

Sanctuary and Solidarity in Scotland

A strategy for supporting refugee and receiving communities 2016 – 2021

1. Introduction and context

- 1.1 Scottish Refugee Council's vision is a Scotland where all people seeking refugee protection are welcome and where women, men and children are protected, find safety and support, have their human rights and dignity respected and are able to achieve their full potential play a full and equal role in their new communities. Refugee empowerment and engagement are key values at the heart of our organisation, with one of our strategic aims being to '*support refugees' integration and inclusion.*' Our work with communities has been instrumental in delivering this vision since 2001.
- 1.2 We recognise the strengths, skills and assets within communities and the importance of supporting communities to come together and organise effectively so that they can collectively achieve their aims, exert influence on the decisions that affect them and enable positive changes in the quality of community life for refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland today. We value the contribution of refugee community organisations who work collectively to meet the needs of their communities and to represent their views and aspirations, and the huge range of local projects and organisations who have delivered many programmes and services which have welcomed and supported refugees and asylum seekers into their local neighbourhoods.
- 1.3 The context of our work within Scotland has changed significantly recently in relation to asylum policy, dispersal, resettlement, integration and community empowerment, resulting in new challenges and opportunities for our organisation, for partner organisations and for communities themselves. The global refugee crisis and the Syrian Vulnerable Person's relocation scheme has led to an increase in refugee communities in many local authorities as well as the development of new support groups and offers of help from across Scotland. The potential widening of asylum dispersal could also lead to further new asylum seeking and refugee communities across Scotland. As an organisation, we acknowledge the challenge of balancing our existing work with communities which is predominantly in Glasgow where the majority of refugees and asylum live with our work with new communities in many local authority areas across Scotland.
- 1.4 Priorities within New Scots: Integration Refugees in Scotland's Communities 2014 – 2017 are that refugees are enabled to build social relationships and are active in their local communities as well as being able to live in communities that are safe, cohesive and welcoming. The Scottish Government have introduced The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2016 with the Community Empowerment Team taking the lead on national policy for community development. We recognise that discussions are being progressed to develop a more explicit policy framework for community development at national level and we hope that the identified needs and

strategic approach within this strategy can make a contribution to any future community development policy.

“The Scottish Government is committed to our communities being supported to do things for themselves – community empowerment – and to people having their voices heard in the planning and delivery of services – community engagement and participation.”¹

- 1.5 In addition, we recognise that it is communities themselves who are often at the sharp end of austerity policies. Many community organisations as well as voluntary sector organisations are struggling to survive in the current economic and political climate, facing increased need and reduced resources. Furthermore, cuts to community development practitioners across Scotland creates challenges in developing partnerships with local practitioners and results in many community organisations with no access to community development support.
- 1.6 This strategy sets out the direction for our work with communities over the next 5 years, building on our expertise developed over the last 15 years working with both refugee and receiving communities. As a national organisation, we believe that community development work is most effectively delivered in partnership with a range of stakeholders and other community development providers. Our strategy was developed through significant engagement with a range of stakeholders, including refugee and asylum seeking communities themselves.
- 1.7 Our community development interventions are based on the Indicators of Integration framework² which highlights the importance of the development of relationships and social connections within communities and specifically the development of:
- **Bonds** within communities (for example our work supporting refugee community organisations);
 - **Bridges** between communities (for example enabling dialogue between new and receiving communities), and;
 - **Links** between communities and services and government (for example enabling communities to access and influence services and to develop a collective voice in order to participate in decision making, both nationally and locally).

“Where communities are empowered we would expect to see a range of benefits: local democratic participation boosted; increased confidence and skills among local people; higher numbers of people volunteering in their communities; and more satisfaction with quality of life in a local neighbourhood”³

- 1.8 Currently our work with communities is delivered by a range of staff across the organisation, utilising a range of approaches depending on the desired purpose and outcome which includes community development, community engagement, peer education, service user involvement and arts & cultural development. While this

¹ Scottish Government, <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/engage>

² Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework (Ager & Strang 2004)

³ Scottish Government, <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/engage>

work is not restricted to the Communities team, it is however envisaged that this strategy will be driven forward by community development staff within the organisation.

