

Faculty of Journalism and Media Communications



Griffith College Dublin

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<b>Programme</b>	MAJPR	
<b>Stage</b>	Semester 2	
<b>Module Name</b>	Dissertation	
<b>Assessment Title/Number</b>	Final project	
<b>Lecturer Name</b>	Barry Finnegan	
<b>Date Due</b>	08/08/2024	
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# **Finding a home away from home**

**A radio documentary on the culture shock of educational migration on international students in Ireland.**

**By**

**Blessing Kure**

**A dissertation by practice submitted in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements for MA in Journalism &  
Public Relations (QQI)  
Faculty of Journalism & Media Communications  
Griffith College**

**August 2024**

**DECLARATION**

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Blessing Kure

8 August 2024

## **ABSTRACT**

"Finding a Home Away from Home" is a radio documentary that delves into the experiences of international students in Ireland. This first part of a seven-part documentary series is an audio portrait of one student. Through the students' personal narratives, the documentary examines the culture shock experienced and its challenges, focusing on initial struggles, its psychosocial impacts, the students' coping mechanisms and eventual integration into Irish society.

This 36 minute long documentary aims to offer insight into the peculiar challenges, experiences, and triumphs of educational migration and was structured based on the five stages of culture shock as identified by Peter Adler. This work is valuable for future research on international student experiences and migration studies.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank my supervisors, Francesca Lalor and Pat Proctor, for their guidance and expertise. Your feedback and support have been invaluable to this dissertation.

To Samuel Yakura for sharing his story and time. And to my family and friends for their love, unwavering support, and encouragement.

Blessing Kure

8 August 2024

## **CHAPTER 1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The dissertation by practice proposal titled 'Finding Home Away from Home: A Radio Documentary on Culture Shock of Educational Emigration on International Students in Dublin' explores the impact of culture shock on these big students' overall well-being and academic performance of these students as they acclimatise in Dublin, Ireland.

### **1.1 Significance of Research**

According to a report (Higher Education Authority, 2023), Ireland has experienced a significant surge in international student enrolment over the past 15 years. The figures reveal a staggering 270.30% increase, with the number of students rising from slightly over 13,000 in 2007/2008 to 35,140 in 2022/2023. Therefore, how these students from different regions acclimatise in Ireland to successfully maximise their time studying here is worthy of research because to be able to optimise this academic opportunity and perform at peak capacity, the student must adequately adapt to the new society and be effectively integrated (Faizah and Rifameutia, 2019 cited in Malay et al., 2023). Students from different regions or countries face challenges while adapting to their new surroundings and lifestyles. Hence, they need to familiarise themselves with the college and their new environment, as pointed out by various studies (Faizah and Rifameutia, 2019, cited in Auliya et al., 2023).

### **1.2 Dissertation Aims**

This documentary aims to offer insight into the experiences of international students in Dublin by providing a platform for their voices and experiences. It highlights their challenges, culture shock, its psychosocial impact, and coping mechanisms.

### 1.3 Research Questions

To document and tell the stories of the students migrating to Ireland, this dissertation aims to address the following research questions:

1. How does educational migration affect the psychosocial well-being of international students in Ireland?
2. How does culture shock impact students' academic performance?
3. What have the experiences of integrating into the Irish community been like?
4. What support is available to international students studying in Ireland?

### 1.4 Documentary Format

This radio documentary is accompanied by a written dissertation comprised of the following chapters:

- **Chapter Two:** This chapter outlines the existing literature on education, culture shock, and migration in Ireland, providing evidence of the research that informed the dissertation.
- **Chapter Three:** This chapter details the design and construction of this radio documentary, including the selection criteria, interview, narration and technical approaches. It also discusses ethical considerations, challenges, and limitations in producing the radio documentary.
- **Chapter Four:** This chapter recounts the dissertation timeline from the initial proposal submission to date. It discusses the research journey and narrative evolution from the inception of the research to the finished product. It explains the rationale behind the

editorial and narrative decisions made during the production. It concluded with a recommendation suggestion for future studies and productions.

## CHAPTER 2.0 EVIDENCE OF RESEARCH

Immigration is now a significant part of many communities. It exposes people to unfamiliar cultures and provides them with opportunities to live, study, and work abroad. Sometimes, immigrants may settle in these countries for a long time (Bierwiazzonek and Waldzus, 2016). In developed countries that receive immigrants and generate tourism, cultural differences and the process of intercultural adaptation can even be observed within households (Moufakkir, 2013). However, not everyone easily adapts to the unfamiliar realities surrounding them. Numerous studies have attempted to explain the determining factors for the success or failure of international experiences, resulting in a vast literature on cross-cultural adaptations (Bierwiazzonek and Waldzus, 2016). The extent to which individuals can acclimatise and overcome culture shock may significantly impact their academic performance, health, relationships, and overall progress.

Malay et al. (2023) found that people experience culture shock and difficulties with new surroundings, food, weather, and intercultural communications. The ability to overcome these challenges plays a crucial role in their integration, as transitional experiences suggest that specific psychological, social, and cultural dynamics occur when new cultures are encountered (Adler, 1975). Similarly, Pedersen's (1995) observation that culture shock varies from person to person suggests that these reactions are best qualitatively analysed, as quantitative measurements are often unrepresentative of individual lived experiences. Therefore, a radio documentary is an ideal medium to capture and convey these lived experiences (Lindgren, 2011 cited in Willis, 2018).

## **2.1 Immigration, Emigration, Migration**

Immigration refers to the act of moving into a new country with the intent to live there permanently. For example, when someone moves from Mexico to the United States to start a new life, they are immigrating to the United States (Griffith Williams and Korn, 2017). On the other hand, emigration is the act of leaving one's own country to reside in another. For instance, if a person leaves Ireland to settle in Canada, they are emigrating from Ireland. Migration is a broader term that encompasses both immigration and emigration, referring to the movement of people from one place to another, either within a country or across borders. Migration can include both temporary moves, such as seasonal work or education, and permanent relocations (NYU Press, 2023). These distinctions are essential for understanding the different aspects of population movement and cultural adaptation.

## **2.2 Culture Shock**

The term culture shock was first introduced by Oberg in the 1950s (Moufakkir, 2013). Culture shock displayed in individuals is characterised by confusion and disorientation when entering a foreign culture, resulting from the loss of familiar signs and symbols of social interaction (Furnham and Bochner, 1986, as cited in Moufakkir, 2013). On the other hand, Adler (1975, as cited in Pedersen, 1995) describes it as a state of alienation where individuals strive to understand, cope, and develop while immersed in a foreign culture.

Culture shock could be viewed as an occupational ailment experienced by those abruptly relocated overseas (Oberg, 1954, cited in Moufakkir, 2013). Based on Oberg's framework, Pedersen (1995) found that numerous authors had attempted to describe culture shock using

words like language shock, role shock, pervasive ambiguity, and culture fatigue (Smalley, 1963; Byrnes, 1966; Ball-Rokeach, 1973; Guthrie, 1975, cited in Pedersen, 1995).

According to the study conducted by Faizah and Rifameutia (2019), normative achievement goal orientation plays a negative moderating role in the relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic adjustment for sojourner students. This implies that students who have high academic self-efficacy and normative achievement goal orientation, with a desire to outperform other students when migrating, may experience culture shock in the "the-big-fish-little-pond" academic environment in their host country, which may lead them to feel like a failure, and as a result, decreases their confidence and academic enthusiasm, and in turn produces a poor GPA that alleviates stress and frustration, the general indicators of academic adjustment difficulties.

### **2.2.1 Stages of Culture Shock**

Jandt (2007) categorised culture shock into a five-stage process from initial contact to reciprocal interdependence while addressing how verbal and non-verbal communication affects emigrants' understanding of cultural norms. Malay et al. (2023) discovered that those with previous multicultural exposure deciphered social cues faster by the Cultural Distance Hypothesis; therefore, the stages of culture shock they experience vary from others because the level of cultural intelligence possessed by a student can have an impact on the extent and nature of the influence of perceived cultural distance on the psychological, sociocultural, and academic adjustments of international students in the host country.

Wang et al. (2021, cited in Malay et al., 2023) posited that while there are variations in the descriptions of these stages, there is consistency in the portrayal of culture shock as a

developmental process that occurs in people who recount their experiences of culture shock (Pedersen, 1995).

Adler (1975 cited in Pedersen, 1995) identified five stages of culture shock, namely the honeymoon phase, disintegration, reintegration, autonomy, and reciprocal interdependence, based on the work of Oberg and other researchers.

Lesser and Peter's (1957 cited in Pedersen, 1995) three-stage process for comprehending culture shock begins with a spectator phase upon arrival. This is followed by an involvement phase where the individual cannot remain detached from the host culture and must participate. Finally, the visitor enters a coming-to-terms phase where they learn how to adapt to the host culture.

Torbiorn (1982 cited in Pedersen, 1995) classified culture shock into four distinct stages: the tourist phase, the culture-shock phase, the conformist phase, and the assimilation phase.

