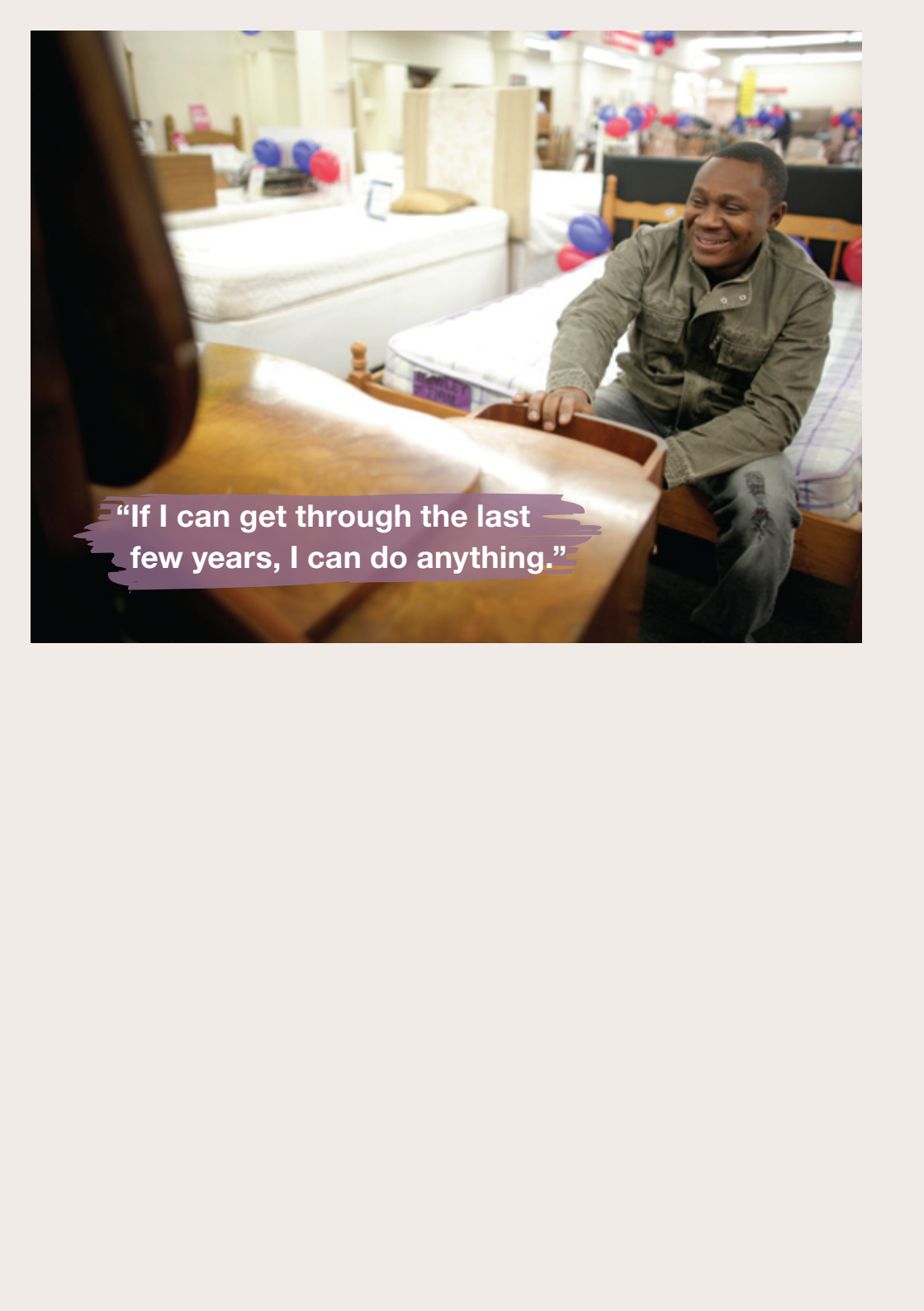


**“Before I came to the  
Scottish Refugee Council,  
I was alone.”**

## **Annual Review 2011**

*Why we're needed more than ever,  
60 years on from when the  
UN Refugee Convention was signed.*





“If I can get through the last few years, I can do anything.”

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## **Sixty years ago, the UN Refugee Convention was created...**

On 28 July, 1951 not long after the terrors of the Second World War, the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees was created. It would go on to save millions of lives by providing the means for people who had been persecuted to seek protection.

