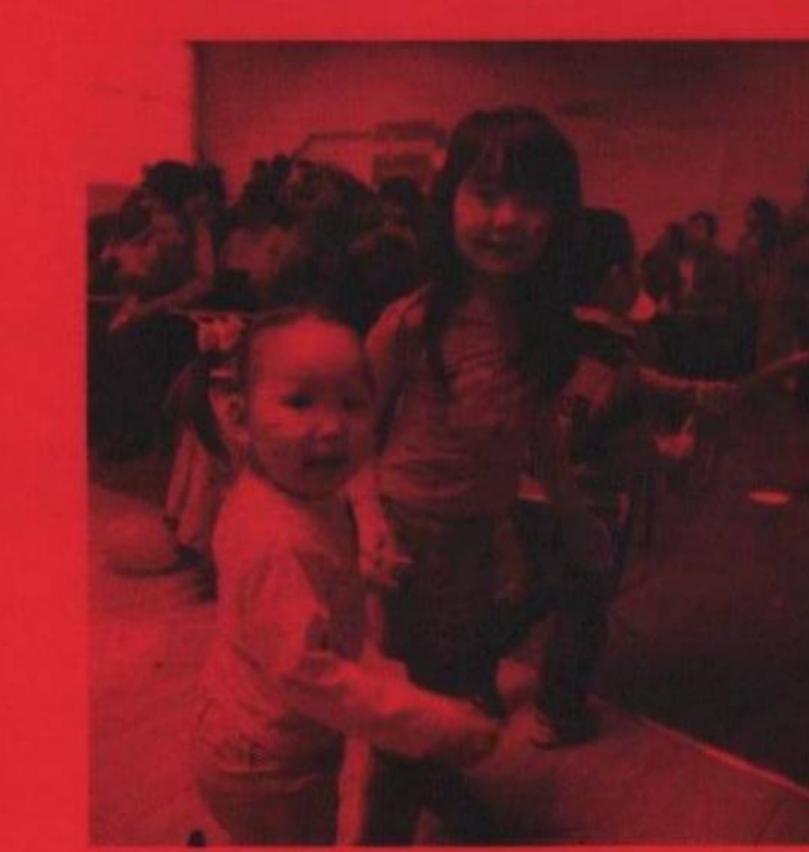
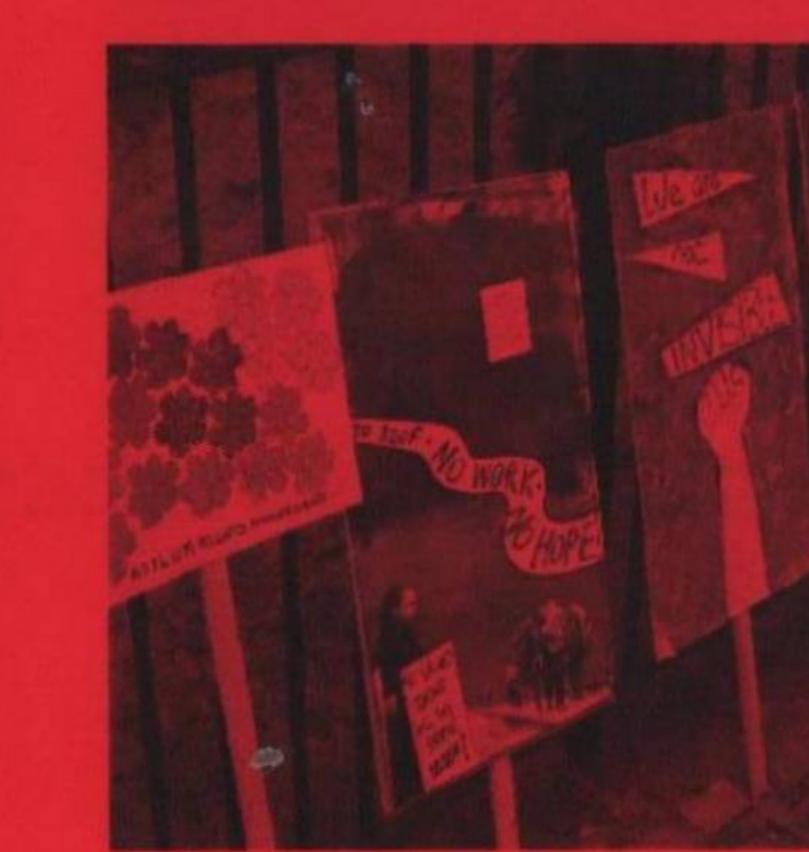
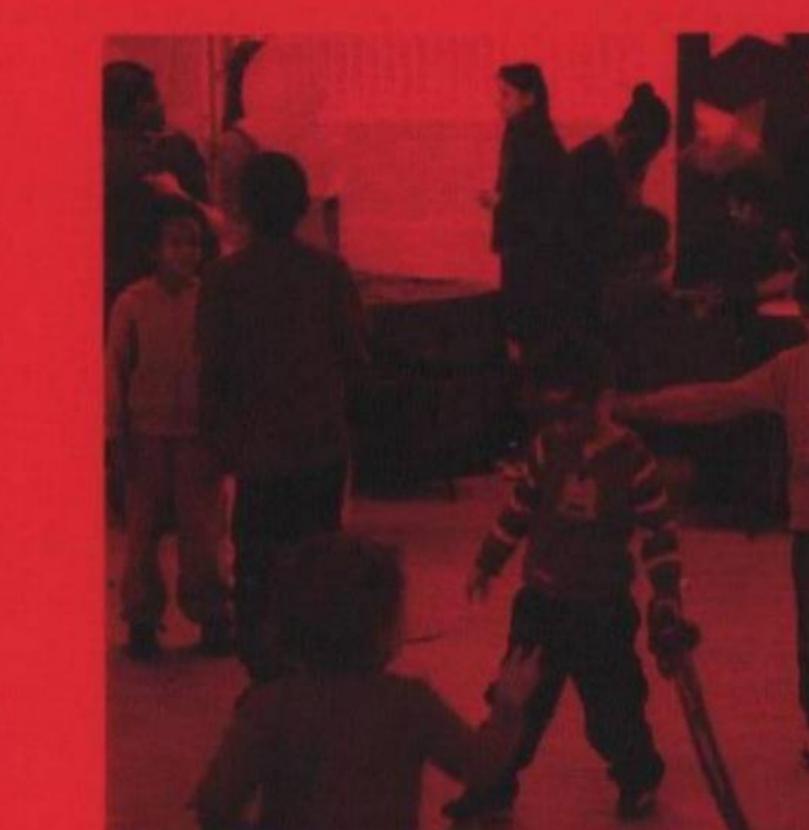


Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum

Annual Report



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Who's who at Refugee Forum: 2010 – 2011

Executive Officers:

Chair:	Patsy Brand	Vice chair:	Andrew Wilson
Treasurer:	Leo Keely	Secretary:	John Henson

Other Management Committee members (NB not all of those listed were able to serve for the full year):

Nancy Bonongwe	Vera Hau
Dave Hewitt	Julia Howell
Maggie Jones	Amdani Juma
Marie-Claude Kabazo	Mussie Kidane
Clara Ndlovu	Laurent Tchouleng
Waheed Ur-Rehman	Lynda Wilson

The Committee (which acts as the board of Trustees in terms of the Charity Commission and as Directors in terms of Companies House) met 12 times during the year and also held a strategic planning away-day.

Refugee Forum staff - 2010-11

Centre Manager:	Bea Tbolewska
Senior Adviser/Deputy manager:	Rakiba Khatun
Assistant Manager (Advice & interpreting):	Bahman Mohammed
Senior Administrator:	Imran Asif
Administrative Assistants:	Teresa Pacey Devlin & Tina Patel
One-Stop-Shop Adviser:	Fiona Broome
Benefits Advisers:	Janet Hannay (to December 2010), Mussie Kidane (from January 2011)
Health project worker:	Kinsi Clarke
Volunteer Coordinator:	Wesal Afifi
RCO support worker:	Stuart Brown
Children's Worker:	Liz Burrell
Training and Employment Adviser:	Vera Hau
Housing Support Worker (Temporary):	Simon Breen
ESOL tutors:	Naomi Jemmett & Sheila Jones
Caretaker & Cleaner:	Azad Mohammed
Refugee Futures Support Worker:	Julie Whitehead

Note: The following staff members were sadly made redundant in May 2011 as a result of funding cuts:

Refugee Futures 'Floating Support'

Team Leader:	Simon Breen
Support workers:	Sara Abraham, Sonia Bilkhu, Jasim Ghafur, Saeed Hassani & Amdani Juma
Interpreter:	Ismaiel Alwan
Reception Co-ordinator:	Victor Simonian (to May 11)



capacity across the region. Having suffered a 64% reduction in funding nationally, Refugee Action has had to rationalise service delivery by moving their regional office to Leicester with an outreach service being delivered in both Nottingham and Derby.

