



South West Regional Gathering Review Report



This project is part funded by the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. Making management of migration flows more efficient across the European Union.

Section 1 Event Details



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|-------------------------|--|
| Event Title | South West Regional Gathering |
| Event organised by | Regional Integration coordinator for South West |
| Event Venue | University of West of Scotland, High Street, Paisley |
| Event Date | Saturday 19th October 2019 |
| Event Start – End times | 11.00 – 3.00pm |



Section 2 Event Agenda Regional Gathering in Paisley, 19th of October 2019

Where: University of the West of Scotland, High Street, Paisley.

When: Saturday 19th October 2019 from 11am to 3pm

| Time | Area |
|---------------|--|
| 11.30 – 11.50 | Introduction and Speeches |
| 11.45 – 12.15 | Music and Performance |
| 12.15 – 3.00 | Lunch and Information Stalls/Workshops |
| 11.30 – 11.40 | Introduction from member of Scottish Refugee Council's Refugee Advisory Group and Associate Vice Principal of Research at University of West of Scotland |
| 11.40 – 11.45 | Speech by Councillor in Motherwell and Wishaw, local activist and co-founder of Wishaw to Calais |
| 11.45 – 12.00 | Musical performance by Musicians in Exile |
| 12.00 – 12.15 | Musical performance |
| 12.15 – 3.00 | Lunch and Information Stalls relating to New Scots Integration Themes (Health, Housing, Education, Employment and Community) |

“Thank you for organising the gathering in Paisley today, it was very enjoyable. It was an opportunity for our families to connect both with each other and others. Hopefully we can work together to provide them with more opportunities in the future.”

Section 3 Attendees

Total number of attendees

The registration sheet indicates that 61 people attended the event. Unfortunately, this did not account for everyone that attended the event as there were children, entertainers and general attendees that did not sign in. Taking these factors into consideration a more reasonable attendee estimation would be in excess of 80 people.

Organisations attending in an official capacity

- NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (Health and Community)
- CRC Care (Health and Community)
- Shelter Scotland (Housing and Community)
- Skills Development Scotland (Education, Employment and Community)
- Scottish Refugee Council (Staff, Board and Volunteers)
- West of Scotland Regional Equality Council (Community)
- Invest in Renfrewshire (Employment)
- Children's Activities (Face painting etc)
- Sewing2gether All Nations – Children's and Family Activities (Arts and Crafts)
- The Big Welcome (Charity)
- North Lanarkshire Council (Local Authority)
- East Ayrshire Council (Local Authority)
- Renfrewshire Council (Local Authority)
- University of West of Scotland (University) – Provided Security Staff, Event Staff, Catering Staff as well as Venue and Catering.
- Councillor (Speaker)
- Musicians in Exile (Musicians)
- Musician
- Spoken Word Artist, Poet and Rapper
- Event MC

Please note that there had been registration and also verbal confirmation from groups in the East Renfrewshire, South Lanarkshire and Dumfries and Galloway area but due to various issues, including minimal staff, travel distance, family issues etc, they were unable to attend on the day. Apologies were sent both in advance of and after the Gathering.

'Groups' contributing to the event

– e.g. musicians, entertainers, caterers etc.

- NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (Health and Community)
- CRC Care (Health and Community)
- Shelter Scotland (Housing and Community)
- Skills Development Scotland (Education, Employment and Community)

Section 4 Event Reporting

Short description of the theme/aims of the event and its intended outcome

Scottish Refugee Council celebrated diversity and the cultural richness that refugees bring to the South West of Scotland this October.

This family-friendly regional gathering was held on Saturday 19th October 2019 at the University of the West of Scotland, High Street, Paisley.

The event offered an accessible and interactive platform for refugees living in Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire, North Lanarkshire, Inverclyde, Dumfries and Galloway and Ayrshire to come together and engage with the New Scots Integration Strategy.

As well as the opportunity to engage with some of the key themes of the strategy, including housing, health, education, employment and community, the event was fun-filled with speeches, performance poetry, music, information stalls, food, refreshments, activities for children and more on offer!

This event was developed and planned with the intended outcome being that Social Connections (improving social bridges, links and bonds) amongst refugees would be improved.



Section 5

Key messages/outcomes

Key Conclusions

- University of West of Scotland (were keen to build a stronger partnership with Scottish Refugee Council where support can be provided both ways. A follow up meeting was held on Tuesday 29th October 2019 where an interest was expressed in supporting future Scottish Refugee Council events and developing a more 'joined up' approach with Scottish Refugee Council.
- A 'follow up' meeting including all key stakeholders from both the SE and SW Gatherings was scheduled for Monday 9th December 2019 to further examine the key conclusions and recommended actions from both Gatherings. Due to a lack of availability from key stakeholders this meeting was postponed until January 2020.
- The vast majority of attendees agreed that music was a good way of showcasing different cultural experiences, showing commonalities and unifying people – something which undoubtedly improves social bridges, links and bonds for all citizens, including refugees.
- The Gathering served as a useful means of confirming legitimate concerns held by refugees noticed during the past 9 months as a Regional Integration Coordinator in the South West of Scotland. The recurring topics of concern in relation to access to employment and further education were brought up.