This year, we joined the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in marking 60 years of this vital agreement – one that is more important now than ever.

We released a short film, *Courage: 60 Years of the UN Refugee Convention*, made by six refugees from around the world, now living in Scotland. It has gone on to tour film festivals across Europe and has been watched by thousands. As international leaders met in December to conclude the 60th anniversary, we joined the UNHCR in urging the UK Government to re-state its commitment to this lifesaving convention.

We hope this annual review gives you a sense of the work we've done, and the individuals we've helped, in this anniversary year.

## Who we are

Since 1985, Scottish Refugee Council has been standing up for the rights of refugees and people seeking asylum in Scotland.

We're the leading Scottish charity providing the first point of call for hundreds of people who've fled horrific situations around the world. We provide independent advice, information and a listening ear – every step of the way.

Our services are based in Glasgow. We give out around 1,000 advice sessions every month from our city centre One Stop advice hub, hundreds more from our Scottish Induction Service in the north of the city, and we work hard to get refugee voices heard in the media, in the community and at government level.

## Who we help

Refugees come from all over the world; Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia... wherever conflict is rife, or human rights abuses are commonplace. Most leave behind their homes, many leave friends and family, because their life is in grave danger.

Unfortunately there's still a lot of misunderstanding around who refugees are, and why they are here. The individuals, families and children we see every single day are united by just one thing; the need for safety.

In 2010, the last full year recorded, there were just 17,790 applications for asylum in the UK – the lowest number since 2002. In Scotland, there were just over 2,000 people receiving support from the Home Office. The same year only around 5,000 people were granted protection by the Home Office – three times as many were refused.

# The ten countries from which most refugees come to the UK\*



\*These figures come from the Home Office's own statistics, and are for 2010, the most recent full year recorded. Scottish statistics are not gathered. NB we have included Sudan. In 2011 the country divided, with South Sudan becoming a new nation. For the purposes of the 2010 figures we are showing Sudan as it was in that year.

**Amadou Bah, 30, was imprisoned and tortured by the Guinean military after taking part in a peaceful protest. After waiting more than four years he's finally found safety in Scotland, and with our help has his first permanent flat.**

'I left Guinea in 2007. We had been peacefully demonstrating in the capital, and because I was a youth leader, the police and the military targeted me.

'Everybody was out protesting that day, thousands of people. We got close to the parliament, and when we arrived the military were waiting. They started firing on us. Innocent people were dying, women and children.

'I jumped into a gutter but the military fished me out. They tied my arms and feet and put me in the military truck, and took me to prison. Then they tortured me. I can't forget that for the rest of my life. They dipped me in and out of bowls of water, stuck me with pins all over my body. I was there for three days, until protesters burned down the police station and I escaped.

'When I made it out of Guinea, I was taken to the Home Office in London, who sent me to Glasgow. Finally, in July this year I got my leave to remain.





‘When I got my refugee status they wrote me a letter saying that I had to leave my accommodation. I said where can I go? I ended up in a hostel, where people would walk into my room at night, and all my clothes were stolen. I was there for two months until my caseworker at Scottish Refugee Council found me a temporary flat to begin with.

‘Then she fought my case, and I got a permanent place as soon as I registered with the housing association she suggested. At Scottish Refugee Council, they are always there to help people.

‘The next step is making my house comfortable, and then I’d like to bring my son over from Africa. If I can get through the last few years, I can do anything.’

\* In 2011, 475 refugees were advised on their housing rights by the staff in our Refugee Integration Team, which has been set up to help refugees in Scotland settle and move on with their lives.



Find out more about  
this work on page 8

## A letter from our Chair and Chief Executive



All the people featured in this year's annual review have something in common. Their lives have changed for the better, because of their connection with Scottish Refugee Council.

A big focus for us in 2011 has been to mark and celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Refugee Convention, the critical international legal instrument that continues to save thousands of lives every year and underpins all that we do. We were delighted that the film we commissioned to mark this important date, *Courage: 60 Years of the UN Refugee Convention*, produced by refugees in Scotland, has achieved international recognition.

But 2011 has been a time of difficult change too, as we have been forced to deal with severe cuts to our some of our most-used and necessary services. These cuts were targeted on our frontline One Stop advice service, our Scottish Induction Service and the Refugee Integration and Employment Service, and have reduced our overall budget for the 2011/2012 financial year by 30%.

