



SUPPORTING AND EMPOWERING REFUGEES



IMPACT REPORT 2012 2013



Message from our Chief Executive

I joined the Refugee Council as Chief Executive in March 2013, intent on ensuring that the Refugee Council plays a pivotal role in building a strong and effective asylum and refugee rights movement in the UK. Previously I ran a smaller refugee protection charity, Asylum Aid, so as well as knowing our cause well, I also understand the crucial importance of a strong Refugee Council for those who seek protection from persecution in the UK.



The Refugee Council is the most prominent civil society voice on refugee matters in the UK. It's an honour to have been entrusted with the job of leading the organisation at a time that is particularly challenging for refugees and those that support them.

This Impact Report provides a flavour of the remarkable and transformative work we do with some of the most excluded people in our society. Whether achieving better health outcomes for those traumatised by the persecution that drove them into exile; or assisting newly recognised refugees to secure decent, affordable, housing; or helping young people who were trafficked for exploitation to reach a place of safety and the prospect of a new life; or enabling refugee doctors or teachers to obtain employment in the UK; we change people's lives for the good, on a daily basis.

We're proud of what we achieve, but this is no time to rest on our laurels. In an age of austerity, and against a backdrop of negative public attitudes and policy on immigration, life in the UK just keeps getting tougher for the people we exist to help.

We must raise our game, focus our attention and energy on what matters most to refugees in the UK and prioritise only those activities that really make a difference to their lives.

We began that process this year by refreshing our aims, objectives and priorities.

Our vision is of a UK that is a welcoming place of safety for people who seek refuge from persecution and human-rights abuses abroad. The goal we've set ourselves is to make the Refugee Council a confident, resolutely independent and highly influential advocate of refugee protection rights in the UK and Europe.

The authority that we will need to fulfil this mission must be rooted in strong, mutual, relationships with refugee communities and our peer NGOs, and in our expert provision of specialist, transformative, services. And we've also set ourselves the challenge of spearheading an inclusive, cooperative, and coherent protection movement, articulating a shared asylum reform agenda and combining with mainstream civil society to ensure refugee voices shape public services and policy.

As the present refugee crisis unfolding in the countries bordering Syria demonstrates all too tragically, providing refugee and humanitarian protection to people fleeing conflict, oppression and persecution will be as acute a need in the 21st century as ever before.

As we have been for over 60 years, the Refugee Council will be ensuring that the UK plays its part in responding to that need as we seek to achieve our fundamental strategic aims:

- for those seeking asylum, we want fair and just decision making;
- for those granted refuge, we want equality of opportunity to lead fulfilling lives;
- for those denied protection, we want understanding and humane treatment;
- for all refugees in the UK, we want respect and dignity.

I hope we can count on your continued support.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Maurice Wren'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a light blue background.

Maurice Wren

www.facebook.com/refugeecouncil 

[@refugeecouncil](https://twitter.com/refugeecouncil) 

www.refugeecouncil.org.uk 

With thanks to Bill Knight for many of the images in this report.

Advice and support for asylum seekers and refugees 2012 – 2013

We deliver a range of advice and support services for asylum seekers and refugees which help and support them through the asylum process and in rebuilding lives in the UK.

Total advice sessions delivered

49,976



(Combination of face-to-face, telephone advice and briefings. 14,463 of these were unique clients. One client may receive several advice sessions)

40%  60% 

OLTAS

OLTAS our Own Language Telephone Advice Service delivers advice over the telephone in a **choice of 8 languages**. Now in its second year this innovative service has enabled clients to get accurate 'one stop service' information quickly and cost effectively. **The number is free to call, even from mobiles.**

Total advice sessions delivered by OLTAS

30,160



(9,199 of those were face-to-face)

Destitution

People not granted refugee status, but who cannot return to their home country because it is unsafe to do so often end up destitute without any means of support. **We provide three drop in centres in London providing emergency provisions and advice.**

3,498

 clients for the first year

This includes clients who attend several times and all the centres. The number of unique, individual clients who have attended from 24/5/12 – 25/6/13 = 520

Total Therapeutic Casework Unit sessions held

2,494



Helping a total of 825 clients in the following projects:

- London Powerful Women project 34%
- London Health Access Project 24%
- Psycho Educational Therapeutic Groups project 3%
- Young Adults Torture Survivors project 5%
- London Therapeutic Case Work project 27%
- Brixton Health Access 8%

Clients accessing therapeutic support presented with or showed symptoms of the following:

- Depression 29%
- Anxiety 29%
- Psychotic symptoms 8%
- Self Harm 4%
- Suicidal ideation 29%

Children

During 2012 the Children's Section provided **over 1,700 individual advice sessions** to clients and **accompanied children to 1,300 visits** to legal advisers, age assessments, home visits, social services, Home Office appointments and other appointments within the asylum process. 300 particularly vulnerable clients were allocated an individual adviser for additional support.

