

## FOREWORD

Refugee Action, in its 23 year existence has worked with refugee community organisations (RCOs), support groups and other local communities across UK in a consultative and partnership way in the process of its strategy development, planning services and evaluation of its work.

This is a report from a survey of RCOs and a consultation exercise carried out by an independent consultant, Michael Bell Associates, to evaluate Refugee Action's work and identify gaps in services in the different regions.

Refugee Action's development and integration work focuses on long-term settlement services to refugees and their communities in an integrated and collaborative way with services for new arrivals and asylum seekers. The ongoing 'generic' integration services include capacity building, community relations, inclusion, awareness raising, and developing partnerships and links from offices in Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Leeds, Leicester, Nottingham, London and Bristol.

We also develop, or help others to develop, specialist services that complement the above mentioned 'generic' development work, enabling refugees to access a more holistic service. Current projects include an employment project (Bolton Apprenticeship Project), an intensive capacity building project (Marketing Project), a voluntary return project (Choices Project), an arts project (South East Regional Arts & Culture Project) and a local community relations/awareness raising project (Derwent Refugee Support Project) in Derby

RA will respond to the findings by focusing on sustaining its key strengths such as capacity building and developing partnerships. We will also take some additional measures, including;

- Launching a new website to provide more information on the range of services and activities that RA undertakes
- Engaging other partners and funders to increase support to RCOs and improve their access to funding
- Working more closely with mainstream local service providers to increase their cultural competence and sensitivity to the needs of refugees
- Increasing our focus on awareness raising and work with local communities to promote positive images and help the involvement of refugees in local neighbourhoods and initiatives.

Voluntary return services (Choices Project) will concentrate on providing information and facilitating access to our services by building on the training sessions, presentations and other outreach work undertaken so far. During 2004, Choices organised 45 such events. We will also organise a national conference which will focus on the involvement and participation of RCOs.

If you have any queries or would like to be involved in addressing the identified gaps in services please contact us at the address below

**Wondimu Yohannes**

Director of Development and Integration

**Contact address:**

Refugee Action, 240a Clapham Road, London SW9 0PZ.

Tel: 020 7735 5361 or email Maria Patterson at [mariap@refugee-action.org.uk](mailto:mariap@refugee-action.org.uk)

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE**

At the end of 2003 Refugee Action embarked upon an ambitious and innovative consultation programme to inform the development of their long term business plan. This consultation process covers all key stake-holders: from funders, to partner agencies such as local authorities and refugee community organisations (RCOs), through to individual service users.

Michael Bell Associates have worked closely with Refugee Action on a number of aspects of this consultative process, including supporting work on eliciting service user views through to this project seeking the views of RCOs.

Whilst the primary purpose of this report is to inform the planning process within Refugee Action, it is anticipated that it will also be of interest to RCOs themselves and to other partner organisations, including funders of community development and capacity building services.

### **1.2 CONSULTATIVE METHODOLOGY**

This research was largely focused upon the work of Refugee Action's Community Development Directorate, but included other areas of service where RCO's or their service users were likely to have contact with Refugee Action. These other areas of service included both the Asylum Advice Directorate and the "Choices" team working on voluntary return.

The approach taken to this work by Michael Bell Associates sought to both provide research and consultative expertise and also to develop capacity within Refugee Action for future exercises. To this end, the work included both direct research work by Michael Bell Associates alongside training and support to Refugee Action staff to undertake consultative process for themselves.

Michael Bell Associates worked with the various directorates within Refugee Action to develop an appropriate survey of RCOs in contact with Refugee Action. The survey can be found in the appendices to this report.

Initially the survey was distributed by post, but respondents were also advised that they could complete the form over the phone with a member of Refugee Action's staff. In addition, each region prepared a list of "must reach" organisations in their areas, which reflected the range of RCOs their unit dealt with. If these "must reach" agencies did not complete the survey they were telephoned and offered the opportunity to complete the survey over the phone with Community Development Officers (SDOs) from neighbouring regions. This process boosted the response rate considerably.

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To supplement this largely quantitative approach 5 regional focus groups were held with respondents to the survey invited to indicate if they would like to participate in these events. Focus groups questions were developed by Michael Bell Associates and a training session was held to brief CDOs on running these events. CDOs from neighbouring regions facilitated each event and allowed the exploration of experiences of Refugee Action's service and the options for development in a more qualitative way.

Both the survey and the focus groups were designed to provide both a retrospective and prospective view of Refugee Action's services. That is, reflections on services received in the past and those that they would like to see in the future.

This report includes both the findings of the survey and the reports of the individual focus groups, alongside conclusions and recommendations for the future.

## **2 KEY FINDINGS**

### **2.1 ABOUT THE REFUGEE COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS**

In total 39 RCOs responded to the survey and 15 RCOs participated in the focus groups. In discussions with Refugee Action staff it was considered that participants largely reflected the range of RCOs in contact with Refugee Action.

The survey identified that around 4 out of five were constituted in some way, with more than 30% registered as charities. Around one in five were unconstituted, indicating that they were probably newer organisations. This profile was also reflected in the level of funding with over 20% having no current funding. 44% reported having more than £100,000 of income per year, which was a larger proportion than anticipated – this percentage may reflect that these groups had the staff resources to complete a survey. There were no significant differences in the responses from large and smaller groups.

More than half of survey respondents indicated that they worked with all refugee communities. This profile was slightly different for those attending the focus group with around two thirds working with specific ethnic or other communities.

Cultural and social support and advice services on a range of topics were the most common services provided by respondents to the survey with more than three quarters of RCOs providing these. But, there were a large number of other activities undertaken (see 3.2.3 below).

### **2.2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RCOS & REFUGEE ACTION**

Half of all organisations surveyed had been formed within the past two years, it is not surprising therefore that over two thirds of organisations surveyed had been in a working relationship with Refugee Action for two years or less. This suggests that many organisations have established a relationship with Refugee Action at (or very close to) their inception.

Around a quarter of respondents first came into contact with Refugee Action via publicity, but most others through a variety of ways largely connected to networking (e.g. by word of mouth from other groups or at conferences and events). A small but significant number of respondents made contact as a result of an individual within the RCO previously receiving support or advice from Refugee Action on their personal problem. This pattern was largely reflected by participants in the focus groups.

Survey respondents were asked to rate the services that they had used. While this user feedback focuses on the 'generic' development work of Refugee Action, voluntary return service has been included in the consultation to find out the level of awareness by RCOs about this service, and the findings in this report should be understood in this context. A separate one to

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one user feedback exercise will be conducted to establish the level of satisfaction and to identify gaps in RA return services which currently focuses on advice and support to asylum seekers and refugees. In addition, comments were invited on all services such as those for women or around employment which are only available in a limited number of areas. Comments on take-up should be seen in this context and there are footnoted explanations for these items.

The overall ratings were very positive with “building links and partnerships” and “RCO capacity building” scoring most highly (four out of five RCOs rating these good or very good) in terms of both one-to-one support and group events (such as training). It is worth noting that these were also the most used services for both one to one and group events, with nearly 9 out of ten projects benefiting from one-to-one support around building partnerships.

“Service Development”, “Access to statutory services” and “raising awareness and campaigning” were only marginally less well regarded. Although one-to-one support in “Access to statutory services” and “raising awareness and campaigning” was more likely to be rated only as “good” whereas group events were more likely to be rated as “very good”.

“Services for refugee women” and Refugee Action’s employment service (which is only provided from the Leeds office) were rated less highly although they still received a positive rating overall. Refugee Action’s Services for Women were used by less than half of all respondents<sup>1</sup>.

Only around a third of respondents had made use of Refugee Action’s “Choices” programme around voluntary return (at the time of this research there were no staff providing this service in the South of England). Of the small number that had made use of the service there were low levels of satisfaction. In terms of one-to-one support only half of respondents gave a positive rating to “providing options for voluntary return” and one-to-one support around “links with countries of origin” was the only service area to receive a negative rating with 75% rating this “poor” or “very poor”. It should be noted the issue of “return” is a politically sensitive one within refugee communities and in discussion with Refugee Action staff some organisations that responded that they had not used the service were actually acting as referral bodies into Choices. We consider that some of the negative responses in this context may relate to the issue of “return” itself, rather than the service provided by the Choices programme. We would anticipate that this should be explored further in the separate evaluation of that service planned for 2005.

Specific comments on voluntary return from the focus groups included that women were poorly served by their own communities in this regard and that they need information targeted at them

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<sup>1</sup> There are currently only limited specific services for women and these are not available within all Refugee Action regions. Services for women are now a priority area for Refugee Action, but at the time of this research Refugee Action employed just one Policy and Strategy Officer responsible for women’s issues across the entire country.

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as a distinct group. Others felt that return was not an option for their community because of the situation back home, whilst others felt that all those who wanted to return would already have done so. The level of awareness of this service appeared to be low in the focus groups and this is reinforced by the survey which indicates that it is the least used of Refugee Action's national services for RCOs.

The focus groups largely reflect the views above and allowed for an opportunity to explore why people rated Refugee Action's services so highly. For many this came from Refugee Action's understanding of groups "like ours", others talked of the intensity of support and its availability at times of need, for others it was the fact that Refugee Action was first to offer support while other agencies wait to be asked. For a number of agencies it was the only support group that they were aware of to assist them (the survey indicated that this was the case for 25% of RCOs).

Both the survey and the focus groups explored the reasons why people were using Refugee Action. In both cases the way in which Refugee Action provided its services was the key factor with trust and understanding recurring themes, along with the contacts and networks that Refugee Action can provide.

RCOs also identified a range of needs and barriers to the further development of their services. The three biggest problems identified through the survey were:

- Problems in equipping your service users to participate in your organisation
- Lack of skills needed to present your organisation to the outside world
- Lack of necessary professional skills in management committee

These issues were largely reflected in the focus groups, although there was a particular emphasis on the role that Refugee Action could play in changing public attitudes to refugees and asylum seekers and also more support around fund-raising.

### **2.3 WAYS FORWARD**

Whilst both the survey and the focus groups found high levels of satisfaction with existing Refugee Action services for RCOs there were also a range of ideas for future developments. Key amongst these requests was for "more of the same". Other ideas included:

- More information on the range of services and activities that Refugee Action undertakes and improved communication through newsletters or regular mailings.
- Funding was a key issue for many RCOs. The ideas that were offered by RCOs included much more assistance with preparing funding applications and for Refugee Action to administer a small start-up grants scheme.

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- The brokerage role played by Refugee Action in terms of developing partnerships between RCOs and the statutory sector was widely valued. A number of RCOs also talked about the need (not identified as being currently provided) for Refugee Action to act as an advocate for RCOs at a local, regional and national level.
- A number of RCOs felt that Refugee Action could influence the development and delivery of other local services. This included encouraging local solicitors to take on more immigration cases, through promoting access for refugees in mainstream services, to developing the cultural competence or sensitivity of mainstream providers.
- For many RCOs, problems faced by their users were exacerbated by negative media portrayals of refugees and asylum seekers and the consequent impact upon public opinion. A number of RCOs felt that Refugee Action was well placed to tackle this issue.
- Voluntary return services were also identified as an area for development, although all stressed the “the emphasis should be on the word ‘voluntary’”. There were requests for more information, including Choices staff to visit RCOs and explain the service. One other key recommendation was that the service should be extended to provide advice on their options and information on situations in their home countries for those in detention, including those awaiting deportation.

### 2.4 ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

This section contains a number of key issues which should be considered by Refugee Action in developing its business plan and development strategy.