### **Difficult changes to the entire organisation**

We have had to look hard at how we run the entire organisation, a very difficult task that the board of directors and senior management team have had to tackle. We carried out a major overhaul of our entire service provision and restructured the organisation.

It was an extremely tough time for every one of our staff and volunteers and we are proud of the professional and committed way that everyone has responded. We were sad to see valued friends and colleagues having to leave, many of whom had been with us for years.

But we believe we have come through this challenging period, by putting refugees and people seeking asylum at the heart of any changes we have had to make. We continue to provide advice services five days a week for people going through the asylum process, as well as for those who have refugee status and need help rebuilding their lives.

## How our work continues

Our policy, research and campaigning work continues, as does our commitment to raise awareness and build communities. Our new women's project, funded by Comic Relief, will enable us to throw some light on the challenges that women refugees and women in the UK asylum process face. Our annual conference in November focussed on this important and critical issue.

We remain vibrant, robust and focussed on delivering our strategic priorities and continuing to work with our valued partners in Scotland and the UK. We welcomed many new volunteers who have joined us this year to help with our work. We've been positively investing in our future as well.

We have developed new technology and tools to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of our services. We have expanded our fundraising capacity and are now working to find new ways of bringing in funds; and you may already have taken part in our first major fundraising drive, the Protection Appeal.

## Continuing to spread the word about refugees in Scotland

We have created a new website, which makes it easier for anyone to find information quickly and easily, and establish a presence in the world of social media, where we've built virtual communities of friends and supporters who'll stand up for refugees in Scotland.

So despite some of the biggest challenges we've had to face, we truly believe that we can join in celebrating 60 years of the UN Refugee Convention with an organisation that's strong for the future – and that can carry on helping those who need us most.

### David Fraser,

Chair, Scottish Refugee Council  
Board of Directors

### John Wilkes,

Chief Executive of Scottish Refugee Council

Helping those  
who need us  
most: our year  
in numbers



People from 41 nationalities, speaking 34 different languages, helped to make their first steps towards seeking safety. The most common languages of newly-arrived asylum-seekers were Arabic, Farsi, Tigrinya, Mandarin, Amharic and Kurdish-Sorani.

**FIVE** housing providers we've begun partnerships with, to help refugees get better access to permanent homes

advice sessions every single week to asylum seekers and refugees, ranging from quick help to complicated casework

**250**

**\* Two**

**833**

newly-arrived asylum seekers welcomed by our staff between January and September... that's 100% of those who've been sent to Scotland by the Home Office



**15,000**

hours of vital work carried out by our volunteers

refugee-led organisations receiving intensive help to make a difference in their communities

**60** of Scotland's most vulnerable children, those who have arrived alone seeking safety in Scotland, helped through our Guardianship project



\* A programme of **six** training work-shops started for refugee-led groups to help them build their knowledge

**334**

newly recognised refugees helped to settle in Scotland

**nine** new leaflets produced, with vital information for asylum seekers and refugees.

More than **30** information leaflets are now available in print and on our website, on everything from how to cope with destitution to getting healthcare

**20%** of households we helped moved on to settled housing



**475** refugees helped to get to grips with their housing rights

**93** people attended our free money management courses, delivered throughout the community



**71**

refugees using our services started their first job in the UK

**Meron Tadesse is 26, and fled conflict in Eritrea at the end of 2010. Thanks to our financial literacy courses she's now saving for a future and has opened her first bank account.**

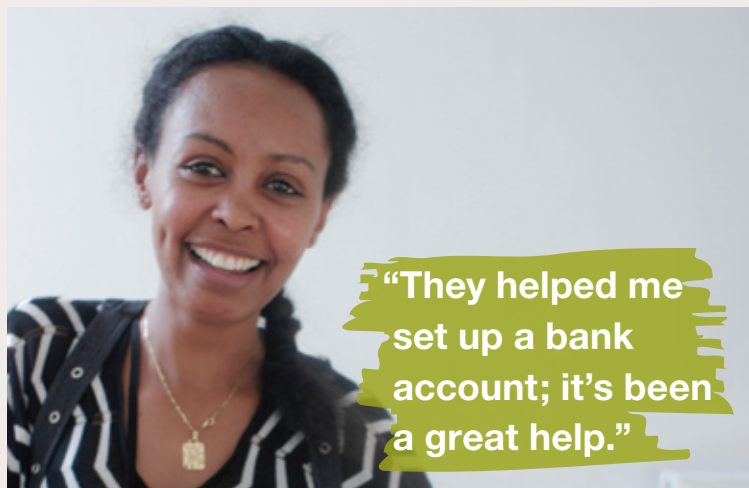
'I first arrived in December 2010, hidden in a lorry. I was born in Ethiopia, but had been living and working in Eritrea for many years. Everyone is afraid of the government there, life isn't normal.

