



@MTPteacher

# ‘It’s not what you know, it’s who you know’ Listening to Immigrant Internationally Educated Teachers (in Ireland)

Dr Emer Nowlan

Marino Institute of Education, Dublin



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt  
agus Comhionannais  
Department of Justice  
and Equality



An Associated College of  
Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin



# Setting the Scene for the R/EQUAL project

1. What is the context?
2. What are we trying to do in this context, and why?
3. What (and how) can we learn with and from immigrant teachers?

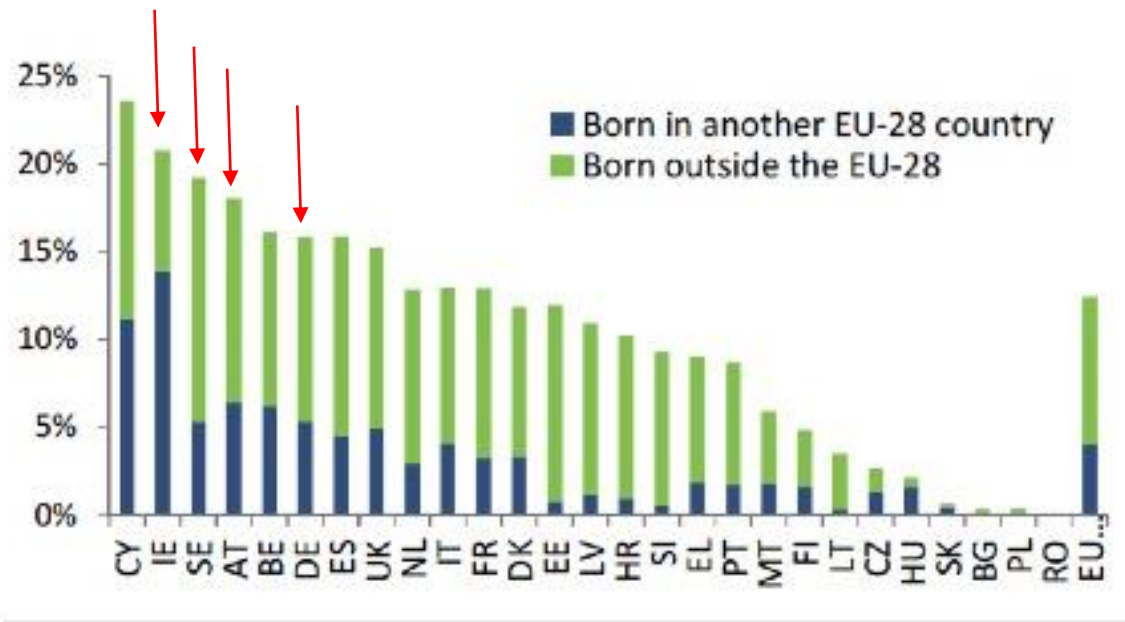
(Immigrant Internationally Educated Teachers, IETs)



# The Global and European Context

- Increasing labour mobility globally and across Europe

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



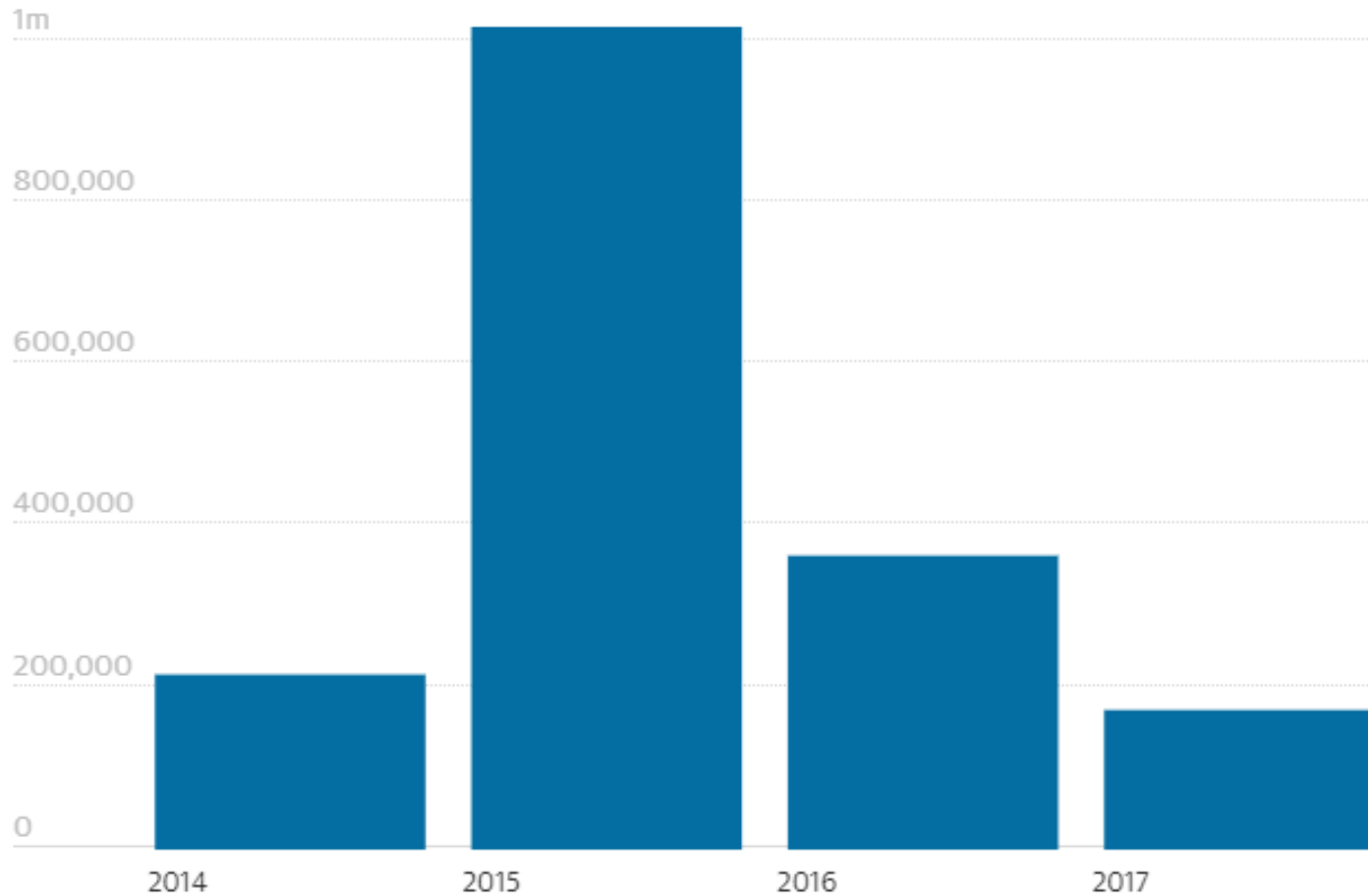
Portes 2015, Data from European Commission 2014