2. Our vision

- 2.1 Our vision is of strong, safe, sustainable, creative, involved and influential communities across Scotland; refugee communities who have a sense of belonging, are able to identify and respond to their needs and aspirations and influence policy and practice that impact on their lives and vibrant, welcoming receiving communities embracing diversity and nurturing solidarity, enabling refugees to rebuild their lives here in Scotland.

3. Methodology

- 3.1 In order to develop this strategy, we carried out significant engagement between January and April 2016 with a range of key stakeholders, including refugee community organisations, community activists, integration networks, welcoming groups and statutory, public and voluntary agencies. We used a variety of methods including a strengths and support needs assessment survey, an in-depth strengths and support needs assessment workshop delivered to refugee community organisations, '*Supporting refugee led groups and working with communities*' workshop and a Communities workshop at our '*Shaping a better future with refugees – What next?*' Conference in March 2016.
- 3.2 Over 120 external stakeholders including representatives from 22 refugee community organisations and a wide range of other agencies participated. In addition, we were involved in '*Sanctuary, Solidarity and Social Capital; Supporting refugees through community development*' conference delivered by Community Development Alliance Scotland which was attended by 80 community development practitioners, community activists and agencies, as well as discussions with 6 CD/CLD practitioners from Aberdeen City Council. . Staff, volunteers and our board have also contributed,

4. Definitions

- 4.1 Communities are dynamic and often complex and have a range of characteristics that define them. In this document, we define **communities** as those that share a common bond '*that can be defined by geography, identity or interest*'⁴
- 4.2 **Refugee communities** are generally communities of interest or identity, often organising around nationality, ethnicity, gender or a particular issue.
- 4.3 **Receiving communities** are generally geographical communities, who are organised to welcome new communities and support integration. This includes local community organisations and welcoming groups, and could also include faith based

⁴ Community Development National Occupational Standards 2015, <http://www.fcdl.org.uk/>

organisations and community organisations that do not have a specific remit for working with refugees.

Refugee communities themselves can also be receiving communities and so can also play a role in resettlement/dispersal and welcoming new arrivals.

4.4 Community development – Community development is a skilled long term intervention which strengthens communities to take collective action towards positive change in the quality of community life. This long term process starts from people's own experience and enables communities to work together to:

- Identify their own needs and actions;
- Take collective action using their strengths and resources;
- Develop their confidence, skills and knowledge;
- Challenge unequal power relationships;
- Promote social justice, equality and inclusion,

in order to improve the quality of their own lives, the communities in which they live and societies of which they are a part. ⁵

While we recognise the strengths and assets within communities, our view is that asset based community development approaches alone will not address structural inequality and disadvantage within communities.

'Good community development work is done in ways which challenge disadvantage and tackle inequalities. It involves changing the relationships between ordinary people and people in positions of power. ... It is an approach to social change. It is based on the idea that disadvantage and social injustice cannot be tackled in top down solutions alone' ⁶

4.5 Community engagement – Community engagement is defined as *'developing and sustaining a working relationship between one or more public body and one or more community groups, to help them both understand and act on the needs or issues that the community experiences'*⁷

It should be noted that voluntary organisations are included within this definition of public bodies. Community engagement is thus a process of dialogue that involves developing relationships with community groups in order to understand and respond to their needs. Community development can play a key role in advising and informing agencies on community perspectives and how to engage effectively.

5. Values underpinning the strategy

⁵ Community Development National Occupational Standards 2015, <http://www.fcsl.org.uk/>

⁶ <http://www.communitydevelopmentalliancescotland.org/documents/WhatCommunityDevelopmentDoes.pdf>

⁷ National Standards of Community Engagement, <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/doc/94257/0084550.pdf>

5.1 As an organisation, our work is underpinned by our values of refugee empowerment, refugee protection, equality, independence, engagement, excellence and respect.

