



scottish
refugee
council

30
years

**Annual
Review
2014**

Who we are and what we do

Scottish Refugee Council is an independent human rights charity dedicated to supporting people who have fled horrific situations around the world. We believe in a Scotland where people seeking refugee protection are welcome and where people seeking sanctuary from persecution can live safe and dignified lives.

The individuals, families and children we work with are from countries where conflict is rife, or human rights abuses are commonplace. This year we worked with people from Syria, Sudan, Iran, Eritrea and beyond - all united by the need for safety.

At Scottish Refugee Council we help people rebuild their lives by providing essential information, advice, support and a listening ear.

Our Family Keyworker Service provides a lifeline to families with children under eight years old as they navigate the asylum system and come to terms with life in a new country. Our Holistic Refugee Integration Service supports people recently granted refugee status in all aspects of their new lives, including housing, health, education and employment.

Our award-winning **Scottish Guardianship Service, in partnership with Aberlour Child Care Trust** supports children and young people who arrive alone and separated from their families.

We run **award-winning arts projects** to promote better understanding between communities, and every June we present **Refugee Week Scotland**, a cultural celebration of refugees' contribution. We work with individuals and refugee communities to promote integration and support the **Refugee Women's Strategy Group** and the **Scottish Refugee Policy Forum**.

We campaign for policy change, raise awareness about issues that affect refugees and work hard to make sure refugee voices are heard in the media, in their communities and at government level.

Judith Robertson

Chair of the Board



“This year has been historic for Scotland with the biggest debate on our future in living memory.

Our new strategic plan launched this year set out Scottish Refugee Council's priorities for the next period to support and speak out for refugees. The organisation managed another year of significant change and continued to deliver against every priority.

As a board we also kept a focus on ensuring good stewardship of our resources in these difficult times of economic challenges and austerity.

I thank each and every member of the staff and volunteer team for the dedication, passion and commitment they bring to Scottish Refugee Council.

Finally this year I step down as Chair and leave the board after ten years. I thank all my fellow board members for their support during my time as Chair. I take with me many happy memories and a sense of pride at the many achievements Scottish Refugee Council has delivered. It will continue to deliver for refugees in Scotland and I wish it all the very best for the future.”

Judith Robertson, Chair of the board

John Wilkes

Chief Executive



"I am proud to report on another year of significant achievements for Scottish Refugee Council.

We continued to inform and improve public attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers through securing much positive coverage of refugee issues in the media. This remains a challenging task given prevailing attitudes in the UK on immigration and asylum.

Our policy and advocacy work remains an important priority. We produced a number of significant reports including one highlighting problems in the provision of asylum accommodation. We produced a groundbreaking study on tackling female genital mutilation in Scotland, launched with Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice and Communities, Alex Neil MSP. This report will provide an important platform for future work.

We worked with the Commonwealth Games organisers to enable the inclusion of refugees as volunteers at the Games in Glasgow.

We are a proud partner in the Scottish Government's New Scots refugee integration strategy, which underpins our work to support refugees building new lives in Scotland.

Our ever successful Refugee Week Scotland festival has become one of Scotland's mainstream annual cultural events.

We continued to provide support and help to hundreds of people through our holistic integration services and have developed new services to support families in the asylum process and destitute asylum seekers.

Scottish Refugee Council played a key role in advocating for refugee issues during Scotland's 2014 referendum campaign and we were pleased to be featured by OSCR as an example of good practice. We are delighted that some of our recommendations to improve the asylum system have been adopted by the Smith Commission and we will push for their implementation.

All of these outcomes would not be possible without the energy and commitment of all the staff and volunteers who I am privileged to work alongside. I also thank Judith Robertson, the outgoing Chair, and the whole board for their ongoing support and guidance.”

John Wilkes, Chief Executive

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Rashida

Third Country National Service

“I left my home in Syria in 2011 and escaped to Jordan, where I lived for three years. Those were the worst years of my life. It was a struggle in every way - physically, emotionally, financially. I faced a lot of problems and was very depressed.