Chair's Report

In my last year's report I anticipated difficult times ahead owing to expected public sector cuts. Sadly this prediction was realised with a major cut in May, resulting in the loss of 6 members of staff, 5 of whom were refugees. Threats of further cuts have been hanging over the Forum all year and will continue into 2012. This has all meant a very stressful year for all staff and trustees, with the uncertainties making future planning problematic.

At the same time, cuts to UK Border Agency (UKBA) contracts experienced by Refugee Action and Refugee Support have increased pressure on the Forum to meet a wider range of support needs for both asylum seekers and refugees. The collapse of the Immigration Advisory Service this summer meant the loss of a major provider of legal representation and caused further problems.

The number of visits to the Centre for advice and support has increased this year by 50% to over 9000. In addition to those already mentioned, a major factor affecting demand this year has been the speeding-up of the UKBA's programme of clearing the backlog of 'Legacy cases'. This has brought positive decisions for many who had been in asylum limbo for up to 10 years and now needed help to start their new lives. But it has resulted in despair and fear of deportation for some who have been refused and are now destitute.

Another reason for the extra pressure on our reduced resources has been an increase in the dispersal of new asylum seekers to Nottingham as accommodation in the West Midlands has been closed down. Faster decision making by UKBA often means that individuals have had little chance to adjust, to get to know the City or learn English before coping with their altered circumstances and need a lot of help.

The funding uncertainties, redundancies and new challenges have taken their toll on staff and management but all have shown great commitment and determination to adapt and maintain the high quality of service that characterises the Forum. Much of the credit for this goes to our Manager, Bea Tobolewska, who has unstintingly supported staff through this difficult year, despite experiencing health problems.



As ever, volunteers have made great contributions to the Forum this year, continuing to run activities such as the Anti-Destitution support, the Tuesday Night project and assisting in running the centre and providing advice services. A special thank you must go to my fellow Trustees on the Management Committee who have had to take some painful decisions this year. We are also very grateful to our various funders and to our many members and supporters who assist us with donations.

2012 looks like being another difficult year for all at the Forum, but we are determined to fight to do all we can to maintain our capacity to support and provide a place of welcome for vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees.

Patsy Brand
Chair of Management Committee

Manager's Report

2011 has proved to be another busy year for NNRF. It has brought with it many changes. However, I continue to feel privileged to work here with the most fantastic, supportive people who place refugees and asylum seekers at the centre of all they do – a wonderful, dedicated and creative team of staff, volunteers and Management Committee members who make the Refugee Forum the unique place that it is. I would personally like to thank all of them for the commitment and enthusiasm they bring to the Forum despite the tough year we have had.

The change of government 18 months ago has brought with it many significant changes to what resources and services are available in Nottingham City to support refugees and asylum seekers. At the time of writing NNRF is still awaiting further information from both the PCT and Nottingham City Council about what we can expect for the next financial year. This will have an impact upon the function of our premises and relationships with our partner agencies, staff and the specific advice and capacity building work that we are able to provide to individuals and Refugee Community Organisations.

Sadly, we were hit quite harshly by the cuts from central government to 'Supporting People' Funding. The *Refugee Futures* Project lost almost 70% of its funding. The effect of this is that the team based at the Forum was made redundant in May with just one member of staff remaining, working to a new service specification contract. This scale of cut has also had a wider detrimental impact on our finances by reducing our income. Tragically, this has meant that other key members of staff were also made redundant, with some others being retained on a temporary basis. This is far from ideal but has enabled us to reconfigure and maintain services.

A personal word to those who had to leave us due to redundancy this year: You are all very greatly missed and we wish you well. We also had to say good-bye to Janet Hannay, our Benefits Adviser, who retired in March following a period of poor health. We miss you too!

That said, I am very happy to welcome Vera Hau, our Employment and Training Adviser, and Mussie Kidane, our new Benefits Adviser. I wish to thank both of them for the commitment and enthusiasm they bring to the Forum. This is especially so as they have both travelled through every aspect of the organisation - from service user to volunteer to Management Committee member to staff member. Their insights are of great value to me.

There have also been wider implications for the City and therefore ourselves with the loss and closure of the Refugee Action Nottingham office and their greatly reduced capacity across the region. Having suffered a 64% reduction in funding nationally, Refugee Action has had to rationalise service delivery by moving their regional office to Leicester with an outreach services being delivered in both Nottingham and Derby.

NNRF has been very happy to be able to support Refugee Action by enabling their weekly outreach appointments to be run from the Forum. The closure of the RA Nottingham Office has had one beneficial spin-off for us, bringing Eamon Collins (Kinsi Clarke's Refugee Action employed counterpart in the 'Into the Mainstream' Health Project) under our roof.

On another positive note, despite the cuts, we have over the last months had the opportunity to enter into new working partnerships with both the British Red Cross and the Nottingham Arimathea Trust, thus enabling us to develop our services and better respond together to address the needs of destitute and failed asylum seekers - some of the most vulnerable people in society.

It is important to add that without the dedicated contribution of each and every one of the volunteers who work with us we would not be able to continue to offer our current range of services or assist so many people who seek us out. I would also like to take this opportunity to mention the most valuable financial and other contributions and donations which are so generously given to us by our Members and supporters. Much of this goes towards our anti-destitution work. Thank you so much for your continued support.

Bea Tobolewska
Centre Manager

Communications

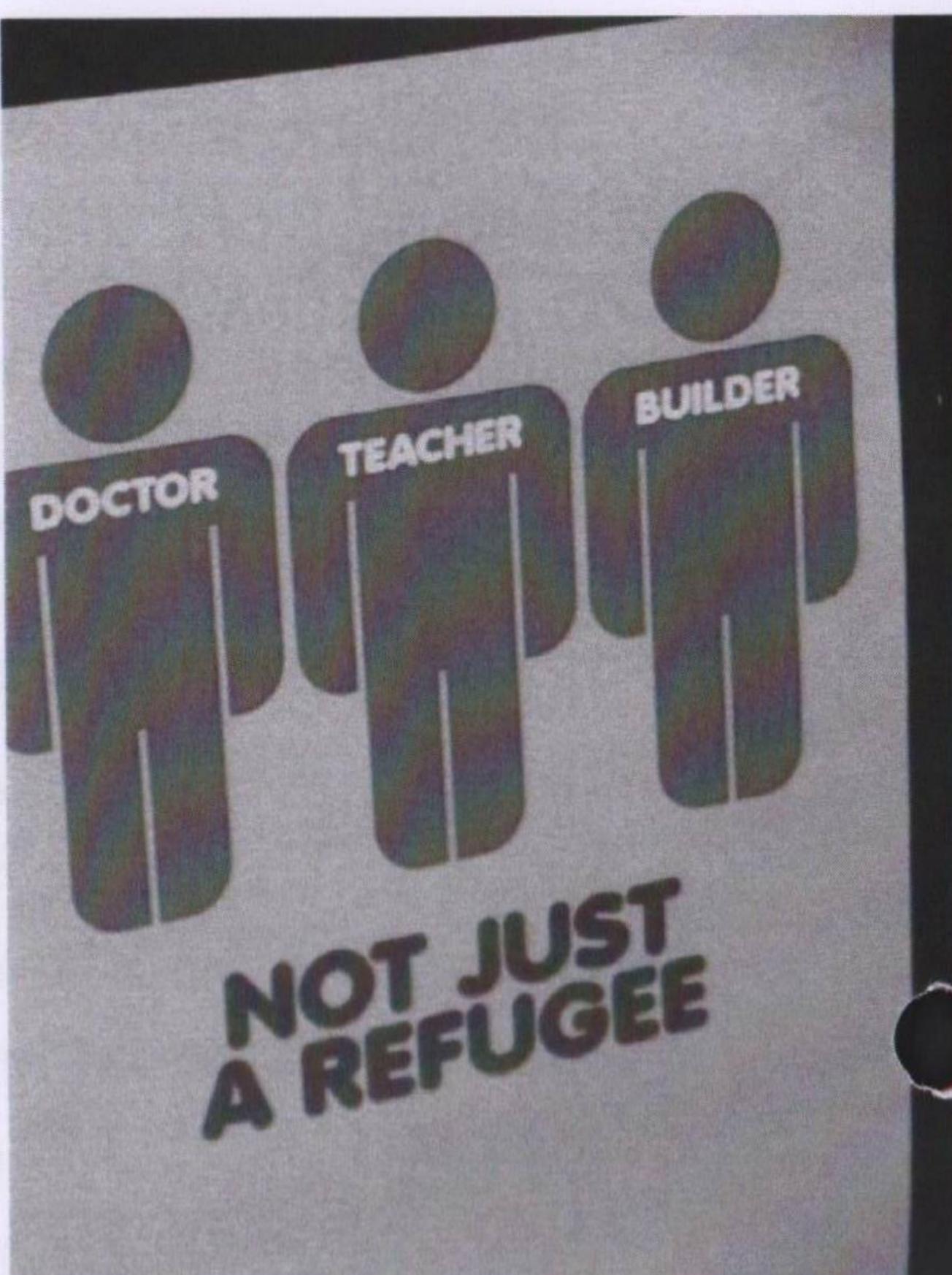
Enabling good communication between centre users, staff, volunteers, management committee and our membership and supporters is important to us.

