

NASC

Protecting Human Rights, Promoting Integration, Campaigning for Change

Immigrants and refugees arriving in Ireland are often at a disadvantage due to language skills, lack of information about their rights and in many instances the traumatic experience of leaving a home country due to war and conflict.

The bright link to a better life in Ireland is Nasc. Nasc is Gaelic for "link" and the organization actively links newcomers and ethnic minorities to legal advice, advocacy and opportunities to integrate into Irish society. They also advocate and educate local communities about the opportunities—both economic and social—that newcomers bring to Ireland. Working with the police and schools, they

ensure that any incidents of discrimination and racism are addressed when they arise. Nasc actively works to reunify families torn apart by countries in conflict.

"The Ireland Funds saw that Nasc was about people and families," explains Fiona Finn, CEO of Nasc. "For us, that was really important. The Ireland Funds have stayed with us and then they introduced us to donors who have been amazing. Thanks to that support, we have been able to open our service for an extra day a week, which means that we see an extra 10 people a day, which adds up to quite a lot of people each year. It makes a huge difference as an organi-

zation knowing that you're not turning your back or closing your doors. When The Ireland Funds are behind you it helps you leverage other funding because those others say, "This must be a reputable organization, it has a good relationship with The Ireland Funds."

"I thank The Ireland Funds for helping us," says Fiona. "It was a brave decision and choice. Our work is about people and their lives. It just happens these people come from a different place other than Ireland. I think that, if anything, is our story."

NASC IN NUMBERS

2000

The year Nasc was established on account of an increase in migration to Ireland

54

families reunited by Nasc in 2015

1000

clients seen a year by Nasc for legal advice and consultations

A FAMILY REUNITED

Raja's story

"Because of the war in Somalia I had to flee in 2003. My daughter and I were separated and she made her way to a refugee camp in Kenya with her grandmother. I was finally able to find a phone number and reach them to confirm they had made it! But then her grandmother died and my daughter was alone in the refugee camp. She was 16.

I came here to Nasc and asked for help. I told them everything about my story and they welcomed me.

Coming here to Nasc, I have met other women going through what I am going through. We come out, we talk, and we feel free. Starting a new life is very hard. You don't know what will happen tomorrow. You don't know what letter may come for you.

Nasc worked very hard to help me. They helped me with the legal forms to bring my daughter here. I don't know how to thank them enough. After all these years? She arrives tomorrow! I will see my daughter tomorrow."

In April of 2016, Raja was reunited with her daughter Khadija after 12 years apart due to the war in Somalia.



A CHANCE TO GIVE BACK

Bibli's story

"I came to Cork from Ghana when I was 17. I didn't know anything about Ireland. It was like living in darkness. I could not work or contribute. It was scary. Where am I going? What's going to happen next? For me, at that time, I was kind of broken. I felt like giving up. I heard about Nasc. What surprised me was everyone here was smiling! They actually talked to me about my options. They explained my rights and how I could attend school. In a million years I could not have dreamed I could go to school. Education had seemed so far away.

Claire and Fiona here at Nasc really helped and encouraged me. Later, when the school said 'please bring your parent' I would bring Fiona or Claire! I had stopped going to school in Ghana so there had been a break in my education. But Nasc made sure I had extra classes after school to keep me going. It is difficult to express how much I have benefitted. Emotionally it has also changed me. My position about life has changed.

I once felt like everybody was bad. That the world was not a place you could enjoy. The kindness of Nasc has shown me the kindness of people. Now I can give something back."

Bibli completed his degree with honors at the Cork Institute of Technology in structural engineering.