1. Most RCOs making use of Refugee Action’s services are relatively new. This may reflect the areas in which Refugee Action is operating and the impact of dispersal in terms of generating a demand for new RCOs. The key areas identified by RCOs where assistance is required are largely developmental (e.g. developing the skills base of members) rather than those facing longer established groups (e.g. internal disputes etc.). **Refugee Action should ensure that its services such as training and the competence of its CDO team reflect these needs and focus upon development issues.**
2. Refugee Action’s capacity building services are both used by the overwhelming majority of RCOs surveyed and are very highly rated. **Refugee Action should focus efforts on sustaining this key strength.**
3. Refugee Action’s work in building partnerships were also used by most RCOs and very highly rated. Open comments in the survey and comments from the focus groups

suggest that less is known about Refugee Action's work in promoting and advocating on behalf of RCOs. **This is a key activity of Refugee Action at a national level and more work should be done communicating this to RCOs at a local level.**

4. Services that were less well used, such as those for women, are also less highly rated. This suggests that there may be a need to promote the necessity of addressing women's needs in the early developmental support to RCOs and that the ways in which this support is provided may need to be modified. **Refugee Action should consider further developing the promotion of its services for women to RCOs at the point of start-up and review the way in which its services are delivered in this area to ensure that they are seen as an integral part of RCOs work.**
5. Around one in four RCOs that they have no funding. Not surprisingly funding was a key issue for many projects. Requests for further assistance included both help in preparing fund-raising applications and providing access to start-up funds. We understand that the Big Lottery Fund is currently investigating ways in which its funding may be delivered more strategically in other sectors. **Refugee Action should explore ways in which it could work more strategically with funding bodies such as the Big Lottery Fund to act as a broker for RCOs. In addition, Refugee Action should seek to work more closely with funders offering start-up funds, such as the Home Office Community Development Fund, to promote access to these resources for new and emerging RCOs.**
6. Refugee Action has been committed to increasing the range of informed options available to refugees and asylum seekers for many years. Choices, its voluntary return project, is part of this tradition. The overall levels of satisfaction with Choices may reflect a range of issues, not least the fact that this exercise was aimed at groups whilst individuals are the primary users and beneficiaries of the service. Two thirds of projects that had made use of Choices training rated this as good or very good. However, there do appear to be some problems around awareness of this service, although it is acknowledged that Choices does not operate in all areas which would affect RCOs awareness of the service. The current Choices training programme should be built upon as a way of extending awareness of the service. It should also be noted that many RCOs were keen to learn more about the project, felt that Refugee Action was more trusted than the Home Office or the main voluntary return provider (IoM) and had ideas for elements of this programme to be expanded to detainees, amongst others. **Refugee Action should build upon the Choices training programme as a way of raising awareness amongst RCOs and should consider a thorough service user survey to assess the operation of, and satisfaction with Choices amongst the primary beneficiaries.**

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7. The Refugee Action Employment Service in Leeds received relatively low ratings from the few organisations in that locality that had used the service (more than half of RCOs were satisfied with the service, but the level was not as high as most other services). The service was not mentioned in the Yorkshire focus group, so no qualitative data is available. **Refugee Action should review the relatively low levels of satisfaction with this service.**

In summary, we conclude that there is a high level of satisfaction with Refugee Action amongst its RCO stake-holders and a desire for it to do even more. In considering the ways forward for the service it is important to stress the strengths identified by RCOs and build upon these. In short these are Refugee Action's understanding of their needs and the high level of trust this engenders, the quality of its services and finally the quality and dedication of its staff.

### **3 STAKEHOLDER SURVEY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This section of the report presents the findings of a survey sent to a range of refugee community organisation (RCOs) in areas where Refugee Action operates. The survey was developed in consultation with Refugee Action as part of a wider stakeholder consultation that is currently being conducted. The survey covered the following areas:

- o Organisational profile
- o Relationship with Refugee Action
- o Barriers faced by organisations and their service users

Analysis of the data was done using SPSS, with results presented both graphically and in tabulated form. Tables are shown with frequencies per response, including the number of cases with 'missing' data (i.e. no response was recorded). Unless otherwise indicated, percentages have been calculated out of the valid responses (i.e. excluding missing cases).

Questionnaires were sent out to 151 organisations in the summer of 2004. A total of 39 questionnaires were returned (response rate of 25.8%).

#### **3.2 ORGANISATION PROFILE**

A series of questions were asked to obtain a profile of respondent organisations, revealing a range of organisations in terms of size and structure.

##### **3.2.1 FUNDING**

Almost half of organisations had a funding level of over £100,000 per year, whilst almost a quarter received no funding at all.

##### **How would you describe your level of funding over the last 12 months?**

|                     | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------|
| No funding          | 9                | 23.7           |
| £10,000 to £50,000  | 7                | 18.4           |
| £50,000 to £100,000 | 5                | 13.2           |
| Over £100,000       | 17               | 44.7           |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>38</b>        | <b>100.0</b>   |
| Missing             | 1                |                |
| Total               | 39               |                |

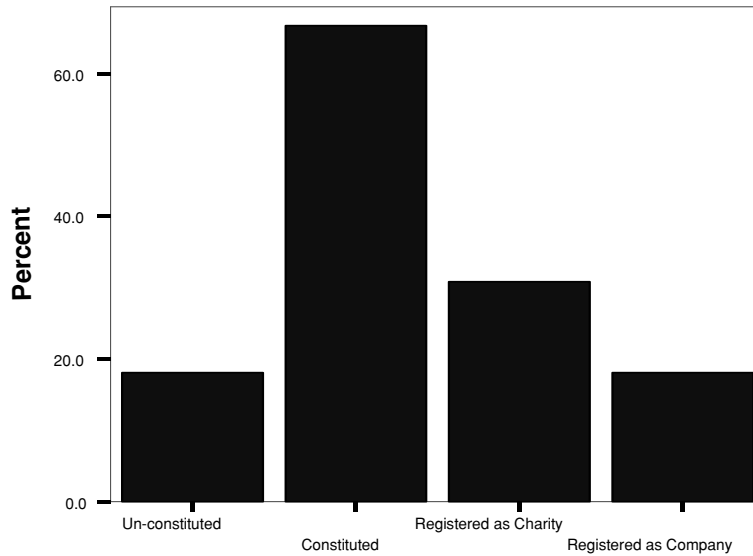
##### **3.2.2 GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE**

Two-thirds of organisations were constituted, with 30.8% registered as a charity.

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### How would you describe your governance structure?



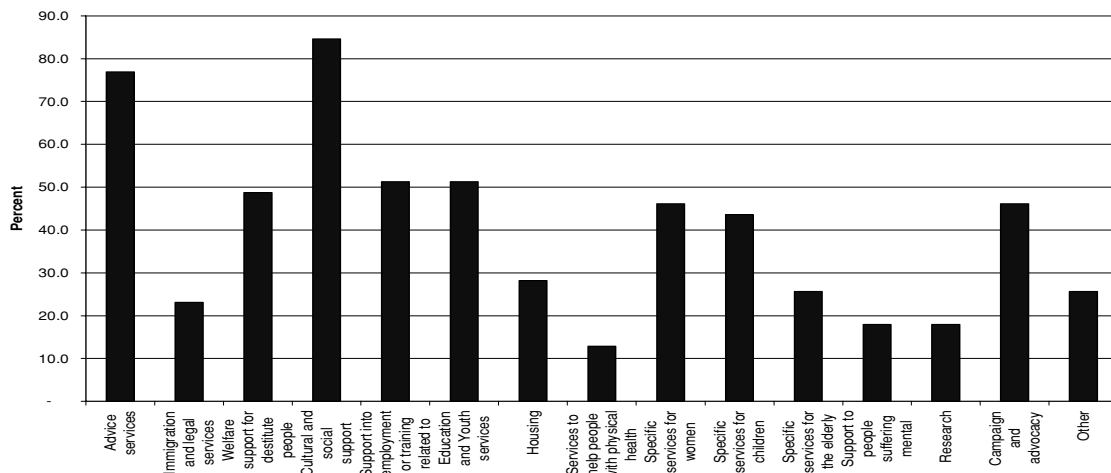
|                       | Frequency | Percent* |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------|
| Un-constituted        | 7         | 17.9     |
| Constituted           | 26        | 66.7     |
| Registered as Charity | 12        | 30.8     |
| Registered as Company | 7         | 17.9     |

\* Note: sum of percentages is not 100 as respondents were asked to tick all that apply

### 3.2.3 SERVICES PROVIDED

Organisations reported providing a range of services. Most common were cultural and social support (84.6%), advice (76.9%), support into employment or training related to getting a job (51.3%) and education and youth services (51.3%).

#### What services does your organisation provide?



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### What services does your organisation provide?

|   | Frequency | Percent |
|---|-----------|---------|
| Cultural and social support   | 33        | 84.6    |
| Advice services on a range of areas                                   | 30        | 76.9    |
| Support into employment or training related to getting a job          | 20        | 51.3    |
| Education and Youth services (e.g. Saturday schools)                  | 20        | 51.3    |
| Welfare support for destitute people                                  | 19        | 48.7    |
| Specific services for women   | 18        | 46.2    |
| Campaign and advocacy   | 18        | 46.2    |
| Specific services for children  | 17        | 43.6    |
| Housing   | 11        | 28.2    |
| Specific services for the elderly (e.g. home visits)                  | 10        | 25.6    |
| Other   | 10        | 25.6    |
| Immigration and legal services  | 9         | 23.1    |
| Support to people suffering mental health problems (e.g. counselling) | 7         | 17.9    |
| Research  | 7         | 17.9    |
| Services to help people with physical health problems                 | 5         | 12.8    |

“Other” services were specified as:

- o Befriending (2 cases)
- o Environmental awareness project
- o help with victims of racism and discrimination, and translation and interpreting
- o Housing
- o I am part of a large organisation, refugees do not necessarily access these services.
- o RAS vulnerable women
- o Socio-cultural + sporting + awareness-raising in schools.
- o Sports Training Programme
- o Translation / interpretation

### 3.2.4 COMMUNITIES SERVED

In terms of communities served, a slight majority of organisations (53.8%) did not cater to any specific community, whilst the remaining (46.2%) catered to various communities, largely based on country of origin.

### Which communities does your organisation serve?

|              | Frequency | Percent      |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| All          | 21        | 53.8         |
| Specific     | 18        | 46.2         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>39</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

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The specific communities were specified as:

- o Afghan
- o African French speakers and asylum seekers
- o all refugees
- o and other Somalians who reside in Nottingham
- o Bosnian
- o Burundian
- o Central African Community
- o Chinese
- o Detainees at Tinsley House
- o East and Central African
- o Horn of African Communities
- o Immigrants and natives of Great Lakes region
- o Iraqi
- o it should service refugee communities in the specific new deal area
- o Local residence
- o New arrivals relocated from Europe.
- o Refugee and BME Health Professionals
- o Settle Ethiopians
- o Somalians (others on demand).
- o Sudanese
- o Sudanese and Arabic
- o Those from Somalia only
- o Wide range but majority refugees/asylum seekers
- o Women

#### 3.2.5 AGE OF ORGANISATION

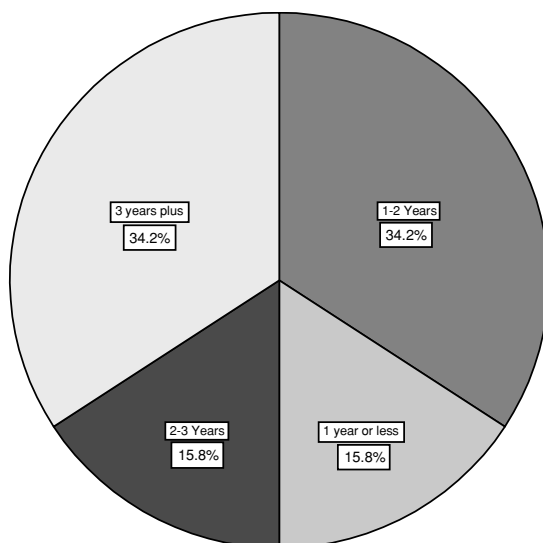
Whilst just over a third (34.2%) of organisations were formed three or more years ago, half of the organisations were young – being formed less than a year ago or between 1 and 2 years ago. Interestingly, there appeared to be little relationship between the age of the organisations and the level of funding.<sup>2</sup>

#### When was your organisation formed?

|                | Frequency | Percent      |
|----------------|-----------|--------------|
| 1 year or less | 6         | 15.8         |
| 1-2 Years      | 13        | 34.2         |
| 2-3 Years      | 6         | 15.8         |
| 3 years plus   | 13        | 34.2         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>38</b> | <b>100.0</b> |
| Missing        | 1         |              |
| Total          | 39        |              |

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<sup>2</sup> A statistical test (chi-squared test) revealed no significant relationship between the age of the organisation and the level of funding.

