

**Evaluation of the Trans-national
Resettlement Project:
UK and Ireland**

A Report Commissioned by UKBA

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Summary

This study reports the findings of an evaluation of the Trans-national Resettlement Project: UK and Ireland (TRUKI). The project involved the UK and Ireland jointly resettling a group of 120 refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The original intention was to resettle the refugees either side of the border between the two states in Northern Ireland and County Monaghan in Ireland. In the event, difficulties were encountered working against a tight timetable to prepare the ground (politically, practically and socially) for the arrival and resettlement of the refugees in Northern Ireland. The decision was therefore taken to resettle the refugees originally bound for Northern Ireland to Rochdale in England.

This research study was commissioned by Analysis, Research and Knowledge Management (ARK) within the UK Border Agency (UKBA), in order to fulfil the funding requirements of the European Refugee Fund II (ERFII), Community Actions Fund (CAF).

Aim of the evaluation

The overall aim of the TRUKI project, as detailed in the grant agreement, was to develop an achievable, beneficial and sustainable model for conducting joint resettlement activities and cross-border settlement of refugees between EU member states. The issues to be addressed were how to:

1. jointly plan and conduct concurrent and overlapping selection missions;
2. establish the costs and benefits of settling refugees of one nationality close to one another across the border of two member states; and

3. explore how best to involve EU countries with little or no experience of resettlement in shadowing activities.

This evaluation assesses these issues.

Methods

Staff focused activities - interviews with UKBA and Office of the Minister of State for Integration (OMI) staff involved in the selection, transfer and resettlement of the DRC refugees in Rochdale and County Monaghan. Interviews were also conducted with representatives of the three states that shadowed the project (Belgium, Bulgaria and Slovenia). The evaluation team also observed TRUKI project management group meetings and visited the reception centre in County Mayo where the refugees lived for two months.

Refugee focused activities - two rounds of face-to-face interviews were carried out with 27 DRC refugees who were resettled in County Monaghan (15) and Rochdale (12). Four focus groups were also conducted with refugees living in County Monaghan and Rochdale.

Conclusions were validated through a workshop involving OMI and UKBA officers.

Summary of Research Findings

Refugee Outcomes

Refugees were largely satisfied with the selection process carried out by UKBA and OMI. Six of the 27 refugees interviewed were concerned about the year long delay between selection and resettlement. In the UK this was partly caused by the change of destination from Northern Ireland to Rochdale and in Ireland transfer was delayed

due to late arrival of a preceding caseload and therefore the reception facility was not available. The refugees reported that they experienced harassment from other camp residents during the extended waiting period. Pre-departure cultural orientation and English language training was found to be particularly important for Rochdale bound refugees who moved into separate self-contained accommodation upon arrival, while the County Monaghan bound refugees were initially all based at the same reception centre.

In general, the refugees reported feeling safe and secure and appeared to be getting by and coping with life in County Monaghan and Rochdale, despite facing some challenges. Resettlement workers were the key source of support for the refugees in County Monaghan and Rochdale and some refugees were worried about coping without this help. Some of the challenges faced by refugees in County Monaghan were ameliorated by a befriending scheme that linked refugees to non refugees.

English language skills were the key barrier to refugee integration. Access to language training was more of an issue for refugees in Rochdale, reflecting the resourcing capabilities of local ESOL providers.

OMI and UKBA Joint Working

A joint selection mission to Tanzania, where the DRC refugees were based, was successfully planned and delivered, resulting in the selection of 120 refugees for resettlement. In addition, two networking events involving refugees and staff from Ireland and the UK were successfully delivered and provided important insights into refugee experiences, as well as an opportunity for refugees to 'catch up' with

friends. Joint working did not extend to include cross-border resettlement work, OMI and UKBA officers reporting that this was never an intention of the TRUKI project.

Joint working provided some lessons for future projects of this sort. First, the appointment of a dedicated, full-time project manager could have helped limit the impact of external factors on the project timetable. Second, officers who will be involved in the delivery of a project should ideally be actively involved in its design. Third, the production of a written agreement at the project inception stage detailing the aims and objectives of the project and associated roles and responsibilities could have helped limit subsequent misunderstanding.

Shadowing

Resources invested in shadowing were reported to have reaped significant dividends, in terms of lessons learnt and pitfalls avoided. Benefits were reported to flow from being able to compare and contrast resettlement practice in two states and observe the resettlement process from beginning to end.

Lessons learnt by shadowing state representatives from Slovenia, Bulgaria and Belgium were actively disseminated to fellow officers and politicians, informing the development of resettlement policy and practice. The shadowing states were developing selection mission policies modelled on the UK approach and arrival and resettlement practice modelled more on the Irish approach.

1. Context

This report presents the findings of an evaluation of the Trans-national Resettlement Project: UK and Ireland (TRUKI). The overall aim of the TRUKI project, as detailed in the grant agreement, was to develop an achievable, beneficial and sustainable model for conducting joint resettlement activities and cross-border settlement of refugees between EU member states. The issues to be addressed were how to: jointly plan and conduct concurrent and overlapping selection missions; establish the costs and benefits of settling refugees of one nationality close to one another across the border of two member states; and explore how best to involve EU countries with little or no experience of resettlement in shadowing activities.

The TRUKI project involved the UK and Ireland jointly planning and carrying out selection missions to Tanzania, where the refugees were based, and resettling a group of 120 refugees originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as part of an international programme operating under the supervision of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The aim of this programme is to resettle the most vulnerable refugees currently living in refugee camps or urban areas whose life, liberty, safety, health or other fundamental human rights are at risk in the country of refuge. In the UK the programme is managed by the UK Border Agency (UKBA). In Ireland the programme is managed by the Office of the Minister for Integration (OMI). Resettled refugees are provided with a minimum of twelve months of support to help them settle into their new lives, which is provided by different agencies in different resettlement sites, including local authorities, non-governmental organisations, housing associations and church groups.

Originally, the intention was that the 120 DRC refugees would be resettled in locations close to the border between the two states. Some were to be resettled in Northern Ireland (UK), while the remaining refugees were to be resettled across the border in the Republic of Ireland. In the event, difficulties were encountered working against a tight timetable to prepare the ground (politically, practically and socially) for the arrival and resettlement of the refugees in Northern Ireland, an area with little experience of managing the resettlement of refugees. As a result, the decision was taken to resettle the UK-bound refugees in Rochdale, England, a location with a history of receiving and accommodating refugees. Consequently, 46 refugees were resettled in Rochdale and 74 were resettled in County Monaghan, in the Republic of Ireland.