'At the end of my journey the police picked me up and I asked for asylum; I was detained in Yarl's Wood, a removal centre near Bedford. It was like a prison. After a month I was released, and by chance I was sent to Glasgow. In a few days I got my refugee status and was allowed to stay.

'I was given a place in a homeless hostel in the west end of Glasgow. The staff were nice, but the people living there scared me. It was shocking. I saw bad things.

'After four months, I got myself a flat. But I was very confused, because I didn't have a bed, a cooker, or anything at all. My money was very limited so I didn't know how to pay for things.





**“They helped me set up a bank account; it’s been a great help.”**

‘I’d found about the money management courses at Scottish Refugee Council when I came in for an appointment one day. I learned about understanding bills and bank accounts, and how to deal with paperwork.

The system’s very different from what we do in Eritrea – although I had a job there, as a care worker, I didn’t have a bank account so I didn’t know about things like this.

‘They helped me to set up my bank account, and I got a sheet to fill in with my budget, and that’s been a great help. Now that I can legally work I just want to get a job. Step by step, it will happen.’

\* Our Financial Literacy Project has staged 37 free workshops throughout 2011, reaching more than 90 people at all stages of the asylum process.

Find out more about this work on page 9



## Helping others understand: our year in numbers

A record **42** training sessions on asylum and refugee issues, to delegates from more than **70** external organisations

**35** decision makers attended our round table discussion to hear more about the issues women refugees face



More than **1500** subscribers to our monthly e-newsletter



Our Sanctuary Project, which provides training on the mental health of asylum seekers in conjunction with fellow charity Freedom from Torture, won the Principles into Practice Award for diversity

## Five

legal seminars hosted, to improve the way legal professionals work with asylum seekers

# 200

articles in the media that we've played a part in, including widespread coverage of Refugee Week Scotland 2011

**800** fans of our Facebook page, and **1700** followers of our Twitter feed - receiving daily updates about refugees in Scotland



**150** people came along to our autumn conference, 'Raising Refugee Women's Voices' - we were fully booked!



**8** social housing providers we've begun partnerships with, to help refugees get better access to permanent homes

*Our research and advocacy led directly to a change in government rules, allowing refugees to be reunited with more of their family members*

**Eight** people from refugee backgrounds supported to create *Courage*, a short film released to mark 60 Years of the UN Refugee Convention



**120** events staged during Refugee Week Scotland in partnership with **100** organisations - which meant a combined audience of **20,000** people

**4** research reports produced, including the first stage of a major three-year study into how refugees are rebuilding their lives in Scotland