Total advice sessions on children's behalf with agencies, foster carers and clients

4,144

including face-to-face advice sessions, email and telephone advice



We provided a range of educational and recreational activities to more than 50 children including:

- Our weekly Social Evening
- Camping trips
- Visits to farms
- Visits to art galleries

Total female victims of trafficking who received intensive emotional and practical support

30+

 many of them receiving refugee status after prolonged intervention from ourselves

In 2010, we worked with **36** young people held in detention

26

 of these were released after being assessed as a child after our intervention

In 2011, we worked with
38 young people held
in detention
22 of these were released after
being assessed as a child
after our intervention



In 2012, we worked with
30 young people held
in detention
24 of these were released after
being assessed as a child
after our intervention



So far in 2013 we have worked with **10 young people held in detention, 9 of these young people have been released** after being assessed as a child after our intervention.

Helping to integrate into life in the UK

Employment advice services

Over the last 12 months (April 2012 to March 2013) **we have provided a range of employment support activities to approximately 120 people** regardless of their career backgrounds.

To help people progress into training and employment we offer a wide range of activities, including:

- Specialist advice and guidance
- English language support
- Employability courses and workshops
- Mentoring
- Specialist training
- Work placements

Total new clients registered in the past 12 months

120

53  **67** 

We supported 9 clients who have a disability

Total who achieved sustainable employment

25



Total supported into volunteering roles

17



Total helped into training and to achieve a qualification

31



Average face-to-face advice sessions we deliver per month

60



Refugee Health Professionals work

We also have a specialist service for refugee health professionals supported by the NHS in London. Working in partnership with other organisations and hospitals we provide:

- Specialist English language training
- Training in preparation for the clinical and communication skills tests which are part of the requalification process
- 3 month clinical attachments within one of our partner hospitals
- Help with identifying and applying for suitable employment within the NHS

Over the last 18 months:

Total refugee doctors from 14 countries were supported through our specialist provision

40



Total refugee doctors were helped to pass the required examinations to become UK doctors

28



Total refugee doctors were supported through clinical attachments

25



Total refugees became paid doctors

21



Health Befriending Network

- 311 clients given support to access health services
- 698 clients connected with RCOs
- 2736 clients briefed on health access

Total volunteers recruited

152

65 of them from a refugee background



Provided training to

240

volunteers



The project benefited from

20,606 hrs

of volunteer contribution to supporting clients



275

Clients befriended by volunteers



Housing

Housing Resettlement and Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme in London has since Jan 2012 to today:

140+

Clients given specialist housing information advice and guidance



42 Clients in sustainable private rented accommodation

30 Clients into supported accommodation



Working to improve the lives of refugees

Campaigns

Our 'Dignity in Pregnancy' campaign, in partnership with Maternity Action, highlighted the inhumane treatment of pregnant women seeking asylum in the UK. These women are particularly vulnerable, they may have experienced torture or sexual violence and may need specialist care during pregnancy.

The Home Office often moves pregnant women around the county to different housing, sometimes repeatedly; interrupting the specialist care they are receiving and uprooting them from friends and family. As well as the health risks to mother and baby this leaves women isolated and vulnerable; many give birth alone and struggle to cope as new mothers in an unknown place with little or no money to provide for their babies.

We asked supporters to ask their MP to write to the Home Secretary to ask her to protect pregnant women seeking asylum and their babies.

1,354

Supporters took action



427 Individual

MPs were contacted



As a result of this work, the Home Office have agreed to re-write their guidance on the dispersal of pregnant women. We are currently in detailed discussions with them on this.

Research

We published four research reports in the period. Topics include refused asylum seekers '*Between a Rock and a Hard Place*', post 16 education '*A Lot to Learn*', maternity '*When Maternity Doesn't Matter*' and the detention of children who have been assessed as adults '*Not a Minor Offence*'.