5.2 This strategy is also underpinned by community development values ⁸

- **Social justice and equality** - work for a more just and equal society which recognises environmental, political cultural and economic issues
- **Anti-discrimination** - respect, value, support and promote difference and diversity whilst rejecting and challenging any form of oppression, discrimination and sectarianism.
- **Community empowerment** - enable communities to develop confidence, capacity, skills and relationships to shape collective action and challenge imbalances of power.
- **Collective action** - promote the active participation of people within communities, using the power of a collective voice and goal.
- **Working and learning together** - create and encourage opportunities for collective learning through action and shared reflection.

6. Who and where are refugee and asylum seeking communities?

The number of asylum-seekers and refugees in Scotland is difficult to estimate as there is no official data covering this population group, with the information gap concerning refugees being especially pronounced. Scottish Refugee Council estimates that there is now a significant refugee population in Scotland of around 15 000–20 000 people.

In relation to asylum-seekers, statistics are available on the number of asylum-seekers supported under Section 95⁹ by country of nationality, UK region and local authority at any one time¹⁰. As a consequence of accommodation under Section 95 being provided on a no-choice basis, and Glasgow City Council being the only local authority in Scotland participating in the dispersal scheme, the vast majority of asylum-seekers in the country – 3067 out of 3130 asylum-seekers in receipt of Section 95 support in Scotland at the end of 2015 – were accommodated in dispersal accommodation in Glasgow. Using the subsistence-only option, 15 asylum-seekers lived in Dundee and 14 in Edinburgh. The top 5 countries of origin of asylum-seekers receiving support in Scotland at the end of 2015 were China (932 applicants), Eritrea (299), Iran (277), Nigeria (246) and Pakistan (245). Data on the family composition, sex and age of the applicants is only available at the UK level and is not disaggregated by region.

⁸ Community Development National Occupational Standards 2015, <http://www.fcdl.org.uk/>

⁹ Section 95 support refers to financial support (subsistence and accommodation or subsistence-only) provided to people whose claims for asylum are still being considered or are subject to appeal. Those whose claims have been refused but who have children under the age of 18 are also entitled to continue receiving Section 95 support until they are removed from the UK or their youngest child turns 18.

¹⁰ Home Office (February 2016) Immigration statistics, October to December 2015

Home Office data also shows that since 2001, around 10 per cent of all asylum-seekers have been dispersed to Glasgow, with the actual number fluctuating in line with the total number of persons seeking international protection in the UK.

While despite some limitations data on asylum-seekers, including those in Scotland is available, statistics on those who have been granted protection or allowed to remain on humanitarian grounds¹¹ are not available, making it difficult to ascertain how many of them currently live in Scotland or what their characteristics such as family size, nationality, sex and age are. According to UNHCR in 2014 there were 117, 161 *refugees* in the UK¹². Given that Scotland receives around 10 per cent of all asylum-seekers and that research indicates that the majority of them tend to remain Scotland upon being granted status¹³, it could be estimated that at least around 12, 000 *refugees* currently live in Scotland.

Through its Holistic Integration Service (HIS), the Scottish Refugee Council has collected data which could be used to gain an understanding of refugee communities¹⁴. With some minor variations, the profile of HIS clients indicates that the main countries of origin or refugees accessing the service have been Eritrea (28%), Sudan (22%), Iran (15%) and Syria (10%), accounting for, on average, 75% of total refugees who accessed the service throughout its 3-year period of operation. Men consistently constituted a clear majority of service beneficiaries – above 70 per cent, while 80 per cent of the households were classified as single¹⁵. Refugees who accessed HIS were primarily of working age, with the majority (57% of the total) aged between 25 and 39.

The refugee population in Glasgow appears to be concentrated in specific areas - a recent study found that 51% of refugees/applications for help to Scottish Refugee Council and Glasgow City Council Refugee Support Team live in just seven of Glasgow's postcode districts, with the majority being based in the North West Strategic Planning Area¹⁶

In addition to applicants seeking international protection in the UK being granted status, the number of resettled refugees should also be taken into consideration in the estimate of the size and location of refugee communities. Scottish local authorities have engaged extensively with the UK's Government's Syria Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) - so far, 16 local authorities in Scotland have

11 Including those who have obtained refugee status, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave to remain

12 UNHCR (2015), *UNHCR Global Trends 2014: World at War*, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/558292924.html>, p. 47

13 Sim, D. (2014) Refugee Onward Migration and the Changing Geography in Scotland, *Scottish Geographical Journal*, 131:1, 1-16

14 This data is limited only to those refugees who choose to engage with the service.

15 It should be noted that many of these 'single' people actually have partners, dependent children and/or elderly parents in their country of origin or transit.