- Teacher mobility and migration increasing globally (Bense 2016)

# The European Context

- Recent increases in migration of refugees and people seeking asylum

**1.8 million refugees have arrived in Europe since 2014, more than 1 million of them in 2015 alone**



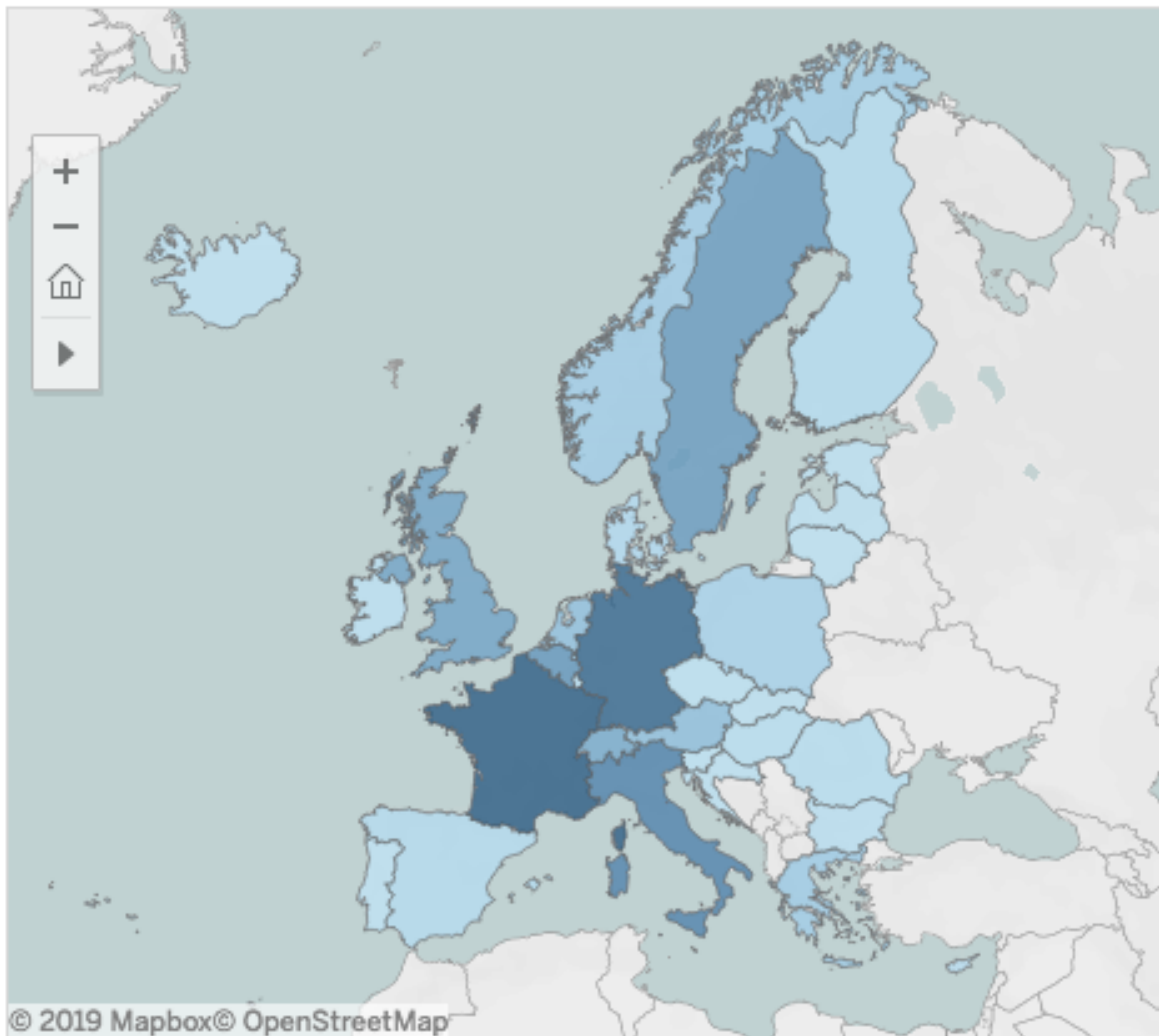
Guardian Graphic | Source: UNHCR



# The European Context

- **Changing** patterns of origin and receiving countries

**Asylum Applications in the EU/EFTA by Country, Annual Total, 2008-2017\***



Total asylum applications  