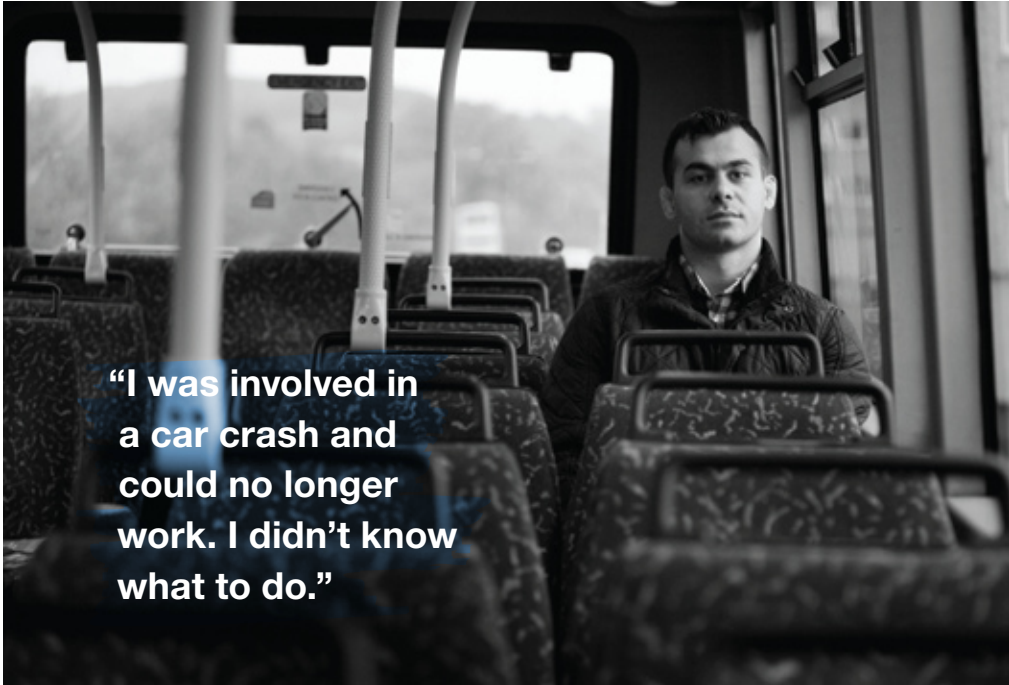
**173**

venues screening *Courage* during Refugee Week Scotland 2011, including the Document International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival, plus nearly 3000 views on YouTube

**Masoud Yosefi came to Scotland from Iran in 2008, fleeing persecution. He has always been a keen wrestler and since arriving in Scotland has been helped by Scottish Refugee Council's Refugee Integration Service to make his first steps in wrestling professionally for his new home.**

'Before I got leave to remain as a refugee I wasn't thinking about wrestling, I was too stressed by the asylum system. But I told the guys at Scottish Refugee Council my story about my life and how I'd been wrestling back home when I was a young child.

'They helped me get in touch with the Scottish wrestling team. They helped me to set up a bank account and get started with my sport. It was the staff at Scottish Refugee Council who said 'come on, you can do it'.



**"I was involved in a car crash and could no longer work. I didn't know what to do."**



'I ended up getting a job teaching wrestling to children in Oldmeldrum, near Aberdeen, which I loved, and was there for about seven or eight months. But not long ago I was involved in a car crash and could no longer work. I didn't know what to do.

'Scottish Refugee Council stepped in and helped me get an appointment for housing, they helped me apply for benefits because I wasn't able to work due to my injuries. They showed me I was not alone. They pushed me and made me happy

'Now I'm back at college building up my qualifications so that I can be a coach for all ages. I'd still love to wrestle for Scotland in the Commonwealth Games. I know Scottish Refugee Council will be behind me all the way.'

\* In 2011, 334 newly recognised refugees were helped to settle in Scotland by our Refugee Integration Team, 21% of whom went on to find their first job here.



Find out more about this work on page 9

**Our finances explained**

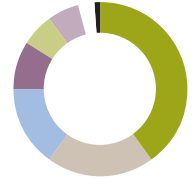
**These are figures for the financial year ending March 2011**

*This is money we get from the Home Office to advise people seeking safety. These funds were dramatically reduced in early 2011*

**Total Income**

**£3,756,436**

UK Border Agency, services for people seeking asylum	1,504,419	<b>40%</b>
UK Border Agency, services for refugees to integrate	736,230	<b>20%</b>
Scottish Government funding to help us achieve our strategic aims	580,000	<b>15%</b>
Grants from other bodies	355,676	<b>9%</b>
Scottish Government funding for individual projects	207,482	<b>6%</b>
<u>Donations from charitable trusts</u>	226,198	<b>6%</b>
Investment and other income	93,918	<b>3%</b>
Funding from local authorities	52,513	<b>1%</b>

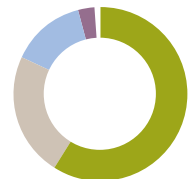


*We're trying to build this up for next year so that we have a more diverse source of funding for the future*

**Total Expenditure**

**£3,438,228**

Providing advice services from our two Glasgow offices	2,035,630	<b>59%</b>
Advocating for refugees through our research, policy and communications work	786,997	<b>23%</b>
Helping refugees to build their skills and experience	491,361	<b>14%</b>
Running the organisation itself	107,193	<b>3%</b>
Cost of bringing money into the organisation	17,047	<b>1%</b>



*These are a lifeline for hundreds of asylum seekers and refugees each year*

## Our funders

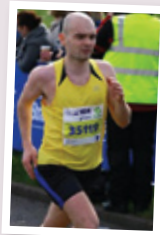
Here's a massive thanks to all of our funders, without whom we'd never have been able to do the work we've done this year. Your support has meant the world not just to us, but to people whose lives depend on what we do.