The NNRF website (www.nottsrefugeeforum.org.uk) is managed by Bob Cann who generously continues to offer his expertise and time in providing us with this facility and updating it for us. We are enormously grateful for this service, so thanks are due to him on everyone's behalf.

The NNRF mailouts and the Newsletter are a regular feature in the inbox of many Members and supporters. The mailouts are posted out very regularly, having been researched and edited by Stuart Brown. Thanks to him too for his seemingly tireless efforts.

We are now also catching up with more contemporary modes of communication. NNRF can be found on Facebook, where regular posts are placed about recent news and information, issues faced by refugees and asylum seekers both locally and nationally, plus details about events and fundraisers. Many thanks to everyone who regularly contributes to this. Facebook users are encouraged to seek us out and become a 'friend of NNRF'.

Thanks also to Konnie Lloyd who regularly sends out information to us and on behalf of the Nottingham 'Citizens for Sanctuary' group www.citizensforsanctuary.org.uk and to Jonathan Silvey of Nottingham 'City of Sanctuary' group www.cityofsanctuary.org who also helpfully circulates information.



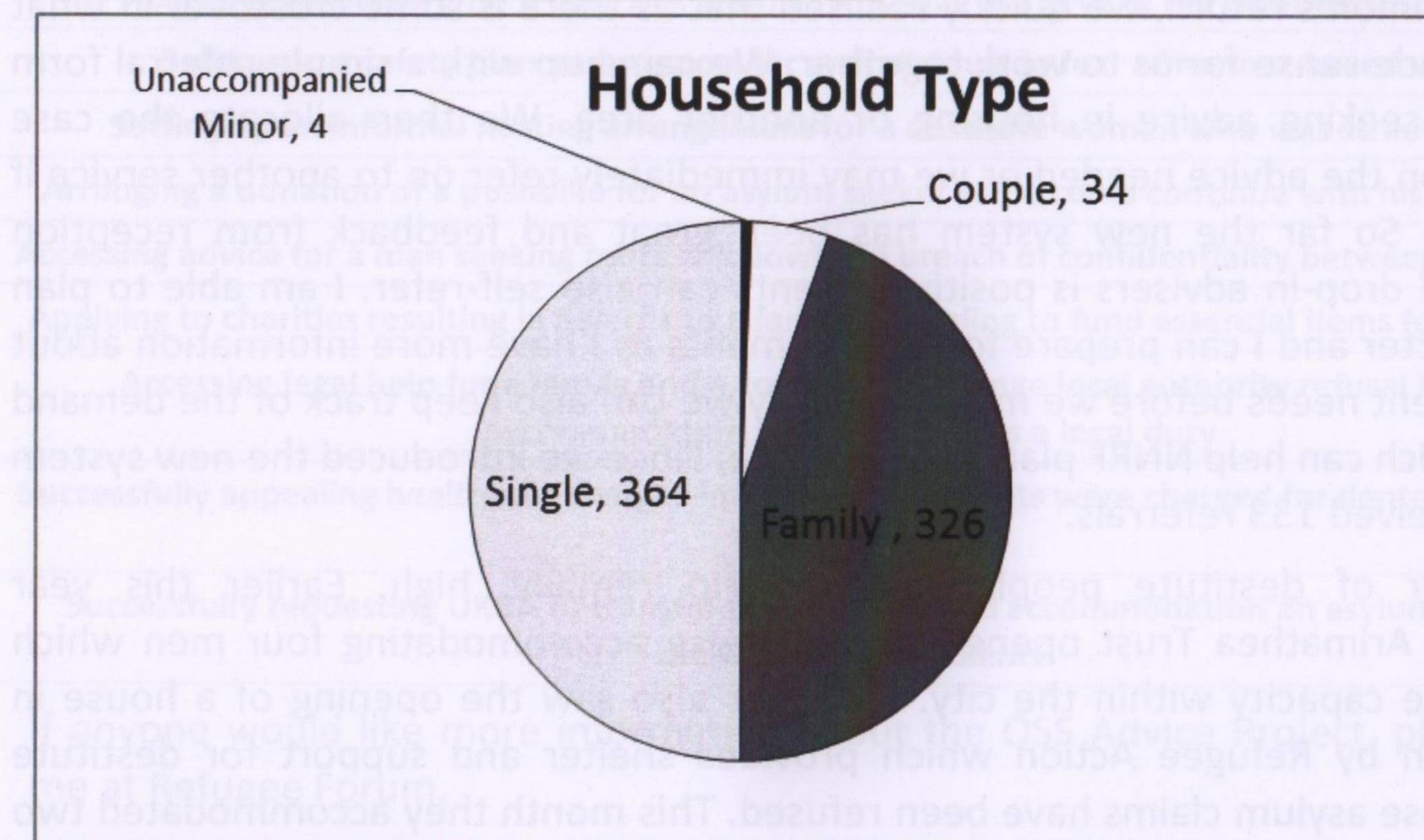
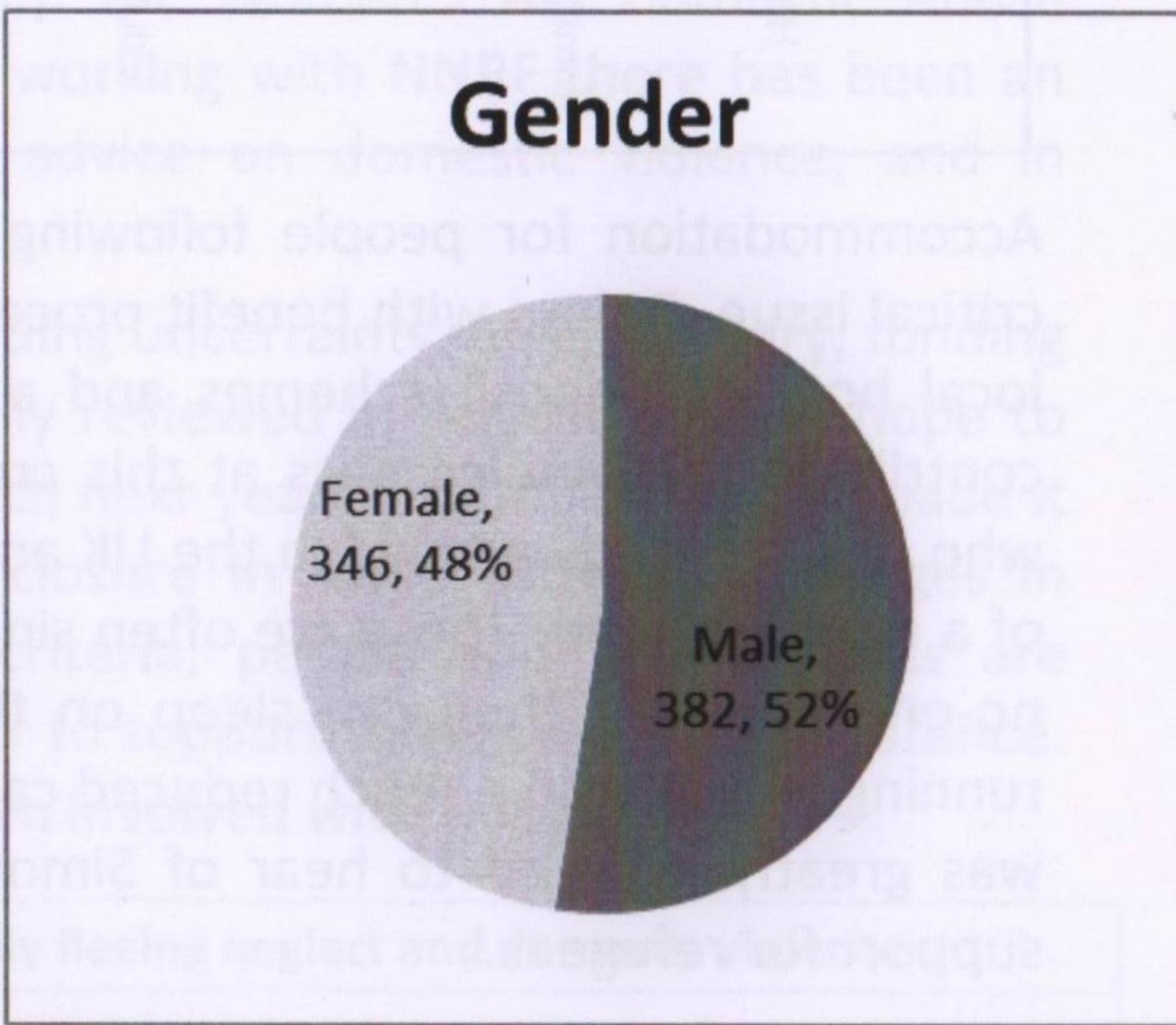
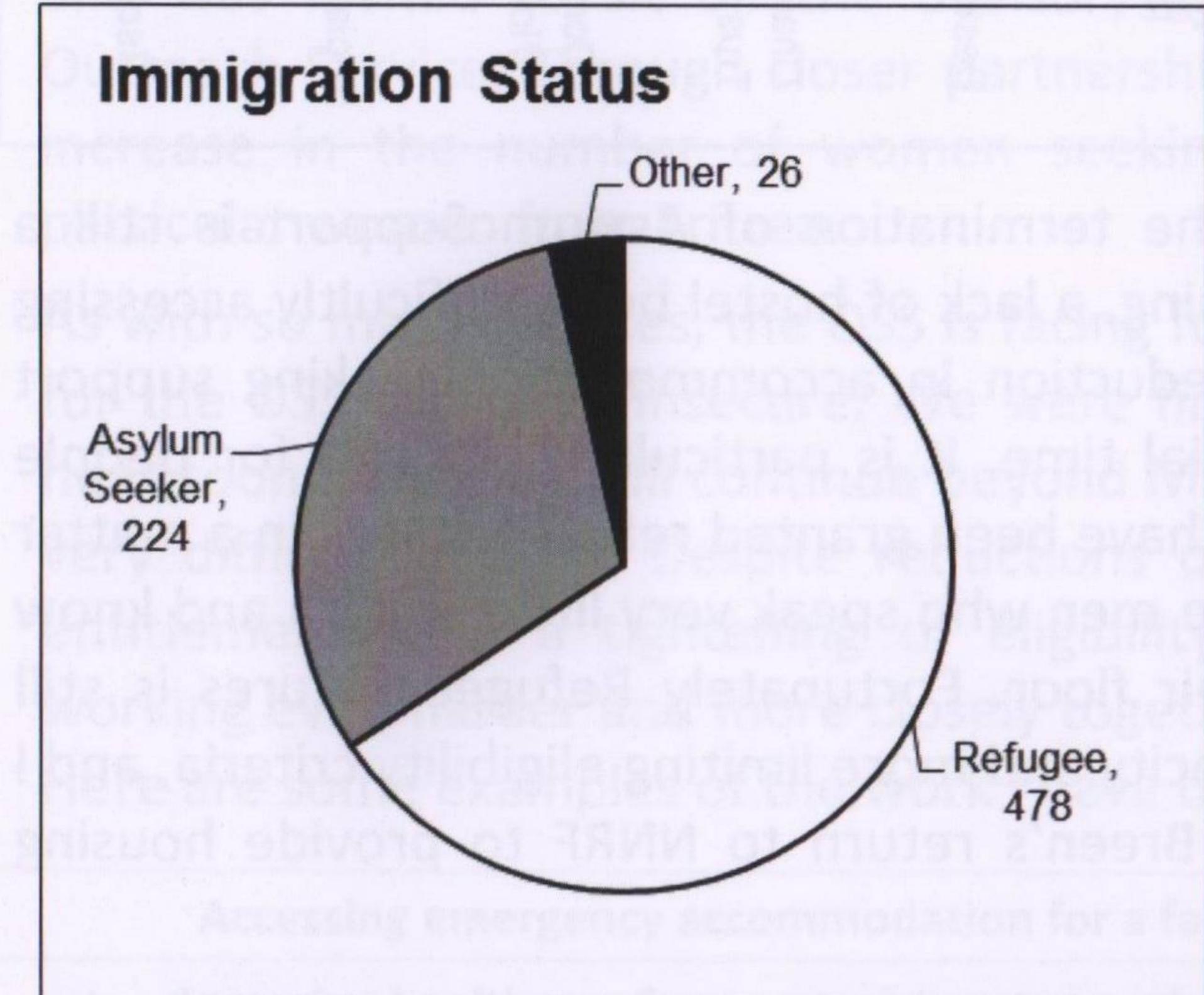
Bea Tobolewska