from all countries  
in EU/EFTA in 2011:  
342,895

## Top 10 Countries of Origin in All in 2011

All countries	342,895
Afghanistan	30,205
Russia	18,855
Pakistan	16,435
Iraq	16,070
Serbia	15,585
Nigeria	15,255
Somalia	15,230
Iran	12,590
Kosovo**	10,690
Eritrea	10,355

Select Country of Origin

All countries ▼

Year

2011

**2011**

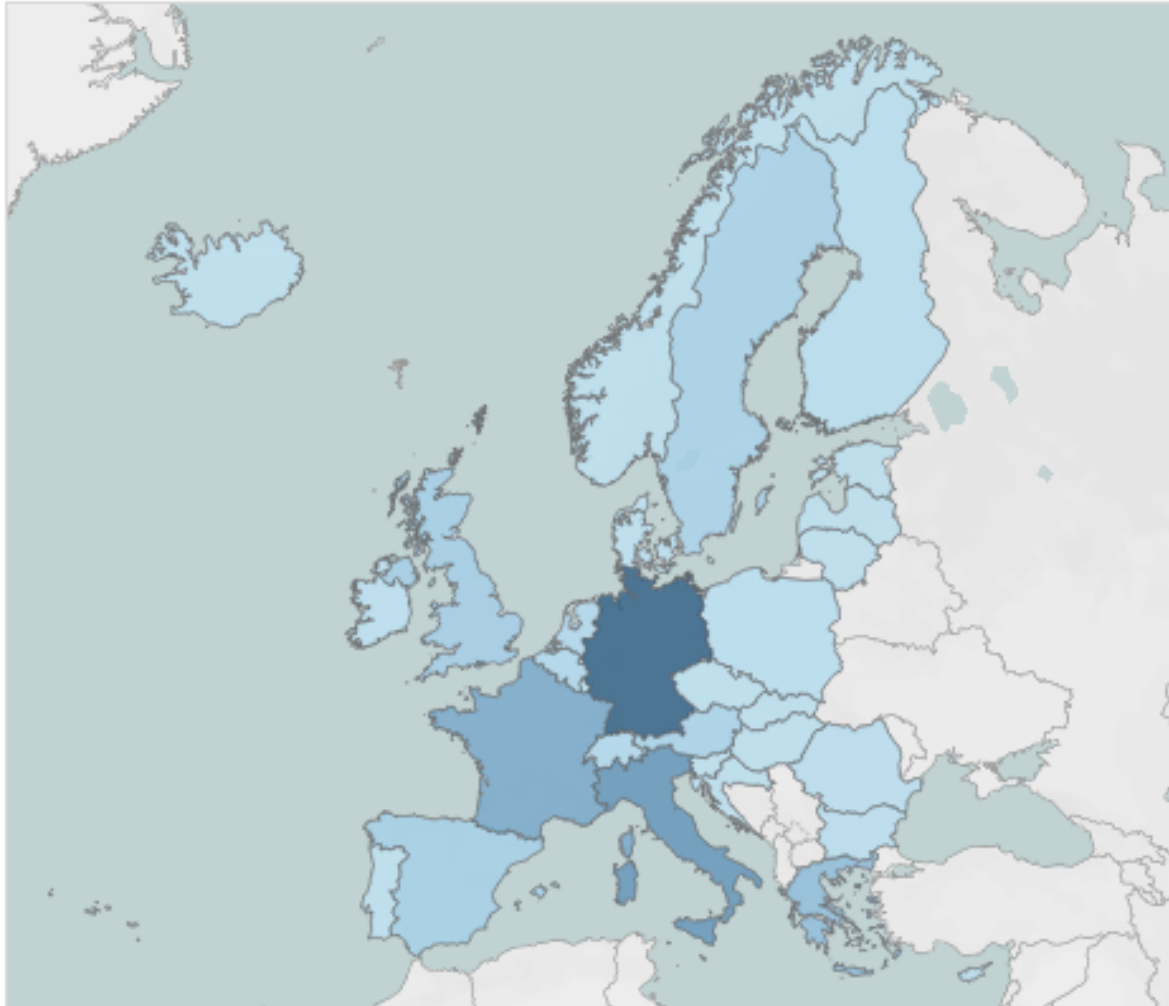


[Migration Policy Institute](https://www.migrationpolicy.org)  
[Data Hub](https://www.migrationpolicy.org)  
[www.migrationpolicy.org](https://www.migrationpolicy.org)

