Immigrant Internationally Educated Teachers in Ireland – a process of elimination?

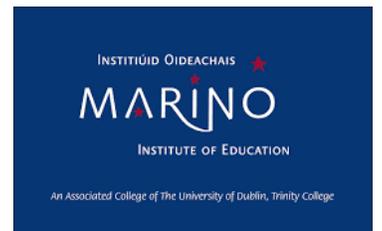Dr Emer Nowlan   Dr Rory Mc Daid

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Overview

1. European and Irish context
2. Overview of study and sample
3. Emerging findings

The European and Global Context

- Teacher mobility and migration increasing globally (Bense 2016)
- Benefits of teacher diversity recognised: positive effects on achievement and inclusion for ME students, increased intercultural awareness, etc. (e.g. Goldhaber et al 2015, Bense 2016)
  NB notwithstanding issues with narrow positioning of 'minority teachers' (e.g. Santoro 2013)
- Policy objective to recruit, integrate immigrant / ME teachers (European Commission, 2016)
- EC Directive 2005/36/EC - regulated professions

The European and Global Context

• Increasing labour mobility in Europe (esp. Ireland > 20%).

Graph 2: Share of working-age population born in other countries, 2013

■ Born in another EU-28 country
■ Born outside the EU-28

Portes 2015, Data from European Commission 2014
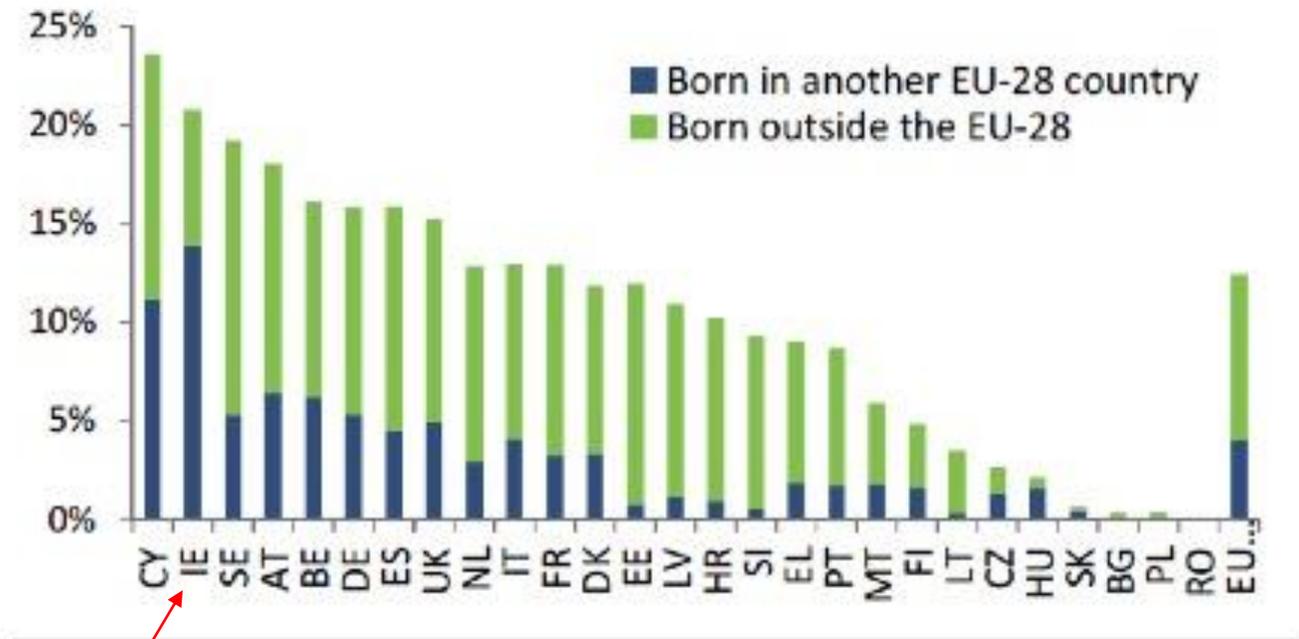
BUT – lack of diversity in teaching persists

- Little progress despite 'Herculean' effort (Schmidt 2016) "..neoliberalism and the myth of meritocracy obscure the pervasive systemic barriers characterizing their (IIETs) professional experiences"

- Problems include: issues with recognition of qualifications, preference for 'local' teachers, underemployment

- Not just 'leaky / filtered pipelines, bottlenecks or glass ceilings' – complex, systemic problems (Ryan et al 2009)

The Irish Context – history and migration

- European / post-colonial. Developed / underdeveloped.
  - Narrow discourses of 'Irishness' (white, Catholic…)
  - Long history of emigration. Slow response to immigration.