The two countries delivered post arrival support to the selected refugees separately and in line with established resettlement practice in each country (see Appendix 1). The TRUKI project focused on developing understanding of how to jointly plan and conduct resettlement selection missions and how to involve EU countries with little or no experience of resettlement to enable understanding of the resettlement process. Delivery of the latter objective involved the project being shadowed by the emerging resettlement countries of Belgium, Bulgaria and Slovenia. Appendix 2 provides a summary of key events in the delivery of the TRUKI project.

2. Approach

Data collection for this evaluation focused on two activities:

- *staff and agency interviews* - involving interviews with UKBA and OMI Mission and resettlement staff; partner agencies and support workers in the UK and Ireland; shadowing partners; and a facilitated discussion with staff from the UK and Ireland; and
- *interviews with DRC Refugees in Rochdale and County Monaghan* - two rounds of in-depth face-to-face interviews with DRC refugees in Rochdale and County Monaghan; and two rounds of focus group discussions with groups of men and women from DRC living in Rochdale and County Monaghan.

2.1 Staff and Agency Interviews

Eight interviews were conducted with UKBA and OMI staff involved in the selection, transfer and post-arrival resettlement of the DRC refugees in UK and Ireland.

Wherever possible, interviews were conducted face-to-face. The interviews focused on the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the TRUKI project and lessons learnt that might be usefully shared with other member states. In addition, a telephone interview was conducted with a representative of each of the three shadowing states, which focused on the twinning element and the practical support that the TRUKI project had provided to the emerging resettlement countries.

Interviews were also undertaken with staff in non-governmental agencies involved in selection and resettlement processes, including International Organization for Migration (IOM) staff in London and Dublin and managers and front-line staff in the support agencies providing on-the-ground resettlement support to the refugees in Rochdale and County Monaghan. Interviews focused on experiences of being

involved with the TRUKI project; relationships with OMI and UKBA; knowledge and awareness of the support needs of the refugees; approaches to meeting these needs; and thoughts and comments about lessons learnt. All interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed into verbatim text for analysis.

Evaluation team members observed TRUKI project management group meetings, in a bid to understand working arrangements, roles and functions and attended the networking events in Ireland and the UK. A member of the evaluation team also visited the reception centre in Ireland where the refugees spent their first two months in the country. The research findings were validated through a staff workshop, involving OMI and UKBA staff members.

2.2 Interviews with DRC Refugees in the UK and Ireland

A total of 27 of the 120 DRC refugees who were resettled in County Monaghan (15) and Rochdale (12) were interviewed three months after arrival (February 2010) (see Appendix 3 for a profile). A second wave of interviews were conducted with the same refugees seven months after arrival in Rochdale (June 2010) and seven months after the refugees in County Monaghan left the reception centre and moved into independent accommodation (May 2010). In total, 24 repeat interviews were secured (14 in Ireland and 10 in Rochdale). Purposeful sampling was employed to select respondents, ensuring the inclusion of men and women of different ages (all over 18 years of age) in different household situations. All interviews were conducted face-to-face by researchers skilled in the relevant community languages (typically Swahili). Time was taken to explain to each refugee what the interview would involve and how the data would be used, in a bid to limit problems for the refugees during interview. The interview was guided by a schedule which included

structured and semi-structured questions and all interviews were recorded, translated into English and transcribed into verbatim text for analysis. The first round of interviews focused on the selection process, the journey from Tanzania, where the refugees were based, to Ireland or Rochdale and initial arrival experiences. The second wave focused on resettlement and integration.

A total of four focus groups were conducted at the networking events in Ireland and the UK. Two focus groups were conducted with men and two with women. Up to ten people of different ages living in the UK and Ireland took part in each focus group. The sessions were conducted in Swahili by community researchers, who were guided by a schedule containing key questions and associated prompts. The first round of focus groups concentrated on the selection process, the journey and arrival experiences. The second round concentrated on resettlement and integration. The discussions were recorded, translated into English and transcribed into verbatim text for analysis.

3. Results

3.1 Refugee Outcomes

Summary

- Refugees were largely satisfied with the selection process.
- Six out of the 27 refugees interviewed complained about the year long delay between selection and resettlement, caused partly by the change in location from Northern Ireland to Rochdale, during which time they experienced harassment from other camp residents.
- Pre-departure cultural orientation and English language training was found to be particularly important for Rochdale bound refugees who moved into separate self-contained accommodation upon arrival.
- The refugees encountered no major problems on their journey and arrived safely.
- The reception centre experience ensured that the Irish refugees had a smoother transition into life in their new country than refugees in the UK.
- The resettlement worker was the key source of support for the refugees in County Monaghan and Rochdale and some refugees were worried about coping without this help.
- The refugees reported feeling safe and secure and appeared to be getting by and coping with life in Ireland and the UK, despite facing some challenges.
- A befriending scheme had helped ensure that refugees in Ireland had stronger links with other residents who were not refugees.
- English language skills were the key barrier to integration. Refugees in Rochdale encountered problems accessing language training. This reflected problems with the resourcing capabilities of local ESOL providers.

This section explores the resettlement process from the refugee perspective and identifies differences between the experiences of refugees resettled in County Monaghan and Rochdale. Discussion is organised under five headings: selection; arrival; support and assistance; indicators of integration; and looking forward.

3.1.1 Selection

The refugees in County Monaghan and Rochdale expressed high levels of satisfaction with the selection process; 24 out of the 27 refugees reported that they were very satisfied with the selection process and all 27 respondents reported being either very or fairly satisfied. Respondents often explained that their satisfaction reflected the fact that their application was successful, that they had escaped the dangers they had faced in the DRC and the poor living conditions of the refugee camp and had been safely resettled in Rochdale or County Monaghan. The only factor reported to be undermining satisfaction with the outcome of the selection process was the fact that some refugees had left close family members (for example, siblings) behind in the refugee camp.

The majority of refugees (16 out of 24) reported that they had been provided with enough information about the selection process, but eight refugees (six in County Monaghan and two in Rochdale) reported that they would have liked more information. These concerns centred on a lack of information about how the process would proceed and on what basis decisions would be made.

The refugees were asked how the selection process might be improved.