Building on these findings, Pedersen (1995) found that six key indicators show that a culture shock adjustment is taking place. First, there is an absence or change in the meanings of familiar sociocultural cues. Second, there is an absence of respect for the values the person holds in high esteem by the hosts. Third, an emotional state is created, ranging from mild unease to rage, due to the disorientation created by culture shock. Fourth, dissatisfaction with the present and an idealisation of the past. Fifth, the ineffectiveness of previous coping mechanisms. The sixth is the sense that the culture shock will never cease.

### **2.2.2 Theories and Models of Culture Shock**

There is much disagreement about culture shock and how it presents itself. While some publications discount the construct of "culture shock" as a useful concept, the current literature favours the positive, educational rather than the negative, pathological disease-based

description of culture shock. That is why Pedersen (1995) presents varying schools of thought to be considered, like the disease model of culture shock and the growth model of culture shock.

The earliest description of a culture shock compared it to a disease that resulted in temporary or permanent disability but could presumably be cured with the right treatment (Pedersen, 1995).

Juffer (1987) and Furnham (1988) were forerunners in this school of thought. Juffer (1987), cited in Pedersen (1995), identifies five theories of culture shock, with four relying on the deficit or disease hypothesis. These theories propose that culture shock occurs when individuals confront a new environment, experience misunderstandings due to ineffective communication, face threats to their psychological and emotional well-being or need to adjust their behaviour to suit the new environment to regain positive reinforcement. The fifth theory is the positive explanation of culture shock, caused by a growth experience where change is considered a potentially positive condition of development and learning that is not indicative of failure or abnormality.

Furnham (1988) presented eight different explanations of culture shock, each highlighting the disease model's shortcomings. Ultimately, it remains unclear why some individuals are more susceptible to culture shock than others and to what extent it can be predicted or prevented.

The growth model of culture shock suggests that if a person preconditions their mind in anticipation of the move and the possible difficulties they encounter, they will be less startled and mentally ready for it (Juffer, 1987 cited in Pedersen, 1995).

### **2.2.3 Factors Affecting the Extent of Culture Shock**

Furnham and Bochner's study (1986, cited in Pedersen, 1995) identified six predictor variables that determine how an individual will experience culture shock and how it will manifest. These

classes include: First, the control of conditions for initiating contact with the host culture. Second, a range of intrapersonal factors include age, previous travel, language skills, resourcefulness, independence, fortitude, ambiguity tolerance, appearance, and other personal factors. The third factor relates to an individual's biological factors, including their physical fitness and general health. The fourth factor is related to interpersonal variables, such as having a support system and a clearly defined role in society. The fifth factor involves the characteristics of the culture where an individual is living. Furthermore, the sixth factor involves the host culture's geopolitical conditions during contact. These variables align with Coffman's (1978) similarity between culture shock and adapting to different life roles, such as divorce.

Coffman and Harris (1984) classified the contributing factors of culture shock into physiological, psychological, and social aspects. Likewise, the factors by Ward et al. (2001) include life changes, appraisal and coping styles, personality, social support, coping resources, knowledge and skills, modes of acculturation, acculturation status and demographic factors, cultural distance and modernisation, and prejudice and discrimination.

Malay et al. (2023) urged universities to provide an accessible and comprehensive support system that meets students' academic, sociocultural and psychological needs to aid their adjustment. Unfortunately, many universities mainly focus on providing practical support services, such as assistance in the immigration process; although these are valuable, they lack in catering to other adjustment dimensions needed by international students (Choudaha, 2016; Malay et al., 2023).

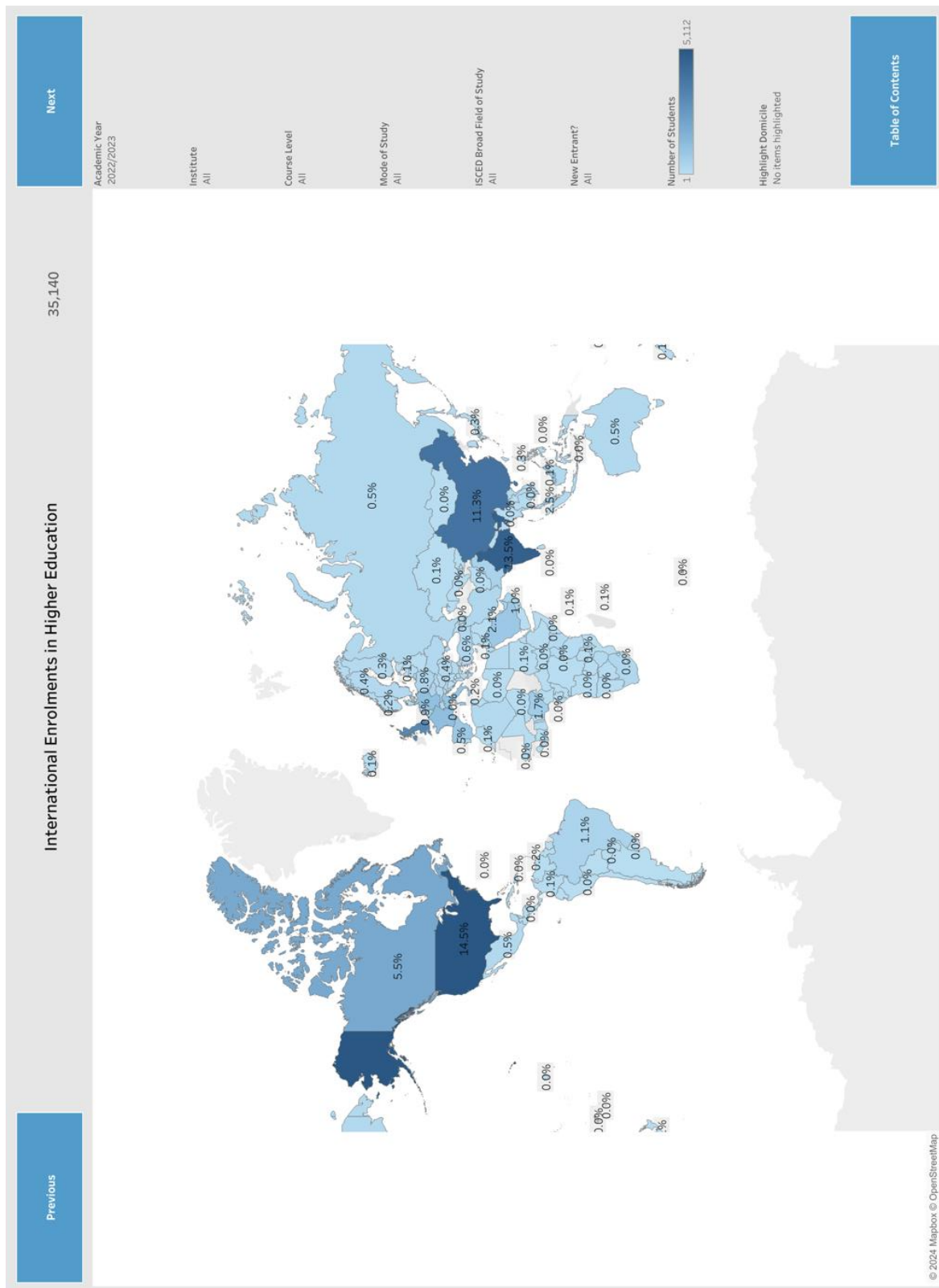
For instance, supporting them to acquire relevant study skills and language competence will fulfil students' academic needs only, but integrating ample opportunities for social networking and

culturally appropriate counselling services in internationalisation programs meets the student's sociocultural and psychological needs (Bartram, 2008 cited in Malay et al. 2023). Hence, well-developed cultural and educational programs are necessary (Hong et al., 2021, cited in Malay et al., 2023). This integration would have a significant impact on enhancing the cultural intelligence of international students while also providing benefits to the local students of the host country (Wang et al., 2021, cited in Malay et al., 2023).

Faizah and Rifameutia (2019) suggested that lecturers encouraging collaborative learning methods may lower first-year sojourner students' normative achievement goal orientation. They are more likely to focus on cooperation rather than comparison, which can improve their academic adjustment. Ward et al. (2001) argued that expectations and human responses to reality on the ground vary, which can explain why people experience culture shock differently.

### **2.3 Education in Ireland**

According to the Higher Education Authority (2023), Ireland has seen a significant rise in international student enrolment, growing from just over 13,000 in 2007/2008 to 35,140 in 2022/2023, marking a 270.30% increase. The countries with the most students include India, the United States, and China. The distribution of students over the years shows a steady increase, with many choosing to stay post-graduation. Approximately 40% of international students remain in Ireland after completing their studies, contributing to the country's skilled workforce and cultural diversity. This trend highlights Ireland's appeal as a destination for higher education and career opportunities.



Source: Higher Education Authority, 2023.