16 CJM (2015) Glasgow City Council: Mapping of Integration Networks under the Integrated Grant Fund, p. 24- 25

welcomed around 400 of the 1,085 Syrians resettled in the UK through the VPRS from October to December 2015¹⁷

Future – While it is not possible to accurately predict the future size of refugee communities, some assumptions can be made based on current trends and experiences. In 2015, 38,878 people asked the UK Government for international protection (asylum) a 20% increase from the 2014 figures. As the current global refugee protection crisis develops, it is likely that the number of asylum applicants and refugees resettled to the UK will continue to increase as more women, men, and children have no choice but to flee war, persecution, and human rights abuse.

Scotland plays an important role in the UK Government's refugee resettlement schemes, and has committed to continuing to do so demonstrating its solidarity with those in grave need. Programmes such as the Syrian Resettlement Programme and plans to resettle child refugees across the UK will probably see around 1500, mainly families and children, being resettled across the majority of local authorities in Scotland over the next 4 years. Negotiations are also currently underway between the Home Office and some local authorities in Scotland to expand asylum dispersal outside of Glasgow. Taken together, these developments and trends mean that communities across Scotland will welcome and benefit from refugees and become more diverse. This in turn makes advocacy provision and community development support for both refugee and receiving communities even more important to facilitate long term integration.

Having reliable data on the size and location and characteristics of refugee communities would facilitate planning and provision of services. The provision of detailed data by the Home Office on asylum-seekers, their nationality, family composition, sex and age, disaggregated by local authority as well as including a specific question on 'reasons for migration' in the census could help address the existing information gap regarding asylum-seeking and refugee population in Scotland.

7. Community strengths – refugee community organisations

7.1 Eight refugee community organisations completed a survey and seven organisations participated in an in-depth strengths and support needs assessment. This was based on Building Stronger Communities¹⁸ planning and assessment tool developed by Scottish Community Development Centre. The following strengths in four key areas (organisation, involvement, equality and skills) were identified:

- *Organisation:* Most groups have transparent operating procedures and relevant legal status. Many groups have a clear understanding of the needs of their community and clear plans for what they hope to achieve, although the plans are not necessarily

¹⁷ <http://www.scotlandwelcomesrefugees.scot/latest-news/2015/december-2015/first-1-000-syrian-refugees-resettled-in-uk-ahead-of-christmas/>

¹⁸ <http://www.scdc.org.uk/what/building-stronger-communities/>

written. The vast majority of groups identified funding as a key issue, with many groups unable to access sufficient funds and resources to support their activities.

- *Involvement analysis:* All groups identified that they had a good understanding of the needs of their community with processes in place to find out needs. Nearly all groups identified a positive belief that they could achieve change for their community. However, while most groups felt they are recognised as 'representative' by their wider community and also to an extent by agencies and elected members, very few groups felt that they had any impact on decision making or that they received feedback from their participation. Over half of the groups identified that they didn't have opportunities to meet with other groups to share experience and knowledge and to work together on common issues.
- *Equality analysis:* The majority of groups felt that they were able to involve all different sections of their community and that they considered equality issues. All groups identified discussion and dialogue as a way to developing a common agenda within their organisation. Several groups identified the challenge of ensuring that women were involved and of addressing barriers to participation.
- *Skills analysis:* All groups identified the need to further develop their skills, with the majority of organisations identifying that they would like more opportunities to do so. All but one group identified applying for funding as a key training and support need. Most groups identified the need to further develop a range of people skills eg negotiation and influencing skills, media, presentation skills and public speaking. Groups also identified the need for IT and book keeping and accounts skills.