# The European Context

- **Changing** patterns of origin and receiving countries

**Asylum Applications in the EU/EFTA by Country, Annual Total, 2008-2017\***



Total asylum applications  
from all countries  
in EU/EFTA in 2017:  
727,805

## Top 10 Countries of Origin in All in 2017

All countries	727,805
Syria	108,000
Iraq	52,560
Afghanistan	49,055
Nigeria	41,675
Pakistan	31,975
Eritrea	29,290
Albania	26,025
Bangladesh	20,765
Guinea	19,015
Iran	18,840

Select Country of Origin

All countries ▼

Year

2017

**2017**

**Diverse countries  
of origin**



[Migration Policy Institute  
Data Hub  
www.migrationpolicy.org](https://www.migrationpolicy.org)



# The European Context

- Discourses of 'crisis', 'influx' circulate in traditional and social media
- Increase in right wing nationalism in some European countries

**The  
Guardian**

## What is the current state of the migration crisis in Europe?

Three years since the peak of the crisis, here is how things stand as tensions rise again



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↑ > Politik > Themen > Migration

THEMA

## Migration



Politik EVP-Chef Daul

### "Orbán hat die rote Linie überschritten"

Joseph Daul brach die Schule ab, wurde Bauer – und ist heute als EVP-Chef einer der mächtigsten Männer in Brüssel und enger Vertrauter Angela Merkels. Mit WELT sprach er über Bürgernähe, Migration und ungarische Plakatkampagnen.

00:00





# The Global and European Context

- ‘Immigrants’ are diverse and migrate for diverse reasons
- Many positive experiences of immigration and integration

‘I hadn’t been in real school until I came to Ireland. It’s nice being normal’

New to the Parish: Ismail Ahmed arrived from Sudan, via Libya and France, in 2017

© about 16 hours ago

Sorcha Pollak



‘I love spending the day in the nursing home. It’s bringing me back to life’



New to the Parish: Vekash Manzoor Khokhar arrived from Pakistan in 2015

‘As foreigners in Ireland we are so touched by the people around us’



Judy Li arrived from China in 2004. Her husband died in 2015 and she is grateful for the support she has received

‘It’s tough getting into competitive Scrabble here. The Irish scene is small’



New to the Parish: Lukeman Owolabi arrived from Nigeria via UK and Sweden in 2015

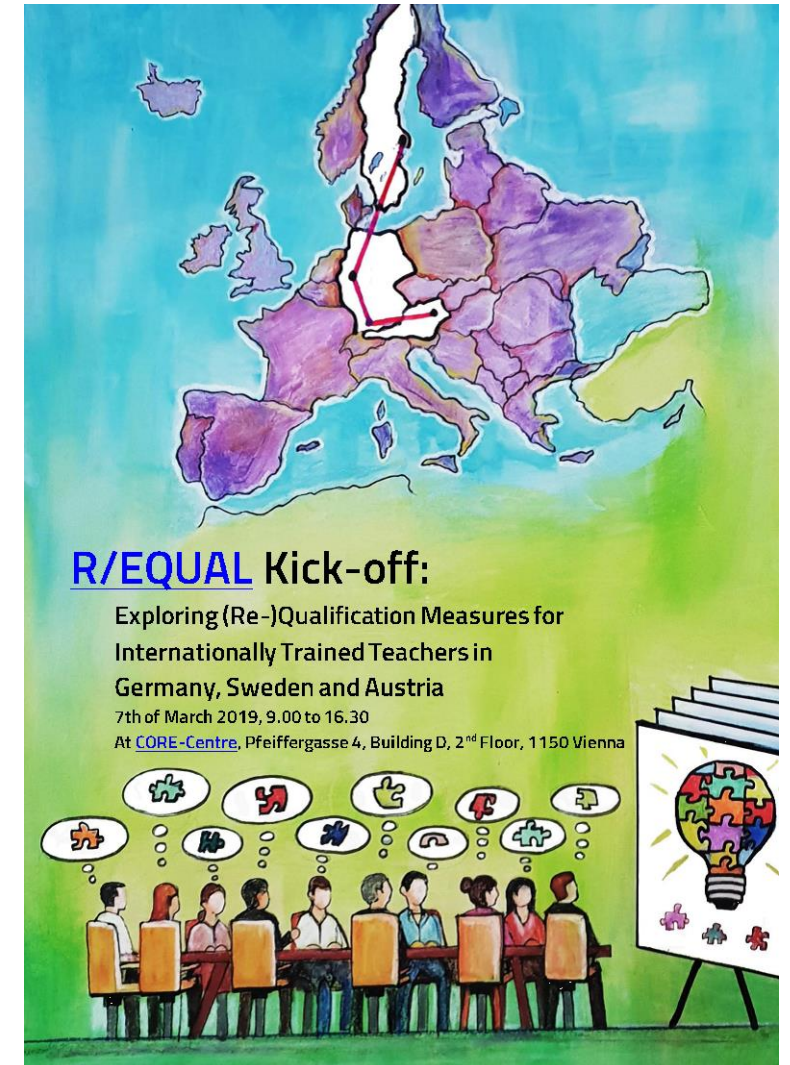
What are we trying to do in this context?