## 2.4 Radio Documentary Design

A radio documentary is ideal for sharing lived experiences, such as identity formation (Lindgren, 2011, cited in Willis, 2018). Therefore, this research will be presented as a radio documentary comprising narration, interviews, and a fusion of natural ambient sounds and background music to create an immersive listening experience.

Since culture shock is a complex and multifaceted experience, measuring it accurately can be challenging. Adler (1975) and Pedersen (1995) recognise the need to allow those who have lived through culture shock to describe their experiences using their own words. By sharing personal narratives, we can gain insight into the nuances and complexities of this unique experience. Storytelling can be a powerful tool to capture the experience of culture shock, providing a more profound understanding of its impacts.

Several related media products explore similar themes, such as "Migrant Mishaps" on ABC Radio, which delves into the mishaps and misunderstandings migrants face (ABC, 2024), and personal accounts on SpunOut.ie, where immigrants share their experiences in Ireland (SpunOut.ie, 2024). Additionally, the RTE documentary "Immigrating to Ireland: Middle East Immigrants" provides insights into the immigrant experience in Ireland, focusing on individuals from the Middle East (RTE, 2024). These examples underscore the effectiveness of radio documentaries in conveying the rich, personal dimensions of immigration and cultural adaptation.

Willis (2018) used a radio documentary to highlight the impact of immigration on national identity, while Olowere (2019) examined Nigerians living in Ireland's cultural Identity from a multigenerational angle using this same medium, which then allowed the interviewee's freedom

to narrate their ordeals, therefore, enabling the listeners put a voice to the people behind the immigration statistics.

The final program structure of the radio documentary will be drafted after the interviews are carried out to ensure a natural flow of the entire storytelling based on the responses from the selected interviewees. Ensuring the final product is within the required duration for the radio documentary is a maximum of 30 minutes exported at the broadcast quality format of a 44.1KHz, 16-bit stereo sample rate mp3.

International students are a readily available group for research across all cross-cultural traveller categories and may serve as a testing ground for new cross-cultural concepts and models (Bierwiazzonek and Waldzus, 2016).

## **2.5 Audience**

The primary audience for this radio documentary will be listeners of RTE Documentary on One. Immigration has become a hot topic, especially in recent years, as Ireland has experienced unprecedented immigration numbers. Since RTE is a national broadcaster, it is the best medium to convey a documentary of this nature to the general public and its existing listenership.

RTE has a strong history of producing documentaries that explore immigration and its impacts. For instance, the documentary "In a Strange Land: Immigrants in Ireland" delves into the lives of immigrants from various backgrounds, highlighting their challenges and triumphs as they navigate life in Ireland (RTE, 2024). Other relevant programs include "Migrant Voices," which amplifies the stories of immigrants contributing to Irish society, and "New to the Parish," which

chronicles the experiences of new arrivals in Ireland. These documentaries have effectively raised awareness and fostered understanding of the immigrant experience in Ireland.

By leveraging RTE's platform, this documentary aims to reach a broad audience, including policymakers, educators, and the general public, to promote a deeper understanding of the cultural and social dynamics of immigration. This engagement can potentially influence positive changes in policies and attitudes towards immigrants, aiding their integration and enriching Irish society as a whole.

## **CHAPTER 3.0 CONSTRUCTION AND DESIGN**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Constructing and designing a radio documentary involves meticulous planning and execution. It requires a thoughtful combination of interviews, narration, and sound design, including ambient sounds and background music, to create an engaging and immersive listening experience that effectively conveys the documentary's themes and stories (Lindgren, 2011).

### **3.2 Contributors**

This radio documentary is an audio portrait of Samuel Yakura, a former third-level Master's student from Nigeria who came to study in 2018 and has since remained in Ireland. Samuel Yakura is a graduate of Engineering from the Waterford Institute of Technology, Waterford, now South East Technological University, Waterford.

#### **3.2.1 Selection Criteria**

The contributor was selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Samuel was chosen because of his lived experience and willingness to discuss it openly. His media product is the performance poetry play 'The Perfect Immigrant,' which addresses concerns similar to those in this documentary.

This radio documentary is proposed to be a seven-part documentary series, with this being the first episode; in subsequent episodes, in addition to the students, the numerous organisations representing international students in Ireland will be added to gain better a holistic insight into the transitional experiences of International students studying in Ireland. The criteria for selection were international students from countries with the highest enrolment rates on their continents based on the 2023 report from the Higher Education Authority.

The international enrollment in Higher Institutions (HEI), according to the Higher Education Authority (HEA) (2023), shows that 35,140 international students enrolled in Ireland for the 2022/2023 session across all continents. In Africa, Nigeria has the highest enrollment rate of 1.7%. In Europe, it is the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, with 8.9%. In North America, the United States of America (USA) has the highest enrollment, with 14.5%, while in South America, Brazil has 1.1%. In Asia, India has the highest enrollment, with 13.5%. And lastly, in Oceania, Australia has the highest percentage, 0.5%.

### **3.3 Interviews**

#### **3.3.1 The Interviews**

This audio portrait contained only one interview. It was a fully immersive 360-degree portrait of the contributor and their experience rather than a series of soundbites. The documentary medium provided the scope to tell the full story by allowing the interviewee to share their experiences down to the nitty gritty, which would otherwise be lost if condensed into a shorter piece.

Adler (1975 cited in Pedersen, 1995) identified five stages of culture shock, namely the honeymoon phase, disintegration, reintegration, autonomy, and reciprocal interdependence, based on the work of Oberg (1954;1960) and other researchers. Therefore, the questions and responses of this radio documentary are organised in line with the stages mentioned above.

The interview questions the respondents were asked were modelled after Adler's (1975) culture shock stages to probe their experiences at each of these five stages. The student respondent with lived experience provides insight into situations experienced across each stage.

### 3.3.1.1 Students Interview Questions

1. What is your name, and what country are you from?
2. What school are you attending, or did you attend?
3. What course did you study or are you studying?
4. Why did you choose to study in Ireland?
5. How did you decide to move to Ireland? What led to the decision to move to Ireland?

#### 1. Contact or Honey Moon Phase

- i. Can you tell me how you felt at the airport when leaving your home country?
- ii. Did your family and friends come with you to the airport?
- iii. What is your strongest memory from the day you left for Ireland?
- iv. Tell me how you felt and what your first impression was upon arrival in Ireland.
- v. Describe how you felt on your first night in Dublin.
- vi. What is your comfort song, food or item from back home?
- vii. Give me an example of what has happened since you got here that made you grateful to be here.
- viii. What was your biggest culture shock about the educational system?

#### 2. Disintegration Stage

- i. What was your biggest culture shock?
- ii. What experience makes you feel out of place or very different?
- iii. How did that encounter change your perception of Ireland?
- iv. What has been your biggest academic struggle?

- v. Did you struggle to adjust to the education system, teaching and assessment methods?
- vi. What was your lowest emotional moment since moving here?
- vii. When did you realise how far you were from home, and how did that make you feel?

### **3. Reintegration Stage**

- i. Do you have friends or family here?
- ii. How did you make your first friend here?
- iii. Did your school provide avenues to meet diverse people?
- iv. Did you ever need to use the counselling or mental health hotlines?
- v. How did you start to find your footing?
- vi. Have you heard about the Irish Council for International Students (ICOS)

### **4. Autonomy Stage**

- i. At what point did you feel like you have started to get the hang of this new life?
- ii. If your little sister, brother, or friend wants to make this move, what advice will you give them?
- iii. What would you have done differently if you had a do-over?
- iv. Do you now have a support system here?
- v. Do you consider Ireland a second home?
- vi. At what point did you realise you had a second home?
- vii. Do you feel like you belong here in Ireland?

### **5. Reciprocal Interdependence Stage**

- i. Have you visited your home country since leaving? How was it?

- ii. How do you cope with the need to code-switch between your native persona and your new persona in Ireland?
- iii. What transports you back home when you need to go back in your mind?
- iv. Tell me about your post-graduation life experiences in Dublin?

#### **Extra Questions**

- i. If the person responsible for education in your institution and Ireland at large, what advice will you give them as to how they can improve the situation of things for international students?
- ii. Tell me about your best and worst experience since moving here.
- iii. I attended your poetry play titled 'Perfect Immigrant', what inspired the writing, tell me how that came about.

### **3.3.2 Interview Schedule**

To secure the student interview, Samuel Yakura was contacted via Instagram message, as I did not have access to his email address then. Upon his acceptance to participate, I sent a formal email with the consent forms to fill out at the interview. We then scheduled the interview at Griffith College radio studio to guarantee the best quality audio.

## **3.4 Technical Approach**

### **3.4.1 Recording Location**

The interview was conducted in person at the sound-treated radio studio in Griffith College Dublin. The narration recording was also done.

### **3.4.2 Recording Software**

The interview was conducted in person, using a Rode NT USB Mini microphone connected to my MacBook Pro, recorded in the Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) Adobe Audition 2024.