7.2 In relation to new refugee communities, we engaged with a range of support agencies and staff across ten local authorities and with new Syrian families. Currently, it is difficult to get an accurate picture of the extent to which new refugee communities have access to support which enables them to develop bonds, bridges and links, due to the fact that people who have been resettled have arrived fairly recently and that initial integration needs, such as housing, health, language and education require to be addressed first and thus it is difficult to ascertain if longer term plans exist. It appears that some connections are being encouraged between new and established Syrian families where these exist, and with welcoming groups operating across a wider geographical area, but not with local people within their neighbourhoods. It should be noted that there are also new asylum seeking and refugee communities in Glasgow, not all of whom will have organised themselves thus further engagement is required to engage with new communities in order to identify their needs.

8. Community strengths – receiving community organisations across Scotland

8.1 *Integration networks in Glasgow* – There are nine integration networks across Glasgow, with some other local authorities considering similar structures. Established following dispersal in 2000, integration networks consisted of local agencies, community groups and local people, including refugees and asylum seekers, and aimed to co-ordinate local responses to the needs of refugees and asylum seekers. Initially, integration networks focused on responding to immediate needs of new asylum seekers and then increased their activities to bring different communities together and support integration. This included helping to dispel myths about

refugees and asylum seekers in receiving communities, building capacity of agencies to help understand the needs, working with refugee and asylum seeking groups, supporting integration, social cohesion and cross cultural understanding and bringing communities together through cultural and education projects.¹⁹

Through our engagement with five integration networks, all identified the challenge in balancing long term integration projects with services to meet urgent needs, stating that they had to increasingly focus their resources on providing information and advice for asylum seekers, following reductions and changes to asylum advice services in 2014. Integration networks also stated they have strong local community links and understand refugee community needs yet their work is '*not always strategic enough*' to influence policy. A couple of networks highlighted the Framework for Dialogue approach which brought together asylum seekers and refugees in their local neighbourhoods to work together to tackle issues and promote long term integration. The extent to which local people are involved in the governance of integration networks varies and thus they may not all describe themselves as receiving community organisations.

- 8.2** *Welcoming and support groups across Scotland* – Following the global refugee crisis, increased media attention and the Vulnerable Persons Relocation (VPR) scheme, some local people have set up welcoming or support groups in order to welcome new refugees into their local area. We estimate that there are approximately ten welcoming groups across Scotland, as well as a range of other organisations, for instance arts based organisations, local community projects, churches and voluntary organisations, who are also keen to support refugee communities. It could be argued that the development of the welcoming groups is similar to the development of integration networks in Glasgow and thus we can learn from the experience in Glasgow, while acknowledging the different context. Due to the recent establishment and development of such groups and the geographical scope, our engagement with welcoming groups in order to identify their strengths and support needs is an on-going process.
- 8.3** Participants in the Communities Workshop at '*Shaping the future with refugees in Scotland – what next?*' Conference identified the need for community preparation with support to local community organisations to prepare as essential, as well as support to enable refugees to become involved in mainstream organisations. They also identified the need to harness the emerging goodwill and offers of support from across Scotland. Lastly, they identified the need to develop programmes that can help refugees and local people to build connections and explore activities that can support integration including peer education, volunteering and outdoor activities.

9. Support needs

- 9.1 Refugee Community Organisations:** In relation to support needs, most groups identified the need for ongoing support, including helping people and groups to work together on common issues, support to form or develop their community

¹⁹ Integration Networks workshop, Sanctuary, solidarity and social capital, Community Development Alliance Scotland Conference 2016, www.cdas.org.uk

organisation, support to plan and take action and to evaluate their work, developing opportunities for networking between groups, promoting equality and supporting them to address barriers to participation and enabling them to influence policy and services which affect their lives. The needs assessment demonstrated that there is a strong commitment from groups to work within their communities and that they see a vital role for Scottish Refugee Council in providing community development support.