- Denominational education system – state-funded private institutions.
  - Most schools recruit and employ own teachers (paid by government)
  - 90% of primary schools Catholic – teachers required to prepare children for religious sacraments (First Holy Communion, Confirmation).

- Post-independence - education system vehicle for cultural revival.
  - Teachers responsible for establishment of Irish nationhood
  - Primary teachers: must prove competence to teach Irish language

- Inward migration increasing and diversifying
  - 12.2% foreign nationals (Central Statistics Office, April 2018)

The Irish Context – teaching profession

- Teaching profession dominated by WHISCs (Tracy 2000)
  - WHITE HETEROSEXUAL IRISH SETTLED CATHOLICS
  - also female, middle class
- Ethnic homogeneity not changing through Initial Teacher Education (Keane & Heinz 2015)

Children aged 5 - 19	Applicants to ITE
82.5% 'white Irish' (Census 2016)	98% 'white Irish' (DITE, 2014 data)

- Initial research highlights particular issues IIETS face at primary level relating to the Irish Language Requirement. (Schmidt & Mc Daid 2015, Walsh & Mc Daid 2018)

The Irish Context – teaching profession (2)

- Low numbers of foreign teachers registered with Teaching Council (despite European Council Directive 2005/36/EC being applied to all applicants)

Table 1 - Main sources of new primary teacher registrations 2009 – 2014 *(Source – Register of Teachers)*

Most recent qualification (origin)	Year of registration					
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Ireland	2,583	2,975	2,968	3,958	2,825	2,065
United Kingdom	369	505	388	421	339	189
Rest of EU	6	1	3	0	2	6
Rest of world	21	34	21	12	17	15
Location not identified	8	2	3	2	3	5
Total primary registrants	2,987	3,517	3,383	4,393	3,186	2,280

- Current shortage of teachers at primary and secondary levels.

Who are the Immigrant Internationally Educated Teachers in Ireland?

400+ teachers reached (over 6 months) through Migrant Teacher Project activities:

- Press coverage of launch

- Networking through NGOs, community groups, etc.

- @MTPteacher

Country		No. of teachers reporting this nationality	No. reporting qualifications obtained in this country
Spain		58	82
Poland		62	62
India		22	28
UK		10	16
Brazil		10	15
Nigeria		9	10
Lithuania		9	10
US		8	10
Romania		10	9
Argentina		7	9
Croatia		8	8
Hungary		6	7

Overview of Study

- **Needs Analysis** for a **Bridging Programme** funded by Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration (Department of Justice and Equality)
- Main aim to identify **perceived gaps** in knowledge or skills of IIETs
- Also to sketch **profile of IIETs** in Ireland and identify any barriers to employment (no previous research)

Instruments:

- **Survey** of IIETs (online, 55 questions – c.20 minutes. **225 valid responses**)
- **Focus Groups** with IIETs (2 to date) and employers (1 to date)
- Also: informed by ongoing engagement with teachers, principals, officials (Teaching Council, Teacher Unions, management bodies, etc)

PROFILE OF IIETs – DIVERSE (languages, qualification routes, experience...)

In which country were you born?