Recommended Actions

- Continue strong relationship with UWS through regular updates and meetings with the aim of collectively striving to continue to improve integration of refugees in the South West of Scotland and beyond.
- Arrange and deliver a 'Follow Up' consultation for key stakeholders involved in the planning and delivery of the SE and SW Gatherings to identify common issues and new insights and move forward.
- Continue to promote and encourage the use of the arts (music, poetry etc) at similar events as a means of improving integration and strengthening unity amongst communities.
- Continue to connect refugees, and those working closely with them (councils, charities), with relevant support agencies – particularly in the employment and education realm. Also continue to raise these concerns with relevant agencies on behalf of the aforementioned groups.

“The vast majority of attendees agreed that music was a good way of showcasing different cultural experiences, showing commonalities and unifying people.”

Section 6

Event Evaluation

Lessons Learned

- Around a fortnight prior to the Gathering we were notified by UWS that external catering would not be permitted. After dedicating specific time to obtaining quotes from local caterers this problem could have been avoided if the question about food and refreshments had been put to the University upon confirmation that they would host the event. In future, I will ensure that such issues and risks are accounted for and that fundamental questions such as these are posed upon initiation of the event planning. A potential solution to this could be the creation of an issue/change register which will help to navigate and 'firefight' any potential pitfalls or obstacles. This situation also meant that further negotiation time, between myself and the UWS staff, was required in order to find a suitable solution to this – the event management team at UWS were quoting a far higher price than what was initially budgeted for food and food was originally planned to be purchased at a lower price from a local, preferably refugee-led, caterer. As a consequence of this, UWS agreed to provide free catering for this event. Although this was challenging the eventual outcome was a success and helped to build stronger links between Scottish Refugee Council and UWS.
- There were also late cancellations/non-arrivals from those who had registered on Eventbrite and provided verbal/written confirmation that they would attend the Gathering. Generally, reasons for this were due to circumstances beyond our control (e.g. Family issues, travel distances, availability of staff/volunteers to accompany refugee families); however, in hindsight, some of these cancellations could have been overcome. For example where particular Councils do not have adequate staff available to accompany refugees, in future, I will contact nearby Councils to see whether they could potentially support.
- There were also late cancellations from speakers and performers that were due to speak and perform at the Gathering.

Positives

- Overall, I feel that the Gathering went well with a vast majority of the feedback being positive. The feedback will be the best indication of how the event went and how it helped those that attended improve social connections overall but I will provide a brief summary of some of the positives below.
- Social Links improved – refugees from SW Scotland were able to link up, learn from and receive advice from key stakeholders in the Housing, Health, Education, Employment and Community sectors. After initially experiencing the benefits of improving social bridges and bonds at the Gathering, the meetings with the representatives of the institutions present acted as a close to the event providing the refugee families with a 'third dimension' of social connection.
- Social Bridges improved – refugees from SW Scotland were able to link up, learn from and 'mix' with people of a various ethnicities at what was a diverse, multicultural Gathering. Cultural understanding was clearly broadened by this event and it went 'two ways' meaning that social cohesion was undoubtedly improved for those in attendance. This could be attributed to the musical performances – Scottish Hip-Hop being a potentially new experience for many of the refugee families in attendance and Middle Eastern folk music being a potentially new experience for many of the Scottish attendees.
- Social Bonds improved – refugees from SW Scotland were able to link up and build and develop relationships with people who are in similar positions to them but in different geographical areas of SW Scotland – and contributed to the realisation for many of the refugee families that support for 'New Scots' is nationwide and that they are part of a distinct, well supported and, generally, welcomed community in Scotland.
- The presence of 2 freelance arts and activities workshops also helped to engage women and children in particular in creative activities as well as serving as an informal way of improving English.

Section 7

Attendee Evaluation

Feedback from stakeholders (Performers, Speakers, Agencies)

“Thank you for organising the gathering in Paisley today, it was very enjoyable. It was an opportunity for our families to connect both with each other and others. Hopefully we can work together to provide them with more opportunities in the future. It was a pleasure being there and the families had a great time thank you. Thank you again for a lovely event.”

“Thanks for having us! It was a great event. I thought it was a perfect mix of information and informal, fun activity. The music was absolutely brilliant too. Congratulations on getting it all together. Looking forward to seeing the pictures!”

“Thank you for inviting us on Saturday. I thought the event was great- it had a relaxed atmosphere and was welcoming to everyone who attended. The musical performances were brilliant as well!”

“Thanks for the invite. Keep up the good work. Great day, great people. Loved the rapper and beatboxer.”

“Thank you for having me I really enjoyed and was busy as face painting/glitter tattoo popular with the children.”

“Thank you for inviting me to your very well organised event. I have enjoyed the day and found it very useful for networking and happy to be involved in the future events. Keep in touch.”

“I appreciate all your effort on such event. Everything was well organised and thanks for inviting the Musicians in Exile and providing the PA as well. Hope to do more event and collaborations in the future.”