9.2 Our ‘*Supporting refugee led groups and working with communities*’ workshop attended by representatives from 14 refugee community organisations –and four individual community activists made the following recommendations:

- *Support the development of a collective voice* - Representative structures which bring together different community organisations to work on common issues were identified as essential.
- *Provide long term community development support to community organisations* – this would include both new and emerging groups, with a focus on working in partnership and sustainability.
- *Support links between refugee and receiving communities* recognising that refugee communities have a key role to play in welcoming and support new arrivals and the need for neighbourhood based work.
- *Ensure a coherent approach across Scottish Refugee Council to working with communities in an empowering way* ensuring transparency when working with community organisations.
- *Provide policy support and updates* to community organisations in order to help them to influence and campaign.
- *Equality and inclusion* – ensure that the needs of additionally marginalised groups, for example refugee women and young people, are considered and address barriers to participation ie travel expenses.

9.3 Participants in the Communities Workshops at ‘*Shaping the future with refugees in Scotland – what next?*’ Conference’ reiterated the need for community development support for grassroots refugee-led organisations. In addition, they identified the need for support to enable refugee communities to reach out to receiving communities, as well as identifying the challenge of accessing resources for community groups, including venue hire and office space.

9.4 **Receiving community organisations:** Integration networks identified some key areas of support:

- *Updates on changes to policy and support* eg e.g. hold events on major policy changes, e.g. Immigration Bill; DWP changes so that Networks understand their implications for refugees and asylum seekers and can take action,
- *Delivering training workshops*, for instance on asylum process, support system and benefits system as many networks are delivering advocacy work for individual refugees and asylum seekers which requires knowledge of complex legal and welfare advice. In addition, many networks or community projects rely on volunteers and are unable to access specialist training.
- *Workshops and networking events* to enable organisations to share learning and practice

From our engagement with a small number of new welcoming groups, it would appear that welcoming groups may have similar needs. In addition, most groups have limited or no access to community development support to enable them to progress their aims.

9.5 Community development practitioners

*'We would like to see a Scotland where community development is recognised, valued and resourced and where community development practitioners are supported to work effectively with communities to develop their strength, influence and impact on issues that matter to them'*²⁰

Community practitioners and other staff who participated in our Communities Workshop at 'Shaping the Future with Refugees; What next?' or who participated in 'Sanctuary, Solidarity and Social Capital: Supporting refugees through community development' CDAS conference made some key suggestions around how to support community development practice and outcomes in this area:

- The need to share learning and experience and to build on good practice across Scotland, while acknowledging the differences between the dispersal experience in Glasgow and Syrian resettlement across Scotland.
- The challenge of knowing where people are being dispersed or resettled in order to provide support and/or make interventions
- The need to work together and share resources to meet need
- The need to develop an understanding of the role of community development in integration
- The importance of working with communities in order to develop outcomes.

10. Strategic direction

10.1 The strategic aims for our work with communities between 2016 – 2021 will continue to further the vision of Scottish Refugee Council. In order to do so, we have identified four key outcomes;

- **Refugee communities are strong influential and have a voice, and are supported to develop social connections;**
- **Receiving communities are welcoming and informed and refugees are welcomed into their new communities;**
- **Community practitioners have increased knowledge and understanding of working with refugee and receiving communities;**
- **Refugee communities influence the priorities of Scottish Refugee Council.**

10.2 Our objectives in achieving these outcomes are set out below:

Refugee communities are strong, influential and have a voice, and are supported to develop social connections.

²⁰ What Vision for Community Development Conference 2014, Community Development Practice in Scotland – the reality behind the rhetoric <http://www.scdn.org.uk/>

We will:

1. Provide **skilled long-term community development support to grassroots refugee community organisations**, both communities of geography (ie within neighbourhoods) and communities of interest (ie communities organised around nationality or a particular issue) to enable them to organise, develop and achieve their aims/goals. This will include supporting the development of both new and established groups as appropriate.
2. Enable refugee communities to work collectively and **develop a collective voice** through supporting representative forums which can represent the views of refugee communities.
3. Develop and support **opportunities for meaningful engagement** between communities and agencies and decision makers, by developing strong relationships with refugee communities and working with agencies and decision makers to help them understand the needs of refugee communities and how to engage effectively.
4. Influence **funding opportunities for community organisations** and support organisations to access the resources they require.
5. Address the **needs of additionally marginalised groups**, for example women, young people, LGBT, disabled and develop specific projects or approaches where necessary, building on for example the model of our Women's Project.