**When was your organisation formed?****3.3 RELATIONSHIP WITH REFUGEE ACTION**

The vast majority of organisations surveyed had a working relationship with Refugee Action.

**Does your organisation have working relationships with Refugee Action?**

|              | Frequency | Percent      |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| No           | 1         | 2.6          |
| Yes          | 37        | 94.9         |
| Don't know   | 1         | 2.6          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>39</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

**3.3.1 DURATION OF WORKING RELATIONSHIP**

In light of the young profile of most organisations surveyed, it is not surprising that over two thirds of organisations surveyed had been in a working relationship with Refugee Action for two years or less. There was a strong relationship between responses to this question and the

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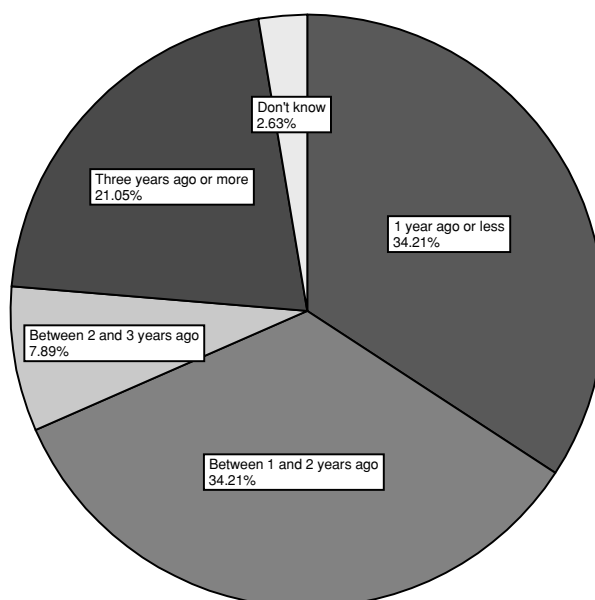
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question above on the age of the organisation. This suggests that many organisations have established a relationship with Refugee Action at (or very close to) their inception.<sup>3</sup>

#### How long has your organisation had a working relationship with Refugee Action?

|                           | Frequency | Percent      |
|---------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| 1 year ago or less        | 13        | 34.2         |
| Between 1 and 2 years ago | 13        | 34.2         |
| Between 2 and 3 years ago | 3         | 7.9          |
| Three years ago or more   | 8         | 21.1         |
| Don't know                | 1         | 2.6          |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>38</b> | <b>100.0</b> |
| Missing                   | 1         |              |
| Total                     | 39        |              |

#### How long has your organisation had a working relationship with Refugee Action?



#### 3.3.2 COMING INTO CONTACT WITH REFUGEE ACTION

Organisations had come into contact with Refugee Action through a wide range of means. Referrals through contacts and through other community organisations were commonly cited, as well as publicity. Referrals by asylum teams and through the internet were cited least often.

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<sup>3</sup> A statistical test (chi-squared test) revealed a correlation between the age of the organisation and the number of years they had been in a working relationship with Refugee Action.

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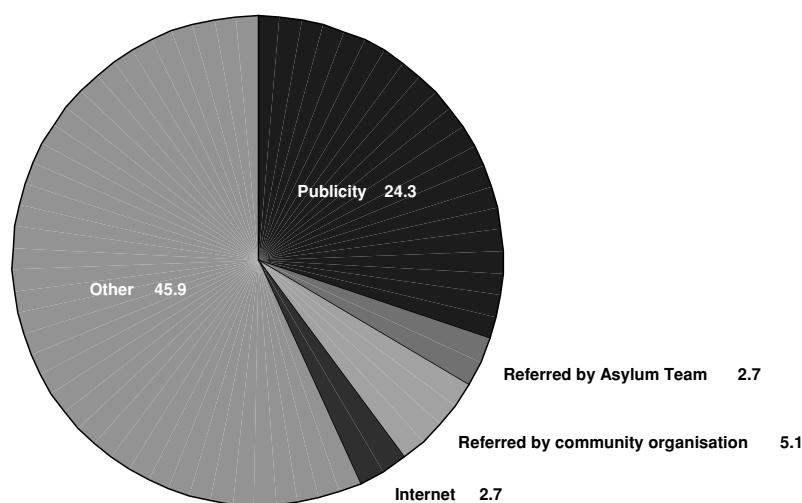
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| How did your organisation come into contact with Refugee Action? | Frequency | Percent* |
|--|-----------|----------|
| Publicity  | 9         | 24.3     |
| Referred by Asylum Team  | 1         | 2.7      |
| Referred by community organisation                               | 13        | 5.1      |
| Internet   | 1         | 2.7      |
| Other  | 17        | 45.9     |

\*Note: Percentages calculated out of 37 (those that selected 'Yes' in question 6). Percentages do not add to 100 as respondents were asked to tick all that apply.

#### How did your organisation come into contact with Refugee Action?



Those that specified 'other' elaborated as follows:

- Approached to join informal partnership
- Chairman working volunteer 4 year
- Chance contact.
- I'm a volunteer at RA
- It's a member
- Made contact at conference/events
- Met first time at a conference.
- Portsmouth area refugee support
- previously worked for refugee action
- Refugee Council
- Supported setting up MRSN.
- Through Derwent new deal.
- Through existing voluntary group (KRSNG)
- To long to remember
- Via friend
- Voluntary action in Leeds

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### 3.3.3 RATING OF SERVICES USED<sup>4</sup>

Where respondents' organisations had used Refugee Action services, they were asked to rate these. Respondents were asked about a range of services that are provided via two different methods: one-to-one support and through seminars, training and other events. The table below shows responses given for activities that were provided through training, seminars and other events. This table shows that 'building links and partnerships' was used by the most number of respondent organisations (21.9% had not used that service). Of those that had used this service, the vast majority rated it positively – 52% 'good' and 36% 'very good'. RCO capacity building was also frequently utilised (around two-thirds of organisations had used this service). Again, of those that had used this service the vast majority rated it positively – 36.4% 'very good' and 50% 'good'. We can also see from the table below that 'access to statutory services' and 'raising awareness and campaigning' had the highest percentage of 'very good' rating from the organisations that had used these services. Due to the small numbers it is difficult to meaningfully assess what the most poorly rated services were.

In the first set of questions we ask stakeholders about any training, seminars or other events that that they may have used that were provided by Refugee Action:

|   | Not used | Very good | Good   | Poor   | Very poor | Total  | Missing | Total |
|---|----------|-----------|--------|--------|-----------|--------|---------|-------|
| RCO Capacity Building                     | 13       | 8         | 11     | 3      | 0         | 35     | 4       | 39    |
|   | 37.1%    | 36.4 %    | 50.0 % | 13.6 % | 0.0%      | 100.0% |         |       |
| Service development                       | 18       | 3         | 8      | 3      | 1         | 33     | 6       | 39    |
|   | 54.5%    | 20.0%     | 53.3 % | 20.0%  | 6.7 %     | 100.0% |         |       |
| Access to statutory services              | 15       | 8         | 6      | 3      | 2         | 34     | 5       | 39    |
|   | 44.1%    | 42.1%     | 31.6%  | 15.8%  | 10.5%     | 100.0% |         |       |
| Services for refugee women                | 20       | 2         | 5      | 4      | 1         | 32     | 7       | 39    |
|   | 62.5%    | 16.7%     | 41.7%  | 33.3%  | 8.3%      | 100%   |         |       |
| Building links and partnerships           | 7        | 9         | 13     | 2      | 1         | 32     | 7       | 39    |
|   | 21.9%    | 36.0%     | 52.0%  | 8.0%   | 4.0%      | 100.0% |         |       |
| Raising awareness and campaigning         | 15       | 8         | 7      | 2      | 2         | 34     | 5       | 39    |
|   | 44.1%    | 42.1%     | 36.8%  | 10.5%  | 10.5%     | 100.0% |         |       |
| Refugee Action employment service (Leeds) | 21       | 0         | 3      | 2      | 1         | 27     | 12      | 39    |
|   | 77.8%    | 0.0%      | 50.0%  | 33.3%  | 16.7%     | 100.0% |         |       |
| Links with countries of origin            | 21       | 3         | 4      | 1      | 4         | 33     | 6       | 39    |
|   | 63.6%    | 25.0%     | 33.3%  | 8.3%   | 33.3%     | 100.0% |         |       |
| Providing options for voluntary return    | 19       | 4         | 4      | 3      | 1         | 31     | 8       | 39    |
|   | 61.3%    | 33.3%     | 33.3%  | 25.0%  | 8.3%      | 100.0% |         |       |

<sup>4</sup> Not all projects are provided from every Refugee Action office, for example, the Employment Service is only provided in Leeds and Choices does not operate in the South, South-West, Liverpool or Birmingham.

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Note: Percentages under the columns 'very good', 'good', 'poor' and 'very poor' are calculated out of those that accessed the service only

Respondents were asked to rate the same services as above that were delivered through one-to-one support. We can see in the table below that 'RCO capacity building', 'building links and partnerships' and 'raising awareness and campaigning' were the most frequently used services. Similarly, these services were highly rated. Again, due to the small numbers it is difficult to meaningfully assess what the most poorly rated services were.

In this second set of questions we ask stakeholders about any one-to-one support they may have received from Refugee Action. This could include face-to-face contact with a Refugee Action community development worker or telephone contact.

|   | Not used | Very good | Good  | Poor  | Very poor | Total  | Missing | Total |
|---|----------|-----------|-------|-------|-----------|--------|---------|-------|
| RCO capacity building                     | 9        | 10        | 9     | 3     | 1         | 32     | 7       | 39    |
|   | 28.1%    | 43.5%     | 39.1% | 13.0% | 4.3%      | 100.0% |         |       |
| Service development                       | 15       | 6         | 5     | 2     | 1         | 29     | 10      | 39    |
|   | 51.7%    | 42.9%     | 35.7% | 14.3% | 7.1%      | 100.0% |         |       |
| Access to statutory services              | 11       | 6         | 9     | 1     | 2         | 29     | 10      | 39    |
|   | 37.9%    | 33.3%     | 50.0% | 5.6%  | 11.1%     | 100.0% |         |       |
| Services for refugee women                | 16       | 2         | 5     | 2     | 3         | 28     | 11      | 39    |
|   | 57.1%    | 16.7%     | 41.7% | 16.7% | 25.0%     | 100.0% |         |       |
| Building links and partnerships           | 4        | 11        | 11    | 3     | 1         | 30     | 9       | 39    |
|   | 13.3%    | 42.3%     | 42.3% | 11.5% | 3.8%      | 100.0% |         |       |
| Raising awareness and campaigning         | 9        | 6         | 10    | 4     | 1         | 30     | 9       | 39    |
|   | 30.0%    | 28.6%     | 47.6% | 19.0% | 4.8%      | 100.0% |         |       |
| Refugee Action employment service (Leeds) | 18       | 1         | 2     | 1     | 1         | 23     | 16      | 39    |
|   | 78.3%    | 20.0%     | 40.0% | 20.0% | 20.0%     | 100.0% |         |       |
| Links with countries of origin            | 19       | 0         | 2     | 2     | 4         | 27     | 12      | 39    |
|   | 70.4%    | 0.0%      | 25.0% | 25.0% | 50.0%     | 100.0% |         |       |
| Providing options for voluntary return    | 17       | 1         | 4     | 4     | 1         | 27     | 12      | 39    |
|   | 63.0%    | 10.0%     | 40.0% | 40.0% | 10.0%     | 100.0% |         |       |

Note: Percentages under the columns 'very good', 'good', 'poor' and 'very poor' are calculated out of those that accessed the service only

Of the other services asked about, 'information and publication' and 'facilitation' were rated most highly.

In considering the response to questions regarding voluntary return it should be noted that the stakeholder consultation exercise was aimed at groups. As such comments on one-to-one support from the Choices project is problematic because groups are not the primary users or beneficiaries of Choices services.

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The number of responses to the questions on training and one-to-one support relating to voluntary return was low. It has traditionally always been difficult for RCOs to talk about voluntary return especially in public and although there has been some headway in this area it remains problematic. The groups who responded to the survey and/or attended focus groups, included a significant proportion representing nationalities where voluntary return is viewed extremely negatively due to prevailing security concerns e.g. Somalia, Great Lakes, Sudan, Zimbabwe.

