

Meet Them.

An exhibition guide to help you get to know the women you see.

Meet Them is a photography exhibition celebrating lone parents who experienced Irelands Direct Provision system.

The six women featured are part of Paving the Way, an ActionAid Ireland project focused on creating a future where lone parents who apply for international protection in Ireland are supported and provided with the vital information they need to know about their rights.

The women you see here have often been spoken about rather than listened to. Their lives reduced to labels — “asylum seeker”, “single parent”, “African” — while the fullness of who they are is overlooked. ‘Meet Them’ exists to change that.

In these images, taken by photographer Beta Bajgart, these six women reclaim their stories on their own terms. They show themselves not as they are often portrayed, but as they know themselves to be: mothers, students, professionals, carers, dreamers, survivors. Women carrying fear and hope, grief and determination — often all at once.

Each woman has chosen what she wants you to see and know about her, when you stand in front of her photograph.

This exhibition asks you to slow down. To look carefully. To listen.

Recognize their strength, dignity and possibility.

Ola

I want you to see a woman who defied all odds, broke barriers and set a precedent for other women who are struggling to navigate life alone in diaspora. I want you to see a widowed mum of three children who went back to education and ran two degrees concurrently to position herself for life in a society where opportunities are limited and highly competitive for migrants. I want you to see a woman who came from struggling to winning multiple awards. Above all, I want you to believe that a dream that cannot be actualized is one you're not determined to bring to fruition. Impossible means nothing.



Janet

I am a woman who despite all my challenges is always there for my child and will do everything I can to give him a life of dignity and beauty. I am a dreamer who chose not to let circumstances dictate my future. I live with idiopathic intracranial hypertension, a condition that has tested my body, my mind, and my spirit. I want you to see a woman who carries fears she rarely speaks about; the fear of financial struggle, the fear of not being enough, the fear of failing as a mother. But also, a woman who does not let those fears stop her. I want you to know that I am more than my challenges.



Rispa

When you look at me, know that I am resilient. A mother who raised her three children in Direct Provision in one room. I became homeless but never defeated. I pushed forward then, and I push forward now. I've built a life, and a future powered by determination. I rise so my children can rise with me. When you see my face, see strength. See ambition. See a woman who refused to surrender. And to anyone facing their own struggle; stand tall, keep going, your dreams are still yours to claim.



Thandiwe

I am a South African woman who came to Ireland seeking safety and a chance to rebuild. As a single mother now studying Community and Youth Development, I carry both my challenges and my hopes proudly. These photos reflect a woman who kept going, even on the days she wanted to give up. I want other single mothers in Direct Provision to see that they are not alone, and that even when the road is hard, a new beginning is possible.



Deborah

When you look at my photo, I want you to witness a woman who chooses grace, purpose, and faith. A woman who carries her identity with honour; a migrant, a single mother of four, a lawyer, a writer, a founder, a woman who refused to be reduced to a single label, and God is her strength. I want you to know that strength sometimes looks like showing up again, rebuilding again, believing again. Life can be tough and uncertain, but never let the pain define you. Most of all, I want you to know that grace is real, that I am the evidence that healing is possible.



Immaculate

I want you to see more than the woman in these photographs. I am a mother first, and my son is the source of my strength—his presence reminds me every day why I keep moving forward. My work as a social care worker shapes me too; it has taught me compassion, resilience, and the importance of showing up for others. I carry dreams for a more stable, hopeful future, as well as the fears that come with responsibility. When you look at me, I hope you see that quiet determination.



Find out more about ActionAid Ireland's work at www.actionaid.ie

Find out more about photographer Beta Bajgart at www.seethelight.ie