Suggestions included:

- providing more information about family reunification (County Monaghan and Rochdale based refugees) - OMI and UKBA reported providing detailed information to all applicants about family reunification, but refugees reported wanting more information about rights and possibilities for bringing other family

members to the UK or Ireland, a finding that chimes with previous studies of resettlement (see, for example, Evans and Murray, 2009); and

- removing successful applicants from the refugee camp (County Monaghan and Rochdale based refugees) - six refugees explained that they had encountered problems in the camp and experienced harassment from other refugees during the year long wait between selection and resettlement, this being partly due to the change in location from Northern Ireland to Rochdale.

Cultural orientation and Pre-departure English Language Training

All the refugees were provided with cultural orientation training prior to departure. The refugees were largely positive about this training, although the County Monaghan bound refugees commented that they had forgotten everything they had been told at the one day programme of cultural orientation provided by OMI staff during the selection mission. OMI commented that the objective of providing orientation at this time is to help refugees make an informed decision about seeking resettlement in Ireland. Also, the refugees had ample opportunity to learn more about life in County Monaghan during the more intensive orientation in the reception centre upon arrival. Twelve out of the 15 County Monaghan bound refugees interviewed reported that it would be useful to have some English language training prior to departure, reflecting the fact that the refugees were committed to learning English and reported that the earlier they could start learning, the better this would be for them.

The Rochdale bound refugees received a three day cultural orientation programme shortly before departure, which was provided by IOM officers in Africa,

along with ten days of English language training. This more intensive programme of pre-departure training reflected the fact that the Rochdale bound refugees would be moving into independent accommodation immediately upon arrival in Rochdale. The Rochdale bound refugees were largely satisfied with the cultural orientation training. The only suggestion for improving the training was that it should be delivered by people from the UK, who are more informed and familiar with life in the UK and the experiences of refugees. The Rochdale bound refugees also spoke positively about the English language training received before departure, reporting that it provided them with some essential words or phrases in English. However, five people suggested that it would have been helpful to have more than ten days of training. This suggestion appears to reflect the fact that this was the only English language training that some refugees received as part of the resettlement programme (see 3.1.4).

3.1.2 Arrival

The refugees reported that the journey to the UK and Ireland proceeded without any major problems. Initial impressions of the UK and Ireland were largely positive and influenced with observations about how different the situations and circumstances of the refugees now were, compared with what they had left behind. Some refugees commented about feelings of sadness about friends and relatives left behind in Africa.

Upon arrival, the Ireland bound refugees were met by OMI officers and transferred straight to the National Orientation and Training Centre in Ballyhaunis, County Mayo. All the Ireland bound refugees expressed satisfaction with their arrival experience and frequently talked about the happiness they felt upon arrival. Also

notable within the accounts of the County Monaghan based refugees was the pleasure and reassurance they gained from being greeted at Dublin airport by OMI officers they recognised from the selection mission.

In the reception centre, the refugees were accommodated in a cluster of flats in the same block. In the early days of resettlement the refugees were settled into their new accommodation and shown how to use domestic appliances. They were also linked into key services, including health care. During the first two weeks, orientation focused on the basics of getting by, such as shopping. The subsequent six weeks involved an intensive programme of training, including English language training and visits to various agencies and service providers, while the children spent time in a classroom environment.

The reception centre model was reported to involve a sizeable commitment of staff time and resource. However, this investment appeared to reap significant rewards. The refugees talked very positively about their time in the reception centre - 13 out of 15 were very satisfied and all 15 were either very or fairly satisfied. The centre appeared to have successfully delivered on its core objectives of easing the transition from the dependent nature of life in the camp to independent living in County Monaghan and to removing obstacles to integration. Refugees commented on how it had prepared them for the realities of living in and managing a house in County Monaghan, which was a new and challenging experience. Refugees also talked positively about being taught how to use public transport, about how to go shopping, how to access health care and how to relate to and communicate with Irish people. Two refugees also commented that they were grateful for the opportunity to rest in the reception centre.

The Rochdale bound refugees were met at the airport by staff from Refugee Action and transported to Rochdale. After being given a meal in a local church, the refugees were taken to their accommodation, which was located in neighbourhoods across Rochdale. Upon arrival, each household was shown how to use the domestic appliances and the heating system. All the UK refugees expressed satisfaction with their arrival experience, but also commented that their immediate resettlement in independent accommodation was a disorientating experience and that the challenge of living independently immediately upon arrival was a major cause of worry.

3.1.3 Support and Assistance

Refugees resettled in the UK and Ireland are provided with a minimum of 12 months support to help them adjust to their new life. In County Monaghan, this support was provided by a dedicated resettlement worker employed by Monaghan Integrated Development, a local third sector organisation. An intercultural worker was also employed to support interactions and to help with intercultural understanding in the health and education sectors. In Rochdale, this support was provided by a resettlement officer employed by Refugee Action, a national charity that provides advice and support to asylum seekers and refugees and which had previous experience of providing support and assistance to refugees from the DRC.

The resettlement worker was the most important source of support and assistance for refugees in Rochdale and County Monaghan. Refugees reported seeing their resettlement worker regularly during the first three months of settlement, being

able to contact them easily when they needed to and expressed satisfaction with the support received.

The support provided by the resettlement worker during the first three months of independent living was reported to be similar in the UK and Ireland and focused on:

- *advice and guidance* - ranging from when to put the bins out, through to budgeting advice;
- *help managing the home* - in the UK, this included showing refugees how to use domestic appliances;
- *help with correspondence* - for example, help understanding and responding to letters about benefit payments; and
- *help accessing services* - the most common example involved accompanying a refugee to a hospital appointment.

Seven months after moving into independent accommodation, refugees in County Monaghan and Rochdale remained largely satisfied with the support and assistance provided by their resettlement workers - 23 out of 24 of the refugees interviewed after seven months reported that their resettlement worker had proved a very (20) or fairly useful (3) source of support. Refugees in County Monaghan and Rochdale expressed concern about coping without the support and assistance provided by the resettlement worker when it was finally withdrawn, given limited English language skills.