#### Which other Refugee Action services have you used, and how would you rate them?

|   | Not used | Very good | Good  | Poor  | Very poor | Total  | Missing | Total |
|---|----------|-----------|-------|-------|-----------|--------|---------|-------|
| Information and publication               | 3        | 15        | 11    | 0     | 3         | 32     | 7       | 39    |
|   | 9.4%     | 51.7%     | 37.9% | 0.0%  | 10.3%     | 100.0% |         |       |
| Facilitation                              | 7        | 13        | 6     | 1     | 2         | 29     | 10      | 39    |
|   | 24.1%    | 59.1%     | 27.3% | 4.5%  | 9.1%      | 100.0% |         |       |
| Refugee Action employment service (Leeds) | 14       | 1         | 3     | 2     | 1         | 21     | 18      | 39    |
|   | 66.7%    | 14.3%     | 42.9% | 28.6% | 14.3%     | 100.0% |         |       |
| Campaign and lobbying                     | 11       | 5         | 6     | 4     | 1         | 27     | 12      | 39    |
|   | 40.7%    | 31.3%     | 37.5% | 25.0% | 6.3%      | 100.0% |         |       |
| Referrals from Refugee Action             | 7        | 6         | 9     | 1     | 1         | 24     | 15      | 39    |
|   | 29.2%    | 35.3%     | 52.9% | 5.9%  | 5.9%      | 100.0% |         |       |
| Referrals to Refugee Action               | 4        | 7         | 9     | 2     | 1         | 23     | 16      | 39    |
|   | 17.4%    | 36.8%     | 47.4% | 10.5% | 5.3%      | 100.0% |         |       |

Note: Percentages under the columns 'very good', 'good', 'poor' and 'very poor' are calculated out of those that accessed the service only

Respondents were asked to state which service used in the last 12 months had been the most useful. The responses provided are listed below:

#### What was the most useful service you used from Refugee Action in the last 12 months?

- o One to one development consultation. - Securing office for community work. - Provision of information.
- o Advice Guidance
- o Capacity building for my organisation. Used as a source for information.
- o Client line.
- o Community development and advice service both provide a range of very useful services
- o Consultancy and advice on the development of Leeds Afghan community to be more effective in the future.

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- o Development
- o Excellent support from Wlinal Harim and Katie Hope and their colleagues in providing training and facilitating our work - especially in use of interpreters and ensuring knowledge and understanding of volunteer workers. RA advisers always helpful and supportive of our queries.
- o Help we received from the development officers of Bristol office
- o Helping to set up group and create constitution. Refugee women project
- o Homelessness - they are helping more.
- o Individual contact with refugee action employees for advice and support. Refugee Action may now take over as the lead partner to support our project.
- o Information provided and link with HACT, which provided training (housing for refugee/asylum seekers).
- o Leadership training and fundraising training organised by RA. Building links and relationships with other organisations and grant providers
- o Linking RCOs
- o Not yet.
- o Our group is known since we took part in some events.
- o Our service dev. Officer (Tsfaye) attended an AGM; it was good to have the moral support of RA. Tsfaye has arranged a training course for our volunteers on human rights to take place in July. He is very supportive to the aim of our group and much appreciated.
- o Phil Davis sits on our management committee. He has provided essential support in the supervision of community development staff, providing crucial advice for planning and development. He has a key role on our management committee discussions, helps with recruitment of staff, helps to identify funding opportunities and refers RCO's to us for support and assistance. Overall, Phil Davis has provided absolutely indispensable support for MRSN.
- o RA give us the office for our purposes.
- o RA support our organisation to put funding for two workers, we have a successful outcome from grant officers and our office are staffed and we are confident to develop our community work.
- o Refugee Action has given our organisation a room at Wardlow Centre in Neehells where we are able to our members on Mondays. Services include interpreting and translation and other service help.
- o Setting up with us a co-ordination meeting with member groups.
- o Support with the drawing up of constitution. Support with preparing / organising refugee week. Support with communication between members of the group (stationary, telephone, meeting room...)
- o The annual conference and quality workshop
- o Training and seminar Advice
- o Training at Wardlow Centre.
- o Use of resources, i.e.: premises for meeting, telephone... (facilitations).
- o We used information provided by RA on funding availability mostly from their website or sent on our email address.

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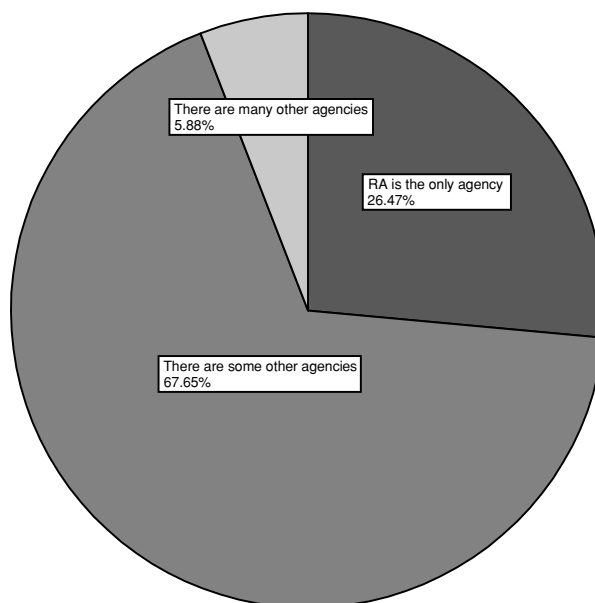
#### 3.3.4 UNIQUENESS OF REFUGEE ACTION SERVICES

Almost two-thirds of organisations stated that there were some other agencies that provided these services to them. For just over a quarter, Refugee Action was the only agency that provided these services, which highlights a significant degree of reliance.

##### Is Refugee Action the only agency that provides these services?

|                               | Frequency | Percent      |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| RA is the only agency         | 9         | 26.5         |
| There are some other agencies | 23        | 67.6         |
| There are many other agencies | 2         | 5.9          |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>34</b> | <b>100.0</b> |
| Missing                       | 5         |              |
| Total                         | 39        |              |

##### Is Refugee Action the only agency that provides these services?



#### 3.3.5 WHY REFUGEE ACTION?

For most organisations, the way in which Refugee Action provides services is the key factor in their relationship with the organisation. Almost 30% also found that the range of services was the most important factor in the relationship with Refugee Action. A positive finding here is that only one organisation stated that Refugee Action was the only organisation providing these services in their area. This implies that for most organisations the use of Refugee Action services is a conscious choice as opposed to being one dictated by a lack of alternatives.

## Building Capacity

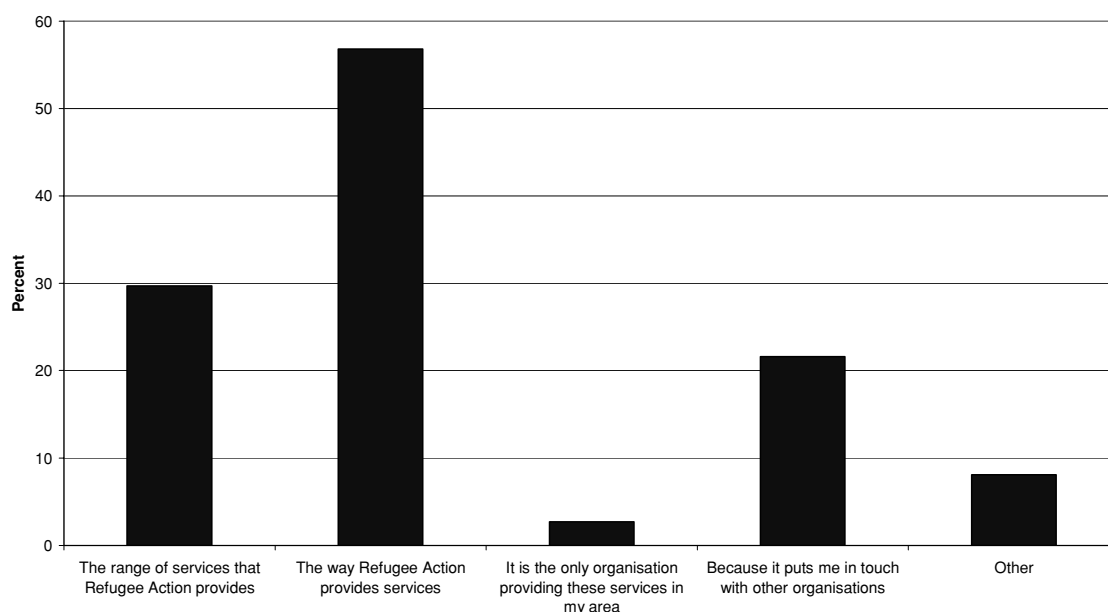
### A Report on the Stake-holder Consultation with Refugee Community Organisations for Refugee Action

#### Which of the following factors is most important in your relationship with Refugee Action?

|   | Frequency | Percent |
|---|-----------|---------|
| The range of services that Refugee Action provides              | 11        | 29.7    |
| The way Refugee Action provides services                        | 21        | 56.8    |
| It is the only organisation providing these services in my area | 1         | 2.7     |
| Because it puts me in touch with other organisations            | 8         | 21.6    |
| Other   | 3         | 8.1     |

\*Note: Percentages calculated out of 37 (those that selected 'Yes' in question 6). Percentages do not add to 100 as respondents were asked to tick all that apply.

#### Which of the following is the most important in your relationship with Refugee Action?



Of the three respondents that selected 'other', one specified their response as:

- It is one of RO that I refer to for various reasons

### 3.4 BARRIERS

#### 3.4.1 BARRIERS FACED BY ORGANISATIONS

Respondents were asked about barriers faced by their organisations in three key areas:

- RCO Capacity Building
- Building links and partnerships
- Raising public awareness and campaigning

Regarding RCO capacity building, the following areas were cited as the most problematic:

- Lack of access to longer term funding
- Problems in equipping service users to participate in the organisation
- Difficulties in accessing funding when starting an organisation

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Areas which were least cited as problematic were:

- o Management committee and staff relationship difficulties
- o Availability of one-to-one support in developing an RCO
- o Divisions and conflict amongst groups within the organisation

### RCO Capacity Building

|  | Not a problem | Problem | Serious problem | Don't know | Total  | Missing | Total |
|--|---------------|---------|-----------------|------------|--------|---------|-------|
| Problems in equipping your service users to participate in your organisation   | 5             | 18      | 10              | 1          | 34     | 5       | 39    |
|  | 14.7%         | 52.9%   | 29.4%           | 2.9%       | 100.0% |         |       |
| Difficulties in accessing funding when you start an organisation   | 7             | 14      | 14              | 1          | 36     | 3       | 39    |
|  | 19.4%         | 38.9%   | 38.9%           | 2.8%       | 100.0% |         |       |
| Lack of access to longer term funding  | 1             | 10      | 25              | 0          | 36     | 3       | 39    |
|  | 2.8%          | 27.8%   | 69.4%           | 0.0%       | 100.0% |         |       |
| Lack of available one-to-one support in developing a refugee community organisation  | 18            | 13      | 2               | 1          | 34     | 5       | 39    |
|  | 52.9%         | 38.2%   | 5.9%            | 2.9%       | 100.0% |         |       |
| Lack of services to assist in organisational development including charity registration, fundraising, management and business planning | 14            | 16      | 6               | 1          | 37     | 2       | 39    |
|  | 37.8%         | 43.2%   | 16.2%           | 2.7%       | 100.0% |         |       |
| Lack of services to assist in organisational development including charity registration, fundraising, management and business planning | 14            | 16      | 6               | 1          | 37     | 2       | 39    |
|  | 37.8%         | 43.2%   | 16.2%           | 2.7%       | 100.0% |         |       |
| Management committee and staff relationship difficulties   | 28            | 6       | 0               | 2          | 36     | 3       | 39    |
|  | 77.8%         | 16.7%   | 0.0%            | 5.6%       | 100.0% |         |       |
| Lack of necessary professional skills in management committee  | 12            | 17      | 4               | 2          | 35     | 4       | 39    |
|  | 34.3%         | 48.6%   | 11.4%           | 5.7%       | 100.0% |         |       |
| Lack of skills needed to present your organisation to the outside world  | 11            | 18      | 4               | 1          | 34     | 5       | 39    |
|  | 32.4%         | 52.9%   | 11.8%           | 2.9%       | 100.0% |         |       |
| Divisions and conflict among groups and individuals, because of politics, clan, ethnicity and competition for resources                | 18            | 10      | 3               | 4          | 35     | 4       | 39    |
|  | 51.4%         | 28.6%   | 8.6%            | 11.4%      | 100.0% |         |       |
| Lack of understanding of local political context   | 16            | 12      | 2               | 3          | 33     | 6       | 39    |
|  | 48.5%         | 36.4%   | 6.1%            | 9.1%       | 100.0% |         |       |

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With regards to building links and partnerships, over two thirds of respondents did not identify any problems in the two areas asked about.