4

Research Reports were published



Fundraising

This year saw an amazing response to our Syria appeal. A young refugee Hassan, who attended our therapeutic casework unit kindly let us tell his story. His story helped us raise vital funds for others like him, who have made it here after fleeing brutal conflict.

Our Syria appeal has
(so far) raised

£80,328

1,700 kind donations



Here is Hasan's story.

In Syria we suffered racism and prejudice against us Kurds, with no access to education or a job. We had to be careful what we said about the government and the Assad's rule. We lived in fear, with no freedom of speech or fair elections. Once the uprising began, **I participated in demonstrations, which was extremely dangerous.** Eventually I was unable to go work, I had to leave my parents home, because I and others had attended demonstrations, our lives were in danger. We had to hide, seeking shelter in different places.

I was arrested by the secret intelligence with three others we were taken to an unknown building and threatened. Then they took us to a prison that had been newly created due to the surge of people being arrested. There were a lot of people including women and children. **We were in a cell with 25 other men, I was subjected to aggressive interrogation, I could hear people being beaten, tortured and women screaming, begging for mercy.**

After 25 days I was released. One of the men arrested with me has never been seen or heard from since. His family tried to look for him, but the secret intelligence warned them to stay away. Other men were beaten badly, we were treated worse than animals, no food or clean water for days. We hardly slept as the cell was too small, we took turns in sleeping.

After my release, I went home to my family.

We were warned not to participate in any more demonstrations, but I couldn't help myself, I returned to demonstrating, now there were more people, the atmosphere was breath-taking. **My family were getting harassed by the secret intelligence, they would come to my home looking for me, so I went on the run.**

I left my country because my life was in danger. I was very upset, angry, I didn't want to leave my parents, but my dad forced me to go.

A man helped cross the border at night from Syria to Turkey. A car was waiting for us, we were lucky to get away, it took days to achieve, with military personnel at the border. If caught I would've been imprisoned and tortured or killed.

I flew to London; the man helping me had links at the airport to get me through with my Syrian passport.

I claimed asylum at Heathrow. The immigration officer took me to a room where there were 5 others like me; I was interviewed and kept overnight. The next morning at a police station I was interviewed again, then taken to court where the judge sent me to prison for 3 months for having no ID papers. I was worried, thinking prison was going to be like the prison in Syria. I became stressed, I had run away from persecution, yet was being persecuted again here in the UK. I didn't speak to my family for 2 months whilst I was in prison. This caused me immense grief as I knew my parents were very worried. No one offered me any support or help, only a translator and a lawyer. After 2 months I was released, I immediately found a phone and I called my family. My parents were crying, and my dad who I've never heard cry before, sobbed on the phone. They thought something terrible had happened to me. The situation had got worse after I left and my brother was missing.

I worry about my family; the situation in Syria is terrible and frightening. I suffer with anxiety, I can't sleep at night, I get panic attacks, not sure what will happen to my family, I feel stressed, I can't feel happy because I know my family are not. I worry about whether I will ever see them again.

I would love to go back to Syria but not whilst the regime is still present, if I went back now I would most certainly be killed.



To make a donation to our work please call **020 7346 1205** or go to **www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/donate**

The Refugee Council relies on voluntary contributions from trusts and individual supporters to make all our work possible. Sadly, space does not allow us to thank them all, but we would like to make a special mention of: Comic Relief, Crisis, The Scotshill Trust, Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation, HSCVF, Batchworth Trust, Goldsmiths' Company, Big Lottery Fund Local Food Programme, Basil C Bellhouse Charitable Trust, Volant Charitable Trust, Alan and Babette Sainsbury Charitable Fund, Evan Cornish Foundation, 29th May Charitable Trust, the Home Office and the Rowan Charitable Trust, without whom our vital work would not be possible.

Financial Information Income & Expenditure Account

Statement of Financial Activities for
the year ended 31 March 2013

Incoming Resources 2012/13 £' 000

Incoming resources from generated funds Voluntary income

Donations, legacies and other voluntary income 2,578

Investment income 48

Incoming resources from charitable activities

Direct services to refugees and asylum seekers 5,208

Campaigning and policy 66

Capacity building, education and training 404

Total incoming resources 8,304

Resources expended 2012/13 £' 000

Total cost of generating funds 713

Charitable activities

Direct services to refugees and asylum seekers 7,389

Campaigning and policy 654

Capacity building, education and training 1,047

Governance costs 52

Total resources expended 9,855

Net incoming/(outgoing) resources (1,551)

2012/13 was a transitional year and we anticipated drawing on our reserves to cover costs such as relocating our services.