Other useful sources of support and information for refugees in both Rochdale and County Monaghan were reported to include English language classes, places of worship, relatives, other refugees, neighbours and friends who are not refugees (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Usefulness of different sources of support since arriving in Rochdale/County Monaghan (24 respondents)

Source of support	Very useful	Fairly useful	Not very useful	Never used	Don't know
Resettlement support worker	20	3	0	1	0
Place of worship	21	2	0	1	0
Relatives	20	3	0	1	0
Other refugees	20	3	0	1	0
English teaching classes	21	1	1	1	0
Friends not fellow DRC refugees	17	4	1	0	2
Neighbours	19	1	2	1	0
Refugee community org	14	1	1	3	5
College	10	1	0	10	3
Local council / Local Authority	9	0	1	9	5
Legal advisor	5	0	0	10	9
Job Centre Plus (UK only)	5	0	0	9	10
Advice Centre	2	0	1	11	10
Employer	2	0	0	11	9

3.1.4 Indicators of Integration

This section compares and contrasts the integration experiences of the DRC refugees in County Monaghan and Rochdale. The aim is not to provide a comprehensive review of the complex set of interconnected issues informing integration, which are themselves contested. Rather, the intention is to spotlight experiences and compare and contrast differences across several key domains that are recognised as important influences on refugee integration. To this end, discussion follows the lead of Ager and Strang (2004), who suggest that integration can be measured through four types of indicators: means and markers; social connections; facilitators; and foundations. There are inevitable limitations

with any framework that seeks to measure something as complex as refugee integration (see Atfield et al., 2007). This particular framework was employed because it was found to usefully focus discussions with refugees on issues of immediate pertinence to integration that could be explored in a relatively short, face-to-face interview. Key differences revealed between the experiences of refugees in the two countries included satisfaction with housing, social networks, and English language training and competency.

Means and Markers of Integration

Positive experiences in four particular realms have been acknowledged as indicative of a positive integration experience and providing the means to assist with the wider integration process:

***Housing** - Refugees in Rochdale and County Monaghan expressed satisfaction with their current accommodation, but some specific problems were reported by refugees in County Monaghan.*

Seven months after arrival, all the refugees were living in independent accommodation provided by a private landlord (County Monaghan and Rochdale) or housing association (Rochdale). High levels of satisfaction with current accommodation were reported, but a small proportion of the refugees expressed concern or reported problems with specific aspects of their accommodation (Table 3.2).

Some refugees in County Monaghan were less satisfied with specific aspects of their current accommodation than refugees in the UK. All the refugees expressing dissatisfaction with the size of their home (four) and all the refugees expressing

dissatisfaction with the condition of their home (six) were in County Monaghan.

Some young people in County Monaghan expressed a desire to leave the family home and move into independent accommodation, as some of their counterparts in Rochdale had done.

Table 3.2 Satisfaction with different aspects of accommodation (Rochdale and County Monaghan, 24 respondents)

How satisfied are you with...	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
Distance to friends/relatives in the UK/Ireland	12	11	0	0	1
Size of home	15	5	4	0	0
Your neighbours	15	5	0	4	0
Your landlord	13	6	1	2	2
Condition/repair of home	13	4	3	3	1
The cost of heating your home	5	6	3	9	1
How much rent you pay	5	5	3	3	8

Education - Refugees in County Monaghan and Rochdale were keen to learn but few were in education or training, other than English language classes.

Refugees in both countries expressed an eagerness to enter education and training and 5 out of 10 refugees in the UK and 8 out of 14 in Ireland reported that they were currently studying. Most of these people were studying English, rather than undertaking a work-related training programme or attending a course other than English language training at a college, and most of the people expressing a desire to enter education were actually talking about English language training. However, some respondents did express an explicit desire to undertake education and training in addition to their English language training, in a bid to improve their

chances of securing a job and becoming financially independent. Most of these refugees had previous experience of formal education and were among the 11 out of 27 refugees who had secured some form of qualification, diploma or degree prior to resettlement. It was not possible to establish whether these refugees had the English language skills required to participate in mainstream education or training.

Employment - *None of the refugees were in paid employment but all reported wanting to work.*

Four respondents (3 out of 10 in Rochdale and 1 out of 14 in County Monaghan) indicated that they had actively looked for work since their arrival and three refugees (one in County Monaghan and two in Rochdale) indicated that they had done some unpaid volunteering since their arrival. The principal barrier to employment in both countries was reported to be limited English language skills. Concerns were also expressed about the difficulties of gaining work experience. In response, refugees suggested that they would like help accessing voluntary work in a bid to gain work experience, a finding that chimes with recommendations about the need for work-relevant volunteering opportunities in a bid to improve employment opportunities (Cramb and Hudek, 2005; Jones et al., 2008).

Health - *Poor health was common among the refugees in County Monaghan and Rochdale. Refugees reported being dependent upon the help of their resettlement worker to access health care.*

The health profile of the refugees reflects the criteria employed during selection, which sought to prioritise the most vulnerable cases for resettlement. Nine of the

27 refugees reported having a long-standing illness or disability and 23 reported that someone in their household (themselves and/or another household member) had a long-standing illness or disability. All the refugees interviewed in Rochdale and all but one of the refugees interviewed in County Monaghan reported being registered with a GP, but refugees in County Monaghan and Rochdale were typically dependent upon the help of the resettlement worker to access health care. This reflected limited knowledge about the health care systems in UK and Ireland and difficulties understanding and communicating with health care staff because of limited English language skills.

Social Connections

Differences were apparent in the breadth and depth of social connections and bonds developed by the refugees in County Monaghan and Rochdale.

Strong bonds with people from a similar background can represent an important resource, which can help refugees to cope with the challenges of living in a new culture and society. The refugees in County Monaghan reported that they maintained regular contact with the other DRC refugees living in the same town by attending the same English language classes. No respondents in County Monaghan reported associating and having regular face-to-face contact with refugees from outside the group. The refugees in Rochdale were more geographically dispersed and maintained contact by speaking on the phone, sometimes calling round to visit other members of the group and seeing other refugees at church, in the market and at the job centre. However, refugees in Rochdale also talked about meeting refugees from the DRC already settled in the area.

Connections with local residents can serve to enhance language and cultural knowledge, provide insight into rights and opportunities and foster a greater sense of belonging to a place of residence. Many refugees reported problems forging associations and friendships with local people, language proving a barrier to social interaction. However, five refugees (all in County Monaghan) reported regularly meeting friends who are not refugees. Regular contact between the refugees in County Monaghan and settled residents had been facilitated by the development of a befriending scheme. This was run by local people and involved them forging relationships with a refugee family, paying them regular visits and providing informal support and assistance.

Facilitators of Integration

***English Language** - Refugees in County Monaghan appeared to be making better progress learning English. Refugees in Rochdale reported problems accessing English language training.*

Three months after being resettled in independent accommodation in Rochdale and County Monaghan, most of the interviewed refugees could not understand spoken English, speak English themselves or read and write English. 25 of the 27 interviewed refugees reported that their English language skills were not good enough to get them through day to day life in the UK or Ireland. After 7 months, 17 out of 24 interviewed refugees reported that their English had improved a little or a lot.