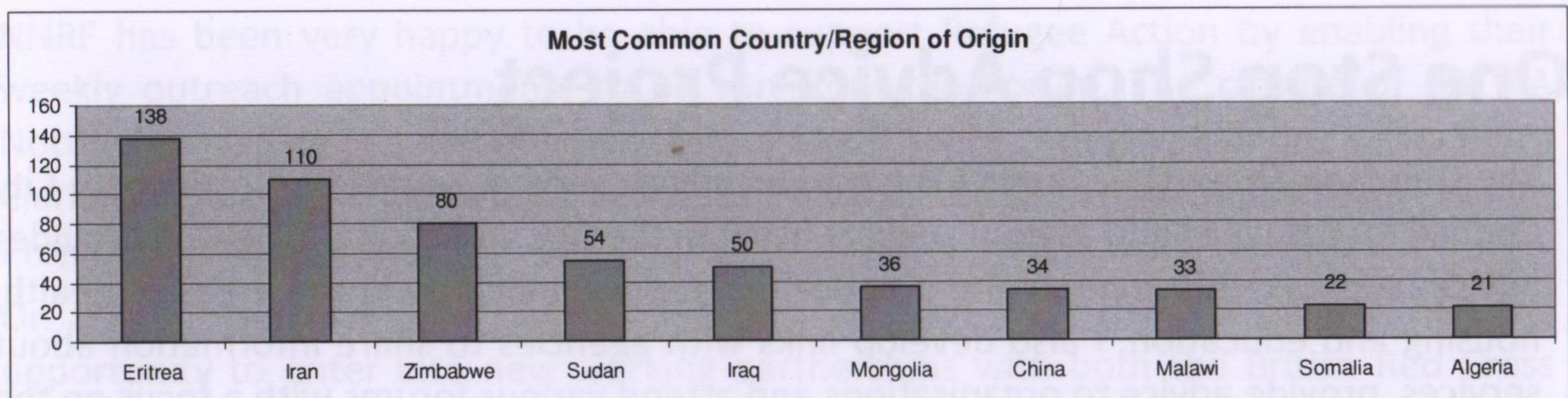
One Stop Shop Advice Project

The One Stop Shop (OSS) Project is a flexible advice service funded by Nottingham City Council for refugees and asylum seekers living in the city and county. The OSS provides advice, support, information and practical help, predominantly in the areas of health, housing and education. I also develop links with agencies to share information about services, provide advice to organisations and attend various forums with a focus on the needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

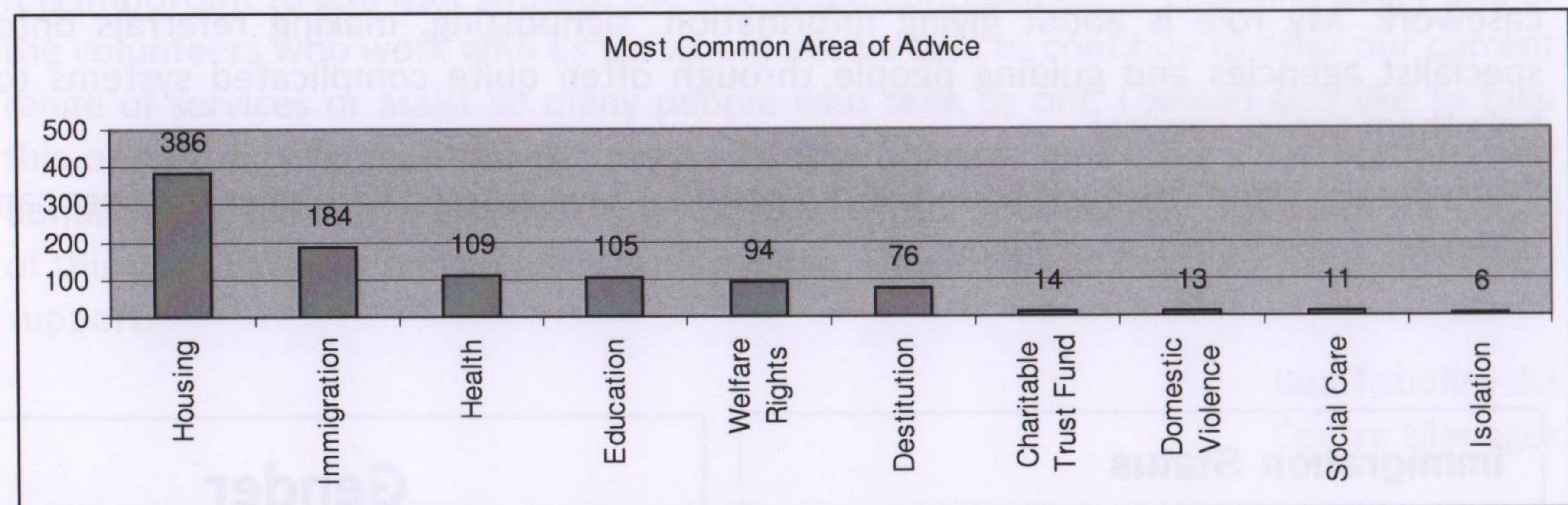
Over the past year there have been 728 visits to the project. This is either a one-off appointment or I may work with people for several months providing more in-depth casework. My role is about giving information, signposting, making referrals onto specialist agencies and guiding people through often quite complicated systems to help them access services.