Big Lottery Fund	HBOS Foundation
Cash for Kids	North Lanarkshire Council
Comic Relief	Paul Hamlyn Foundation
Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund	Scottish Government
Educational Institute of Scotland	South Ayrshire Council
Endrick Trust	Strathclyde Police Community Partnership Fund
Falkirk Council	UK Border Agency
Glasgow City Council	West Lothian Council

## And everyone else!

Thank you to all of our donors, volunteers, members and regular supporters. You can read some more about two of them on page 20.

This year, we'd like to give a special thanks to Mark Rafferty and Vanessa Miller, who took part in the Great Scottish Run in September, together raising more than £600 to help us help refugees in Scotland.




**Berthe Patricia Nganga, 44, fled war-torn Congo Brazzaville in 2003 after her family were targeted and killed for their political beliefs. She was granted leave to remain in the UK in August 2011. She is a member of the Refugee Women's Strategy Group, which is supported by Scottish Refugee Council.**

'You know, being an asylum seeker is not an easy life. I was a paediatric nurse in Congo Brazzaville, working in the local hospital and in my mother's chemist. She was killed by the government because she didn't support them. Then in 1998, my husband fled the country, because he was part of the opposition party too.

'In 2003 I fled. People were after me because of my husband, so I had to get away. But the Home Office didn't believe me. It's so frustrating; as an asylum seeker you're not allowed to work, you're not allowed to do full-time courses... it can make you crazy.

'After spending my first few years in the UK in and out of detention, I came to Glasgow.



**"People were after me because of my husband, so I had to get away."**



'I came here to the Scottish Refugee Council and they did everything to give me support, and two and a half years ago I became part of the Refugee Women's Strategy Group.

'The group helps women get information and advice about everything to do with asylum. It gives you strength.

'We have changed things, too. Now women seeking asylum in Scotland can ask for childcare when they are interviewed at the Home Office; that's because we wrote a letter asking for that change.

'Now I'm free from the Home Office, but I want to continue being part of the Strategy Group to help other people. They helped me see that I'm not the only one.'

\* Our Comic Relief-funded project 'Raising Refugee Women's Voices' kicked off this year. Through it, we've already helped the Refugee Women's Strategy Group release a report on access to jobs.

Find out more about this work on [page 12](#)



### **Edgar Prais, volunteer**

'I'm the son of refugees, who came to Scotland in 1939. If this country hadn't taken them in, I wouldn't be here today.

'I was a criminal lawyer for 40 years, and now I'm retired I feel a duty to fight the corner for people who can't. At

Scottish Refugee Council I'm helping people whose claims for asylum have been refused but who still need our support.

'The staff always have time for me, and the training is better than anything I had in my career.

'For me, the only way to overcome misconceptions about refugees and people seeking asylum is to get involved. That way you can see the reality people face.'

**Find out more about volunteering by calling our coordinators Gün Orgun or Rosanne Alexander on 0141 248 9799.**



### **Sheila, donor**

'A while back I read a statistic that said there were 14 million refugees in the world. It really stuck with me.

'I feel frustrated over the lack of understanding there is around refugees and asylum seekers. People

often don't understand the situations people have come from and have been forced to flee.

'I support Scottish Refugee Council because it links what's happening in the developing world to what is happening here in Scotland. Scottish Refugee Council helps people who have come from really tough backgrounds – it makes them less invisible.'

**There are so many ways you can help us to continue helping refugees and people seeking asylum in Scotland. Here are just a few...**

### **Donate**

All your donations, small or large, regular or one-off, make a massive difference in helping us to help refugees in Scotland

### **Campaign**

We're working to improve how refugees are treated by the government, and by the public. You can stand with us to push for change in attitudes and laws

### **Volunteer**

You only need to spare a few hours a week to make a difference to hundreds of lives

### **Fundraise**

Many Scots have found fun and easy ways to raise money for refugees, and you can join them

### **Give as you live**

Do you shop online? Register to donate as you shop, at no extra cost to you

### **Become a member**

Sign up for membership, as an organisation or an individual to be more involved and have your say in how we help refugees in Scotland

**Find out more on our website at  
[www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk),  
or call Chi My Ta on 0141 248 9799**

# Your donation will make a huge difference to refugees in Scotland



## Please fill in your name and address

Title	<input type="text"/>
First Name	<input type="text"/>
Surname	<input type="text"/>
Home address	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>
Postcode	<input type="text"/>
Email	<input type="text"/>
Home phone	<input type="text"/>
Mobile phone	<input type="text"/>

We would like to keep in contact with you about our work, upcoming news and fundraising activities, using the contact details you have supplied. If you would prefer not to receive any further correspondence from us please tick the box

### Data Protection:

As a valued supporter of Scottish Refugee Council, we will treat your details very carefully. We promise we will not share your personal details with any other external organisation.