Refugees interviewed in County Monaghan were more likely to report an improvement in their English than refugees interviewed in Rochdale (Table 3.3).

This appeared to reflect the fact that the County Monaghan based refugees received intensive English language training during their two month stay at the reception centre and had continued to receive 20 hours a week of English language training and cultural orientation during their first year of independent living in County Monaghan. In contrast, 3 months after arrival 9 of the 12 Rochdale based refugees who were interviewed reported that they had not attended English language classes. This is a finding consistent with previous studies, which have noted the problems encountered by refugees accessing ESOL training (Cramb and Hudek, 2005; Evans and Murray, 2009; Collyer and de Guerre, 2007).

Table 3.3 Has your English improved since arriving in County Monaghan/Rochdale? (after seven months)

Improvement	UK	Ireland	Total
A lot	0	1	1
A little	5	11	16
Not at all	5	2	7
Don't know	0	0	0
Total	10	14	24

The refugees interviewed in Rochdale were often angry about the lack of opportunity to study English, reporting that English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses at the local college were full and they did not know where else to turn. Refugee Action explained that the problem was not a lack of resources, but the fact that local providers of ESOL did not have the capacity to deliver training to the refugees. Seven months after arrival in the UK, seven of the ten Rochdale based refugees interviewed reported that they had attended English language classes, but this improvement appeared to reflect the fact that the

refugees had been directed to English language training provided at a local church. It was not clear whether this training would result in a recognised qualification.

Some respondents (particularly women) in County Monaghan and Rochdale talked about having attended language training on an irregular and infrequent basis because of caring responsibilities or because of a long-standing illness or disability. This finding appears to be consistent with evidence from the Gateway programme in the UK that women with children tend to access the least ESOL education and make the slowest progress (Evans and Murray, 2009).

Safety and Stability - Refugees in County Monaghan and Rochdale reported living lives characterised by safety and stability.

Resettlement appeared to have brought stability to lives that had for many years been characterised by uncertainty and insecurity. No respondents in County Monaghan or Rochdale wanted to leave the neighbourhood or town where they were living. Twenty out of 24 interviewed refugees (9 in Rochdale and 11 in County Monaghan) were very satisfied with their local area and reported feeling that they very strongly belonged to their local area. Twenty-one out of 24 respondents reported feeling very safe out and about in their local area. Only one refugee reported being the victim of a verbal attack since arriving and no respondents reported being the victim of a physical attack, a low level of problems compared to other refugee groups in the UK (Evans and Murray, 2009).

Foundations

Refugees in County Monaghan and Rochdale were unclear about how to access certain key services and sometimes expressed uncertainty about their rights to welfare benefits.

Understanding, awareness and perceptions of rights and citizenship represent a key foundation stone on which integration is built. Some evidence emerged to suggest that the refugees were unclear or uncertain about their legal rights. As already discussed, language problems served to limit access to certain key services (e.g. health care) for some refugees in County Monaghan and Rochdale. Confusion and frustration with the benefit system was also common among the refugees in Rochdale and County Monaghan and was reported to be causing financial difficulties for respondents in both countries, a finding consistent with previous studies. In Rochdale, refugees raised fears about having their benefits cut if they do not find work, which they reported was difficult because of their limited English language skills, a finding that corresponds with the reported concerns of Gateway refugees in Brighton (Collyer and de Guerre, 2007).

3.1.5 Looking Forward

The refugees in Rochdale and County Monaghan were largely satisfied with their new life - 23 out of 24 of the interviewed refugees reported that they were very or fairly satisfied with life seven months after resettlement. Satisfaction was frequently explained through reference to the extreme circumstances and situations that people had left behind in Africa. However, the factors associated with successful refugee integration are not yet all in place: employment remains a

distant prospect for most of the refugees; many remain reliant on the help of their resettlement worker to access key services, including health care; and education is too often an aspiration rather than a reality (although children were reported to be doing well at school). Underpinning these problems was the limited English language skills of the refugees, which was a particular concern for refugees in Rochdale. This finding is consistent with evidence that integration outcomes are closely associated with English language skills (Cebulla et al., 2010).

3.2 OMI and UKBA Joint Working

<p>Summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A joint selection mission to Tanzania, where the refugees were based, was successfully planned and delivered, resulting in the selection of 120 refugees for resettlement.• Two networking events involving refugees and staff from Ireland and the UK were successfully delivered and provided important insights into refugee experiences, as well as an opportunity for refugees to 'catch up' with friends.• The appointment of a dedicated, full-time project manager would have helped limit the impact of external factors on the projects delay.• Officers who will be involved in delivery of a project should be actively involved in its design, in a bid to maximise relevance and ensure appropriateness.• The production of a written agreement at the project inception stage detailing the aims and objectives of the project and associated roles and responsibilities would have helped limit subsequent misunderstanding.
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A key objective of the evaluation was to review the rationale and implementation of the TRUKI joint working arrangements and to highlight lessons learnt for future joint working between Member States. This section addresses this objective.

3.2.1 The Selection Mission

Joint working around the selection mission focused on the mission itself. The review of information and evidence provided by the UNHCR, decisions about which refugees Ireland and the UK were intending to accept for resettlement, requests to UNHCR for full dossiers relating to these individuals and the final decision about who to interview on the selection mission were activities undertaken separately by UKBA and OMI. Some discussion did take place about a joint pre-departure orientation programme and about joint transfer to Ireland and the UK, but different work practices and timetables for transfer made both impractical.

The rationale behind the joint mission was reported by project staff to be to find out about alternative ways of working and to learn from each other. This reflected a more general perception among UKBA and OMI staff that a key aim of joint working was to provide an opportunity for the UK and Ireland to learn from each other about selection, pre-departure and post-arrival practice. The UKBA and OMI selection missions were timed to coincide. This involved ongoing communication and liaison between staff in both agencies regarding the practicalities and logistics of the mission. This was reported to have proceeded smoothly.