More details about the background of the people I have worked with over the year can be found in the figures that follow.





The following table shows the most common areas in which people have sought advice from the OSS. As has been the trend in previous years most people assessing the OSS want help or support with housing.



Accommodation for people following the termination of Asylum Support is still a critical issue. Delays with benefit processing, a lack of hostel beds, difficulty accessing local housing deposit schemes and a reduction in accommodation-seeking support contribute to homelessness at this crucial time. It is particularly difficult for people who have recently arrived in the UK and have been granted refugee status in a matter of a month or two. These are often single men who speak very little English and know no-one to ask if they can sleep on their floor. Fortunately Refugee Futures is still running, albeit with a much reduced capacity and more limiting eligibility criteria, and I was greatly relieved to hear of Simon Breen's return to NNRF to provide housing support for refugees.

Soon after Simon's return, we quickly realised that as there is some crossover in what we do, it made sense for us to work together. We came up with a simple referral form for anyone seeking advice in housing or another area. We then allocate the case depending on the advice needed or we may immediately refer on to another service if appropriate. So far the new system has been great and feedback from reception workers and drop-in advisers is positive. Clients can also self-refer. I am able to plan my work better and I can prepare for appointments as I have more information about what the client needs before we meet. Critically we can also keep track of the demand for need which can help NNRF plan for the future. Since we introduced the new system we have received 133 referrals.

The number of destitute people seeking help remains high. Earlier this year Nottingham Arimathea Trust opened a new house accommodating four men which increases the capacity within the city. This year also saw the opening of a house in Leicester run by Refugee Action which provides shelter and support for destitute women whose asylum claims have been refused. This month they accommodated two women who had been referred by OSS having come to NNRF for support. The

Nottingham Hosting Scheme is almost up and running and hopes to be taking referrals soon.

NNRF has developed good links with the Street Outreach Team which provides support and advice to people sleeping rough. The team aims to secure accommodation for those who have access to housing as well as supporting destitute people who do not have recourse to public funds. We have made several referrals of refugees and asylum seekers, with some successfully being housed in temporary accommodation.

The OSS volunteer project continues to offer advice on Thursday mornings and there have been 32 sessions held during the year. There are currently three regular volunteers and we have just been joined by new advisers who are undergoing an induction into the project with specialist training planned soon. I would like to thank all the volunteers for their dedication and hard work with the OSS project.

My membership with regular forums continues including Children and Young Persons Refugee and Asylum Seeker Task Group; Asylum Seeker, Refugee and New Migrant Health Forum; BMER Domestic Violence Forum; Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task and Delivery Group; and East Midlands No Recourse to Public Funds Network. This year I have also joined the bi-monthly Voluntary Homelessness Forum and was invited to sit on the advisory group for Women's Aid Domestic Abuse Outreach Service. Through closer partnership working with NNRF there has been an increase in the number of women seeking advice on domestic violence, and in particular women from Eritrea.

As with so many services, the OSS is facing funding uncertainty. Since January, funding for the OSS has been insecure. We were finally reviewed in August and we hope to hear soon if funding will continue beyond March next year. Inevitably this has made it very difficult to plan. Despite reductions or closure in some provision, changes in entitlements and a tightening of eligibility criteria, people and organisations are working even harder and more closely together to support those who seek assistance. Here are some examples of the work I have been involved with this past year:

Accessing emergency accommodation for a family fleeing neglect and domestic violence
Accessing healthcare for a very sick woman who was not getting the treatment she needed
Setting up a safety plan and support for an individual in fear of honour-based violence
Setting up an informal hosting arrangement for a destitute woman who was street homeless
Arranging a donation of a pushbike for an asylum seeker so he could continue with his college course
Accessing advice for a man seeking redress following a breach of confidentiality between NHS and UKBA
Applying to charities resulting in awards to a family struggling to fund essential items for their children
Accessing legal help for a family and a couple to challenge local authority refusal to provide accommodation where there was a legal duty
Successfully appealing healthcare charges in cases where clients were charged for dental treatment and prescriptions
Successfully requesting UKBA to transfer to self-contained accommodation an asylum seeker with mental health problems

If anyone would like more information about the OSS Advice Project, please contact me at Refugee Forum.

Fiona Broome
One Stop Shop Adviser

General Advice Service

The Project

The General Advice Service is a central element in NNRF's activities and has been successful in providing advice and support to a number of users since 2000. The sessions take the form of a drop-in service which operates weekly on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 1pm – 4.30pm. This service is the longest-standing one within the Forum and is led by enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers. The volunteers provide advice, information and assistance on a diverse range of issues such as destitution, housing, benefits, health, legal matters and asylum support and the success has been wide reaching.

The service is central to meeting the needs of the Forum's service users and its informal but professional nature works well in helping the most vulnerable users - in particular those who face challenges in accessing other services or have been failed by other service providers. The welcoming atmosphere has been an important element of these sessions. The informality and flexibility of the provision of advice and service delivery has been valued both by our service users and our volunteers.

The impact of funding cuts

The impact of severe funding cuts across the sector over the past year has resulted in reduced services both within the Forum and from other partner agencies. This has resulted in a wider range of queries being raised and the drop-in advice sessions have dealt with the service gap left by other providers no longer operating in Nottingham.

The drop-in service can be very busy and challenging for both advice and reception volunteers due to the high volume of users. The loss of in-house interpreters as a result of the reduction in funding has meant implementing the use of telephone interpreters. Despite the difficulties in a noisy and pressurised environment, the volunteers were able to adapt with ease due to their commitment to assisting our clients.

Changes in the Immigration and Asylum sector

The advice service has limitations and faces difficulties which have a direct impact on both the volunteers and the service users. The volunteers are restricted to a degree by regulatory limitations on the level of work carried out by general advisers.

The wide remit of the general advice sessions means that there is an emphasis on monitoring the type of issues being addressed. Consequently, the advice service has extended the range and depth of its services to cater for the new needs of our users. For example, as a result of increased dispersal to Nottingham, advisers are able to assist and resolve queries for those new to the city. This has been evident in the effective response to dealing with reduced services and changes in the immigration and asylum sector – in particular the reduced service provided by Refugee Futures, Refugee Action's Nottingham office closure and the demise of Immigration Advisory Service.

Training and Support for Volunteers

The aim for this year has been to further improve the standards of service and the delivery of the advice sessions. In order to achieve this our advice sessions aim to provide various types of advice and information on the services available within the

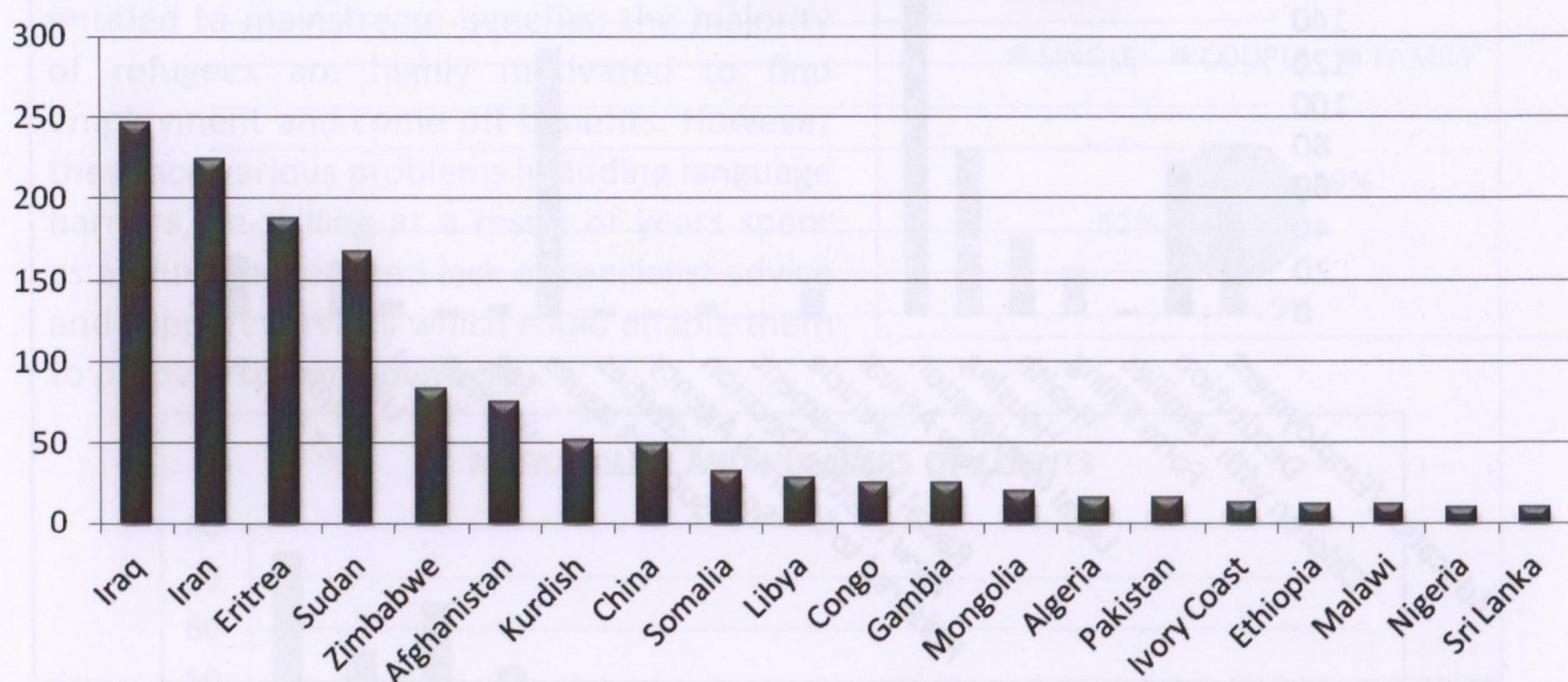
NNRF. It has been necessary to determine the range of services currently being provided, both formally and informally, in the light of funding cuts in order to facilitate appropriate referrals and signposting. It has been essential to review the quality of service delivery and set out appropriate guidelines and encourage good practice by ensuring that the staff and volunteers are well-trained and equipped in order to allow for the delivery of good quality advice. The implementation of regular updates for volunteers has helped towards improving communication and ensuring that volunteers are aware of changes relating to in-house services and partner agencies.