### Building links and partnerships to maximise opportunities for refugees

|  | Not a problem | Problem | Serious problem | Don't know | Total | Missing | Total |
|--|---------------|---------|-----------------|------------|-------|---------|-------|
| Problems in becoming members of forums, networks and other local initiatives | 23            | 8       | 1               | 3          | 35    | 4       | 39    |
|  | 65.7%         | 22.9%   | 2.9%            | 8.6%       | 100%  |         |       |
| Problems in participating in forums, networks and other local initiatives    | 24            | 8       | 1               | 1          | 34    | 5       | 39    |
|  | 70.6%         | 23.5%   | 2.9%            | 2.9%       | 100%  |         |       |

With regards to raising public awareness and campaigning, lack of understanding in refugees and asylum seekers about UK society, and skills in dealing with the media were the biggest problems faced by RCOs.

### Raising public awareness and campaigning

|   | Not a problem | Problem | Serious problem | Don't know | Total | Missing | Total |
|---|---------------|---------|-----------------|------------|-------|---------|-------|
| Dealing with attitude towards refugees and asylum seekers from host communities | 12            | 16      | 7               | 2          | 37    | 2       | 39    |
|   | 32.4%         | 43.2%   | 18.9%           | 5.4%       | 100%  |         |       |
| Lack of understanding in refugees and asylum seekers about UK society           | 7             | 21      | 9               | 0          | 37    | 2       | 39    |
|   | 18.9%         | 56.8%   | 24.3%           | 0.0%       | 100%  |         |       |
| Skills in dealing with the media  | 7             | 15      | 14              | 0          | 36    | 3       | 39    |
|   | 19.4%         | 41.7%   | 38.9%           | 0.0%       | 100%  |         |       |

#### 3.4.2 BARRIERS FACED BY CLIENTS

Respondents were also asked about barriers faced by refugees and asylum seekers that used their services in the following key areas:

- o Accessing statutory services
- o Accessing specialist services
- o Accessing services for refugee women and children

With regards to accessing statutory services, the following were cited as the most problematic:

- o Language and cultural barriers
- o Discrimination against refugees
- o Lack of consultation with refugees in developing local services

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### Difficulties in accessing statutory services

|   | Not a problem | Problem | Serious problem | Don't know | Total | Missing | Total |
|---|---------------|---------|-----------------|------------|-------|---------|-------|
| Language and cultural barriers                                  | 9             | 11      | 17              | 0          | 37    | 2       | 39    |
|   | 24.3%         | 29.7%   | 45.9%           | 0.0%       | 100%  |         |       |
| Lack of understanding by staff                                  | 15            | 13      | 5               | 1          | 34    | 5       | 39    |
|   | 44.1%         | 38.2%   | 14.7%           | 2.9%       | 100%  |         |       |
| Discrimination against refugees, e.g. in employment and housing | 7             | 17      | 9               | 3          | 36    | 3       | 39    |
|   | 19.4%         | 47.2%   | 25.0%           | 8.3%       | 100%  |         |       |
| Service structure and organisation not sensitive enough         | 8             | 17      | 3               | 7          | 35    | 4       | 39    |
|   | 22.9%         | 48.6%   | 8.6%            | 20.0%      | 100%  |         |       |
| Lack of consultation with refugees in developing local services | 6             | 15      | 6               | 5          | 32    | 7       | 39    |
|   | 18.8%         | 46.9%   | 18.8%           | 15.6%      | 100%  |         |       |

With regards to specialist services, services for the elderly and children featured as the most problematic, although the other two areas asked about (mental health and voluntary return) were still regarded as problematic by respondents.

### Accessing specialist services

|                                       | Not a problem | Problem | Serious problem | Don't know | Total | Missing | Total |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|---------|-----------------|------------|-------|---------|-------|
| Mental health                         | 6             | 11      | 12              | 7          | 36    | 3       | 39    |
|                                       | 16.7%         | 30.6%   | 33.3%           | 19.4%      | 100%  |         |       |
| Voluntary return                      | 6             | 10      | 7               | 13         | 36    | 3       | 39    |
|                                       | 16.7%         | 27.8%   | 19.4%           | 36.1%      | 100%  |         |       |
| Services for the elderly and children | 4             | 14      | 6               | 10         | 34    | 5       | 39    |
|                                       | 11.8%         | 41.2%   | 17.6%           | 29.4%      | 100%  |         |       |
| Other                                 | 0             | 1       | 5               | 3          | 9     | 30      | 39    |
|                                       | 0.0%          | 11.1%   | 55.6%           | 33.3%      | 100%  |         |       |

Those that selected 'other' specified as follows:

- o Children/youths
- o Housing and employment
- o Legal advice
- o Unaccompanied minor meaningful activities/social

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With regards to services for refugee women and children, training and one-to-one support were seen as the most problematic.

#### Accessing services for refugee women and children

|                    | Not a problem | Problem | Serious problem | Don't know | Total | Missing | Total |
|--------------------|---------------|---------|-----------------|------------|-------|---------|-------|
| Advocacy           | 13            | 10      | 5               | 6          | 34    | 5       | 39    |
|                    | 38.2%         | 29.4%   | 14.7%           | 17.6%      | 100%  |         |       |
| Training           | 8             | 13      | 7               | 7          | 35    | 4       | 39    |
|                    | 22.9%         | 37.1%   | 20.0%           | 20.0%      | 100%  |         |       |
| One-to-one support | 9             | 16      | 6               | 5          | 36    | 3       | 39    |
|                    | 25.0%         | 44.4%   | 16.7%           | 13.9%      | 100%  |         |       |
| Other              | 2             | 2       | 2               | 5          | 11    | 28      | 39    |
|                    | 18.2%         | 18.2%   | 18.2%           | 45.5%      | 100%  |         |       |

Those that selected 'other' specified as follows:

- o Correct information / Health & social services - total gap in provision - isolation / depression / fear
- o School places

### 3.5 WHAT COULD REFUGEE ACTION DO?

Finally, respondents were asked what they felt Refugee Action could do to address the barriers and problems asked about. This solicited a wide range of responses, which are presented below.

#### Thinking about these problems faced by refugees and asylum seekers, are there any things that Refugee Action could do to help address these barriers or problems?

- o Link and understand community groups working with minorities (background, culture, etc). 2. Organise meeting where groups will be able to speak freely.
- o Built close relationship with RCO. 2. More integration. 3. RA can be bridge between RCO and media to make positive impression about refugees and asylum issues.
- o Address the issues indicated in the preceding section.
- o Advocacy and health. Also housing.
- o Arrange courses to upgrade the skills of the management board.
- o Be good if detainees could access "Choices" project for advice about situations in their home countries - although they cannot access the whole IOM package to return voluntarily - many detainees we are in contact with facing forced removal and would like info and advice on their options once arrived in country of origin.
- o Better communications between refugee organisation on one hand and RA, Home Office, City Council, etc. will solve so many problems and improve the lives of refugees.
- o Current programmes - volunteers, health and well being, can. Development. All lesson these barriers - more projects like this - long term integration flows and support for asylum seekers. Efficient one to one support for all issues for small community groups. Delegate a worker from London to oversee results. Present keep not positive not efficient enough. Too many meetings, too much talk - not enough action to support small effective groups + start-up funds?

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- o Help RCO get more funds to help the service users. Open doors to everyone to have access to be trained in order to get better.
- o Help RCOs to develop services for asylum seekers, refugees. Help RCOs in accessing funds.
- o I do not consider this project to be a Refugee Community Organisation. Its providing a service to refugees. The service is in the development stage we have not produced any monitoring to answer page 8. although in my opinion refugees and asylum seekers experience all these issues
- o More raising awareness with service providers and general public about problems faced by refugees
- o More training for community organisations. Visiting community organisations offices and doing surgeries there.
- o Most of asylum seekers/refugees are facing language barrier problems. It would be nice if interpreters are available when they have problems regarding welfare benefits.
- o Nowadays, there is news that the Somali failed asylum seekers are forcibly removed and taken back to Somalia, Mogadishu. RA needs to react and undertake campaigning to stop this compulsory and yet dangerous deportation.
- o Our organisation is essentially characterised by its ability to bring people together - a more operational and tangible undertaking. RA has contributed greatly in facilitating that. However, we feel much more can be done in terms of linking us to other statutory bodies. Awareness raising within agencies could be carried further while we continue to touch the people in the neighbourhood.
- o RA could further help in continuing the specialist help and advice that are being given to RCOs in the manner that is being done at the moment. Maybe training of RCOs & staffs concerned could be looked at and have a longer term vision of their work with RCOs.
- o RA could work more and better with community based organisations to identify and help address the issues. At the moment only RCO organisations which came into contact, in one way or another with RA get some kind of information mainly about events being organised by RA, in Birmingham RA seem to work mainly with bigger Refugee organisations rather than small ones.
- o RA need from the government support, in order to achieve all service they need to provide. They are good staff but need.
- o RCOs to be an umbrella representation for housing to get the opportunity for strategy in accommodation partnership developing integration agenda for funding, for long term and short term needs.
- o Target statutory agencies with info about cultural sensitivities, facts about - A/S and their needs/reasons for being here, - refugees and their ongoing needs. Many agencies including health, social services and even MHL OSS include staff not naturally sympathetic to a/s or refugees and make negative judgements about the genuineness. The RA can help by stopping some false accusations against asylum seekers and refugees on Newspapers. Any kind of support provided by RA will be helpful.
- o Things that Refugee Action could do are: - increase hours of drop-in - help solicitors to manage more cases - encourage the local community organisation to develop their activities.
- o To much barriers and problems Refugee Action and asylum seekers make. We need to know the rights and no rights for say.
- o To support refugees to have a positive image from the media. To hold seminars to raise awareness in the host community

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- o To try your very best to minimise those barriers by consulting with other voluntary and statutory agencies or organisations.
- o We'd have appreciated more support in the early stages of establishing our organisation and more contact with the RA. Workers trying to develop RCOs in our town - but felt ignored by them. Have only been able to develop links through other RA workers - i.e. info and interpreting. RA should look to order at local infrastructure as its supporting fledgling RCOs.
- o We need more support from RA to help our staff to be paid and to use their voluntary job like a real job. Also, we need RA to help us to have our own office.
- o We would like to know about any training or support that can be provided to help us to create successful funding applications. Refugee Action have been superb!