50 countries

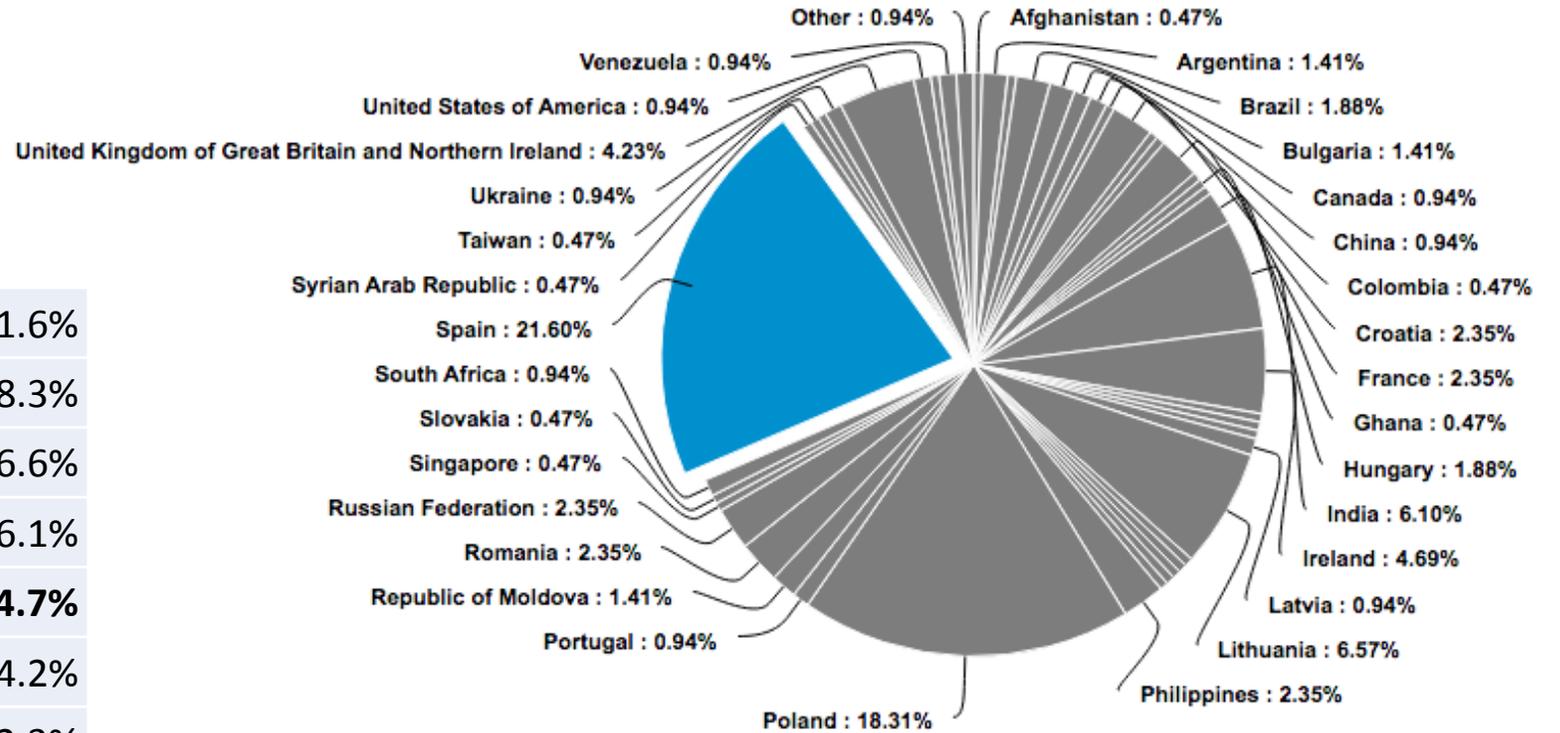|		
Spain	54	24.5%
Poland	40	18.2%
India	17	7.7%
Lithuania	14	6.4%
France	7	3.2%
Russian Federation	6	2.7%
United Kingdom	6	2.7%
Croatia	5	2.3%
