appear that they avail of mainstream services in large numbers, with the exception perhaps of Ruhama which assisted an increased number of women who reported having being trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Several service providers and specialist NGOs indicated that they were aware of Nigerians who they believed had become irregular. However, it appeared that in general people who had become irregular ceased using their services - the reasons for this are not clear, however some irregular individuals may move address to avoid possible deportation or they may seek legal advice in relation to their status rather than the assistance of an NGO.

There are a number of additional challenges in disseminating information to people who are in a vulnerable situation including those who are irregular. Firstly it is not possible to estimate with any certainty the numbers of people in the Nigerian community who are in such a situation and where they are. People in situations of vulnerability probably do not use either specialist or mainstream services to the same extent for example a victim of domestic violence may not be in a position to leave her home or an irregular person may wish to avoid detection. They may also lack financial or other resources to avail of certain services

However, research for this mapping exercise has shown that information in the Nigerian community is often spread by word of mouth and a number of interviewees have indicated that the Nigerian community assists those in the community who are in difficulty, it is reasonable to assume that at least some information reaches those who are in situations of vulnerability.

## 6.0 Recommendations

- Information channels and networks differ from place to place and sometimes depend on individual's circumstances and legal status. It is therefore essential that a multi-faceted approach to disseminating information is used.
- Nigerian led community groups are key to successfully disseminating information among the Nigerian community as a result of the trust that exists among the community in these groups. Consultation with these groups should be considered with these groups ahead of any information campaign is undertaken.
- The internet is a key source of information and networking for Nigerians in Ireland. Social networking sites, in particular Facebook are popular with many Nigerians. A number of NGOs and service providers have responded to increased use of these sites by migrant communities. However, residents in direct provision accommodation centres have limited internet use so this may not an effective way of spreading information to residents.
- Nigerian TV stations such as Ben TV and AIT are widely available (including in accommodation centres), through the cable networks and are popular with Nigerians. However, advertising fees may be prohibitive.
- Newspapers such as Metro Eireann and the African Voice are widely read in Dublin and to a lesser extent in other large cities. However they are generally not available in towns and rural areas limiting their effectiveness as an advertising medium
- The majority of respondents the study referred to the importance of churches to Nigerians in Ireland. However there were mixed views of the church as a way of spreading information as some Pastors may discourage the spread of non-religious information through the church whereas some Pastors will actively encourage the invitation of speakers on various issues and allow posters to be placed on the church notice board
- Residents committees have been established in many accommodation centres and local support groups and community development groups also provide services including information services to residents. However, the level and frequency of services provided can vary considerably depending on the location of the centre and the staffing levels of the organisations.

- Posters alone do not appear a particularly effective way of spreading information. Posters advertising the focus groups were displayed in the four accommodation centres visited but while some residents said that they had noticed the posters, the majority would not have attended on that basis only. Similarly interview participants said that when visiting African shops they read any posters that are displayed but would not necessarily attend the event unless they were aware of it through other means

## **7.0 Conclusion**

The diversity of the Nigerian community in Ireland is one of the key factors to be borne in mind when developing information strategies aimed at this community. The Nigerian community in Ireland comprises people of different ethnicity, religious belief, educational background, profession/occupation, family status and legal status. In addition, some Nigerians have recently arrived in Ireland and others have been in the State for over 15 years, while some of those who have been here legally for at least five years may have naturalised as Irish citizens.

The seemingly mammoth task of disseminating information among the Nigerian community is simplified by several factors:

1. The ability of the vast majority of Nigerians to communicate in English
2. The sense of community that exists between many Nigerians and their willingness to help each other including by spreading information among their friends and associates and in their community more widely
3. The role of the church and Mosque in Nigerian society. Faith based activities are very important to most Nigerians irrespective of other differences such as ethnicity and social background and also facilitate (often informal) information exchange
4. The increasing strength of Nigerian and African community organisations

## **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank all those who contributed to the fieldwork involved in this study. A wide variety of service providers working with new communities in Dublin, Cork, Limerick and other regions, helped by providing statistics and further information during interviews.

We would also like to acknowledge with gratitude the co-operation and support of the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) who arranged focus group sessions with residents in accommodation centres across Ireland. Very special thanks to the members of the Nigerian community in Ireland who completed questionnaires and made themselves available for interview. Without their time and co-operation this study would not have been possible.