The UKBA and OMI mission teams stayed in the same hotel in Tanzania, along with officials from the shadowing states (Belgium and Bulgaria), and travelled to the interviews together, allowing staff to chat informally and compare and contrast experiences. The interviews were conducted at the same venue and the two teams shared a pool of interpreters. There were opportunities for the two teams, as well as the shadowing states, to observe UKBA and OMI staff interviewing refugees, but capacity issues did restrict this opportunity. UKBA and shadowing

state representatives also observed OMI staff delivering cultural orientation to refugees during the course of the selection mission (IOM delivers cultural orientation on behalf of UKBA to refugees selected for resettlement shortly before they travel to the UK).

All parties talked positively about joint working around the selection mission, which was reported to have been a positive experience undertaken in a spirit of cooperation that proceeded smoothly and resulted in the identification of 120 refugees for resettlement. OMI and UKBA staff were less convinced of the benefits of joint working on the selection mission. There was little evidence of efficiencies made as a result of joint working; the two missions were reported to have proceeded in parallel, rather than in partnership. Staff from both countries also found it difficult to identify any lessons learnt as a result of their involvement in joint working on the selection mission. Several reasons were given to explain why this was the case. First, some UKBA team members reported being unclear about the reasons for the joint mission. Second, if both OMI and UKBA teams had included senior managers this would have facilitated more fruitful discussions. Third, UKBA did not have the capacity to release members from interviewing to allow them to observe the work practices of OMI. Fourth, any insights gained from the process were not captured.

Problems realising the opportunities presented by joint working around the selection mission were reported to, in part, reflect the fact that the TRUKI management systems were not fully operational in the build up to the selection mission. OMI reported that this reflected the fact that preparation needed to commence in advance of meetings to establish TRUKI management systems.

Joint working around the selection mission (which took place in September 2008) was therefore reported to have relied on cooperation between individual UKBA and OMI officers responsible for mission planning, without a formal management system being in place.

3.2.2 Joint Working Post Arrival

Following the selection mission, joint working between OMI and UKBA focused on the organisation and delivery of the cross-border networking events attended by refugees based in Ireland and the UK. According to the project parameters, the original objective of the two networking events was to bring together the refugees who were going to be living either side of the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in order to overcome any perceived barrier that the land border might create in the minds of the refugees and encourage them to develop social networks across the border. In the event, OMI and UKBA focused the two events on learning from the refugee experience due to the change in location of the UK based refugees from Northern Ireland to Rochdale.

The first networking event provided time and space for the refugees from County Monaghan and Rochdale to meet and 'catch up' and workshops were held with men, women and young people which explored experiences of the resettlement process in Rochdale and County Monaghan. The second networking event also involved workshops with DRC refugees from Rochdale and County Monaghan, which focused on experiences of resettlement support and refugees' hopes and aspirations for the future.

Discussion at the networking events brought a number of issues to the attention of OMI and UKBA staff. The first networking event highlighted the financial problems of some refugees. The second event highlighted the importance of English language training. Reports were generated from both events and circulated to the Project Board.

The networking events proved to be a fruitful exercise, in terms of the insights that UKBA and OMI were able to gain into refugee views and options. Insights were provided into challenges faced by the refugees and broader lessons were learnt about how practice might be revised and improved to better meet the needs and priorities of refugees. The refugees reported valuing the networking events for providing an opportunity to meet with friends they had not seen since leaving the refugee camp in Tanzania. The shadowing states also talked positively about being able to hear about the refugees' experiences first hand.

Joint working did not extend to include cross-border resettlement work. It might be presumed that this was an inevitable consequence of the necessary decision to resettle the UK bound refugees in Rochdale, rather than Northern Ireland.

Following this decision, it is difficult to see how the project could deliver on the objectives of exploring the costs and benefits of settling refugees of one nationality close to one another across the border of two member States. However, UKBA and OMI officers reported that it was never the intention that the TRUKI project would involve cross-border resettlement work and that the switch from Northern Ireland to Rochdale had little impact on the delivery of the project against its stated objectives.

OMI and UKBA staff noted the importance of ensuring that officers who will be involved in delivering a project are actively involved in its design (although one OMI staff member did report being involved). Staff also suggested that it would have been helpful if Ireland and the UK had generated a written agreement at the project inception stage that detailed the aims and objectives of the project and associated roles and responsibilities, to ensure that all staff were clear about the project's aims and objectives. This document might also have helped focus discussion when the grant agreement needed to be amended in response to the resettlement of the originally Northern Ireland bound refugees to Rochdale.

OMI and UKBA staff were not involved in exchange visits to review resettlement practice or the provision of support and assistance to the DRC refugees in County Monaghan or Rochdale. This fact appears to run counter to the common perception among many of the staff interviewed that an objective of the TRUKI project was to provide staff in both organisations with opportunities to learn from each other about all aspects of resettlement practice. However, joint learning was not a stated objective of the TRUKI project and the project budget was not intended to support such visits. Even so, during the workshop discussion, OMI and UKBA staff acknowledged that this was a missed opportunity, which might have been realised if there had been a full-time project manager in place who was responsible for driving forward joint working at all stages of the project (see 3.2.3).

A final point of note regarding joint working relates to the involvement in the TRUKI project of the local agencies in Ireland and the UK providing resettlement support to the DRC refugees. OMI and UKBA staff reported that it was not an aim of the TRUKI project to engage these local agencies in joint working arrangements.

However, staff from these agencies reported that they would have liked to have been more informed about the project and made aware of how they might help and benefit from being involved, for example, in the networking events.

3.2.3 Project Management

The original intention was to appoint a full-time TRUKI project manager who would be based in Northern Ireland. Delays in confirming Northern Ireland as the resettlement site for the UK bound refugees resulted in a delay in appointing the project manager. A UKBA European Fund Manager was given responsibility for project management until such time as a permanent Project Manager could be appointed. Following the decision not to resettle the UK bound refugees in Northern Ireland, UKBA confirmed that the recruitment of a dedicated project manager was stopped. Project management responsibilities were, instead, assumed by UKBA European fund managers, as is the norm with resettlement work.

OMI staff reported that they were not consulted about a UKBA fund manager overseeing project management functions and suggested that this role should have been filled by someone actively involved in resettlement. The staff workshop also agreed that the failure to appoint a full-time project manager - the succession of UKBA officers appointed to the position managed the TRUKI project alongside existing responsibilities - impacted on the achievements of the project. In particular, it was suggested that a full-time project manager would have been better able to drive forward joint working at every opportunity and would have helped ensure continuity of purpose in the context of frequent changes in the UKBA and OMI personnel involved.