## **4 FOCUS GROUP REPORTS**

### **4.1 YORKSHIRE REGION**

Region: Yorkshire  
Date: 28<sup>th</sup> October  
Time: 1pm - 4pm  
Facilitator: Phil Davis  
With: Modupe Odifa  
Lee Omar  
Taner Altinay

#### **4.1.1 REFUGEE COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS WITH REPS ATTENDING:**

- Leeds Sudanese Community Association
- Zimbabwe Community in Leeds
- Leeds Ethiopian Community
- African Community Support Association
- Leeds Great Lakes Community

Also

- Kirklees Refugees and Friends Together (KRAFT)

#### **4.1.2 GENERAL COMMENTS**

- The lack of Muslim community groups may be due to the group unavoidably being held in an afternoon in Ramadan.
- The group gave consent for the meeting to be recorded. The tape is available on request
- It was agreed that comments would not be ascribed to individuals or groups
- The focus group was evaluated. There was no cause for concern from the evaluation sheets which are available on request
- Quotes are in "quotation marks". Other statements are composites or summaries

#### **4.1.3 HOW DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT REFUGEE ACTION?**

- Through other Refugee Community Organisation members who knew about Refugee Action
- Through KRAFT
- CDO was part of our organisation prior to working for Refugee Action
- The community has long links with Refugee Action, going back over 10 years
- Through Leeds Asylum Seekers Support Group
- Through Voluntary Action Leeds

### **4.1.4 WHAT SERVICES DO YOU USE?**

- Networking with other organisations
- Information
- Help with fundraising
- Training - identifying needs
- Help with formation / organisation of group
- Signposting
- Business planning

### **4.1.5 WHAT SINGLE AREA HAS BEEN THE BEST THING YOU HAVE HAD FROM REFUGEE ACTION AND WHY?**

- 1 to 1 support was picked up by a number of groups. "Other organisations can offer one off support but refugee action offers continuous support to grass roots organisations. Two groups described this as a 'mentoring service'
- Refugee Action was said to be the first organisation to go to "we can call, if they can't help us they will connect us to the right people, if they can't help us there and then they will say 'I'll get information and come back to you'"
- Refugee Action understand refugee communities. If you go to them you don't have to start by explaining what is a refugee, what is a refugee community group etc...
- "You can approach other groups for help. The level of support refugee action has offered us - we haven't been offered it by anyone else."
- "Refugee action is unique because they go to organisations, they don't wait for organisations to ask them... and when they find that an organisation is established they use their example to help other to set up their own organisations"

### **4.1.6 WERE THERE THINGS YOU WANTED BUT WERE NOT AVAILABLE, OR WOULD HAVE LIKED MORE OF?**

- More fundraising support, and more refugee action involvement with funders to help them support Refugee Community Organisations better
- Refugee Action itself providing small amounts of funding to help Refugee Community Organisations dealing with crises - for example destitution
- Sometimes refugee action signpost you to other people, and the other people do not really understand. Why can't refugee action simply deal with it in the first place?

### **4.1.7 DO PEOPLE TALK ABOUT VOLUNTARY RETURN OR GOING HOME IN YOUR COMMUNITY?**

- In most of the communities represented, return is not considered safe.

- In one community there were a few people who had signed up to voluntary return to access section 4 support, but most people had chosen not to, as they were afraid of being made to return.
- The opinion of refugee action's advice was that it was very good
- One person wanted someone from refugee action to come to their community to give information about voluntary return
- One person stated that return was not something that you decided to do immediately. There was a need for information so people could slowly consider return if things changed in their country of origin
- There was widespread agreement that Refugee Action should be involved in advice around return ("with the emphasis on the word 'voluntary'") as refugees trust Refugee Action more than the home office or IOM as it is known to be independent.
- There are many factors affecting return, including the reasons why someone left, the nature of the system in the country now and whether there are children settled in Britain

#### **4.1.8 ARE THERE ANY THINGS YOU WOULD LIKE TO CHANGE ABOUT REFUGEE ACTION? IS THERE A KEY MESSAGE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE US TO TAKE BACK?**

- Can Refugee Action help more when people are being deported, i.e. campaigning and lobbying the Home Office
- Refugee Action should have small pots of money for starting up community groups
- Refugee Action should be more active in creating jobs for refugees
- With the reduction in legal aid Refugee Action should offer more legal support, either legal representation or to be able to link people in with a network of sympathetic organisations with legal expertise
- Refugee Action should use its knowledge of refugee communities to write reports on countries of origin to persuade the Home Office not to return people.

#### **4.2 EAST AND WEST MIDLANDS REGION**

**Date:** 28 October 2004

**Time:** 12 noon

**Facilitators:** Mani Thapa  
Kirsti Staindale

Invitations had been sent to a cross section of RCOs (total 18) in Birmingham and Leicester. 3 RCOs in Birmingham and 8 in Leicester had confirmed they would be attending. On the day, only one representative turned up, from the **Bosnia Herzegovina UK Network** in Birmingham.

We had booked a room, and a sandwich lunch at the Derby CVS for a total of 3 hours.

As it was not possible to have a group discussion, we simply held an interview with the one person.

### **4.2.1 OVERVIEW**

The group in question is in fact a national network of Bosnian RCOs, providing a newsletter, information and support to its members who in turn run a range of direct services to their local communities. In their own locality, the network also provides individual advice and information sessions on a drop-in basis, and is involved in running a Supplementary School on Saturday running mother tongue classes for Bosnian children. This is seen as very important service, which provides a valuable cultural and educational dimension and also acts as a focal point in bringing adult members of the community together. They have their own website, provide IT training particularly for older people, arrange cultural events and work with the Red Cross to find missing people. The Network has two full time paid employees. We interviewed the Co-ordinator who had been in post for three years.

### **4.2.2 WHAT SERVICES ARE THEY USING? HOW DID THEY FIND OUT ABOUT RA?**

The network was established some years before the interviewee (Co-ordinator) joined the organisation and he did not know how contact with Refugee Action was first established. He was aware that the network had had support from Refugee Action in the early days, and said that he knew Zafir Behlic (then Bosnian Liaison Worker) had been involved, and had been helpful.

The network is not currently using RA as much as they could, partly due to the maturity of their own organisation.

Information on funding was seen as helpful (the organisation had attended a funding information session the day before, arranged by RA in Birmingham, and the room had been full).

They are working with RA on Refugee Week events, see it as very valuable, and is well co-ordinated.

### **4.2.3 WHAT SINGLE AREA HAS BEEN THE BEST THING THAT THEY HAVE HAD FROM RA AND WHY?**

The Refugee Week events: opportunity to change attitudes and reduce stigma on refugees. Art events and dance displays are particularly powerful. The community have always participated – a huge event in Birmingham.

### **4.2.4 WERE THERE THINGS THAT YOU WANTED BUT THAT WEREN'T AVAILABLE, OR THINGS THAT YOU WOULD HAVE LIKED MORE OF?**

The interviewee had not been involved when the organisation had been formed so felt that he could not fully answer the question. Suggestion was for more capacity building work for RCOs –

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especially amongst new emerging groups who should have intensive support on a one to one basis for a while when they get established.

More fund raising support would be useful. Particularly for someone to go through available funding opportunities and to highlight the ones that are suitable for RCOs, closing dates and requirements.

### **4.2.5 VOLUNTARY RETURN?**

- On the whole, the community is well informed about voluntary return.
- Most people who wanted to return have already gone back during 1996-98. For the first 10 years, people lived their lives with the intention to return (e.g. buying goods which would be compatible back home etc.)
- Now they are planning to stay, getting settled, starting to buy own houses. They feel they have 2 identities (one when they return for a holiday and meet relatives, speak own language) and one for the U.K. They feel more connected to the locality they live in, and are less likely to move house here, once established, than a person born in the U.K. The wish to return is also closely connected to the likelihood of their old house still being there – people return to their home, not to the country or even village.

### **4.2.6 ARE THERE ANY THINGS ABOUT REFUGEE ACTION THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO CHANGE?**

- Not to change – but to increase its capacity to deliver. More capacity building for RCOs is needed.
- More emphasis in changing attitudes towards refugees i.e. to work through media about combating the stigma on refugees and asylum seekers.

### **4.2.7 IF YOU COME ACROSS ANOTHER RCO JUST STARTING UP WHAT WOULD YOU TELL THEM ABOUT RA AND WHO ELSE WOULD YOU TELL THEM ABOUT AND WHY?**

- Would send them to RA rather than another agency and explain about the capacity building work that RA does, and encourage them to use it.
- I told them to put Sarah Giles at RA at the top of their database when they start one.
- They actually help – real help. Would also tell them get information from other agencies such as Birmingham CVS.

## **4.3 SOUTH EAST REGION**

Date: 16<sup>th</sup> September 2004

Time: 11.30 a.m. – 1.30 p.m.

Facilitator: Zafir Behlic

Attending reps from RCOS:

- Ba Mama Ba Bongwan (African women's group), Southsea
- The Sudanese Coptic Association, Hove
- Kent Refugee Support Group (KRSG), Margate

Also, present were 3 other RA staff

### 4.3.1 GENERAL COMMENTS

- 4 RCO reps confirmed attendance and then cancelled within 24 hours of the meeting.
- Although it looks excessive to have 4 RA staff in the group (with 3 RCO reps) we decided to go ahead with the agreement that that they would be a 'resource', answer specific questions and hear the needs and priorities first hand and pass it on to their team / region. This was explained at the beginning and RCO reps saw the value of it.
- Following the discussion between RA staff present before the meeting, we changed the last question since it was a duplication and felt as leading to a particular answer (praise of RA)
- Instead we provided an opportunity for RCO reps to say anything they missed during the discussions and to reiterate their points by summarising it into a key message(s) to RA
- Although we had got consent from the group to do it, we did not audio record the meeting due to failure of equipment. I forgot to show the note taker how to operate the equipment before the meeting, assuming it was straightforward. Another issue with notes and recording is how do we keep the promise that no information will be shared outside the group if we eventually may publish the report, which would require quotes from RCOs? We suggest we make the comments/ quotes anonymous and tell people if they want to tell us something 'off the record' we will honour that.

### 4.3.2 HOW DID THEY FIND OUT ABOUT RA? WHAT SERVICES ARE THEY USING?

- One person not sure how they found out about RA. He started volunteering with an organisation and the chair of the organisation phoned RA to get some assistance. A CDO came to meet them several years ago and the contact with RA started from then. His organisation is not using RA as much as they did to start with. Initially they got help **one to one help** with funding ideas, setting-up the RCO, **These days they got** ad hoc information exchanges. He now mainly refers other newly forming RCOs in his area to RA, rather than using RA directly himself.
- One person first found out about RA through personally needing immigration advice. She might not have known about RA had it not been for this reason. She did not think RA was that well known, however she thought it was a 'grass roots organisation' and was very aware of what is going on in communities. She had used RA for her RCO, by phoning a CDO and getting their advice on how to run a women's project. The CDO had also sent details of funding opportunities.

- One person was contacted by RA through a forum, as opposed to him contacting RA. He belongs to a large community of 3.5 thousand people. He uses RA for informative purposes and receives regular emails from RA, which he then discusses with members of his community.

### 4.3.3 WHAT SINGLE AREA HAS BEEN THE BEST THING THAT THEY HAVE FROM RA AND WHY?

- One person felt that RA understood their needs. Ideas were not just bounced back and forward – things actually happened. This person had good contact with a CDO, who met her regularly. The help included some technical support (e.g. with computers). The CDO was encouraging, resulting in her situation being less frustrating. She received information about funding from RA, which kept her in the loop.
- This person thought the information he received was the best thing from RA. Especially the **information about funding** and any new laws/Home Office legislation. He can digest this info and disseminate any relevant info to his community.
- One person said that the **support, expertise and information** provided **at the initial stages** of forming an RCO was the best.

### 4.3.4 WERE THERE THINGS THAT YOU WANTED BUT WEREN'T AVAILABLE? OR THINGS THAT YOU WOULD HAVE LIKED MORE OF?

- Two people emphasised the need for **more intensive help**. One described it as more physical help (presence) is needed when starting out, especially if the people working in the RCOs are volunteers. He would have liked someone to help him with practical tasks such as completing funding applications. More 'hands-on' CDOs are needed. The other person needed more help with strategic planning of an RCO, in order to progress. She felt some small groups could become static and unable to expand, leading to the breakdown of RCOs. She would have liked more representation, more practical help with funding applications and advice on where to target pots of money. Actually having someone to help complete a funding application is more helpful than attending a workshop on how to generically complete one. Knowing the aims of funders would be useful; could tailor an application form accordingly i.e. use key words. Possibly meeting the funders would be useful and could reduce time wasting e.g. completing an application form that is unlikely to be successful. An email conversation with a consultant would be very useful.
- One person thought RA could do more awareness-raising in communities and general promoting of refugees in UK. E.g. attending at public events, seminars, roadshows, workshops and producing positive literature with up-to-date information.

**4.3.5 DO PEOPLE TALK ABOUT VOLUNTARY RETURN OR GOING HOME IN YOUR COMMUNITY? WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?**

All three RCO reps said the issue is discussed in the community to various degrees. Specific comments were:

- The women in this person's RCO are badly informed by their own communities, especially regarding voluntary return. There was a need for accurate and up to date info on voluntary return. There were vulnerable groups such as single women and women with children who were vulnerable to exploitation as a result of falling outside the system when they received negative outcome on their asylum application. More targeted information for women is needed.
- The issue for this person is the lack of legal representation and advice - deportation can be a real threat to his community. He would like to have an emergency contact if urgent legal advice is needed. He thought voluntary return was the last thought for members of his community. He suggested that 'creative packages' of voluntary return should be developed. E.g. returning for a short period to 'test the water' and visit relatives, knowing that you can safely return to UK. People are worried about the lack of protection they would have if they returned to their country of origin.