**Why are we here?**

**What is our ultimate objective?**

Was ist unser oberstes Ziel?

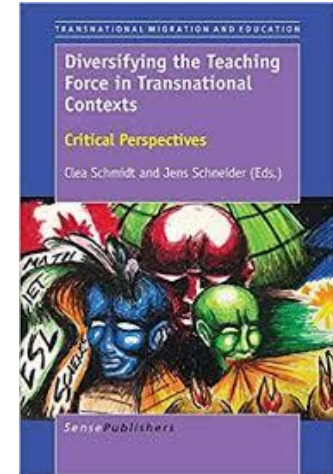
Vad är vårt ultimata mål?



# GOAL: Professional teachers developing their careers with confidence

## Why are we doing this?

1. It's good for immigrant teachers
2. It's good for all teachers and schools
3. It's good for immigrant students
4. It's good for all students
5. It's European (and government) policy (It's good for society)



# 1. It's good for immigrant teachers

- Immigrants face barriers accessing labour markets (some more than others)

## **THE IRISH TIMES**

Black Irish citizens twice as likely to experience discrimination

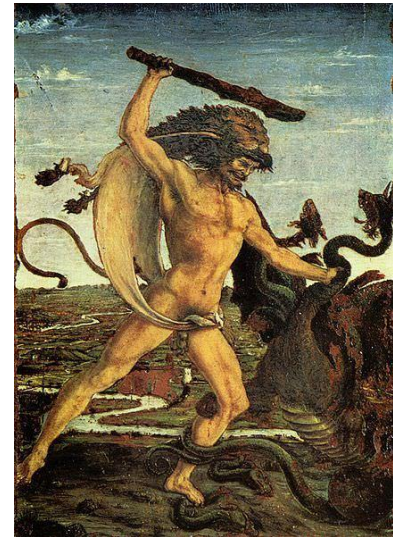
New research focused on experiences in the labour market

- Problems: recognition of qualifications, preference for 'local' workers, underemployment ...



# 1. It's good for immigrant teachers

- Immigrant teachers face particular challenges
- **Not just** 'leaky / filtered pipelines, bottlenecks or glass ceilings' – **complex, systemic problems** (Ryan et al 2009)
- Little progress despite 'Herculean' effort (Clea Schmidt 2016)
  - “..neoliberalism and the myth of meritocracy obscure the **pervasive systemic barriers** characterizing their (immigrant teachers') professional experiences”



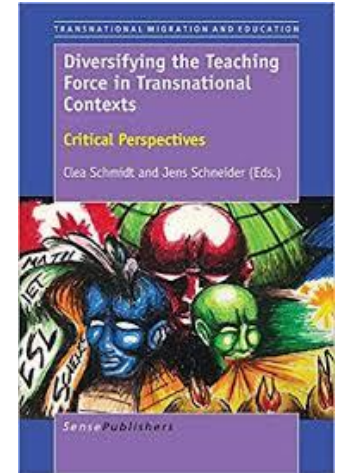
## 2. – 5. It's good for students, schools, society

### Potential benefits of teacher diversity identified:

- Positive effects for immigrant / minority ethnic students:
  - achievement
  - inclusion, belonging, relationships
  - role models
  - home-school communication, etc.
- Better intercultural awareness and education for all
- Innovation in curriculum and pedagogy

**CAUTION – avoid assumptions and narrow positioning**

(e.g. Bense, Goldhaber, Santoro, Schmidt & Schneider, Mantel & Leutwyler ...)