Despite these observations, the UKBA officers who oversaw project management responsibilities played a critical role in ensuring that key aspects of the TRUKI project were delivered. It was an officer appointed to this role who took the decision that the UK bound refugees should not be resettled in Northern Ireland and who identified a service provider able to resettle the refugees in Rochdale; forwarded an update and amendment to the project parameters to the European Commission; appointed a team to evaluate the TRUKI project; and established a Project Board to oversee all aspects of joint working.

3.3 Shadowing

<p>Summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shadowing activities varied in form and nature, reflecting the different objectives of shadowing states, practical considerations and their relationship with Ireland or the UK.• Time and money invested in shadowing was reported to have reaped significant dividends, in terms of lessons learnt and pitfalls avoided.• Lessons learnt by shadowing state representatives were actively disseminated to fellow officers and politicians and informed the development of resettlement policy and practice.• Benefits were reported to flow from being able to compare and contrast resettlement practice in two states and observe the resettlement process from beginning to end.• The shadowing states were developing selection mission policies modelled on the UK approach and arrival and resettlement practice modelled on the Irish approach.
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One of the aims of the TRUKI project was to provide an intensive twinning arrangement for officials from emerging resettlement countries in the EU. This was intended to involve officials from between two and four states observing all stages of the planning, selection, settlement and evaluation, in order to boost their knowledge and capacity to begin accepting cases for resettlement. In the event, three emerging resettlement countries shadowed the TRUKI project: Slovenia, Bulgaria and Belgium.

Shadowing activities involved each state designating a senior officer with some experience of resettlement to lead their involvement, identify good practice and cascade it to other officers and politicians. In all cases senior officers were accompanied at appropriate points in the process by colleagues with more specialised remits who helped them identify good practice.

All three states reported being keen to engage in the shadowing arrangements in the hope they would have the opportunity to appraise alternative models for resettlement, learn lessons from observing resettlement practice in Ireland and/or the UK and inform development of their own resettlement programme. A Bulgarian officer added that another key objective was to foster ongoing supportive relationships that emerging resettlement countries could draw on as they move towards the acceptance of resettlement cases and proceed to integration.

The frequency of contact between Ireland/UK and the shadowing states varied across the lifetime of the TRUKI project:

- Contact between Ireland and Bulgaria was ongoing and frequent.
- Belgium's contact with the UK government centred around organised visits, when officers had participated in detailed discussions.
- Contact between Slovenia and Ireland was limited and infrequent; the Slovenian respondent reported that cost limited greater involvement (this is despite the TRUKI budget covering direct costs associated with shadowing activities).

Representatives from Belgium and Bulgaria commented that the demands placed on the participating states were not too onerous and that shadowing was an efficient use

of time and money, given that it helped them avoid making mistakes in the design and delivery of their own programmes. UKBA and OMI staff, meanwhile, commented that shadowing had not proved unduly onerous, but had involved the commitment of key staff in planning and delivering activities.

The consensus among the shadowing state representatives was that shadowing had proved very effective in terms of enabling them to identify key lessons and good practice. These lessons were reported to have been disseminated to fellow officers and politicians and to have directly informed the development of their resettlement programmes:

- Belgium reported that shadowing the selection mission helped confirm that Belgium's approach to selection, although different to the UK or Irish approach, was appropriate. Belgium was reported to have developed a hybrid approach to post-arrival resettlement practice, influenced by practice in Ireland, the UK and the Netherlands.
- Bulgaria reported that observing selection had helped confirm that they were likely to implement the UK approach to selection. Bulgaria and Slovenia both reported intending to adopt and adapt the Irish approach to post-arrival resettlement.
- All three shadowing states reported intending to replicate the reception centre model from Ireland, explaining that shadowing helped confirm an existing preference for this approach.

Representatives reported that the insights gained from shadowing allowed them to circumvent some of the problems associated with the development and

implementation of a new programme. As a result, it was suggested that the shadowing states stood to make significant savings by modelling their own programmes on 'tried and tested' resettlement models developed by other states. Respondents commented that being able to observe the resettlement programmes of two states in parallel served to prompt critical reflection and led to conclusions being drawn that would not have been so readily forthcoming if only observing one state. Evidence of lessons learnt being shared between TRUKI partners (shadowing states and the UK and Ireland) was less apparent, the only example uncovered being a short paper circulated by Bulgaria reflecting on insights gained through the shadowing of the selection mission. Staff at the workshop session commented that this was an opportunity lost. UKBA staff, in particular, reported regretting that they had not heard more from the shadowing states about the impressions of practice in Ireland and the UK.

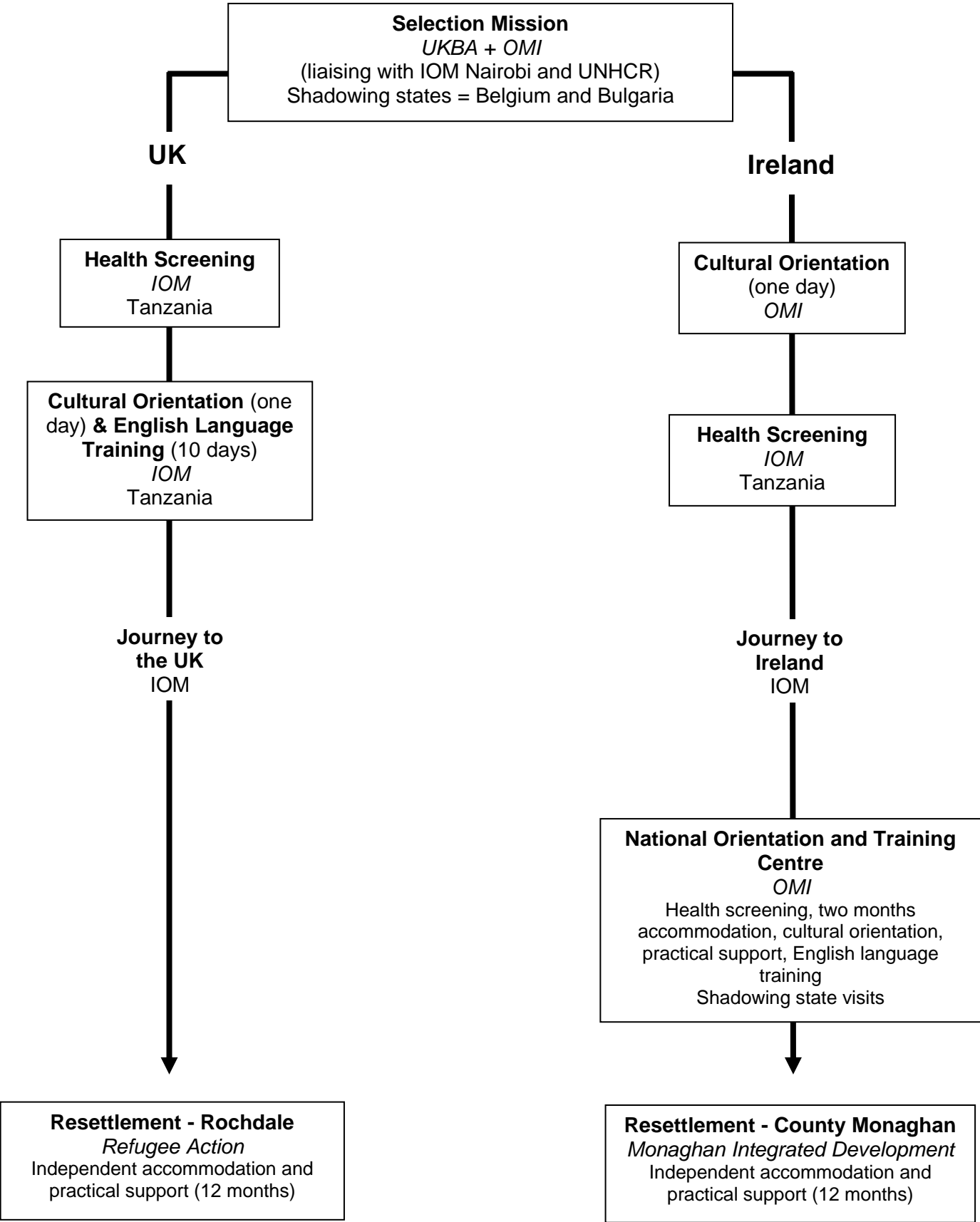
Suggestions for improving the shadowing experience included:

- affording shadowing states more 'lead in' time to ensure that the relevant permissions and resources are in place and providing more background documentation at the outset to aid preparation;
- building in flexibility, so that shadowing states can pick and choose the specific elements of the resettlement process they observe; and
- allowing shadowing states to maintain relations with more experienced resettlement states once formal twinning activities had ended, allowing them to seek advice on a more ad-hoc basis, as and when challenges arise.

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Appendix 1: Overview of UK and Irish Resettlement Programme Activities



Appendix 2: Key Dates and Activities in the Delivery of the TRUKI Project

Date	Activity
December 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TRUKI bid submitted to European Commission. The UK was identified as the lead applicant for the purposes of the bid
March 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UKBA and OMI informed that the bid was successful
August 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project commences and UKBA officer takes on project management responsibilities
September 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OMI and UKBA selection mission to Tanzania, observed by representatives from Belgium and Bulgaria
July 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new UKBA officer takes on project management responsibilities • independent evaluation team appointed • decision taken to resettle UK refugees in Rochdale rather than Northern Ireland • project manager meets with OMI staff to 'restart' joint working activities (financial discussion)
September 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DRC refugees arrive in Ireland and are transferred to National Orientation and Training Centre (NOTC) in Ballyhaunis, County Mayo
November 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • representatives from Bulgaria and Slovenia visit the NOTC centre in Ballyhaunis. • representatives from Belgium who were also visiting the centre at the time participated in the transnational element of the project. • Visiting delegations received presentations from Government Officials on Integration Policy and Practice in Ireland at a national level, met with Regional and local Service Providers and NGO's working with resettled refugees and with a previously resettled group of Karen refugees to hear of their experience of resettlement. • Representatives from Bradford, working with a community of Burmese Rohingya refugees visited the reception Centre – organised through TRUKI contacts. • DRC refugees arrive in the UK and are transferred to independent accommodation in

	<p>Rochdale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DRC refugees in Ireland are moved from the reception centre to independent accommodation in Monaghan and Carrickmacross
April 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New UKBA officer takes on project management responsibilities
May 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking event held in Carrickmacross, Ireland. Ten refugees from the UK attend, along with 25 refugees living in Ireland, OMI and UKBA staff and observers from Belgium and Bulgaria. Time was for the refugees from Ireland and the UK to meet and 'catch up' and workshops were facilitated by OMI staff with men, women and young people, in which refugees from the UK and Ireland were encouraged to share their selection and arrival stories and comment on the pros and cons of the resettlement process in the UK and Ireland. • Officials from the UK/Belgium/Bulgaria attended the networking event to hear of the issues directly from the refugees. • The visiting delegation also met with the Inter-Agency Resettlement Steering Group and the implementing partner (Monaghan Integrated Development Company) that coordinates the resettlement programme at a local level.
June 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking event held in Bolton, England. Ten refugees from the UK and 25 refugees from Ireland attend, along with OMI and UKBA staff and observers from Belgium and Bulgaria. The focus was on exploring the value of different forms of resettlement support and provision to the refugees and their hopes and aspirations for the future.
September 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff workshop attended by OMI and UKBA staff to review and reflect on delivery of the TRUKI project

Appendix 3: Profile of Refugee Respondents

The table below provides profile information relating to the 27 refugees in the UK (12 respondents) and Ireland (15 respondents) interviewed three months after moving into independent accommodation (i.e. 3 months after arrival in the UK and 3 months after leaving the reception centre in Ireland). Twenty-four of these refugees (10 in the UK and 14 in Ireland) were re-interviewed seven months after moving into independent accommodation.

Age	Ireland	UK
18-24	4	5
25-34	1	1
35-44	3	1
45-54	5	4
55-59	1	0
60-64	1	1

Gender	Ireland	UK
Male	7	5
Female	8	7

Nationality	Ireland	UK
Congolese	15	11
Burundi	0	1

Location	Ireland	UK
Monaghan	8	0
Carrickmacross	7	0
Rochdale	0	12

Marital status	Ireland	UK
Single	4	4
Married	8	4
Separated	0	1
Widowed	3	2
Other	0	1

Number with long standing illness or disability	Ireland	UK
Total	5	4

Reading in main language	Ireland	UK
Fluently/ fairly well	9	8
A little	2	1
Not at all	4	3

Writing in main language	Ireland	UK
Fluently/ fairly well	8	8
A little	3	1
Not at all	4	3

Years of education prior to arrival in Ireland/UK	Ireland	UK
None	5	3
6 years or less	2	2
7-9 years	2	1
10-12 years	6	6

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