Having worked with an experienced Trainer from Citizens Advice Bureau a tailored three day advice skills training course was offered to staff and volunteers. In addition, an advisers' resource space was set up which included access to online resources.

Prior to Refugee Action closing their Nottingham office, they agreed to offer two training sessions on the Asylum Process and Support for volunteers. As the funding cuts meant that relevant external training sessions were no longer available, in-house induction and training programmes have been developed to support new volunteers.

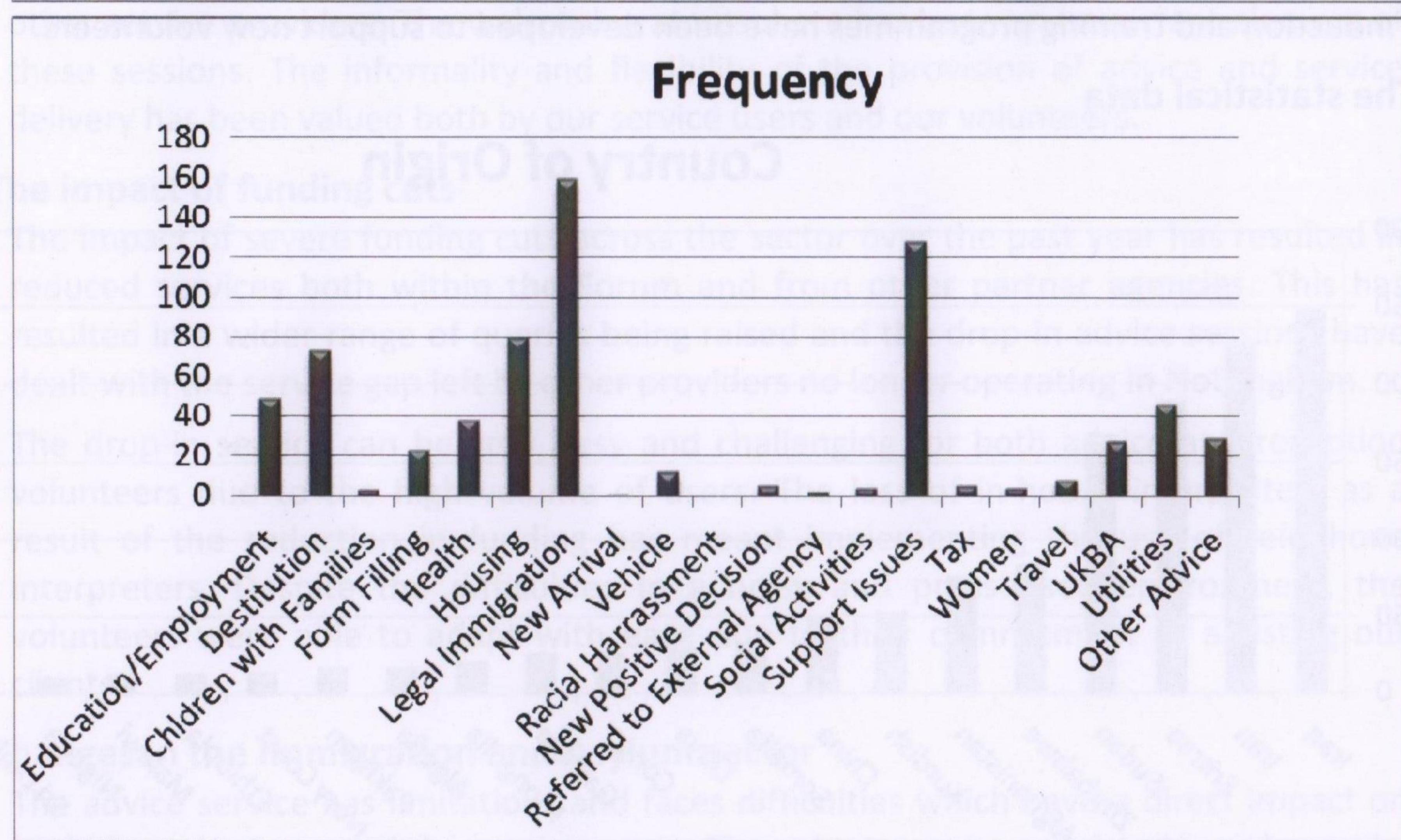
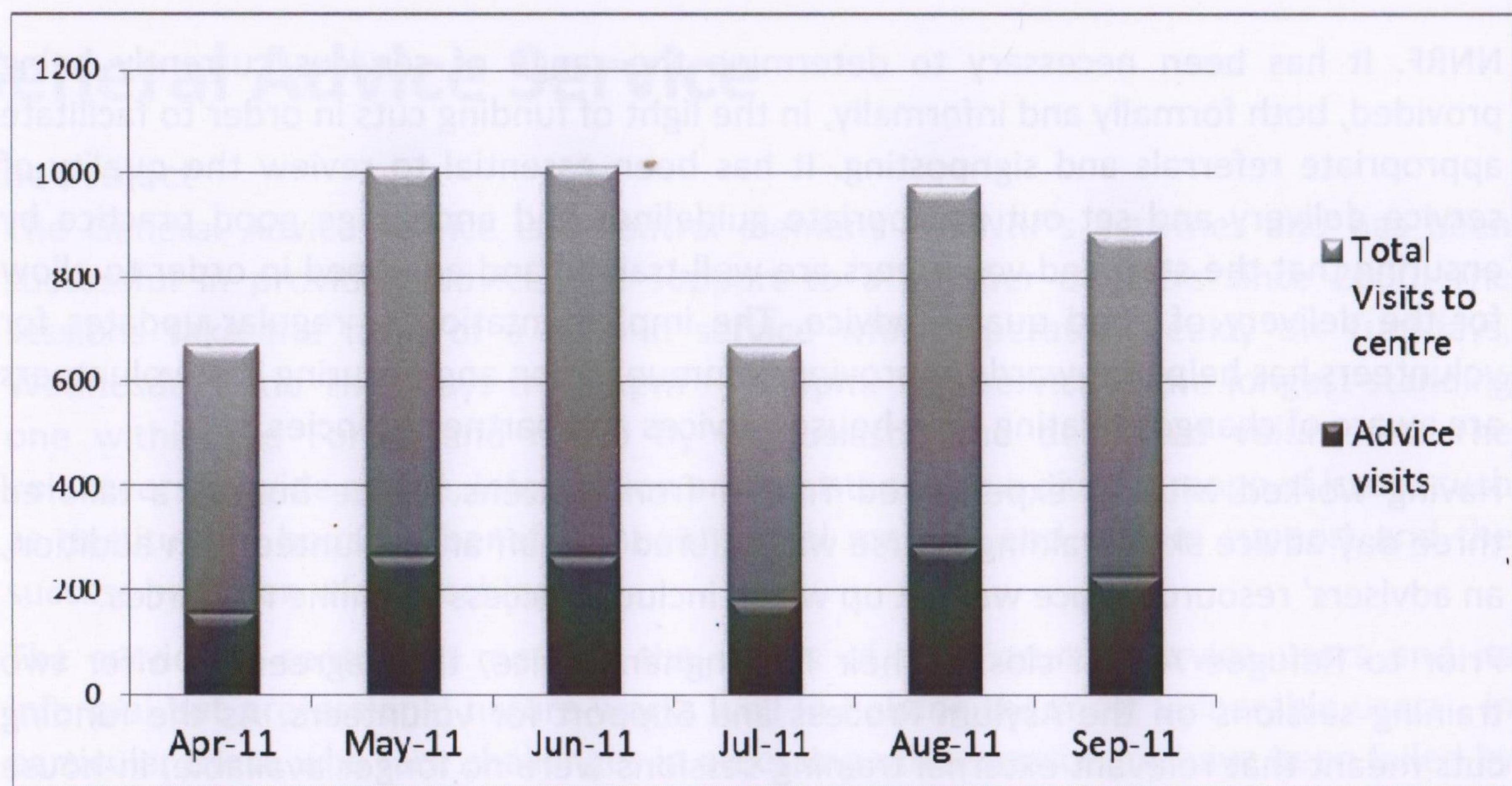
The statistical data

Country of Origin



The service is accessed by people from diverse backgrounds and volunteer advisers have gained an understanding of cultural and linguistic differences. The volunteer advisers have dealt with queries that arise at every step of the asylum and decision process.