# The Irish Context – history and migration

(Context matters - Schneider and Schmidt, 2016)



- **Post-colonial**
  - Narrow discourses of ‘Irishness’ (white, Catholic...)
  - Teachers responsible for ‘establishment of Irish nationhood’
  - Primary teachers: must prove competence to **teach Irish language**
- **Religious control of education system** – state-funded private institutions.
  - Most schools recruit and employ own teachers (paid by government)
  - 90% of primary schools Catholic – teachers as religious instructors
- **Inward migration increasing and diversifying**
  - Long history of **emigration**. Slow official response to immigration.
  - 12.2% foreign nationals (Central Statistics Office, April 2018)

## The Irish Context – teaching profession



- Teaching profession dominated by W.H.I.S.C.s (Tracy 2000)
  - **WHITE HETEROSEXUAL IRISH SETTLED\* CATHOLICS**
- \* not from Ireland's indigenous Traveller minority
- 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% / 99% 'white Irish' (2014 data)

## The Irish Context – teaching profession (2)



- Low numbers of foreign qualified 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
<b>Total primary registrants</b>	<b>2,987</b>	<b>3,517</b>	<b>3,383</b>	<b>4,393</b>	<b>3,186</b>	<b>2,280</b>

- Current **shortage of teachers at primary and secondary levels.**

# What is the Migrant Teacher Project



**AIM:** To increase the participation of Immigrant Internationally Educated Teachers (IETs) in the teaching workforce.

**Funding:** Department of Justice and Equality. To address Action 27 of the **Migration Integration Strategy:**








*Proactive efforts will be made to attract migrants into teaching positions, including raising awareness of the Irish language aptitude test and adaptation period for primary teaching.*

1. Carry out a Needs Analysis (2018)
2. Develop and deliver a Bridging Programme (2019)
3. Provide training for employers (2019)
4. Establish network of IETs (2019)



# Who are the Immigrant Internationally Educated Teachers in Ireland?

- 650+ teachers from 71 countries reached through Migrant Teacher Project activities since Nov 2017
- Most are not teaching in state-funded schools

Country	No. of teachers reporting this nationality	No. reporting qualifications obtained in this country
Spain 	100	123
Poland 	94	94
<b>India</b>	38	46
UK 	19	28
<b>Brazil</b>	27	36
<b>Nigeria</b>	13	17
Lithuania 	14	16
<b>US</b>	16	20
Romania 	19	17
<b>South Africa</b>	15	19
Italy 	16	13
Hungary 	10	11

# Overview of Study



- **Needs Analysis for Bridging Programme**
- Main aim to identify **perceived gaps** in knowledge or skills of IETs
- Also to sketch **profile of IETs** in Ireland and identify any barriers to employment (no previous research)