## Don't forget to Gift Aid it!

Gift Aid is the UK Government scheme that adds 25p to every £1 you donate at no cost to you, allowing Scottish Refugee Council to do even more to support refugees in Scotland.

If you are a UK taxpayer, please tick the following box and allow us to claim Gift Aid.

I am a UK income tax payer. Please treat all the donations I make to Scottish Refugee Council from this date and until further notice as Gift Aid donations.

*giftaid it*

Full name	<input type="text"/>
Signature	<input type="text"/>
Date	<input type="text"/>

Please remember to notify us if your circumstances change. You must pay UK Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the tax the charity reclaims on your donation in the tax year.

## No stamp required – Return this form to

Scottish Refugee Council  
FREEPOST NAT 3349  
Glasgow  
G2 7WZ

## I wish to make a single donation

2011A

I want to donate £20  £50  £100  or  
other £  to Scottish Refugee Council by  
MASTERCARD / VISA / DELTA / SWITCH / MAESTRO

I have enclosed a cheque

Cardholder's name

Card number

Valid from    Expiry date

Security code     
(3 figure number on the reverse of the card)

Switch card issue no

Signature

Today's date

## I wish to support Scottish Refugee Council with a regular donation

By supporting our work with a regular donation you will help us plan our services for refugees more effectively.

Please pay Scottish Refugee Council the sum of £5  £10  £20  Other £

(please specify) from my account every **month / quarter / year** (please delete as appropriate)

until further notice beginning from: DD/MM/YYYY

Please complete the mandate below:

### Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

Please send this completed instruction to:

Scottish Refugee Council  
FREEPOST NAT 3349  
Glasgow G2 7WZ

Name(s) and address of account holder(s)

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms   
Address   
  
Postcode

Bank/Building Society account number

Branch Sort Code

Name and full postal address of your Bank/Building Society

To: The Manager   
Address   
  
Postcode

Service User Number

CAF, Kings Hill, West Malling,  
Kent ME19 4TA

CAF Ref No. FS2399

#### FOR CAF OFFICIAL USE ONLY

This is not part of the instruction to your Bank/ Building Society

Date of first payment on or after:

#### Instruction to your Bank or Building Society.

Please pay CAF Re SCOTTISH REFUGEE COUNCIL Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain within CAF Re SCOTTISH REFUGEE COUNCIL and if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature

Date

**Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account.**

This guarantee should be detached and retained by the Payer

## Direct Debit Guarantee



- This guarantee is offered by all Banks and Building Societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits
- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit, CAF Re SCOTTISH REFUGEE COUNCIL will notify you ten working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request CAF Re SCOTTISH REFUGEE COUNCIL to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request

- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit, by CAF Re SCOTTISH REFUGEE COUNCIL or your bank of Building Society, you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society – if you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when CAF Re SCOTTISH REFUGEE COUNCIL asks you to
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a copy of your letter to us.



Scottish Refugee Council is an independent charity dedicated to providing advice and information for people who have fled horrific situations around the world.

We have been advocating and campaigning for the rights of refugees since 1985.

**To find out more, sign up to our e-newsletter by going to our website, [www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk)**

**Join us on:**



[www.facebook.com/scottishrefugeecouncil](http://www.facebook.com/scottishrefugeecouncil)



[www.twitter.com/scotrefcouncil](http://www.twitter.com/scotrefcouncil)

### **Contact Details**

Scottish Refugee Council  
5 Cadogan Square  
(170 Blythswood Court)  
Glasgow G2 7PH

T 0141 248 9799

F 0141 243 2499

E [info@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk)

Scottish Charity Number  
SC008639  
Company Number  
SC145067

Advice line for asylum  
seekers and refugees  
0800 085 6087

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and Joyce McMillan

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[www.angelacatlin.com](http://www.angelacatlin.com)