As a precautionary measure, I used an Ulanzi wireless USB microphone to record into the RecForge App on my iPhone to record a backup of the interview.

After this, all the interviews were edited using the Adobe Audition 2024 software.

### **3.4.3 Microphone**

For the interview, a Rode NT USB microphone was used, connected directly to the Adobe Audition 2024 Digital Audio Workstation (DAW), a MacBook Pro A2141. Backup audio was recorded on the Voice Record App using the Ulanzi wireless clip-on microphone. The audio was monitored using an Audio Technica M50X monitor headphones. The narration voiceover was recorded using the Griffith Radio studio's Shure SM7B.

### **3.4.4 Recording Process**

Before the interviewee arrived, I prepared the audio set-up and ran test recordings while monitoring with monitor headphones to ensure the set-up and sound were functional.

I launched my Adobe Audition software and used an audio-supported USB 2.0 to USB C converter to connect the Rode USB 2.0 to the MacBook's USB C port.

### **3.4.5 Editing system**

Adobe Audition was the software of choice for editing this documentary because Griffith College made an Adobe student subscription available. To keep the editing organised, I categorised my files into folders, i.e., interview recording, narration recording, music, special effects SFX, edits, and exports. I also developed a file naming structure to help me keep track of the versions and

work progress, i.e., Version Number—File name—Finding Home—Date (V1 Samuel Interview—Finding Home—01.08.24).

### **3.4.6 Edit Approach**

Minimal effects were used to maintain the original sound of the interviewee and narrator. Denoise was used to take away the ambient noise from movements during the interview, and multiband compressions broadcast pre-set were used to boost the vocals.

The interviewer and interviewee audio files were then imported to multitrack and synchronised. When a synergy was forged between both audio files, the music and appropriate special effect sounds were applied. These copyright-free music and sound effects were sourced from the Griffith College radio library and Pixabay, as appropriately credited in the appendix.

Upon attaining the desirable audio sound, a hard limiter effect of -0.1dB was applied, and then the loudness meter was used to bring it up to -16LUFs before exporting in 44.1kHz 16bit stereo to share with my supervisor. Upon my supervisors' approval, the finished work was appropriately renamed and uploaded on Moodle.

## **3.5 Narration Approach**

### **3.5.1 Interview Approach**

For the interview, the questions were structured in categories that align with the five stages of culture shock, as identified by Peter Adler in 1975. Each question was carefully thought out to guide the interviewee's train of thought in recollecting their experiences, making it sequential. Because of this, we can follow a clear imaginary thread running through the entire story. Due to the sensitivity of the discussion and the potential to get emotional as experiences were recounted, a conversational approach was used to help ensure the respondent was at ease.

Short breaks were taken between interview categories to allow the interviewee to relax and avoid burnout from emotional recall. The interview was recorded at Griffith College Dublin's well-sound-treated radio studio to ensure high-quality audio.

### **3.5.2 Creative and Narrative Approach**

#### *3.5.2.1 Script*

The narration script was written after the interview because that enabled me to tie the story together better. I opted to use the past tense for the narration because the interviewee narrated the ordeal in hindsight, and it followed the flow of the conversation.

#### *3.5.2.2 Music and Sound Effects*

Music was used underneath the narrator's speech to distinguish between the interview and the interviewer. For the interviewee, I made the creative decision to leave some parts of his interview without music because the emotions conveyed in the voice in those parts were better left uninterrupted. In places where it was deemed necessary, music was added to create an immersive listener experience. In other areas, subtle sound design was used to develop a sense of place and enhance humour. Copyright-free music and special effects (SFX) were used in this production. These include materials from the producer's Foley recording, the Griffith radio studio archives, and Pixabay, as listed in Appendix IV.

#### *3.5.2.3 Style Preferences*

To enable the listener to quickly identify the different stages of culture shock and its accompanying experiences, an introduction to each stage of culture shock was added before the narrator's introduction and the interviewee's response.

Also, similar paced music was used in all narrations to create consistency in sound, a separate tune was used for the stage-by-stage categorisation of the culture shock, and sound designs were only used to elevate the interviewee's story.

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

In line with Kvale's (1996) recommendations, this dissertation was conducted using ethical research principles. All interviews were recorded per the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) Code of Conduct and the Griffith Research Ethics Committee of Griffith College Dublin.

The contributor was well-informed about the details of the radio documentary via the information sheet. A personal appearance release form outlining the terms of their involvement was distributed and signed before the interview commenced. The interviewee was notified that participation was voluntary and had the right to withdraw consent during and after the interview. The interviewer was given the choice to use pseudonyms to protect their privacy, but they opted to let their name and likeness be used.

After the edit's first draft, the piece felt emotional. It could trigger some listeners with similar experiences, hence the decision to include a public service announcement and signpost people to mental health support helplines.

After postproduction was completed, a copy of the final audio was shared with the interviewees to ensure they were happy with their portrayal, and upon receiving their consent, it was submitted.

### **3.7 Challenges And Limitations**

The major limitation faced during the production of this radio documentary was access to interview the Irish Council for International Students (ICOS)

Another challenge was efficiently representing a detailed account of the student's experiences while keeping it within the given 30-minute time frame. Lastly, ensuring the contributor's privacy was protected by removing any sensitive disclosure made during the interview. Any phrases that could easily be misconstrued if taken out of context were also removed.

## **CHAPTER 4.0 DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter aims to discuss the progression of the dissertation and reflect upon the process, limitations, challenges, and editorial decisions that occurred.

### **4.2 Timeline**

#### **4.2.1 Research Journey and Evolution of the Narrative**

The idea for this documentary came to me in the early days of my arrival in Dublin. I was inspired by my personal experiences and the experiences of my friends studying in other countries, and I saw similarities in their experiences despite living in different countries.

During my first-semester Research Methods course at Griffith College, when I first presented the topic for the assignment, Paddy O'Brien helped me narrow down my idea, guiding books and other materials that were relevant to my research and how best I could convey the idea I had envisaged to the listener. This led to extensive literature reviews to see what had been written on the subject and what a suitable gap I would like to address would be. After studying many materials, I realised that although research had been done around migration and immigration, very little work has been done on educational migrants' experiences in Ireland.

I submitted my proposal to the faculty and was assigned a supervisor on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2024. After emailing my assigned supervisor, Francesca Lalor, we had our first meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024, where we discussed the overall idea of my work. She advised that I contact respondents before the summer break so I can have the interviews recorded in good time before people head off to summer vacations and to meet my personal work timeline. Francesca also advised that I draw up a loose production plan to guide my creative decisions so I keep sight of the initial idea.

Following our call, I prepared my proposed questions for the student respondent and the organisation's representative, which I shared with my supervisor to get her approval before our second call. On June 11th 2024, my supervisor reviewed my questions, commending my categorisation of the questions by stages of culture as a brilliant way of breaking the documentary into segments the listener can quickly identify and follow through. I also advised how to improve my questions to elicit a more emotionally honest response from the respondents by making them feel more comfortable sharing. The rewording of some of these questions proved very effective as it pivoted the discussion to a more significant dimension than anticipated.

My interview with the first respondent, Samuel Yakura, took place on June 12th, 2024, at the Griffith Radio studio to ensure the best audio quality.

In my initial research proposal, I had hoped to interview students from seven different nationalities: Nigeria, the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Brazil, India, and Australia because these countries nationals had the highest education emigration rate according to Higher Education Authority (HEA) (2023). However, upon compiling my questions and developing my research trajectory, I realised that having all seven nationalities in the documentary will take from the depth and emotional vulnerability the documentary portrays. I then made it the first episode of a future seven-part documentary series, each focusing on a different nationality to give a better-rounded story.

To secure the student interview, I sent Samuel Yakura an Instagram message as I could not access his email address at the time. Upon his acceptance to participate, I sent a formal email with the consent forms to fill out at the interview.

Securing an interview with Irish Council for International Students (ICOS) representatives was challenging. All attempts to contact the ICOS were fruitless, as I have not gotten a response. I called the office, sent emails, filled out their website's contact form, messaged the organisation's LinkedIn page since they actively posted there, and tried connecting with the communication officer, all to no avail, upon relaying these challenges to my supervisor, Francesca, and programme director, Barry Finnegan. Barry advised I include all the intended documents, i.e., an Interview Request Letter, a Consent Form for Interviewees to sign, a letter of introduction from my supervisor, and the proposed questions.

Francesca advised me to contact the Griffith College International office for assistance getting in touch with the ICOS since they work closely with such organisations and the college has staff on the board of ICOS. The international office promptly swung into action, and after I provided the needed documents, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 2024, Hugh O'Sullivan, the project administrator at the international office, returned with this response, "At the moment, we would not feel it is suitable to reach out to ICOS with the questions you have presented to us so far. We believe that the questions proposed to ICOS display a lack of understanding of the role of ICOS in Irish Higher Education and International Students' lives. We suggest you consult with your supervisor and work out a solution to progress this project. Alternatively, Barry Finnegan, the Programme Director, is on leave but will be back next week if you would like to discuss it with him. We try

our best to help our International Students and will continue to do so in your case. However, we feel at this point we cannot advise you any further on this matter.”