As the financial cuts to partner agencies and service providers have led to reduced capacity and limited assistance, signposting to the advice sessions has been on the increase. Approximately a quarter of our service users attend the centre in order to access the advice sessions. A wide range of issues and queries has been dealt with by volunteers and therefore there is a high level of output.



The future

The advice sessions will continue to be staffed by volunteers and run three afternoons a week. There is continued interest in volunteering for this project. This interest comes from people of different backgrounds and those with asylum and refugee backgrounds are always encouraged to volunteer. The emphasis is on developing and supporting volunteers and we will continue to work to invest in training sessions. The general advice project is a 'work in progress' and will continue to develop and evolve to benefit our service users.

The drop-in advice service has continued to run successfully over the past decade wholly due to the commitment of our dedicated volunteers. This is a valuable resource at the heart of the Refugee Forum and would not be successful without the time, effort and enthusiasm of our volunteers.

Rakiba Khatun
Senior Adviser

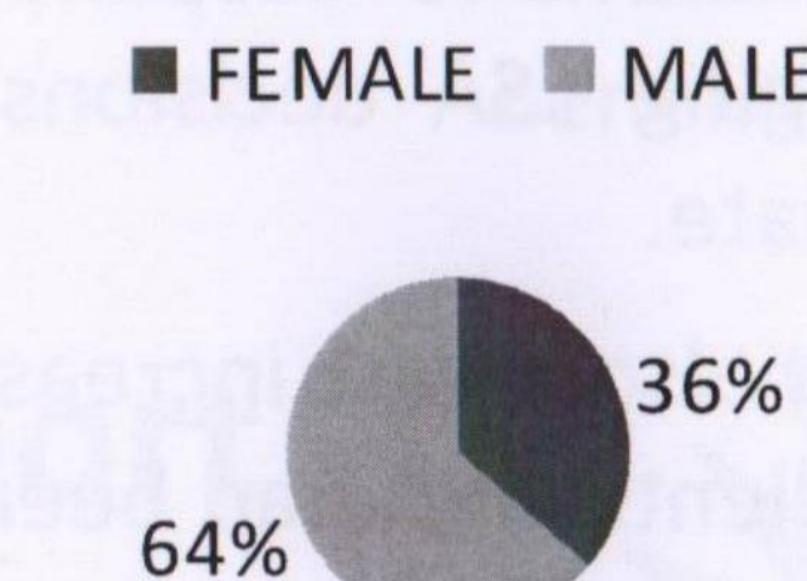
Benefits Advice

Since taking up the post of Benefits Adviser in January this year, I have had the opportunity to work with supportive and dedicated staff and volunteers who have worked passionately and tirelessly to improve the lives of asylum seekers and refugees.

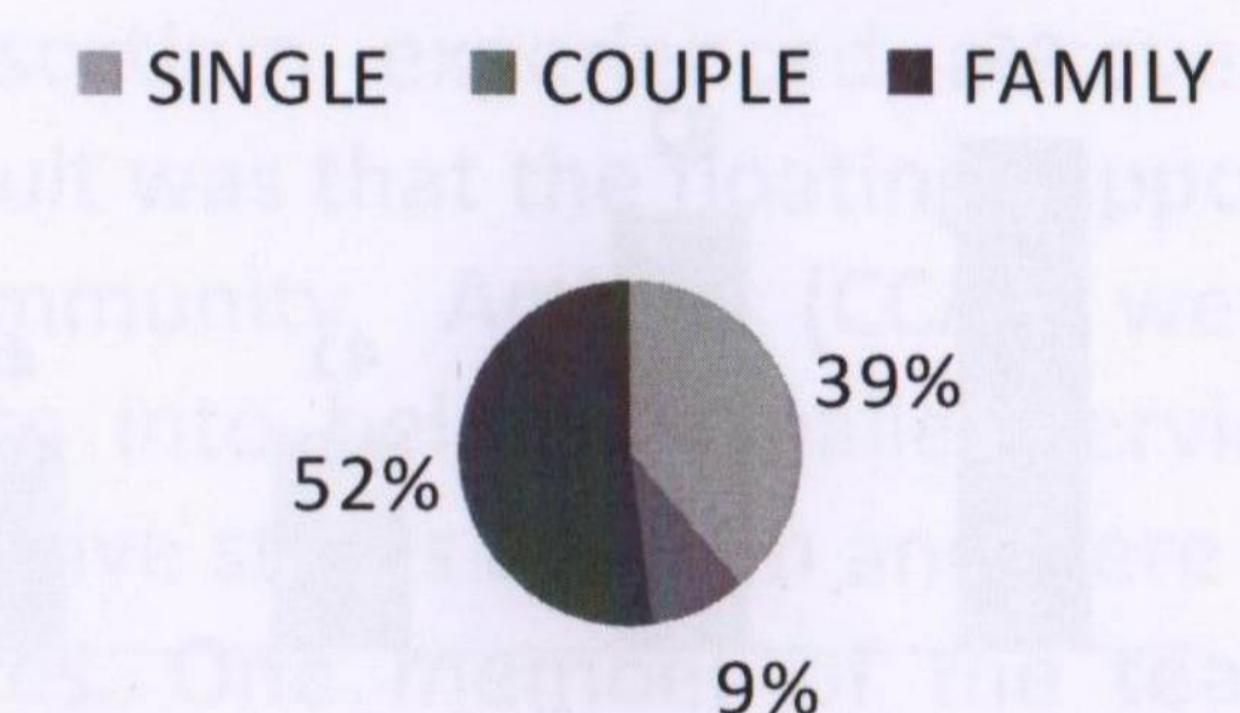
The Benefits Advice sessions have been running at full capacity. Between January 2011 and September 2011 there was a total of 412 visits. Over the last 9 months I have met with clients from 23 different countries, with clients from Iran, Iraq, Eritrean and China being the most common. The figures below show the detailed breakdown of clients according to their nationality, gender and household type.

Once Leave to Remain is granted, refugees are entitled to mainstream benefits; the majority of refugees are highly motivated to find employment and come off benefits. However they face various problems including language barriers, de-skilling as a result of years spent as asylum seekers and lack of specialist advice and support services which could enable them to prepare for employment.

