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BIG LOTTERY FUND SUPPORTING A SAFER, STRONGER SCOTLAND

The Big Lottery Fund has awarded the Scottish Refugee Council close to £1 million to help to create safer, stronger communities where residents from diverse backgrounds are more able to live and work together.

The **£944,543** funding from BIG, the largest of the National Lottery Good cause distributors, will enable the Scottish Refugee Council to challenge and change misconceptions about asylum seekers and refugees living in Scotland. The Scottish Refugee Council believes this grant will provide the opportunity for communities, both incoming and receiving, to improve their mutual understanding.

Today's award has been made through the Big Lottery Fund's Investing in Communities portfolio and will be used to further the Scottish Refugee Council's work in the areas of policy, research and communications to bring about a better understanding of the reality of life for refugees, asylum seekers and indigenous communities in Scotland.

Announcing today's funding, **Big Lottery Fund Scotland Committee Chair Alison Magee** said: "The language surrounding asylum can increasingly become entrenched in negative terms and the representation of the issues surrounding asylum seekers and refugees is often about a drain on 'our' services and jobs. This can sometimes lead to reactions from local communities which easily stereotype, are based on misinformation and are detrimental to good relations between communities. "

"The 'Making Scotland a Safer Place for Refugees' project aims to start with the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers, enabling their voices to be heard, providing correct information and bringing communities closer together. It aims to give expression to Scotland's egalitarian spirit and make the country a safer stronger place."

Stewart Maxwell, Minister for Communities and Sport, said: "This Big Lottery Fund award to the Scottish Refugee Council is to be warmly welcomed. Contrary to the myths which surround this subject, no-one chooses to be a refugee and it's therefore very important that accurate information is put into the public consciousness.

"Scotland has a proud tradition of welcoming people who find themselves in very difficult circumstances and we will continue to do so, because we know that refugees can and do make a positive contribution to Scottish society. But it's vital we ensure that established communities are aware of the issues facing asylum seekers, to promote understanding and empathy."

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Sally Daghlian Chief Executive, Scottish Refugee Council, said, "Scottish Refugee Council is delighted at this grant from the Big Lottery Fund. It will allow us to increase our ability to influence for positive change by ensuring that accurate and up-to-date research and information about refugees in Scotland is readily available and clearly understood.

"An awareness of the real issues facing refugees and asylum seekers is essential to overcome negative attitudes and prejudice, which in turn will lead to safer and more integrated communities, a benefit not just for refugees, but for the whole of Scotland."

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Full details of the Big Lottery Fund programmes and grant awards are available at:

www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Notes to Editors

The Big Lottery Fund rolls out close to £2 million in Lottery good cause money every 24 hours which together with other Lottery distributors means that across the UK most people are within a few miles of a Lottery-funded project.

- The Big Lottery Fund, the largest of the National Lottery good cause distributors, has been rolling out grants to health, education, environment and charitable causes across the UK since its inception in June 2004.
- On 1 December 2006 the Big Lottery Fund was officially established by Parliament and at the same time assumed the residual responsibilities of the dissolved National Lottery Charities Board (Community Fund) the New Opportunities Fund, and the Millennium Commission. The Fund is building on the experience and best practice of the merged bodies to simplify funding in those areas where they overlap and to ensure Lottery funding provides the best possible value for money.
- Since the National Lottery began in 1994, 28p from every pound spent by the public has gone to Good Causes. As a result, over £19.5 billion has now been raised and more than 250,000 grants given out across the arts, sport, heritage, charities, health, education and the environment.

SCOTLAND

The Big Lottery Fund has £257 million to invest in Scotland's communities before 2009 as follows:

£202 million for Investing in Communities

£25 million for the Young People's Fund

£30 million for Awards for All

***Investing in Communities** is the Big Lottery Fund Scotland's new funding portfolio which consists of four investment areas:

Growing Community Assets, to help communities obtain, improve, develop, manage, sustain and protect assets that will help them become stronger and more sustainable.

Life Transitions to support people at times of change in their lives – at different life stages and in different circumstances.

Supporting 21st Century Life to provide support to people and communities to deal with the pace of change, enjoy positive relationships, improve quality of life, and establish connections across 21st century society.

Dynamic and Inclusive Communities (DINC) to fund improvements to the capacity and infrastructure of national, intermediary or second tier organisations, to allow communities to engage in civic society and influence civic processes so that they can build strong and more inclusive local communities.

The Fund's future funding plans are detailed in the manifesto 'Investing in Communities available online at http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/assets/pub_manifesto_scot.pdf