Upon sharing the response with my supervisor, she advised I find alternative ways of including the ICOS in the documentary since the role and nature of their contribution to the international student community is significant, and my thesis submission deadline was fast approaching. I decided to use the interviewee's response to my enquiry about his knowledge of the ICOS's work in Ireland and added a narration about what they do to my documentary.

Upon my supervisors' approval of my interview audio, I proceeded to write the narration script that both introduced the topic to the interviewee and also helped the listeners by providing context to the interview since the target listeners may consist of a global audience with an array of life experiences that may vary to that of the listener. The narration voice-over was recorded at the Griffith College Radio studio with the assistance of my technical supervisor, Pat Proctor. After that, I pieced together the narration and interview and proceeded to appropriately sound design. The final draft of both my written and audio pieces was sent to my supervisor, who made suggestions on ways to improve it. Upon affecting her suggestions, and with her approval and the consent of the interviewee, I submitted the dissertation on Moodle.

#### **4.3 Recommendation**

After this research is completed, it is recommended that further studies be carried out to survey a larger number of educational migrants from various backgrounds to compare the similarities or differences in their experiences.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this is the long overdue start of a meaningful conversation that hopefully will continue, with this radio documentary adding to the narrative strand. I enjoyed the experience of creating this radio documentary piece, and I hope it proves informative to audiences, both international students and those who support them in the future.

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## **Appendix I: Information Sheet for Participants**

### **INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS**

#### **Title of Research Study: “Finding Home Away from Home”, A Radio Documentary on the Culture Shock of Educational Emigration on International Students in Ireland**

Dear interviewee,

You are invited to participate in a research study exploring the impact of culture shock on these students' overall well-being and academic performance as they familiarise and integrate into the Irish community. This research is part of a master's thesis in Journalism and Public Relations for Griffith College, Dublin.

Before you decide whether to take part in this documentary, it is important that you understand what the research entails and what your participation will involve. Participation is entirely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. If you choose to participate, you will be provided with this information sheet to keep and required to sign a participant release form granting the researcher the permission to record, edit and publish your contributions in the radio documentary.

**Purpose of the Research Study:** According to a report (Higher Education Authority, 2023), Ireland has experienced a 270.30% increase in international student enrolment over the past 15 years, with the number of students rising from 13,000 in 2007/2008 to 35,140 in 2022/2023. This surge in numbers makes researching the impact of culture shock on students' academic performance, overall well-being and acclimatisation in Ireland.

**Why You Have Been Chosen:** You have been selected for your experience and insights on supporting international students in Ireland. Your contributions are valuable for understanding the current landscape, the challenges and support available to international students studying in Ireland in a bid to present the research from a more holistic point of view.

#### **What Participation Involves:**

**Interview:** If you agree to participate, you will take part in an in-person recorded audio interview lasting approximately 30 minutes scheduled at a convenient time for you.

**Questions:** The interview questions will focus on the support areas available to international students.

**Recording and Transcription:** The interview will be recorded and edited for the radio documentary. A written transcription will also be added to the documentation for submission to the university.

#### **Your Rights:**

You may withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

You can refuse to answer any question or stop the interview at any point.

Your identity and any personal information will be kept confidential.

**Use of Information:** Information gathered from the interview will be used to complete the radio documentary production.

If you have any questions about this research, please contact:

Blessing Kure: b\*\*\*\*\*@student.griffith.ie (Researcher)

Francesca Lalor: F\*\*\*\*\*@griffith.ie (Research supervisor)

Yours sincerely,

-

**Blessing Kure +35383\*\*\*\*\***

*B\*\*\*\*\*@student.griffith.ie*

## **Appendix II: Personal Appearance Release Form**

### **A Radio Documentary on Culture Shock Release Form**

**Production Date(s):** 12 June to 12 August 2024

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**Program Title:** Finding Home Away From Home

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**Participant's Name:** Samuel Yakura \_\_\_\_\_

**Producer/Production Entity:** Blessing Kure

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**Production Location:** Dublin, Ireland

This dissertation titled 'Finding Home Away from Home: A Radio Documentary on Culture Shock of International Students in Dublin' explores the impact of culture shock on students' overall well-being and academic performance of these students as they acclimatise in Dublin, Ireland and what life becomes after graduation.

I \_\_\_\_\_ enter into this agreement with Blessing Kure, hereby known as the Producer. I have been informed and understand that the Producer, a Masters of Journalism and Public Relations student at Griffith College Dublin, is producing a radio documentary for academic purposes that may be aired on public and/or commercial radio and other formats and that my name, likeness, image, voice, performance or story, or that of my artwork, is being recorded as part of the production.

I hereby grant the Producer the right to use any of said recordings in their productions, whether recorded on or transferred to videotape, film, slides, photographs, audiotapes, print, digital/electronic media or any other media in perpetuity. This includes, without limitation, the right to edit, mix or duplicate and to use or reuse said recordings in whole or in part, as they may desire.

The Producer shall have complete ownership of the program(s) in which I or my likeness may appear. I also grant the right to broadcast, exhibit, publish, archive, market and distribute any of said recordings, either alone or as part of its finished productions, for commercial or non-commercial radio. This includes the right to use said recordings to promote or publicise any of these uses.

I hereby give all copyright clearances for using my voice in the production. I expressly release the Producer and its officers, employees and agents from any and all claims, known or unknown, arising out of or in any way connected with the above uses and representations.

I warrant that nothing said or implied by me shall infringe the copyright or any other rights of any third party or be defamatory or infringe the right of privacy of any third party. I agree to indemnify you and your licensees or assignees against any costs, claims, demands or expenses arising out of any breach or claimed breach of this warranty.

I have read the foregoing and fully understand and consent to the terms and stipulations contained therein.

**Signature of Person Appearing:**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

City, Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Appendix III: Finding Home Away from Home Transcript**

#### **[Public Service Announcement]**

The following programme contains discussions around mental health which some listeners may find distressing. Listener discretion advised.

#### **[Samuel]**

You get to the section of the immigration where they can't get past and then you're the only one who is allowed to go past and you are the only one who is allowed to go on. It just dawned on me that, I am actually alone. I am actually alone, and I am being thrown into deep water. Now I'm not new to leaving the shores of Nigeria, I am always going on holidays with family and stuff but because of the nature of this journey it felt very different. The pain of separation, and the fear of leaving the familiar and then confronted with the uncertainty ahead of me. Whatever happened from then on was whatever I made of it and I think that that is very scary. You're leaving home and you have to find a way to make this your new home.

#### **[Narrator]**

Every year, thousands of people from all walks of life move around the world for many reasons, one of the topmost being in search of a better education and opportunities, and Ireland is no exception. Welcome to the first episode of finding home away from home, a seven-part documentary series that follows the lives of international students studying in Ireland. Each interviewee is a student or former student from a country with the highest number of educational immigrants to Ireland on their continent.

Hello. My name is Blessing Kure, and I'll be your chauffeur for this journey. Buckle up.

This documentary explores the impact of culture shock on these students' physical and psychosocial wellbeing as well as academic performance, as they familiarise with and integrate into the Irish community during their studies. To help you better understand this transitional experience, these students' journeys will be broken down into the five stages of culture shock, as identified by one of the foremost culture shock researchers, Peter Adler, in 1975.

They are contact or honeymoon phase, disintegration phase, reintegration phase, autonomy phase and reciprocal interdependence phase.

In each stage, specific psychological, social and cultural dynamics occur, and the extent to which they can overcome these plays a significant role in the success or failure of their integration. If you're a migrant, this can even help you spot what stage you're on,

**[External Narrator]**

Stage one, honey moon, phase, excitement and euphoria of having a new experience.

**[Samuel]**

My name is Samuel Yakura, and I am from Nigeria, West Africa. I attended South Eastern Technological University, formerly known as Waterford Institute of Technology in Waterford,

**[Narrator]**

I met with Samuel Yakura, who moved to Ireland in 2018 to get a master's in Construction Project Management from the Waterford Institute of Technology, Waterford, now called the South East Technological University. Waterford Samuel said his decision to study in Ireland was informed by several factors.

**[Samuel]** Ireland afforded me a cheaper option financially, without compromising the educational standards. Secondly, Ireland had softer immigration policies as far as the chances of coming to study in the country and getting a visa and all that. Thirdly, I think Ireland has a very rich history of storytellers and export of writers and thespians, and I wanted to be in an environment where, even though I was pursuing my career as an engineer, I also wanted to be able to pursue opportunities as a writer as well and performer. Very importantly, Ireland had statistically a lower racism indices compared to other countries compared to the likes of US and the UK.

**[Narrator]**

Samuel is from Nigeria, and Nigeria has the highest number of enrolments into higher educational institutions in Ireland, on the continent of Africa.