Romania	5	2.3%
Brazil	4	1.8%
Hungary	4	1.8%
Philippines	4	1.8%
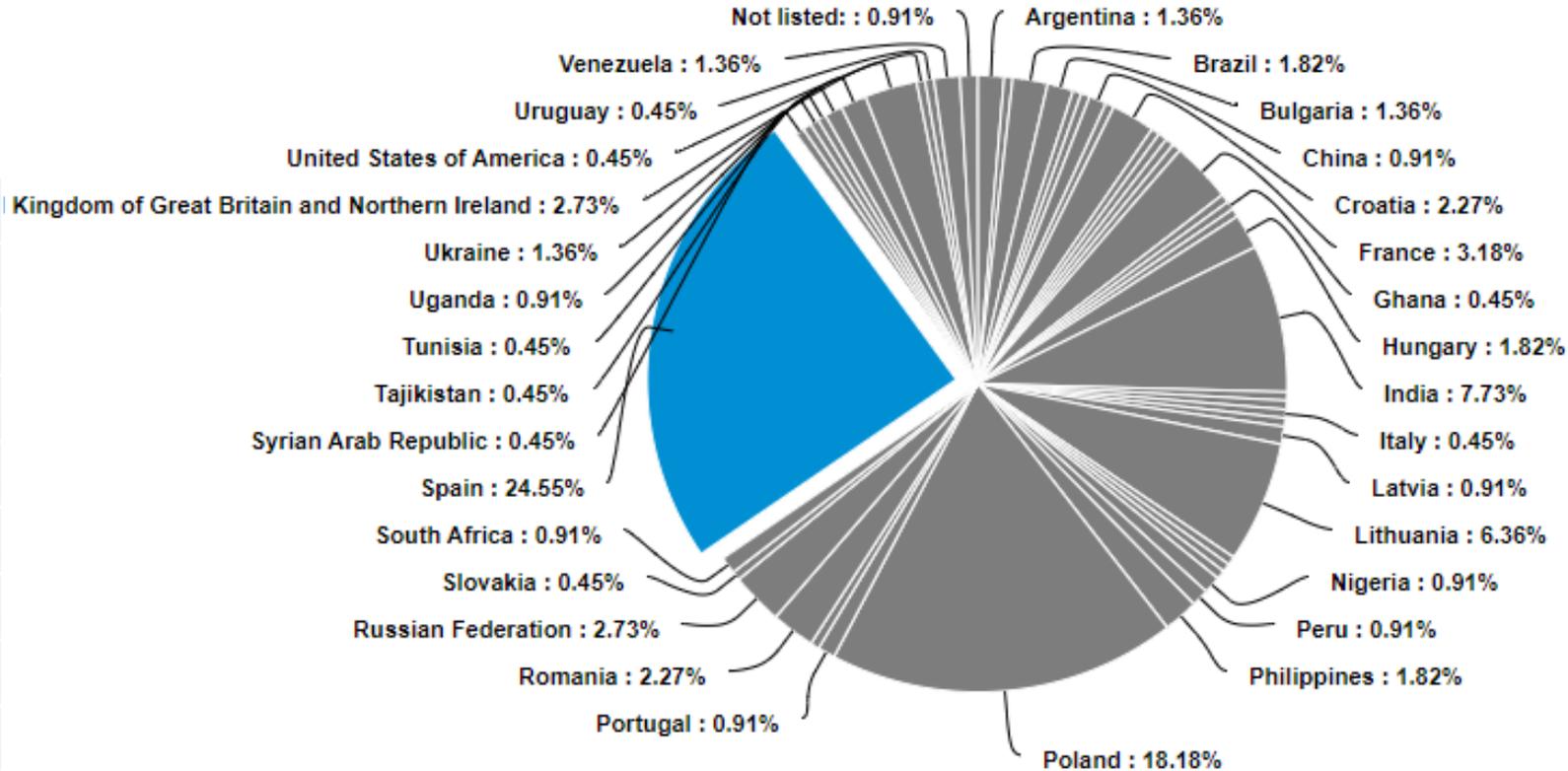
Ethnicities: predominance of 'other white'
Nationalities: Similarly diverse. (21% Irish nationality)