Receiving communities are welcoming and informed and refugees are welcomed into their communities.

We will:

6. **Engage with receiving community groups** (i.e. refugee assisting organisations/groups or potential refugee assisting organisations/groups) in Glasgow and across Scotland. To identify needs and where possible provide support in response to those needs for example by providing seminars, training and opportunities for dialogue and networking, with a view to supporting their development and their ability to involve refugee communities in their work.
7. **Support and develop solidarity between communities within their neighbourhoods**, including supporting the involvement of refugees in their local community and/or their participation in local decision-making structures. We will either do this directly or through working with local community development practitioners and other relevant organisations. This will also include our work with Refugee Festival, other relevant arts & cultural work and our public attitudes work.

Community practitioners have increased knowledge and understanding of working with refugee and receiving communities:

We will:

8. **Share good practice** by developing connections with local community development practitioners and working with key national Community Development agencies in order to influence and support practice development.

Refugee communities influence the priorities of Scottish Refugee Council:

We will:

9. **Provide policy support and regular updates to refugee and receiving communities** to enable them to influence policy and ensure that community development work supports the wider advocacy and lobbying work of Scottish Refugee Council.
10. **Fully implement our Service User Involvement Policy** across our organisation ensuring refugee participation and involvement at all levels.
11. **Engage effectively with individual refugees and refugee community organisations**, ensuring that their needs and aspirations influence our priorities and agenda. We will plan and evaluate our community engagement ensuring that we engage at the appropriate level depending on the desired outcome.

For insight or feedback on specific services, we will engage with individuals recognising that this will provide a collection of individual opinions and experiences. When we wish to work with refugees to influence policy change, we will engage with representative community structures (e.g. relevant refugee-led forums) and refugee-led grassroots community organisations, recognising that this will provide analysed and collective views which include identifying the changes that would improve the quality of community life for refugees.

“All four of the external stakeholders interviewed were confident in Refugee Women’s Strategy Group’s ability to represent the wider community and ‘see the wider picture presenting common concerns rather than focusing upon their own individual concerns.’ (Raising Refugee Women’s Voices, Scottish Refugee Council 2015) ²¹

11. Resources and input

- 11.1 We acknowledge that this strategy will require to be significantly resourced and we will work with a range of organisations to ensure the best outcomes for communities.
- 11.2 Within our own organisation, we envisage that this work will be driven forward by the Community Development Team and will therefore require significant community development resources, both in terms of funding community development staff and in ensuring a significant budget for working with refugee community organisations themselves, particularly in relation to addressing barriers to their participation. Budget requirement for addressing barriers to participation should be built into all teams work.

²¹ http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/0713/Impact_Report_FINAL.pdf

11.3 We will work collaboratively across the organisation to deliver this strategy. All of our organisation works with communities in different ways whether that is delivering services through a group-work model like peer education, engaging with individuals and community organisations in order to understand their needs, delivering arts and cultural programmes including Refugee Festival and our Creative Communities programme, involving refugees and refugee community organisations in our policy and influencing work, and in our media and public attitudes work, all of which requires resourcing with appropriate project budgets to enable meaningful participation.

11.4 Externally, we recognise and value the work of all of our partners and this strategy has a focus on sharing learning and experience and on working in partnership to achieve our aims.

12. Conclusion

We believe that there is an opportunity now to share, learn from and build on good practice in work with refugee and receiving communities across Scotland. We look forward to working alongside many support agencies and community organisations themselves to implement this strategy, enabling communities to work together, to have a voice in decisions that affect them and to enable positive changes in the quality of community life for refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland today.

13. Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all of the community representatives and individuals and wider stakeholders who participated in the development of this strategy. We are hugely grateful to Glasgow City Council, Scottish Government and Goldberg Trust for their investment and support for our community development work.