**[Narrator]**

There are always mixed feelings when leaving home. Samuel shares the range of emotions he experienced at the airport.

**[Samuel]**

I think I felt both sad and excited at the same time, sad because I was leaving family, obviously, because I was living stability, I was leaving everything else familiar to me, but also very excited because of opportunities that I would be afforded and the prospect of furthering my education, becoming a global citizen. The pain of separation and the fear of leaving the familiar and then confronted with also the uncertainty ahead of me.

**[Narrator]** In typical African fashion, an entire entourage of his family came with him to the airport to bid him goodbye.

**[Samuel]**

Oh yeah, it was a full entourage, nuclear family, some extended family as well. They were all talking about how they were going to come visit and all that. And you know, it was a bit emotional. You know, hard guy, hard guy but.

**[Narrator]**

But when asked if they had come to visit as promised, He said his siblings had, but his parents haven't. With hopes his parents visit before the end of the year.

There is always a moment in our life that stays with us forever, moments when time seems to stand still for Samuel, the moment he had to say goodbye to his family was that moment.

**[Samuel]**

I think, that moment I was saying bye to my family, like it doesn't really dawn on you until that that moment when you're actually leaving and like you.

You get to the section of immigration where they can't get past, and then you're the only one who is allowed to go on from that point. And it just dawned on me that I'm actually alone. I'm actually alone, and I'm being thrown into deep waters. Now, I've always attended boarding school, even as a young lad, but this felt very different, because there was a sense of permanence to it. Being a young chap going to boarding school, you know, after three months, you're coming back home. But in this case, I was literally going to become my own man, going to start life, taking all of the limited resources I was given to create a future for myself, and that the ball was literally my court, and whatever happened from then on was whatever I made of it. And I think that that is very scary. It's like your intro to adulthood, 101, with no cues or props or prep.

**[Narrator]**

What does landing in a new country's airport feel like? How do you navigate? For Samuel, the air smelled fresh and the environment was unfamiliar, not because it was his first time leaving Nigeria, but largely due to the nature of this particular trip.

**[Samuel]**

Psychologically, it's very different. I'm not new to leaving the shores of Nigeria. More I'm always going on holidays with family and stuff, but because of the nature of this, this journey, it felt very different. I wasn't coming as a visitor, as one who is going back home. This was like you're leaving home, and you have to find a way to make this your new home, and the anxiety that comes with being accepted, and all of that, just all of that rush in that very moment. So I felt, I felt a bit anxious. I felt a bit nervous. I had to find a way to just get into survival mode. I had to find a way to keep my composure, because I also didn't want to draw attention to myself. So I'm like, Okay, you're already black amongst like a thousand white people. So don't make it any more obvious. Don't embarrass yourself. You have to just observe, figure out how things are done and get home safely. But I did my best to keep my composure. Getting out of the airport and trying to find my way to school was very challenging, because you're learning on the go. You're trying to understand the road signs. You're trying to check directions on your phone. You're looking through emails that you were sent. You're looking at time. You're trying to make sure you're not breaking any rules. I was trying to get a cab at the same time. I was also trying not to expend all the resources I had. I was like, okay, how do I make the best of the time, and the money I have. If there's a way to spend five euros to get to where I'm going to how do I make sure I don't end up spending 50 euros, you know? So there was all of that going on. You're doing so much at the same time. I had to ask a lot of questions. It was also a very humbling experience. You have to

come down from your high horses and realise you don't know Jack and you can't assume anything. You have to ask questions at every point I was asking questions, even when I knew what to do, just as a double check, I would always ask so I think, yeah, I felt very humbled. I just kept my composure every step of the way until I was able to get to my hotel room. Yeah.

**[Narrator]**

The Irish student visa application processing takes between four to eight weeks in Nigeria, his application was initially denied, and upon appealing, it was granted. This delay meant resuming school a day before resumption deadline, and this had a ripple effect on his entire educational journey.

**[Samuel]**

When I eventually arrived, I couldn't get accommodation on campus, and obviously there's a housing crisis, so I had to get a hotel, I think it was Travel Lodge, that I got into, which was thankfully very close to the campus. So I quickly went in, lodged, because I needed to resume in school the next day. I remember going to Iceland, which was just opposite Travel Lodge, and there was no Egusi soup or Jollof rice, obviously. So I had to get, like, these very frozen looking chicken wings, and I had to find a microwave, which the hotel didn't have.

Ah, my God! but I had to eat anyways. It was challenging in the sense that I had to spend money, because getting accommodation would have cost me, like, at the time, 300 euros a month, but here I was spending 50 euros a night, so in six days, I would have spent what I would have needed to spend for a month's accommodation on campus. So yeah, it was challenging financially. That was that was my experience. Anyways,

**[Narrator]**

The million-dollar question remains, was all this effort worth it?

**[Samuel]**

Thing, I would say, seeing the result of all the hard work that I've put in to my education and pursuing my career as an artist, I think seeing the fruit of that hard work has made me feel very grateful. It's just like the season of sewing for the farmer. It's not very exciting. You're having to spend hours in the library, or you're spending so much time studying. The learning curve is very steep. The educational system here is very student led at master's level, at least, it's very different than what you have in Nigeria, and then as an artist as well, coming from Nigeria where I was becoming quite established as a poet, as a performance poet, here, I literally had to start from the scratch, and then trying to work my way, trying to make connections, network, starting to see the fruit of all of those investments really made me feel very grateful, almost like a harvest season. I remember getting a job was definitely one of those moments getting a job in engineering firm, because it was during covid, and it was a nightmare getting a job at the time, and so when people were being laid off, I was getting a job as an immigrant. So definitely a stand out moment, and then getting funding for my play as well in 2022, 2021 was also another moment that just made me feel like, oh, okay, yeah, you're doing something right.

**[Narrator]**

Stage two, disintegration phase, period of confusion and disorientation with growing awareness of cultural differences.

**[Narrator]**

Up until this point, Samuel had most of his education back in Nigeria. I asked him what stood out the most to him upon starting his educational journey in Ireland.

**[Samuel]**

I think the Irish accent, because a lot of my lecturers were on the older side. They were like above 50, and what you find is the older they are, the more difficult it was for me to understand the accent. It's hard to explain, but it's easier to understand the accent of the younger generation of Irish people than it is for the older generation. Being in a classroom where your primary assignment is to listen and understand what you're being taught, and not being able to do that was so frustrating. So I was learning the accent and I was learning what I was being taught at the same time, that was just very challenging. I found myself so many times recording lectures and going back home to replay so I could pick certain things that were being said in the classroom that was definitely a culture shock, like, I'm like, why am I having a struggle understanding the person who is speaking? I've never been put in this situation before, and then having to do that every other day. But over time, I think your ear palette adjusts to the phonetics of you know, the old Irish lecture, and that was what happened over time. The teaching and assessment methods were good, because you already know that at master's level, like it is going to be student led, you're not expected to be taught. So to say. So I think already setting my expectations made me understand what I was going to experience. You know, while studying, what helped as well was the access to resources to help you study. Having good, strong Wi Fi in the library was a cultural shock. I mean, the access to resources here in school was while studying was ridiculous. Like you have peer reviewed materials, you have a library that is functional. You have books available to your wide resource, a database with literally anything you can go in and type. It just makes your research experience a lot easier. The access to resource to help you study

was very helpful. I think what I found challenging was having to collaborate with other students when it came to like group assignments and things like that, that was the greatest challenge. So it wasn't so much about the structure of the system or the school itself, but having to collaborate with other students from different parts of the world, some who aren't as versatile in the English language as you were, and having to manage that as a weakness and covering for that in group assignments, um, having to deal with difficult people and still making sure that you guys get the job done, because you're going to be rated as a group and not individually. So navigating all of that, having to find people's skills that you never knew you had, having to be patient, having to work with all of the deadlines, having to go to people's houses to meet, dealing with the disappointment from people who are not serious in your class, but then you needed to make a first class, you know, Just all of those challenges. Yeah.

**[Narrator]**

Samuel's most shocking realisations or culture shocks ranged from the spellings of traditional Irish names versus their pronunciations to traffic rule compliance and the absence of spicy pepper in meals.

**[Samuel]**

Name spelling is definitely one of my biggest culture shocks, just the fact that the way names are spelt is. Very different from the way they've been pronounced. Definitely one Siobhan, S, I, O, B, H, A, N. Siobhan. Caiomh, C, A, O, I, M, H. What is going on here, lads? You know. Another cultural shock is the orderliness on the road, the road signs, the fact that people oblige to road signs, to traffic signs, having a bus lane, a dedicated bus lane, a dedicated cycle lane, a dedicated car lane. Oh my God, yeah, culture shock in Nigeria.