In which country did you receive your Qualified Teacher Status / teacher certification / license?

47 countries

Spain	46	21.6%
Poland	39	18.3%
Lithuania	14	6.6%
India	13	6.1%
Ireland	**10**	**4.7%**
United Kingdom	9	4.2%
Croatia	5	2.3%
France	5	2.3%
Philippines	5	2.3%
Romania	5	2.3%
Russian Federation	5	2.3%
Brazil	4	1.9%

Pie chart labels:
- Other : 0.94%
- Afghanistan : 0.47%
- Venezuela : 0.94%
- Argentina : 1.41%
- United States of America : 0.94%
- Brazil : 1.88%
- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland : 4.23%
- Bulgaria : 1.41%
- Ukraine : 0.94%
- Canada : 0.94%
- Taiwan : 0.47%
- China : 0.94%
- Syrian Arab Republic : 0.47%
- Colombia : 0.47%
- Spain : 21.60%
- Croatia : 2.35%
- South Africa : 0.94%
- France : 2.35%
- Slovakia : 0.47%
- Ghana : 0.47%
- Singapore : 0.47%
- Hungary : 1.88%
- Russian Federation : 2.35%
- India : 6.10%
- Romania : 2.35%
- Ireland : 4.69%
- Republic of Moldova : 1.41%
- Latvia : 0.94%
- Portugal : 0.94%
- Lithuania : 6.57%
- Philippines : 2.35%
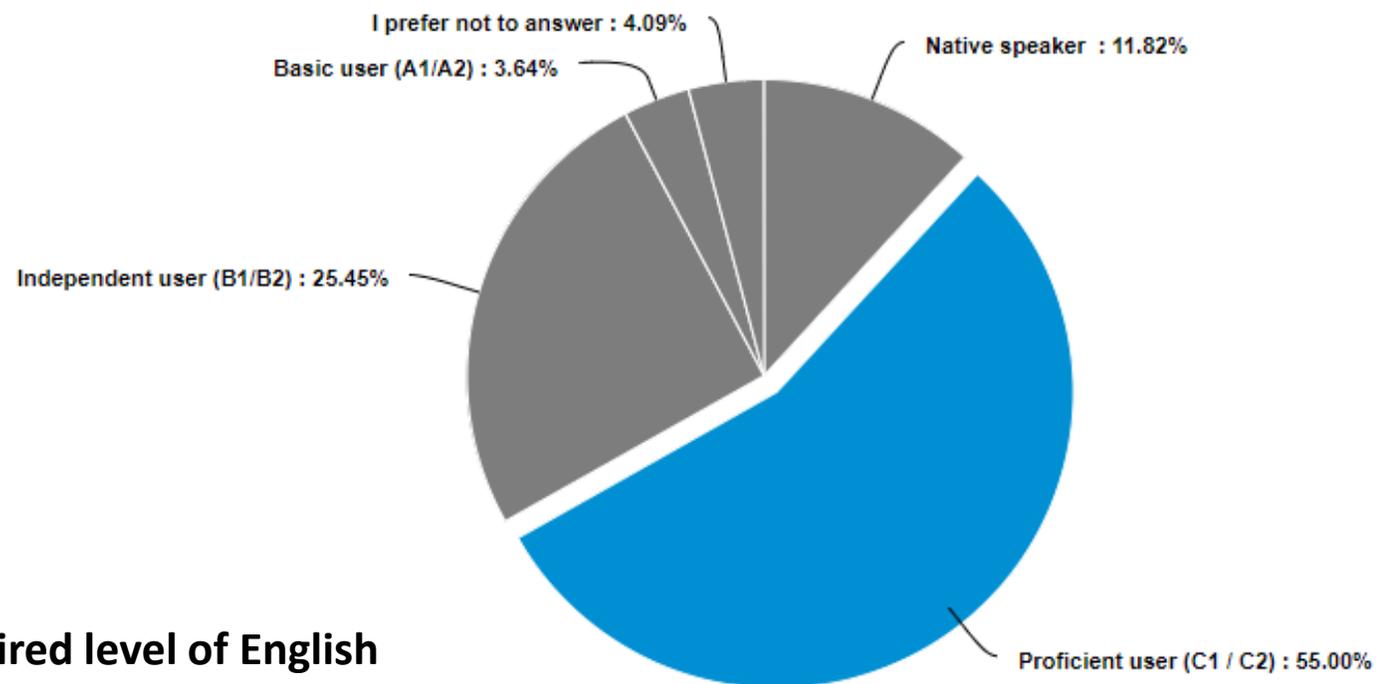- Poland : 18.31%

Age ranges: primary (47%) , secondary (60%), other (21%)

Employment status: 33 (15%) teaching in publicly funded schools in Ireland

Languages

- 46 languages spoken (B1+) by 224 respondents (most at least bilingual)

How would you describe your English language skills?

I prefer not to answer : 4.09%
Basic user (A1/A2) : 3.64%
Native speaker : 11.82%
Independent user (B1/B2) : 25.45%
Proficient user (C1 / C2) : 55.00%

67% native or proficient English
25% independent user
Total: **92% report Teaching Council required level of English**

- Only 2 (<1%) report speaking Irish (Gaeilge)

Teaching Council Registration

Answer	Count	Percent	20%	40%
I hold full Teaching Council registration	23	10.95%		
I hold conditional Teaching Council registration	16	7.62%		
I have applied for Teaching Council registration, but have not yet been registered. (process ongoing)	19	9.05%		
I applied for Teaching Council registration, but was not registered. (process completed)	10	4.76%		
I have enquired about Teaching Council registration, but have not applied	71	33.81%		
I was registered with the Teaching Council but my registration has now lapsed.	3	1.43%		
I do not know anything about Teaching Council registration	43	20.48%		
I prefer not to answer.	10	4.76%		
Other	15	7.14%		
Total	**210**	**100 %**		