**4.3.6 ARE THERE ANY THINGS ABOUT REFUGEE ACTION THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO CHANGE? KEY MESSAGE FOR US TO TAKE AWAY?**

- More intensive and practical assistance is needed for an RCO to become self sufficient (e.g. focus on supporting one group for a period of few months to see things through to prevent losing momentum)
- More information is needed concerning the promotion of refugee issues to get a more balanced debate/changing local media.
- A fact sheet about asylum seekers and refugees would be good. (like the one produced by the Irish government)
- More legal information would be useful, written in a simplified way for refugees to understand.
- RA are pioneers and in a good position to promote social cohesion in communities. RA need to be more forward with policies and strategies.
- There is a real need for information on voluntary return to be given to communities.

**4.4 NORTH WEST REGION**

Date: 13<sup>th</sup> October 2004

Time: 1.30 – 3.30 pm

Facilitator: Gail Pringle

Attending Reps from RCO's / Agencies:



- Three people were very complimentary about the Community Development Conference held in Manchester. Two of the three ran workshops – one promoting their project and the other how to set up an advice centre – and both thought the response to these was excellent and that the conference overall provided an excellent opportunity to network
- One person particularly liked the Refugee World Cup and thought that practical activity-based ideas were really good things to refer people onto. However, another person thought RA services were more important than activities

#### **4.4.4 WERE THERE THINGS THAT YOU WANTED BUT WEREN'T AVAILABLE, OR THINGS THAT YOU WOULD HAVE LIKED MORE OF?**

- One person had not seen strategic services in Manchester or any analysis of this. They were also concerned that no one was working on an employment project / strategy in Manchester (although they were aware of the Gateway project in Bolton)
- Two people thought it would be a good idea for RA to provide a list of the services we offer and publicise them (e.g. in leaflet form). One of these people had only just become aware of Horizons after 1 year of being in contact with RA, and this was by accident. He also complained that when they needed immediate help, mainly around immigration, staff were often unavailable and by the time someone had got back to them 2 days later the problem had been solved. This person was not aware of the free phone 0800 number for agencies
- The other person who mentioned publicity was unclear about exactly what the role of RA is, in particular in relation to fundraising advice
- However, three other members had seen RA publicity or posters and MRSN publicised RA services in their newsletter which went out to several RCO's
- One person explained that one of their colleagues had received requests for information from Refugee Action staff on issues that he felt RA staff should know about (this included mental health services and leisure / recreation activities)

#### **4.4.5 DO PEOPLE TALK ABOUT VOLUNTARY RETURN OR GOING HOME IN YOUR COMMUNITY? WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?**

- There was general agreement in the group that voluntary return was viewed negatively and as a threat
- One person said that members of his community cannot accept being told to go to the RA office to discuss voluntary return. He said they came here to make a new life
- Another person said that his was quite a new group and so far no one had spoke to him about it. However, he agreed that he thought no one would be interested as it would create more trouble for them. Both of these groups were African

- One person representing the Iraqi and wider Arabic community said people did discuss this and there had been mixed responses. In the main, Iraqis did not want to return as they did not feel it was safe. A few did want to return but felt they had nothing to go back to and didn't want to go there empty-handed. This person was concerned that the money available to Iranians, Afghans etc for training or to start up businesses was not available to Iraqis. He was also doubtful that if that money was made available it would enable people to get jobs or training when provision for this (e.g. colleges for plumbing, hairdressing) was not established in Iraq
- There was also dispute over exactly how much money was available to people and whether there was an IOM centre in Baghdad for people to go to
- One person was concerned from a national and political standpoint regarding the extent to which RA should become compliant in Home Office policies. This person thought on the one hand it was good, as RA could attempt to exert influence and use their know-how, but that on the other hand this could create suspicion within refugee communities

#### **4.4.6 ARE THERE ANY THINGS ABOUT REFUGEE ACTION THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO CHANGE? KEY MESSAGES FOR US TO TAKE AWAY?**

- Better communication within offices so people can speak to staff and they will be referred onto the right person
- Regular mail-outs to RCO's about services and activities
- Direct contact between CDO's and RCO's – if this is not always possible, extra resources to employ more CDO's!
- Renewal of RA staff involvement in MRSN Steering Group so the network can develop and enjoy more influence
- Refugee Action should be more high profile – bolder in the press, getting more positive stories out and challenging the current negativity

### **4.5 SOUTH WEST REGION**

Date: 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2004

In attendance: Tesfaye, Tony, Asther

RCO Rep: Burundian Association

#### **4.5.1 OVERVIEW**

Although 4 groups had previously and up until the day before, confirmed their attendance, only one actually attended the consultation. This raised the issue of confidentiality, as comments were coming from one source only. We did check with the rep on the contents of the information and were reassured that what was discussed should be reported back.

Efforts were made not to make the session look like a job interview. Discussions also included setting up homework clubs, support for teen mothers and cultural awareness of own community,

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issues on which the association was facing difficulties, with colleagues giving advice and information.

Prior to starting the formal discussion, and because of the level of attendance, we discussed why we had failed to attract participants. The rep emphasised that most RCOs are run by people who have a full/part time jobs elsewhere. A few hours with us could mean losing income. Our invites also need to be explicit about reimbursement. When will we pay back the travel expenses? Again RCO volunteers use their own money to travel and need to be paid back right away. This needs to be clearly stated in the letters sent to them.

Attendee has been chair of the Burundian Association in Bristol for two years.

The main problems that they are facing are insufficient funding and a lack of volunteers. The chair works as a Supply Teacher part-time and wouldn't have been able to attend if it had been a working day.

### **4.5.2 HOW DID THEY FIND OUT ABOUT RA? WHAT SERVICES ARE THEY USING?**

A friend introduced her to RA. RA helped them to put together a constitution and gave advice on accessing funding. RA also involved the assoc in Refugee Week event, although they didn't have much to display at the event. The fact that other organisations, seen as more established, had received funding to secure cultural crafts seems to have created a degree of resentment among the members of the association.

### **4.5.3 WHAT SINGLE AREA HAS BEEN THE BEST THING THAT THEY RECEIVED FROM RA AND WHY?**

Helping them to set up the organisation, information on fundraising, to secure their current premises.

### **4.5.4 WERE THERE THINGS THAT YOU WANTED BUT WEREN'T AVAILABLE, OR THINGS THAT THEY WOULD HAVE LIKED MORE OF?**

Organising communities is not very easy. Administering and managing the finances of the organisation can be particularly problematic. RA could hold the funds on behalf of the organisation. Intensive support is needed from RA as communities have other priorities and may not always devote free time to strengthen the organisations. This need is also true of other refugee communities who wish to set up organisations but don't have the time and resources to run them.

### **4.5.5 DO PEOPLE TALK ABOUT VOLUNTARY RETURN OR GOING HOME IN THEIR COMMUNITY? WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?**

People in the community don't talk about voluntary return because of the worsening situation in Burundi. In the north of the country people are fleeing, concerned at a repetition of the genocide.

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The group has contacts with people from Rwanda and Congo – they may be interested in information about return. Could the group have information leaflets?

### **4.5.6 DO THEY RUN OR PLAN TO RUN SERVICES OR PROJECTS FOR WOMEN?**

The community has planned services for women. They have provided information about existing courses etc. They haven't organised their own events for International Women's Day – but have worked in partnership with other groups in Bristol to organise an event.

### **4.5.7 ARE THERE ANY THINGS ABOUT RA THAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO CHANGE? KEY MESSAGES?**

- Would like to change the way Refugee Action works. Refugee Action's strength is its recognition that needs are different within different communities – in terms of culture, country of origin and many other areas. Refugee Communities may have common needs, yet each community will have specific needs and unique needs.
- Refugee Action needs to reach out more to new communities and at the same time work more intensively with Community Organisations. Its community workers need to be flexible and to be available at evenings and weekends. A lot can be gained by putting Community Organisations in touch with each other. The Women's Refugee Group in Bristol is a good example of this. A worker from Bristol City Council was able to offer intensive support to help set up the group.
- Refugee Action could do better by providing advice around completing funding applications.

### **4.5.8 ONE MESSAGE TO TAKE BACK TO RA?**

Refugee Action need to reach out to refugee communities, to give advice and help organisations develop. RA should offer capacity building support to community organisations and provide training. RA should provide incentives to encourage individuals to become active in their communities and involved in running community organisations.



**APPENDICES****5 APPENDIX 1: LIST OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS**

The following organisations provided responses to the survey:

| <b>Organisation Name</b>                                  | <b>Town/City</b> |
|---|------------------|
| Arloodi Somali Moi Community                              | Manchester       |
| Ba Mama Ba Bongwani                                       | Southsea         |
| Bosnia-Herzegovina UK Network                             | Birmingham       |
| Bristol Sudanese Association                              | Bristol          |
| Brushstrokes  | West Midlands    |
| C/o 17 St Mark's Road                                     | Derby            |
| Central Africa Welfare Organisation                       | Liverpool        |
| Cite Celeste French Speaking Community in West Midlands   | Birmingham       |
| Community @ Heart   | Bristol          |
| Congolese Diaspora Association                            | Portsmouth       |
| Congolese Support Group in the UK                         | West Bromwich    |
| East Kent Umoja Project                                   | Kent             |
| Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group                           | Crawley          |
| Harbour Project For Swindon Refugees + Asylum Seekers     | Swindon          |
| Iraqi Community Welfare Association                       | Manchester       |
| Kent Refugee Action Network                               | Dover            |
| Leeds Afghan Community                                    | Leeds            |
| Leeds Ethiopian Community                                 | Leeds            |
| Leeds Great Lakes Community                               | Leeds            |
| Leicester Chinese Community Centre                        | Leicester        |
| Manchester Refugee Support Network - MRSN                 | Manchester       |
| Midland East African Community                            | Birmingham       |
| Pakistani Refugee Organisation                            | Manchester       |
| Ramesha   | Bristol          |
| Refugee Clinician Programme                               | Bristol          |
| Refugee Support Project                                   | Bristol          |
| Somali British Friendship Organisation in Midlands        | Birmingham       |
| Somali Community Nottingham                               | Nottingham       |
| Somali Immigrants Resources Development Organisation      | Birmingham       |
| Somali Welfare Association                                | Manchester       |
| Somali Women's Group                                      | Leicester        |
| South West Community Association                          | Bristol          |
| Southampton Refugee Umbrella Group                        | Southampton      |
| Southampton Somali Community Association                  | Southampton      |
| Sudanese Coptic Association                               | Brighton         |
| Undugu  | Staly Bridge     |
| Window's For Sudan  | Birmingham       |
| Yorkshire African Refugees Community Organisation (YARCO) | Leeds            |

## **6 APPENDIX 2: FOCUS GROUP GUIDANCE**

# **Refugee Action: Focus Group Notes**

This paper provides guidance on the approach that is to be taken to the Focus Groups being undertaken as part of Refugee Action's RCO Stake-holder consultation. There are sections for managers and for CDOs undertaking the work.

### **Guidance for Managers**

The Focus Groups will be run by two CDOs from a neighbouring region – you will need to both make arrangements for their visit and make sure that you have two CDOs from your region available to travel to other regions. For support in arranging this please discuss with Suzette.

Your other key responsibility is to ensure a reasonable mix of RCOs at the event in your region. Suzette has a list of organisations that responded to the survey and indicated that they would like to participate in a focus group. In addition to these groups you may need to invite additional local organisations. A total of twelve places are available and, if possible, you should seek to ensure that the groups represented have the following characteristics:

- At least 2 RCOs formed in the last 6 months
- At least 2 RCOs with an annual turnover in excess of £50k
- At least 2 RCOs serving particular communities
- At least 2 RCOs serving groups with special needs (e.g. women, young people etc.)
- At least 2 RCOs providing services to all refugee communities.