Then I came to Glasgow, just five months ago, and to be honest I was in shock at first. It is such a completely different place from where I come from and where I belong.

At first I was so depressed and confused I even thought about going back home despite everything I'd been through there. But my husband, who had arrived here ahead of me, encouraged me to keep trying, to believe that Glasgow could become our second home and that life would get better.

Scottish Refugee Council helped me a lot. When I arrived here my family had nothing at all and no financial support. Scottish Refugee Council's Third Country National Family Integration Service helped set this up for us and also arranged to get the heating in our house working again. Coming in for appointments with my caseworker helped me feel like I could depend on myself a little more and that I could make life better for my family.

All of this helped to make life in Glasgow look more possible for us and after a couple of months I was able to start doing things on my own, like meeting the teachers at our children's school.

Gradually I have started to feel more positive about the future. This has made a big difference for our children. Life has been so hard for them but now they are in school and making friends again. My plan now, when my health improves, is to volunteer so I can help other people with their problems.”

Rashida is supported by Scottish Refugee Council's Third Country National Family Integration Service, which works with refugees going through the challenges of integration and rebuilding their lives following family reunion.



Aso

Peer Education Project Worker

“Refugees and asylum seekers are real treasures of knowledge and experience. As well as their language skills and the other qualifications they bring to Scotland, each individual has a unique insight into the experience of integration in a new country.

In my role as Peer Education Project Worker, I train and support refugee volunteers to work with others in their communities to learn from each other’s experiences of rebuilding their lives in Scotland. We encourage people to share their ideas and resources around different aspects of life here, for example we are currently looking at how people can learn from each other’s experiences of health care in Scotland. In doing so, people can support themselves and each other on their journeys. It is a very positive way of working that focuses on people’s assets rather than their problems.

The volunteers we train through the project develop their natural communication and leadership skills while working in a professional environment. This helps improve their confidence and job prospects.

I have a lot of sympathy and understanding for refugees as I have been through the process myself. I came to the UK from Kurdistan two years ago. I didn’t know anything about Scotland but after I received refugee status I decided to stay here and make it my new home.

I have had difficult times over the years I have been away from my country, but volunteering and now working at Scottish Refugee Council helped me feel I was moving forward in my life and that things would get better.

Because I have experienced this myself I am able to support other volunteers and seeing them feeling energised, positive and confident makes me know my work is on the right track.”

Scottish Refugee Council’s Peer Education Project supports refugees to share and learn from each other’s experiences of accessing services in Scotland.



Esther
Services and Development Manager

“It is so important to me that Scottish Refugee Council is able to support families seeking safety in Scotland. Leaving your home behind can be very traumatic, especially for children. Families need all the help they can get as they try to rebuild their lives in a new place while finding their way through the asylum system at the same time.

The beauty of our new Family Keyworker Service is that it allows us to work with families in a long term and sustained way, getting to know people more deeply and finding out about their and their children’s specific needs. It’s been a learning curve, an exciting one, working with families in this new way, and it’s so rewarding to know that we are making a positive impact on people’s lives.

It’s also important to me to make sure that people who have very recently arrived in the country get the support that they need, so, along with other organisations in Scotland, we do our best to help new arrivals where and when we can. We never stop working to identify new ways to help people seeking asylum, including those who are destitute and have absolutely nothing.

I’ve worked at Scottish Refugee Council for ten years now and I’ve seen a lot of changes over the years. I know that change is a constant thing but I also know that the people most affected by change are the people most in need of our help. This is what drives all of us to continue doing the work we do.”

Over the last twelve months Scottish Refugee Council’s Keyworker Service for newly-arrived asylum seeking families has helped more than 100 families with children aged zero to eight get the health, education, housing and other support they need on arrival in Scotland.

Our year in numbers

We worked with journalists from all sectors of the Scottish media to promote fair and accurate coverage of refugee issues. And **we supported more than 30 refugees** to tell their stories on **film, TV, radio** and in **print**.

World Refugee Day concert headliners **Young Fathers** won the **Mercury Prize** and **Scottish Album of the Year** award for 2014.