You, first of all, you don't even have, you don't even have white paint on the road to start with, to even say that you have three lanes, you just have tar poured, and that's it, and it's like everybody vibes. So I think, yeah, that level of information on the road, it was definitely a culture shock driving on the other side of the road as well. A bit of a culture shock. Like generally the difficulty with finding Nigerian food ingredients, yeah, pepper especially, I think the access to that has really improved. I mean, I'm talking 2018 like it was difficult, especially in Waterford. It was very difficult then. Dublin is obviously a bigger city in Waterford. We probably had in the whole of Waterford, you probably have two, three African restaurants. Another culture shock was pepper, finding hot pepper. Like, you'd go to a restaurant and you'd ask, Oh, spicy. No, spicy, spicy, and they give you sweet chili. And I'm like, No. I mean spicy, like, very, very spicy. And that was the best they could give me sweet chili. So I was like, Ah, so I literally started carrying yaji For context, yaji is a Nigerian flavoured dry ground pepper in powdery form. So I literally started carrying that about, because yeah I need spice in my life.

**[Samuel]**

Again, when you're visiting a country on holidays, psychologically in your mind. You're not thinking of yourself as a part of that country. You're thinking of yourself as a visitor. Then moving here, obviously I was looking to be assimilated into society. I was looking for acceptance. Being identified as minority coming from a predominantly black nation was just very shocking. I think it just humbled me. Like, what? What does that even mean? I come from a country where, like, 200 million. The entire country is 5 million, and I am minority, what does that even mean? It was very difficult to to comprehend. But that was the reality, not just statistically, but even experientially as well, you're going to spaces and you can feel you're different, feeling the need

to code switch, feeling the need to present a certain way, because the way you typically would present is unfamiliar to the majority. That can be exasperating, sometimes, especially in a nation like Ireland, where the black man is still a very new concept compared to other nations where black people have always been.

**[Narrator]**

The Nigerian pidgin English saying, Naija, no, they carry last can loosely be translated to mean Nigerians strive to finish first and must excel at whatever venture. This has become an unofficial national mantra, both at home and abroad, even UFC Welterweights champion Kamaru Usman uses it as his catchphrase. Although spoken light-heartedly, it takes on a heavier meaning when a lot of sacrifices is made to get you abroad. As a Nigerian, there's an unspoken rule that failure is never an option, and this weighs heavily on many.

**[Samuel]**

You subconsciously feel the need to overcompensate and to prove that you deserve to be here, to prove that being a minority doesn't mean you're lesser. Doesn't mean you're not as qualified as the majority. Being Nigerian, we kind of have the can do and must do attitude, we just want to excel wherever we are, and also the fact that the opportunity handed to you came from a lot of toil and sweat and hard work by other people. In my case, my family, my parents, you feel the need, the obligation, the onus is on you to ensure that you justify that sacrifice being made, so all of those factors coming together just that didn't have a choice.

**[Narrator]**

Stage Three, reintegration phase. Rejection of cultural similarities and differences through stereotyping and judgmental behaviours.

**[Narrator]**

The excitement of moving abroad quickly wanes, and the reality sets in. Life throws endless curve balls. As Samuel navigated dealing with academics, family, culture shocks, accommodation and employment, the when COVID-19 struck in 2020.

**[Samuel]**

It was during COVID While I was looking for a job. This was after I was done with my masters. COVID just started then. I was working as a customer service staff with this customer service company. But obviously it wasn't what I studied or it wasn't what I was looking to, it wasn't the career path I was looking to get into to secure my residency in the country. So for two years, while I was working in customer service, I was looking for a job in engineering, and I couldn't find a job, partly because of COVID, people were being laid off. It was difficult to get a job. The economic landscape was just very hard to navigate. There was so much uncertainty, and I didn't know what my chances were. I was an immigrant without a professional experience on Irish soil, I didn't have a stamp 4 which was like a permanent visa that would have improved my chances of getting a job. There are all of these, you know, factors stacked against me. And so it was, it was, it was the lowest moment emotionally, like applying for jobs for almost two years and constantly being rejected, constantly being told, "oh, sorry, unfortunately", going through emails and I didn't want to read anything. I was just looking for unfortunately you know, and once I saw that, yeah, done.

**[Narrator]**

As John Donne said, "No man is an island", so having family and friends or a community to rely on during this journey offers great help in acclimatising and reintegrating into this new

environment. I asked Samuel how having friends in school contributed to his experience, and if his school created any social avenues for the purpose of meeting new people.

**[Samuel]**

I didn't have family at the time. I have family now. I made my first friend as soon as I got here, actually. And that happened because the agency that helped us apply for our visas was where I met these friends, two of them, actually. So we already knew from Nigeria that we were all coming to study here. We are coming to the same university, the same city. So the friendship began in Nigeria. We started our community. And so when we got here, they got here before me, because I got my visa got rejected, but they got their visas approved. So they came about three weeks before me, so they had already experienced a lot, and they knew a lot before I came so it was easy for me to navigate some of those uncertainties, because they had already been through that.

**[Samuel]**

The school did create a lot of those very social spaces for people to connect and network and meet new friends and make new acquaintances. They had, like, inductions and orientations on campus. They had, like, a welcome party. They had all of these things, but because I came late, I never attended any of those, and those things were kind of set up in the first week of resumption. So it wasn't very helpful for those of us that came later on,

**[Narrator]**

According to the World Health Organisation, one in eight people globally live with mental health issues, and migrants are particularly vulnerable due to exposure to various stressors all at once. So I asked if any mental health support was available to him during his educational journey.

**[Samuel]**

I needed to but I never did, because I just didn't feel safe. Part of why I needed the mental health support was because I didn't know if I felt welcome enough, or if this was a safe enough space to be vulnerable. So it was even more difficult to now share that vulnerability with somebody who looked like who I didn't feel safe with, if that makes sense.

**[Narrator]**

The Irish Council for International Students ICOS is an independent advocacy organisation whose mission is to protect and enhance the rights of international students in Ireland, while championing their contribution the places they study and the communities in which they live. ICOS has 26 institutional members, including all universities and technological universities in the Republic of Ireland, and many independent third level colleges, as well as the union of students in Ireland. I asked if you had encountered ICOS or was familiar with their work, as they are one of the foremost advocacy organisations catering for international students in Ireland.

**[Samuel]**

I have heard about them. They're like an NGO providing support for international students. I remember because I was very active on LinkedIn, and they were very active on LinkedIn. They did a lot, especially with regards to visas, stamp 1G, they did a lot of awareness campaigns for the industry, both for recruiters, for organisations, for students, how to navigate the labour market, you know, trying to get jobs and preparing CVS and all of that.

It was really only on LinkedIn, because I don't know anywhere else that I would have heard about them. I think you wouldn't if you weren't on LinkedIn, honestly.

**[Narrator]**

Stage four, autonomy phase. Growth of personal flexibility, rising sensitivity and the acquisition of both skill and understanding to navigate the second culture.

**[Narrator]**

Being here for over five years and having successfully transitioned from being a student to becoming an engineer and an established poet in Ireland, it was only fair to ask Samuel for some good advice for other international students.

**[Samuel]**

The advice I would give is, don't live in isolation. Always, always find a community. There's power in numbers. Find a support system here. Find people who are sharing the same challenges as you and share the burden. Be inquisitive, be curious and yeah, be humble enough to ask for help at every point.

**[Narrator]**

And for the people in charge of education policies in Ireland, Samuel had just one appeal.

**[Samuel]**

Make the tuition cheaper. That would be my advice to whoever is in charge. Make the tuition more affordable for international students. I paid 10,500 euros for a year. That is ridiculous. That is ridiculous.

**[Narrator]**

All is well. that ends well, they say, but is there any part of his experience that he would love to change?

**[Samuel]**

I would have secured on campus accommodation earlier. I had to learn that the hard way I had to pay for that the hard way. I had no idea housing crisis was a thing here. If I knew that, I would have secured accommodation long before I even applied for my visa, because I had the option to do that.

**[Narrator]**

Does one ever stop feeling like a stranger? Samuel told me that he felt like Ireland was a second home now, and that he feels a sense of acceptance and belonging more than he did five years ago. He explained that getting to the feeling of acceptance and belonging is a journey that slowly builds up the more interaction you have with the society. So don't lock yourself up.

**[Samuel]**

I feel like it's a journey, and I feel more accepted than I did. You know, five years ago, when I moved to Ireland, and I think that sense of acceptance is something you will experience on deeper levels, as you assimilate into the society, a lot more as you build deeper connections, as you understand the environment and the people you're living with. I think that is something that comes with time. I definitely feel more at home than I did five years ago.

**[Narrator]**

Although he has found a home away from home, what comforts him when he misses home?

**[Samuel]**

I do have a couple of things that make me feel at home, I think anything that reminds me of home. So it could be the ingredients My mom put in my bag when I was coming here that I would use to make soup or some local Nigerian delicacy. It would be during music afro-beats. It would be pictures or silly videos on my phone from moments I spent with family back home, in those

moments when maybe I'm feeling overwhelmed, or those moments when I'm just feeling alone, just staring at my phone and smiling, watching silly videos of my dad making jokes or teasing my mom. Those kind of things transport me back home and remind me of where I'm coming from.

