

New research reveals the extent of systemic racism in Ireland's job market

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Systemic racism in Ireland's treatment of Asylum Seekers has been revealed in new research from Trinity Business School.

According to research from Elochukwu Uzor and Dr Michelle MacMahon from Trinity Business School, despite Ireland being an international employer, Asylum Seekers are excluded from employment opportunities.

The researchers distributed a short survey to a cross-section of employees. The sample included 50 management and staff across many employment sectors but dominated by the views of three sectors – healthcare, financial services, and education.

The study found that while most participants (43%) believe Ireland is a diverse and inclusive employer, 58% said their organisation does not consider job applications from Asylum Seekers. In 2019, there were 4781 Asylum Seekers in Ireland with almost a quarter (n=1151) from Africa (Irish Refugee Council, 2019).

When the respondents were asked why they thought employers do not consider job applications from Asylum Seekers, the researchers found three recurring themes: employers' lack of knowledge on the employment status of Asylum Seekers; Ireland's employers are prejudice; and Ireland's employers make social assumptions about Asylum Seekers, such as - they are lazy, they are poorly educated, and they have a low level of proficiency in the English language. Meanwhile, only 20% of respondents had advice for Asylum Seekers looking to find a job, which was to 'network' and 'build credibility'.

Elochukwu Uzor, a current MSc HRM student at Trinity Business School, says:

"Employment is a basic human right! Employment provides a sense of inclusion, belonging and security in society. It is also positively related to people's mental health. Therefore, those who are employed have a greater sense of self-satisfaction. Asylum Seekers have longed craved the opportunity to be included in the labour market and contribute to Irish society. However, this can only be possible if employers are properly educated about Asylum Seekers right to work in Ireland and employees check their exclusion behaviours".

Dr Michelle MacMahon, Adjunct Assistant Professor at Trinity Business School, says:

"We have moved beyond the business case for diversity and inclusion and still we pay little attention to the exclusions that remain. We view inclusion and diversity as a social phenomena, that is people represent the organisation and therefore people include or exclude. Particularly in Ireland, there is general consensus that opportunities depend on 'who you know'. However, there exists an opportunity for HRM to adapt existing policies on diversity and inclusion to mitigate exclusion. Policies that draw

attention to un/conscious biases and expose exclusion behaviours to give Asylum Seekers a chance to employment, that is their right”.

Dr Na Fu, Programme Director for MSc HRM at Trinity College Dublin, says:

“I would like to congratulate Elo and Michelle on their excellent research. People are the most valuable asset for organisations. Identifying and developing talented people is critical to enable organisations to generate new ideas and innovate across products and services. I am very proud to see our HRM student and faculty are working together to address the real issues in the contemporary people management”.

The research was accepted for presentation by the Organization Behaviour Division Rapid Research Plenary: Racial Inequality and Systemic Racism in Organizations at the Academy of Management Annual Conference, 2020. The Academy of Management Annual Conference is world's premier and largest management conference. The Academy has a global community with nearly 20,000 members in over 120 countries.

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For more information, a copy of the paper, or to speak with Dr Michelle MacMahon or Elochukwu Uzor, please contact Jonny Stone at jonny@bluesky-pr.com or call 01582 790704.