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A WELCOME RECEPTION?
A Child Rights-Based Analysis of the Direct Provision Scheme
for Asylum Seekers in Ireland

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Abstract

Direct Provision is a scheme in Ireland in which asylum seekers are accommodated in reception centres while awaiting determination of their refugee status. Over one third of such asylum-seekers are children, many of whom have been born and grow up in such centres. Although children in DP are accompanied by family members, they nevertheless require special protection in light of their status as both children and asylum-seekers.

States are continuously criticised for their failure to effectively implement the protection of children's rights in asylum policy, which is overshadowed by political concerns regarding security and immigration control. As a result, children who seek asylum are considered as asylum-seekers first and children second, contrary to the rights-based approach enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In light of the widespread tendency of states to adopt restrictive asylum policies towards people seeking protection, it is therefore critical to address the question of responding to children seeking asylum in accordance with an approach that meets their needs as best as possible.

This thesis therefore seeks to establish whether the treatment of children within the system of Direct Provision is in line with international and regional children's rights standards. In particular, it will identify the various issues arising from the interplay between children's rights and asylum policy and its implications for the lived experiences of children in Direct Provision.

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