**[Narrator]**

Stage five, reciprocal interdependence phase. Acceptance and enjoyment of social, psychological and cultural differences.

**[Narrator]**

Samuel only went back home to Nigeria after spending three years in Ireland, and he says it felt like a homecoming, as so much had changed, both in the country and with his family as well.

**[Samuel]** I arrived 2018 and I was back home for the first time 2021, three years after. It felt like a home coming, it felt like a home coming, it felt like a home coming. So much had changed for me and for my family as well.

**[Narrator]**

To fit into a second culture many migrants code switch. Code switching is shifting from one linguistic code to another depending on the social context, particularly by members of minority ethnic groups, to create a sense of belonging to a larger community, particularly their host community. For migrants, this isn't only in terms of language and mannerisms. It sometimes happens with personalities too, as better explained by the Nigerian author Ijeoma Umebinyuo. She says, "here you are too foreign for home, too foreign for here, never enough for both".

So I asked Samuel how he has coped with code switching over the years.

**[Samuel]**

How do I cope? I think I cope. By understanding the environment, I mean by being conscious of where I am. And by that I mean whether I'm in a social space or whether I'm in the office in a corporate setting, who I'm speaking to? Am I speaking to a mixed audience of other migrants as well, or am I speaking to a room full of white people other than myself? You know, I'm just conscious of where I am and who I'm speaking to, and I think that kind of determines how I engage, because it's also, code switching is it's reliant on the need to want to be understood, versus expressing yourself. And in those settings, you have to understand what is priority, what's more important to be understood or to express myself. If I am at work, expressing myself is not as important as being understood. So I think those are things that help me cope with code switching when I need to.

**[Narrator]**

As a storyteller and an award winning poet Samuel Yakura, debut poetry play the perfect immigrant received funding from the Dublin Arts Council, multiple award nominations, stellar reviews as part of the Dublin Fringe Festival and most recently, a sold out Ireland wide tour. I was curious about what inspired the play and what the reception was like for migrants and non-migrants alike.

**[Samuel]**

What inspired my play the perfect immigrant was primarily my experience. I'm a storyteller, and I felt the need to share my story, and I also think secondly, the necessity for that story in a space that I felt wasn't as sympathetic and as understanding as it needed to be, both culturally and systematically as well, I felt it was a very necessary story. Being able to tell the experience of an immigrant on Irish soil from an endurance perspective, was a necessary story that I hadn't seen

and was such a shared experience, not just by me, but so many other people. And what I found even more interesting was that when I got to tell the story, it was so resonant with so many other people who were also migrants, because the migration story cuts across culture, and there are so many people who are not Nigerian that related to the story, and it just spoke again to the necessity of stories like that being told. I think it allows those telling the story to feel heard, to feel seen, to feel understood, and it also helps those on the other side of the conversation to be sympathetic, to understand, to be educated and to be able to have a more insightful dialogue when conversations about migration and finding home and acceptance is being discussed.

**[Narrator]**

Thank you for sharing your journey with us so vulnerably Samuel. By sharing Samuels's personal experience, I hope you have gained insight into the nuances and complexities of this rigorous yet beautiful experience that is migration. In our next episode, we will speak with an American student to learn about their experiences since moving to Ireland. Here's a fun fact for the road: did you know that in 2017, Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs found in the last census, found that of the about 70 million people around the world who claim Irish roots, about 36 million are from America and they self-identify as "Irish-American" or "Scots-Irish Americans".

My name is Blessing Kure. Till I come your way on the second part of this seven-part docuseries, don't forget to live fully, live freely, live truly.

**[Public Service Announcement]**

This programme was produced by Blessing Kure. If you have been affected by the content of this programme, support is available. Freephone The Samaritans on 116-123.

### Appendix IV: Music and Sound Effects

Music Creator	Title	Copyright
Pixabay	Seat belt pulling and clicking	<a href="https://pixabay.com/sound-effects/seat-belt-pulling-and-clicking-33979/">https://pixabay.com/sound-effects/seat-belt-pulling-and-clicking-33979/</a>
Pixabay	African-drums-loop-33767	<a href="https://pixabay.com/sound-effects/african-drums-loop-33767/">https://pixabay.com/sound-effects/african-drums-loop-33767/</a>
Pixabay	Seat-belt pullin	<a href="https://pixabay.com/sound-effects/seat-belt-pulling-and-clicking-33979/">https://pixabay.com/sound-effects/seat-belt-pulling-and-clicking-33979/</a>
Oscar Okwudinka	Pure Romance	<a href="https://pixabay.com/music/afrobeat-pure-romance-192657/">https://pixabay.com/music/afrobeat-pure-romance-192657/</a>
Alban Gogh	Irish Dance	<a href="https://pixabay.com/music/folk-irish-dance-199572/">https://pixabay.com/music/folk-irish-dance-199572/</a>
Musictown	Irish Jig	<a href="https://pixabay.com/music/ireland-irish-jig-99533/">https://pixabay.com/music/ireland-irish-jig-99533/</a>
Erick Gaya	Solt!ce Acceptance	<a href="https://pixabay.com/music/beautiful-plays-solstce-acceptance-169383/">https://pixabay.com/music/beautiful-plays-solstce-acceptance-169383/</a>
Oleksii Kaplunskyi	Guitar Vibe	<a href="https://pixabay.com/music/acoustic-group-guitar-vibe-190889/">https://pixabay.com/music/acoustic-group-guitar-vibe-190889/</a>
Oleksii Kaplunsky	Just Relax	<a href="https://pixabay.com/music/beautiful-plays-just-relax-11157/">https://pixabay.com/music/beautiful-plays-just-relax-11157/</a>
Oleksii Kaplunsky	Elevator music bossa nova background music version 60's	<a href="https://pixabay.com/music/elevator-music-elevator-music-bossa-nova-background-music-version-60s-10900/">https://pixabay.com/music/elevator-music-elevator-music-bossa-nova-background-music-version-60s-10900/</a>
Julius H	Jupiter Rising Ambient Space Music	<a href="https://pixabay.com/music/ambient-jupiter-rising-ambient-space-music-129014/">https://pixabay.com/music/ambient-jupiter-rising-ambient-space-music-129014/</a>
Artbybigvee	Overly Stressed	<a href="https://pixabay.com/music/afrobeat-overly-stressed-212959/">https://pixabay.com/music/afrobeat-overly-stressed-212959/</a>
Pixabay	Money Counter	<a href="https://pixabay.com/sound-effects/money-counter-95830/">https://pixabay.com/sound-effects/money-counter-95830/</a>
Floraphonic	Fairy Dust Shimmer 1	<a href="https://pixabay.com/sound-effects/fairy-dust-shimmer-1-175611/">https://pixabay.com/sound-effects/fairy-dust-shimmer-1-175611/</a>

Samuel Fjohanns	Icy meditation-glockenspiel	<a href="https://pixabay.com/music/ambient-icy-meditation-glockenspiel-108771/">https://pixabay.com/music/ambient-icy-meditation-glockenspiel-108771/</a>
Griffith College Radio archive	Moving Train	Offline archive
Gaming Sound FX	Cash Register (Kaching) - Sound Effect (HD copyright free)	<a href="https://youtu.be/4kVTqUxJYBA?si=oyXtGk_t5PTJ4tON">https://youtu.be/4kVTqUxJYBA?si=oyXtGk_t5PTJ4tON</a>
Blessing Kure	Dublin traffic sound	Personal archive
Blessing Kure	'Welcome to Dublin' Flight announcement	Personal archive

### **Appendix V: NUJ Code of Conduct**

Members of the National Union of Journalists are expected to abide by the following professional principles

A JOURNALIST:

1. At all times upholds and defends the principle of media freedom, the right of freedom of expression and the right of the public to be informed.
2. Strives to ensure that information disseminated is honestly conveyed, accurate and fair.
3. Does her/his utmost to correct harmful inaccuracies.
4. Differentiates between fact and opinion.
5. Obtains material by honest, straightforward and open means, with the exception of investigations that are both overwhelmingly in the public interest and which involve evidence that cannot be obtained by straightforward means.
6. Does nothing to intrude into anybody's private life, grief or distress unless justified by overriding consideration of the public interest.
7. Protects the identity of sources who supply information in confidence and material gathered in the course of her/his work.
8. Resists threats or any other inducements to influence, distort or suppress information, and takes no unfair personal advantage of information gained in the course of her/his duties before the information is public knowledge.
9. Produces no material likely to lead to hatred or discrimination on the grounds of a person's age, gender, race, colour, creed, legal status, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation.

10. Does not by way of statement, voice or appearance endorse by advertisement any commercial product or service save for the promotion of her/his own work or of the medium by which she/he is employed.
11. A journalist shall normally seek the consent of an appropriate adult when interviewing or photographing a child for a story about her/his welfare.
12. Avoids plagiarism.