## Instruments:

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

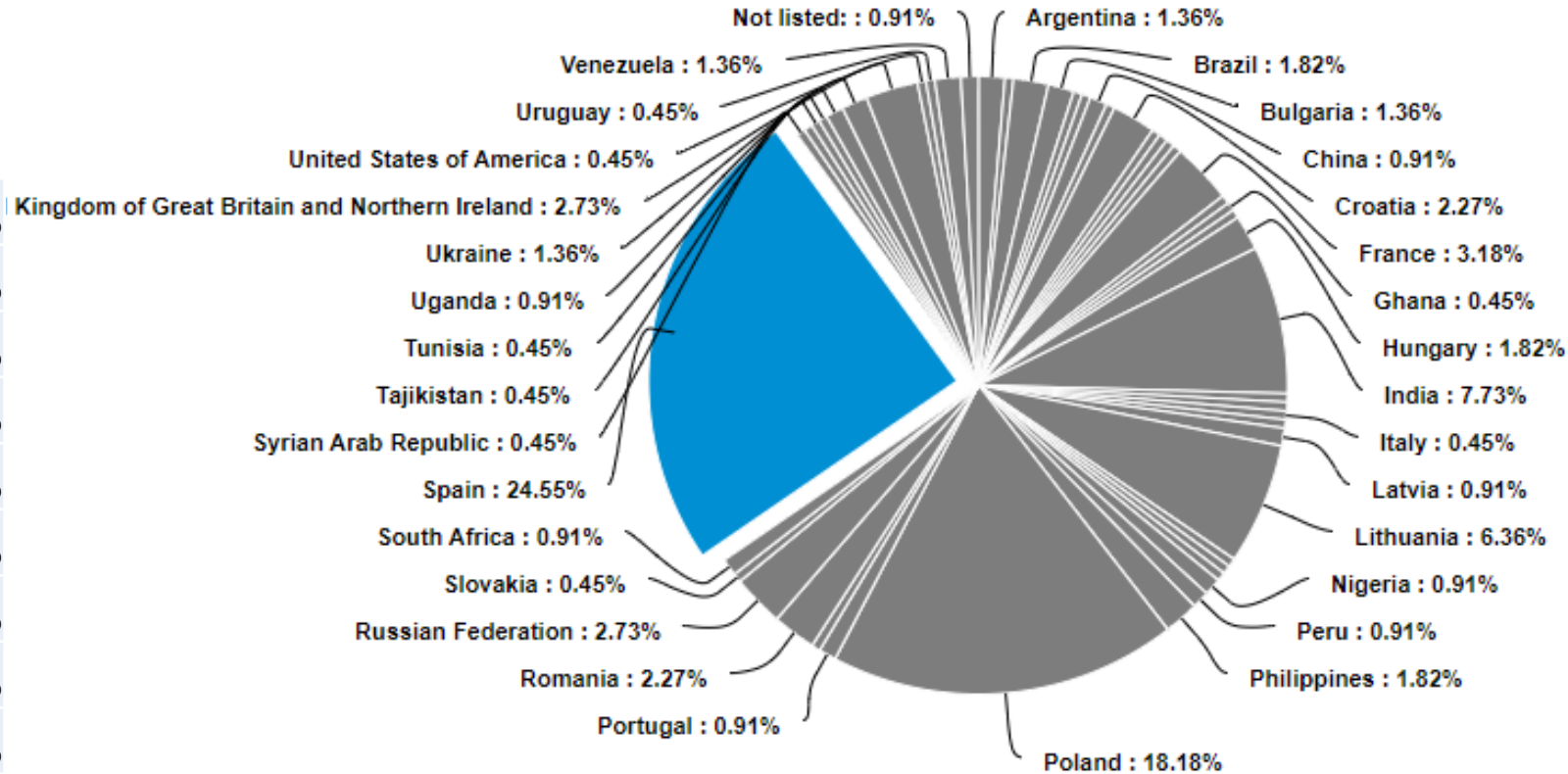


# PROFILE OF IIETs – DIVERSE (languages, qualification routes, experience...)

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%



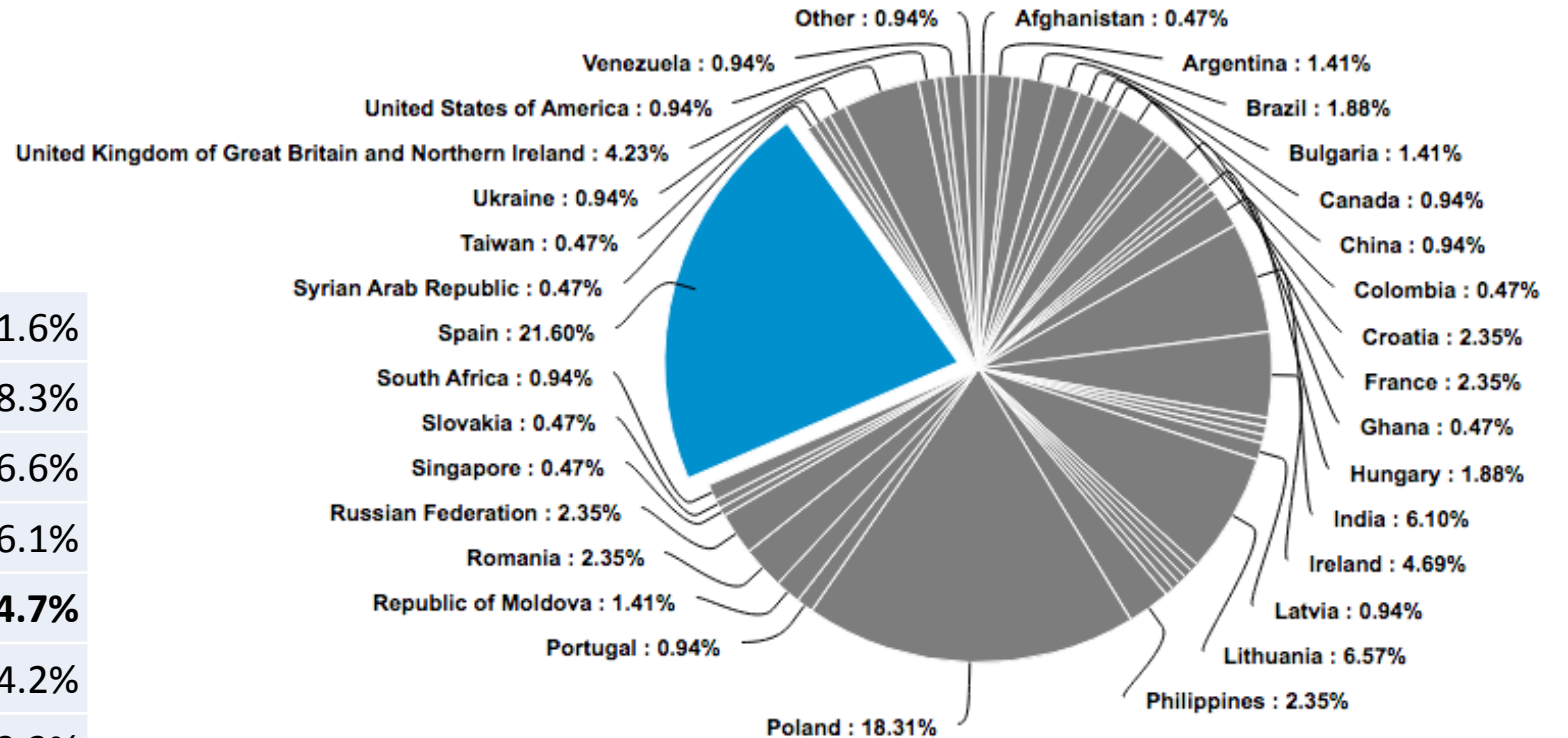
**Ethnicities:** predominance of 'other white'