“The event was very good. Great atmosphere and culture sharing through performances. I got very useful information particularly on health services and employment support available. Thank you for the opportunity.”

More feedback from event participants

“Fabulous event. I felt so at home amongst the diverse participants.”

“I was amazed by the tunes! Brilliant mix of info and fun.”

“Thanks for the opportunity to gain extra and very useful information. Great, too, to meet new people and hear what they’re doing.”

“Interesting ‘taste’ of what is happening in Scotland – New Scots etc”.

“I thought the event was worth the time. It was a friendly gathering and very entertaining.”

“Everyone looks so happy, kids felt very welcome and happy”.

“I would recommend more of similar seminar very often. It was so educating and I appreciate everyone that attended”.

“Interesting to talk to Sharing Lives Sharing Languages projects supported by Scottish Refugee Council, and other projects with lots of services available to refugee groups.”

“It was very helpful to give the families in East Ayrshire a different view of refugees here, Helps them connect. Thank you.”

“It was a beautiful day, I met new people, I liked the music & food, and there was a lot of beneficial information”.

“I really liked the day, we met new friends, and we listened to nice music”.

“It was a very nice day, we got lots of information that will be useful for the future”.

“It was a very nice day today, thank you”

“I really enjoyed my day today & I got to meet new friends & I’ve learned lots of good new information”

“It was a very nice welcoming, I really liked the day, thank you so much”

“Everything is beautiful”

“It was a very nice meeting, we had fun, we learned a lot, the kids enjoyed themselves”

“We find it useful, we met new friends, we got new information, thank you”

“Thanks for all the information”

“It was a very nice day today, thank you”

“Thank you so much, I liked the music, there was the opportunity to meet new people, thank you”.

“An education for this rather older lady: learnt what “beat box” is!”

“It was a lovely day. I enjoyed activities xx”

“Really enjoyed the contrasting styles of music and very good to meet people”

“Scottish Refugee Council needs publicity materials and pop up boards for events”

“Fabulous event. I felt so at home amongst the diverse participants”.

“I have made new friends”

“I was amazed by the tunes! Brilliant mix of info and fun”

“Never knew beat box and rap go together. Fab music all day”

Below, are links to social media posts and direct quotations from event attendees which provide feedback in relation the SW Regional Gathering:

<https://twitter.com/Pachedu01/status/1185582471192162305>

https://twitter.com/angela_feeney/status/1186199769560965120

<https://twitter.com/evi1603/status/1185987572981481473>

<https://www.renfrewshire24.co.uk/2019/10/18/scottish-refugee-council-to-host-celebration-of-diversity-and-cultural-richness-at-uws-tomorrow/>

<https://twitter.com/scotrefcouncil/status/1186199348440424449>

https://www.facebook.com/ScottishRefugeeCouncil/posts/10156271165510194?__tn__=-R

<https://twitter.com/LizLeoM/status/1185526182562975744>

https://twitter.com/rona_alexander/status/1185541690649698304

https://twitter.com/angela_feeney/status/1186199769560965120

“The Gathering served as a useful means of confirming legitimate concerns held by refugees.”

Section 8

Actual Expenditure

Travel

The difference between the estimate in the provisional budget for travel and the actual budget for travel is vast. It was expected that there would be a large contingent travelling from Dumfries and Galloway for the Gathering. An individual return train ticket from Dumfries and Galloway to Glasgow, and then Paisley, costs in excess of £20.00 per individual. This, alongside travel cost estimations (including mini bus hire, train and bus) from the other areas in the South West region were taken into account when preparing this provisional budget. As was explained earlier there were no representatives from the Dumfries and Galloway and also from other particular Local Authority areas thus reducing the amount of expenditure required to cover travel costs for attendees. Further to this, Local Authorities (such as North Lanarkshire Council for example) paid for the travel of refugee families coming from their individual areas which further brought the actual cost down.

Catering

Issues regarding the payment of catering for the Gathering are discussed in detail on page 5 of this report.

Performers

There was an overestimation of the expected hourly rate of potential performers for the Gathering as well as an overestimation of the number of performers required in the provisional budget. This explains the large difference between the 2 budgets.

Creche/Childcare

It was decided after the creation of the provisional budget that there would be no formal crèche or childcare for the Gathering as it was now to be promoted as a 'family fun day' style event where general children's activities (arts and crafts, facepainting) were provided instead. The cost of hiring the freelance activity providers was less than the estimated cost of hiring a crèche for childcare.

Performers

Originally, the plan had been to have around 5 interpreters (including 2 onstage interpreters) for the Gathering. After further planning and review this was deemed to be unnecessary and thus the reduction in cost stated in the Actual Budget.

The actual expenditure of the event was 20% of the amount that had been estimated in the provisional budget. This was partly due to negotiation and the kindness of UWS but I will use the experience of this Gathering to ensure that such overestimations will be avoided in the future.



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Scottish Charity Number: SC008639
Company Number: SC145067
OISC Reference number: N200100084



This project is part funded by the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. Making management of migration flows more efficient across the European Union.

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Scottish Refugee photography by: Scott Preston