In some areas this mix may be difficult to achieve, but managers are asked to do their best to ensure a good range of different types of project.

In addition to providing time for your staff to attend these events, you will also need to provide some time for them to write up their findings from the focus groups.

### Guidance for Focus Group Facilitators

Focus groups provide an opportunity to assess the views of your service users and engage them in providing ideas to develop your service. They should feel informal and free-flowing to participants, but in reality should be carefully structured and well managed.

1. Make sure, at the start, you tell participants why you're holding the session, how their information will be used any ground rules (e.g. around confidentiality etc.)
2. Make sure that everyone gets to speak early – if people haven't spoken in the first ten minutes they probably won't throughout the rest of the session...
3. Make sure that no-one dominates the group
4. Anticipate conflicts and manage these early
5. Reflect back contentious comments from individuals to the wider group
6. Try and ensure everyone speaks, but not everyone needs to address each question – you can use phrases like "Is this the same for everyone else" if you think a consensus is emerging or to challenge a particular point of view.
7. End well – provide people with an opportunity for final comments, tell them what happens next, tell them how they can find out how their contribution will be used and thank them.

The box below contains a list of questions that you should ask at the event and remember you can provide prompts and ask for examples:

- |  |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Ice breaker</b> – get them to talk about themselves in two or threes and present back to the wider group.<br/><i>A good approach is to ask everyone to interview one other person and find out which organisation they are from, how long they have been there and something that they have done there that they are really proud of – they should then tell everyone in the main focus group about the person they have interviewed.</i></li><li>2. Ask about what their current relationship with RA is – e.g. what services are they using, how did they find out about RA?</li><li>3. What single area has been the best thing that they have had from RA and why (prompts?)</li><li>4. Were there things that you wanted but that weren't available? Or things that you would have liked more of?</li></ol> |
|--|



## **7 APPENDIX 3: RCO SURVEY**

Dear Colleague

### **Support for Refugees, Refugee Community Organisations and Refugee Support Groups – We Need Your Views**

Refugee Action is currently reviewing the range of activities that we undertake to make sure that we are providing the right services in the right way. We have recently completed a major exercise with refugees and asylum seekers who use our advice service and we now want to find out your views about the support we provide to refugee community organisations and refugee support groups.

We have produced a short questionnaire that we hope you will be able to complete to tell us a little about your organisation and provide you with an opportunity to tell us what you think of ours. If you would prefer to complete this survey over the telephone please call Suzette Nicol (020 7840 6503) at Refugee Action who will arrange for a Community Development worker from outside your area to call you.

In addition to this questionnaire we will be holding a series of focus groups around the country. These will take place in July and August. If you would like to participate in one of these please tick the appropriate box at the end of the questionnaire or call Suzette Nicol (020 7840 6503).

Information from this questionnaire will only be used to inform the development of our service and the content of your reply will not be shared with the community development officer(s) you work with on a regular basis. We will also be using an independent company, Michael Bell Associates, to help us analyse your responses and ensure your confidentiality. For this reason we ask that you return the questionnaire direct to them in the FREEPOST envelope provided.

To help us to improve our service to you, we ask that you complete and return the form to Michael Bell Associates by 6<sup>th</sup> July 2004.

We look forward to hearing from you.

**WONDIMU YOHANNES**

Director, Development & Integration

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR REFUGEE COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS**

**Name of person completing form:**

**Job Title:**

**Name of organisation:**

**Organisation Address:**

**Organisation Telephone:**

**A. About your organisation**

**In this section we would like you to tell us a bit more about your organisation in order that we can work out if there are any differences in the services that different types of organisation or need or use.**

**1. How do you describe your level of funding over the last 12 months? (Please tick only one box)**

- No funding (emerging group)
- Funding up to £10,000
- Funding £10,000 to £50,000
- Funding £50,000 to £100,000
- Funding over £100,000

**2. How would you describe your governance structure? (Please tick all boxes that apply)**

- Un-constituted
- Constituted (has management committee and constitution)
- Registered as a charity
- Registered as company

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### 3. What services does your organisation provide (please tick all boxes that apply)?

- Advice services on a range of areas
- Immigration and legal services
- Welfare support for destitute people
- Cultural and social support
- Support into employment or training related to getting a job
- Education and Youth services (e.g. Saturday schools)
- Housing
- Services to help people with physical health problems
- Specific services for women
- Specific services for children
- Specific services for the elderly (e.g. home visits)
- Support to people suffering mental health problems (e.g. counselling)
- Research
- Campaign and advocacy
- Other - Please tell us what else you do .....

### 4. Which communities does your organisation serve?

- All refugees and asylum seekers
- Specific community (please specify.....)

### 5. When was your organisation formed?

- 1 year ago or less
- Between 1 and 2 years ago
- Between 2 and 3 years ago
- Three years ago or more
- Don't know

**B. Relationship with Refugee Action**

**This section of the questionnaire is your chance to tell us how you came to know about Refugee Action, the services you have used and what you think of how we have provided these.**

**6. Does your organisation have working relationships with Refugee Action?**

- Yes (go to question 7)
- No (go to question 13)
- Don't know

**7. How long has your organisation had a working relationship with Refugee Action?**

- 1 year or less
- Between 1 and 2 years
- Between 2 and 3 years
- Three or more years
- Don't know

**8. How did your organisation come into contact with Refugee Action?**

- Publicity
- Referred by Asylum Team
- Referred by community organisation
- Internet
- Other (please specify.....)

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9. Refugee Action provides different community development services to RCOs in different areas. Which of the following services has your organisation used, and how would you rate them?

I. In the first set of questions we would like you to tell us about any training, seminars or other events that you may have used provided by Refugee Action.

|  | Not used                 | Very good                | Good                     | Poor                     | Very poor                |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| A. RCO capacity building<br>(e.g. constitution, charity registration, needs assessment, fundraising, management, etc)  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B. Service development<br>Developing or help to develop a new service such as a health service project, a return or employment project or a multi-purpose resource centre.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C. Access to statutory services<br>This could include working with service providers to facilitate access to employment and training, education, housing, health, etc. by, for example, ensuring that refugees are consulted in local service development. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| D. Services for refugee women<br>This might include training on how to make your service more accessible to women or how to develop specific services for women.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| E. Building links and partnerships<br>This might include helping you find out more about other projects locally and working with you and other groups to develop forums and networks, joint projects, sitting on steering groups, etc.                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| F. Raising awareness and campaigning<br>This could include helping you to give speeches or presentation, work with the media, helping organise events, etc)  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| G. Refugee Action employment service (Leeds)<br>For those projects in the Leeds area this might include attending events organised by Refugee Action's Employment Service.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| H. Links with countries of origin<br>This could include attending events that will help you to establish links between your organisation and other projects in your country of origin.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I. Providing options for voluntary return<br>This could include attending events that will help you to give information to your service users about the options available should they want to return to their country of origin..                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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II. In this second set of questions we would like you to tell us about any one-to-one support you have received from Refugee Action. This could include face-to-face contact with a Refugee Action community development worker or telephone contact.

|   | Not used                 | Very good                | Good                     | Poor                     | Very poor                |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>A. RCO capacity building</b><br>One-to one support on drawing up your constitution, charity registration, doing needs assessments, fundraising, or other management support.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>B. Service development</b><br>This could include working with you to develop a new service such as a health service project, a return or employment project or a multi-purpose resource centre.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>C. Access to statutory services</b><br>This could include working with service providers to facilitate access to employment and training, education, housing, health, etc. by, for example, ensuring that refugees are consulted in local service development. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>D. Services for refugee women</b><br>This might include one to one support on how to make your service more accessible to women or how to develop specific services for women.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>E. Building links and partnerships</b><br>This might include helping you find out more about other projects locally and working with you and other groups to develop forums and networks, joint projects, sitting on steering groups, etc.                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>F. Raising awareness and campaigning</b><br>This could include helping you to give speeches or presentation, work with the media, helping organise events, etc)  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>G. Refugee Action employment service (Leeds)</b><br>For those projects in the Leeds area this might include referrals into Refugee Action's Employment Service.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>H. Links with countries of origin</b><br>This could one to one support to help you to establish links between your organisation and other projects in your country of origin.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>I. Providing options for voluntary return</b><br>This could include taking referrals from your service users about the options available should they want to return to their country of origin..   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Building Capacity

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**9(III). Which other Refugee Action services have you used, and how would you rate them?**

|   | <b>Not used</b>          | <b>Very good</b>         | <b>Good</b>              | <b>Poor</b>              | <b>Very poor</b>         |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Information and publication               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Facilitation                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Refugee Action employment service (Leeds) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Campaign and lobbying                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Referrals <b>from</b> Refugee Action      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Referrals <b>to</b> Refugee Action        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**10. What was the most useful service you used from Refugee Action in the last 12 months?**

**11. Is Refugee Action the only agency that provides these services (i.e. those in question 9)? (Please tick one box that most closely reflects your views).**

- Refugee Action is the **only** agency providing these services to us
- There are **some other** agencies that provide some of these services to us
- There are **many other** agencies that provide these services to us

**12. Which of the following factors is most important in your relationship with Refugee Action? (Please tick only one box that most closely reflects your views)**

- The range of services that Refugee Action provides
- The way Refugee Action provides services (e.g. consultative, friendliness, understanding)
- It is the only organisation providing these services in my area
- Because it puts me in touch with other organisation
- Other (please specify.....)

**C. Barriers**

**This section looks at the problems your organisation may face and the issues that are affecting the people using your services.**

| <b>13. In your opinion, what are the biggest barriers or problems facing <u>your organisation</u>?</b>  |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
|   | <b>Not a problem</b>     | <b>Problem</b>           | <b>Serious problem</b>   | <b>Don't know</b>        |
| <b>RCO capacity building:</b> Services, RCO skills and resources to develop and sustain a refugee community organisation                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| A. Problems in equipping your service users to participate in your organisation   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B. Difficulties in accessing funding when you start an organisation (e.g. funders wanting structure and capacity before they can fund)            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C. Lack of access to longer term funding  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| D. Lack of available one-to-one support in developing a refugee community organisation  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| E. Lack of services to assist in organisational development including charity registration, fundraising, management and business planning         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| F. Lack of necessary professional skills in staff and volunteers  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| G. Management committee and staff relationship difficulties   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| H. Lack of necessary professional skills in management committee (e.g. chairing skills)   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I. Lack of skills needed to present your organisation to the outside world.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| J. Divisions and conflict among groups and individuals, because of politics, clan, ethnicity and competition for resources (e.g. jobs) in the RCO | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| K. Lack of understanding of local political context   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Building links and partnerships to maximise opportunities for refugees</b>   |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| A. Problems in becoming members of forums, networks and other local initiatives   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B. Problems in participating in forums, networks and other local initiatives  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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| <b>Raising Public Awareness &amp; Campaigning</b>                                  |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| A. Dealing with attitude towards refugees and asylum seekers from host communities | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B. Lack of understanding in refugees and asylum seekers about UK society           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C. Skills in dealing with the media  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### 14. In your opinion, what are the biggest barriers that the refugees and asylum seekers using your services face?

|  | <b>Not a problem</b>     | <b>Problem</b>           | <b>Serious problem</b>   | <b>Don't know</b>        |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Difficulties in accessing statutory services</b>                |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| A. Language and cultural barriers                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B. Lack of understanding by staff                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C. Discrimination against refugees, e.g. in employment and housing | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| D. Service structure and organisation not sensitive enough         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| E. Lack of consultation with refugees in developing local services | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Accessing specialist services</b>                               |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| A. Mental health   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B. Voluntary return  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C. Services for the elderly and children                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| D. Other (please specify.....)                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Accessing services for refugee women and children</b>           |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| A. Advocacy  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B. Training  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C. One-to-one support  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| D. Other (please specify.....)                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**15. Thinking about these problems faced by refugees and asylum seekers, are there any things that Refugee Action could do to help address these barriers or problems?**

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please return it in the envelope provided to:**

**Michael Bell Associates  
FREEPOST**

**LON107018  
LONDON SE1 2BR**

**Please make sure that it reaches them by 6<sup>th</sup> July 2004.**

In addition to this questionnaire we will be holding a series of focus groups around the country. These will take place in July and August. If you would like to participate in one of these please tick the box below

**I would like to attend a focus group**