**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%
<b>Ireland</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4.7%</b>
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%



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

**Employment status:** 33 (15%) teaching in publicly funded schools  
12% in special schools

# Barriers identified

## 1. Teaching Council Registration



- Negative discourse (many don't apply)
- Mismatch: qualifications held vs. qualifications required
  - Age range, subjects, specialisms..
- Difficulties with registration process:
  - Obtaining detailed information from qualifying country
  - Costs: translation, addressing 'shortfalls', etc.
- Lack of clear information:
  - Misunderstandings common
  - No clear route to addressing 'shortfalls' (requalification)

# Addressing 'shortfalls'

Survey response:

primary school teacher with dual European / Middle Eastern nationality)

*...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.*

# Barriers identified

## 2. Employment

- 49% of teachers surveyed had not sought employment as a teacher in Ireland – lack of **confidence**, English language skills, registration process.
- Working visas – e.g. need full-time offer of employment to activate spouse visa.
- Lack of **social capital** – personal / community contacts in schools.
- **'I gave up.'** Lack of resources to persist – cost (money / time) of addressing shortfalls, emotional cost of refusals, etc.

## Social capital

*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)

**How can we address: Lack of local contacts, social capital?**



## Or should we be addressing: The (racist) system

Focus group

Emma, White Irish, principal of large secondary school (emphasis added):

*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. ...**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.***

## Listening to teachers

*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 ....*

(Maria, Spanish teacher from Spain, emphasis added)

**How can we address: Feelings of frustration, loss of confidence**

**ALSO how can we address: The 'wall' of bureaucracy**

*You get **second class jobs always**. We are trying our best but it is like we are called to cover maternity leave, sick leave..*

**How can we address: Perceptions of IETs as 'second class'**

## ‘You get second-class jobs always’

*Maybe with the shortages of teachers it may actually force schools and force the department and the Teaching Council to free up and allow people into the system because at the moment there are .. too many barriers for those teachers to get into the Irish system.*

Peter, White Irish principal, large post-primary school.

Immigrant teachers **narrowly positioned**,  
reduced to **filling gaps**:

- Addressing shortage, covering leave
- Making up for inadequate intercultural skills of majority teachers



‘It’s who you know, not what you know’

## Implications?

Where should our efforts be focused?



Helping people get over the wall?  
(introducing *some* to schools..)

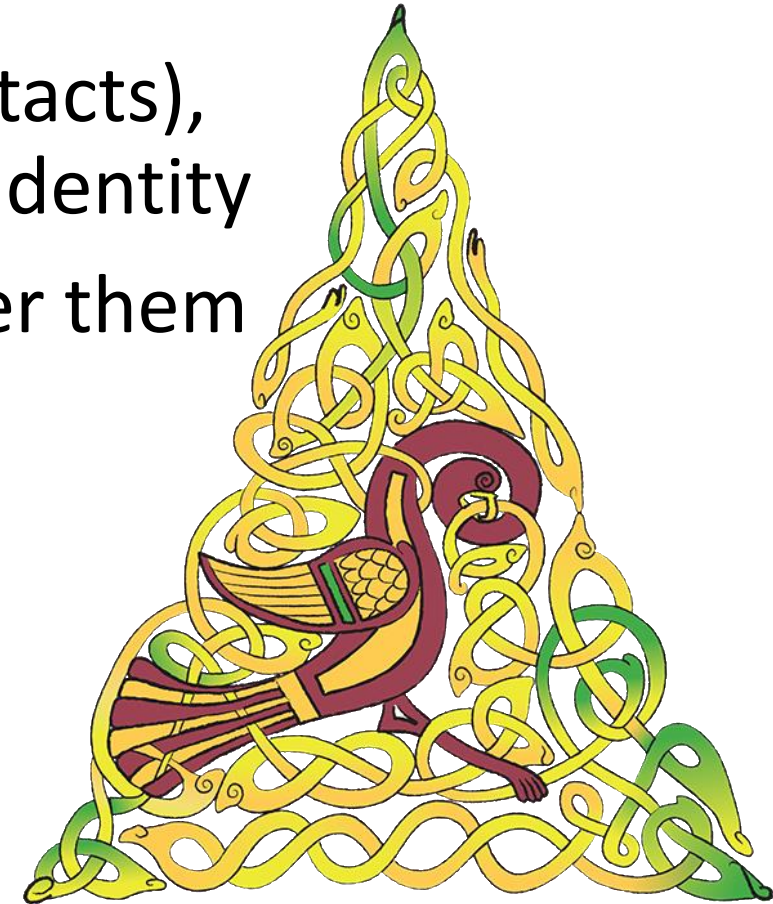


Breaking the wall down?  
(and how?)

# Summing up

- Context matters
- Provide local knowledge, information (and contacts), but support teachers to maintain professional identity
- Break down walls as well as helping people over them
- Don't leave it to IETs to fill the gaps
- Listen to teachers, but change the system
- It's hard, so let's help each other

**Stronger Together**



Ní neart go cur le chéile