Strong negative discourse around registration process

Emerging findings – barriers to registration

- Mismatch: qualifications obtained vs. qualifications required
  - Age range: primary / secondary vs. both
  - No route to registration:
    - Specialist teachers (Special Education, EAL, Guidance Counsellors)
    - Teachers of subject not in Irish curriculum (e.g. Chinese, psychology…)
- Difficulties with registration process:
  - Obtaining information from abroad: 'home' universities, 'competent authorities,' police clearance…
  - Costs: assessment of qualifications, translation, addressing shortfalls
  - Lack of clarity: misunderstandings, unnecessary costs (time / money)
  - No clear information / route to address shortfalls (e.g. Irish language, supervised placement, induction not completed..)
  - Process 'timed out'

Addressing shortfalls

...financial burden to learn Gaeilge (Irish) from scratch. It probably cost me about 8,000€ in total including grinds, classes, exams, Gaeltacht. I would have preferred to study at masters level in an area that the school could benefit from, intercultural education or special needs education, counselling etc. There are enough teachers who can teach Gaeilge already, foreigners shouldn't be forced to do so but acquire other skills instead to address shortfalls.

(survey response - primary school teacher
dual European / Middle Eastern nationality)

*I can't understand how **there isn't a level playing field**. I know each country has different educational systems, but in terms of the teaching, in terms of degrees or Masters, is there not some sort of common ground where qualifications can be recognised, particularly across Europe **if we're supposed to be so integrated** in other areas...*

(Marco, technology teacher, UK / African background)

Theorising the exclusion of migrant teachers - Bourdieu and Passeron 1977

(Walsh & Mc Daid 2018)

- elimination of certain groups from system occurs through the imposition of **cultural arbitraries**
  (NB arbitrary NOT gratuitous. Also not random)

- Elimination occurs **by examination** (e.g. Irish language requirement, registration process) and **without examination**
  (Bourdieu and Passeron P141)

Emerging findings – barriers to employment

- Registration emerged strongly as the biggest barrier to employment, but it is not the only one.

- 49% of teachers surveyed had not sought employment as a teacher in Ireland – lack of confidence, language skills, registration process.

- Working visas – e.g. need full-time offer of employment to activate spouse visa.

- 'I gave up.' Lack of resources to persist – cost (money / time) of addressing shortfalls, emotional cost of refusals, etc.

- Lack of **social capital** – personal / community contacts in schools.

Some teachers' perspectives..

*For me personally I've not experienced racism... but it's just a sense that... if you're talking about employment, whether it be teaching, or applying for things... **it's who you know, not what you know**. And if you're still on the outside of that circle, no matter how many qualifications you've got, how much experience you've got, if you don't know the right person to connect you in a particular field, you're not going to get very far.*

(Marco, technology teacher, UK / African background, emphasis added)

*There is a **big... wall there that we are trying and trying to break**, but it is very difficult. We are lucky in some way, because some principals believe in us, and they are trying to help us to do the whole registration, because the schools need us, at least for foreign languages ....*
You get second class jobs always. We are trying our best but it is like we are called to cover maternity leave, sick leave..

(Maria, Spanish teacher from Spain, emphasis added)

A principal's perspective:

*It is **very narrow** because you learn by bad experiences that you just chip away all the chances and the creativity goes because you are **not willing to take the risk**. And so you will go with somebody who is down the road and says, listen they are not terribly exciting but they can control the class. So there is trade-offs that you make, it comes down to knowing who to trust and I don't think principals fully trust the colleges of education. You can get references and you see PME teachers coming in with references and this isn't really what we needed so you need a principal. **The principals are the key to getting this to work I would say**.*

(Emma, white Irish, principal of new large mixed secondary school, emphasis added)

How are IIETs excluded from teaching in Ireland?

- (self?)Elimination:
  - 5% had been refused TC registration. A further 17% were precarious (conditionally registered / in process). 54% had not applied.
  - 49% had not sought employment as a teacher.
  - Many were underemployed.
- Cultural arbitraries imposed:
  - Irish language requirement
  - Other identified shortfalls (requiring further education, placements, etc)
  - Requirement for recommendation from another (Irish) principal
- Cultural and social capital held by these teachers has limited valued in this field. Considerable economic capital is required to complete process.

'It's who you know, not what you know'

Implications?

Moral and practical dilemmas...

- Provide a (necessarily select) group of IIETs with knowledge, skills and contacts (cultural and social capital) they need through a Bridging Programme
- Engage with school leaders
- Advocate for system change – radical examination of registration and employment processes and practices

THANK YOU