Independent Auditor's Statement to the Trustees of The British Refugee Council

We have examined the summarised financial statements of The British Refugee Council.

This statement is made solely to the trustees, as a body in accordance with the terms of our engagement. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to the trustees those matters we have agreed to state to them in this statement and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity's trustees as a body, for our work, for this statement, or for the opinions we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and auditor

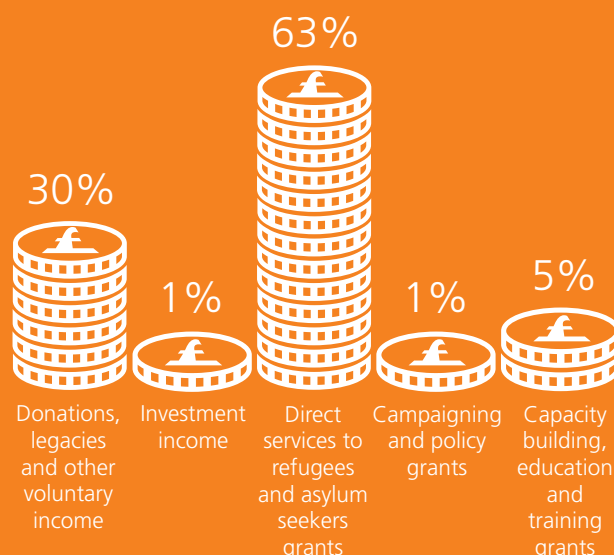
The trustees are responsible for preparing the summary financial statements in accordance with applicable United Kingdom law and the recommendations of the Charities SORP.

Our responsibility is to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summary financial statement within the impact report with the full financial statements and trustees' report and its compliance with the applicable requirements of section 427 of the Companies Act 2006 and regulations made thereunder. We also read the other information contained in the impact report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the summarised financial statements.

Basis of opinion

We conducted our work in accordance with Bulletin 2008/3 'The auditors' statement on the summary financial statement' issued by the Auditing Practices Board for use in the United Kingdom. Our report on the full annual financial statements describes the basis of our opinion on those financial statements and the trustees' report.

Where did our 2012 / 2013
money come from?



Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2013

Fixed assets £' 000
Tangible fixed assets 623
Investments 4

Current assets
Debtors 2,126
Cash at bank and in hand 3,726

Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year (882)

Net current assets 4,970

Total assets less current liabilities 5,597

Provisions for liabilities (210)

Net assets 5,387

Funds

Unrestricted funds

General 1,800

Designated 2,804

Total unrestricted funds 4,604

Restricted funds 783

Total funds 5,387

Opinion

In our opinion the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements and the trustees' report of The British Refugee Council for the year ended 31 March 2013 and complies with the applicable requirements of section 427 of the Companies Act 2006 and regulations made thereunder.

BDO LLP

Karen Thompson
BDO LLP
Statutory auditor
London, UK
11 November 2013

BDO LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales (with registered number OC305127).

Trustees statement

The summarised financial statements are not the statutory accounts but a summary of information relating to the statement of financial activities and the balance sheet derived from the full audited trustees' report and financial statements of the charity, which were approved by the board of trustees on 11 November 2013. The auditors' statement under section 496 of the Companies Act 2006 was unqualified. Copies of the full annual financial statements have been filed with the Charity Commission and Companies House. These summarised financial statements may not contain sufficient information to gain a complete understanding of the financial affairs of the charity. The full audited trustees' report and financial statements may be obtained on application to the charity's central office at Gredley House, 1-11 Broadway, London E15 4BQ.

For and on behalf of the Council: Richard Foster, Chair, Heather Foster, Treasurer

Our mission

To be an influential and effective advocate of refugee protection rights, supporting and empowering refugees to lead safe, dignified and fulfilling lives, in line with the UK's international refugee and human rights commitments and obligations.

Board of Trustees

■ Rita Paulino – RCO ■ Richard Foster – Co-opted ■ Abbey, Graham – Co-opted ■ Sirak Hagos – RCO ■ Yen Nyaya – RCO ■ Heather Foster – Co-opted ■ Sunetra Puri – Co-opted ■ Dougie Campbell – NGO ■ Vaughan Jones – NGO ■ Ben Hopkinson – NGO ■ Hussain Hassan – RCO ■ Connie Mante – RCO

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**SUPPORTING AND
EMPOWERING
REFUGEES**

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