Refugee Week Scotland hosted **130 arts, cultural and community celebrations in 70 venues** across Scotland.

We recruited and supported around **20 volunteers to deliver peer support workshops** with refugee communities in Glasgow.

The Scottish Guardianship Service, run in partnership with Aberlour Child Care Trust, **supported 160 young people from 25**

countries who have been separated from their families.

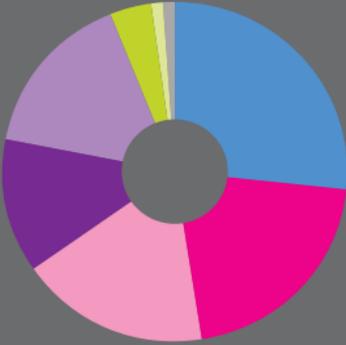
7,000 people followed our updates on **Twitter** and nearly **3,000 people liked our Facebook** page. **60,000 people visited our website** for information about refugees in Scotland.

Our community engagement team supported **64 people from 17 different community organisations to gain new skills**. We ran **four referendum-themed events, attended by around 160 people**.

Our **Holistic Integration Service helped 648 households rebuild their lives in Scotland** through helping them access training, education, employment and housing.

Through the **Refugee Women's Strategy Group**, we worked with **20 women** from refugee community organisations to highlight the key issues affecting women.

These are our figures for the financial year ending March 2014



Income

- UKBA - Advice Services
£730,291
- Scottish Government – Strategic
£550,000
- Grants from other bodies
£482,041
- Charitable Trusts
£339,239
- Scottish Government – Projects
£422,919
- Investment & Other Income
£94,410
- Local Authorities
£28,873
- Donations & Memberships
£19,483

Total

£2,667,256



Expenditure

- Refugee and Asylum Services
£1,356,250
- Integration Support
for Refugees
£631,592
- Research, Advocacy
& Campaigning
£515,980
- Strategic Management
& Governance
£121,330
- Cost of Raising Voluntary
Income
£21,906

Total

£2,647,058

Scottish Refugee Council would like to thank its loyal supporters, including the many individuals and community groups who have given so much. We are very grateful to all our funders including:

Big Lottery Fund; Comic Relief; Celebrate Lottery Fund; Celtic Foundation; Cragnish Trust; Creative Scotland; Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund; Direct Distribution; Educational Institute of Scotland; European Integration Fund; Glasgow City Council; Glasgow Housing Association; Glasgow Life; Goldberg Charitable Trust; HBOS Foundation; Henry Smith Charity; Heritage Lottery Fund; Hugh Fraser Foundation; James Weir Foundation; Margaret Murdoch Charitable Trust; Martin Connell Charitable Trust; New Gorbals Housing Association; NHS; North Lanarkshire Council; Paul Hamlyn Foundation; Philanthrobeats; Rosa Fund for Women and Girls; Royal Bank of Scotland; The Russel Trust; Scottish Book Trust; Scottish Government; South Ayrshire Council; Southside Souk; Strathclyde Police Community Partnership Fund; UK Border Agency; Urban Union; Vodafone; West Lothian Council; Wheatley Group; WM Mann Foundation.

Thank you to all our board members:

Ms Judith Robertson (Chair), Ms Liz Leonard (Vice Chair), Mr Dougie Campbell (director, was vice chair until September 2014), Mrs Nicola Munro (director), Ms Twimukye Mushaka (refugee director), Mr Laurie Naumann (chair of the finance and audit committee), Ms Sue Moody (director), Ms Muleya Mundemba (refugee director), Ms Umaima Musa (refugee director), Mr James Jopling (director), Ms Dorothy Murray (director), Ms Katharine Jones (director).

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

Support our work:

Donate: text RFG31 followed by the amount to 70070 or go to www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/donate

Fundraise: if you can help with fundraising contact kirsty.white@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk or call 0141 223 7921

To find out more, sign up to our newsletter by visiting our website: www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk

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Patrons

Baroness Helena Kennedy, Lord McCluskey
and Joyce McMillan



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