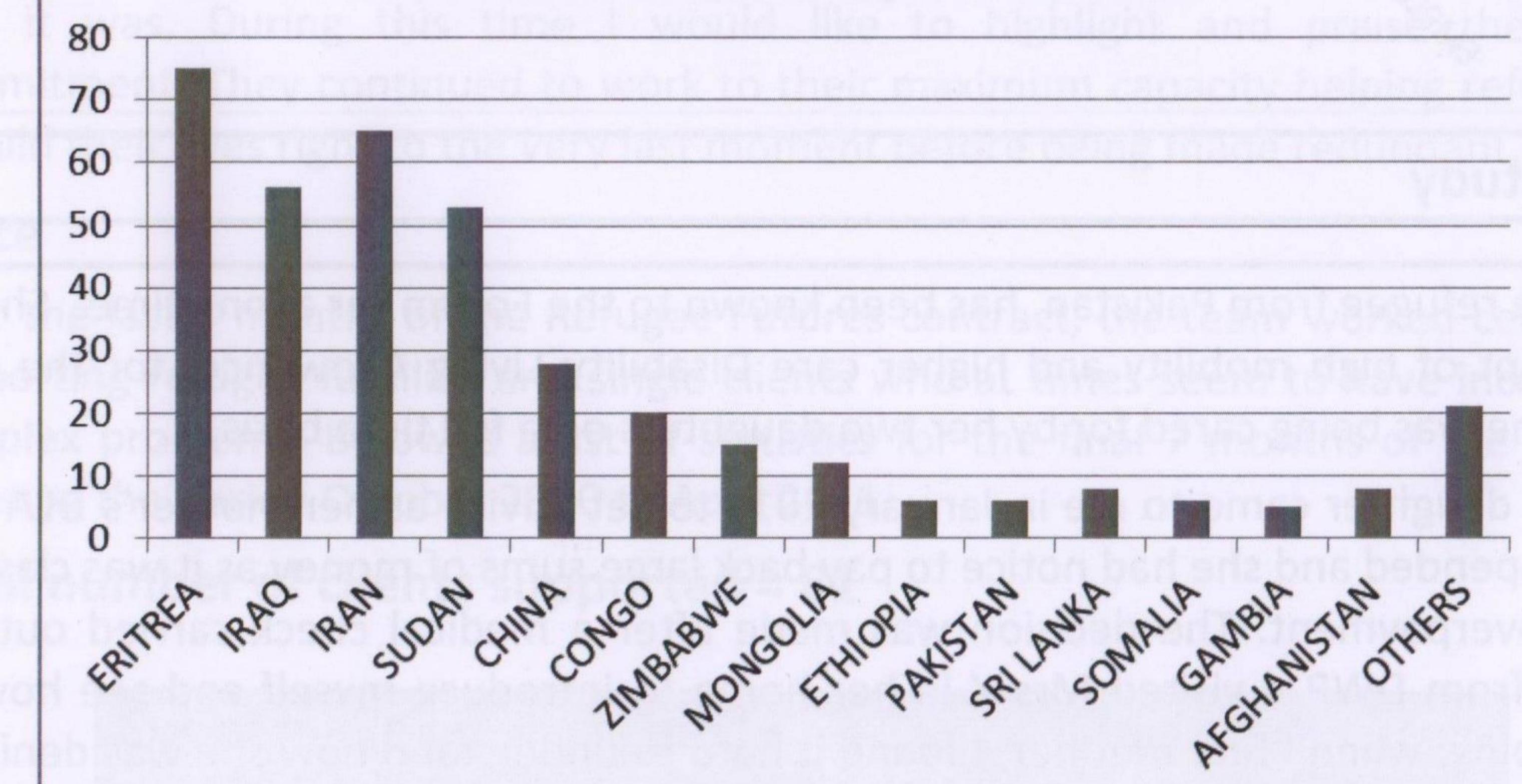
GENDER



HOUSEHOLD



NATIONALITY AND NUMBERS OF CLIENTS



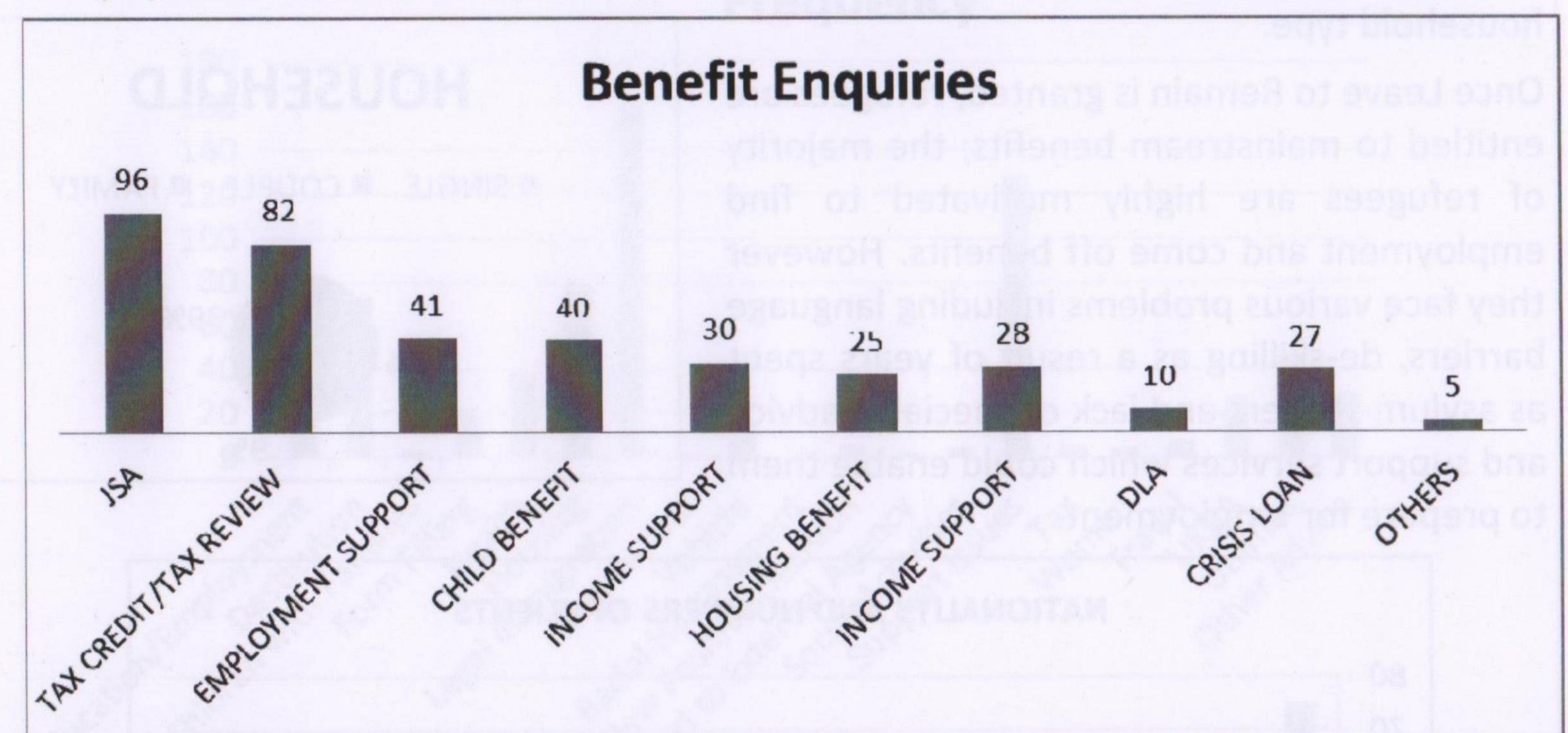
National research has identified that 40% of refugees are still unemployed 2 years after getting status despite high motivation to find work. As the numbers below indicate there are a high number of JSA claimants, followed by Child Tax Credit and Child Benefit.

After being granted status, refugees wishing to claim Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support or ESA have to wait an average of 6-7 weeks before their benefit payments

are issued. One of the reasons for the delay is not having a National Insurance number. Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit claims take 8-10 weeks to process. The combined effect of this leaves refugees, especially families, in severe financial hardship during their first 2 months after being granted Leave to Remain. I help clients make applications for crisis loans during this period; however it has been very difficult to access these without being allocated a National Insurance number.

ESA (Employment Support Allowance) is hugely problematic and has been criticized nationally as being unfair. Ninety-nine per cent of clients who apply for ESA fail their medical assessments. Once a client fails an assessment other benefits such as Housing Benefit are also suspended. This puts clients at high risk of getting into debt. Challenging ESA decisions is made more difficult since the termination of ESA is immediate.

There is also a vast increase in Tax Credit enquiries this year. This is mainly a result of many clients who had been granted status through the legacy programme completing Tax Review forms for the first time. The most common issue faced by clients was an overpayment notice and cancellation of awards due to non-returned Review forms.



Case Study

Mrs X, a refugee from Pakistan, has been known to the Forum for a long time. She was in receipt of high mobility and higher care Disability Living Allowance; for the last 6 years she was being cared for by her two daughters on a full time basis.

Mrs X's daughter came to me in January 2011 to get advice as her mother's DLA claim was suspended and she had notice to pay back large sums of money as it was classified as an overpayment. The decision was made after a medical check carried out by a doctor from DWP. I visited Mrs X in her home to introduce myself and see how she was coping; when I first met her, I found it hard to understand how she was denied an award for DLA. She was visibly not capable of caring for herself and she needed support and supervision at all times. The decision to suspend Mrs X's DLA has caused severe financial and emotional stress to the family. As a result of the suspension Mrs X's daughter also lost out on her claim for Carer's Allowance which was a considerable amount that counted towards the family income. For the next four months I visited the family regularly and made regular contact with DWP to have Mrs X's benefits awarded.

After liaising with her doctor and other agencies providing services to the family, we were able to get an up to date and full medical check carried out by her doctor and letters of support from specialist agencies who had worked with the family previously. I lodged an appeal against the decision from DWP in February 2011 and a positive decision on the appeal was made in June 2011.

Although the family had to go through tough times for the 5 months without payments, the DWP has now awarded Mrs X both high Care and Mobility components of DLA and have also waived the overpayments charge.

Mussie Kidane
Benefits Advisor

Refugee Futures Floating Support Service



Introduction

Following on from last year's annual report and the outcome of Nottingham City Council's spending cuts, the Refugee Futures consortium experienced a severe reduction in funding and service provision. The net result was that the floating support services based at NNRF and Co-operative Community Action (CCA) were decommissioned. Refugee Futures had to consolidate into being a smaller service focusing on new refugees who have just received a positive status decision and were in transition from NASS support to mainstream services. One member of the team transferred over to the new service.

Obviously the last 7 months of Refugee Futures were a very demanding and stressful time for all the team, with no one expecting the service to be reduced by the amount that it was. During this time I would like to highlight and praise the team's commitment. They continued to work to their maximum capacity helping refugees to rebuild their lives right to the very last moment before being made redundant.

Service

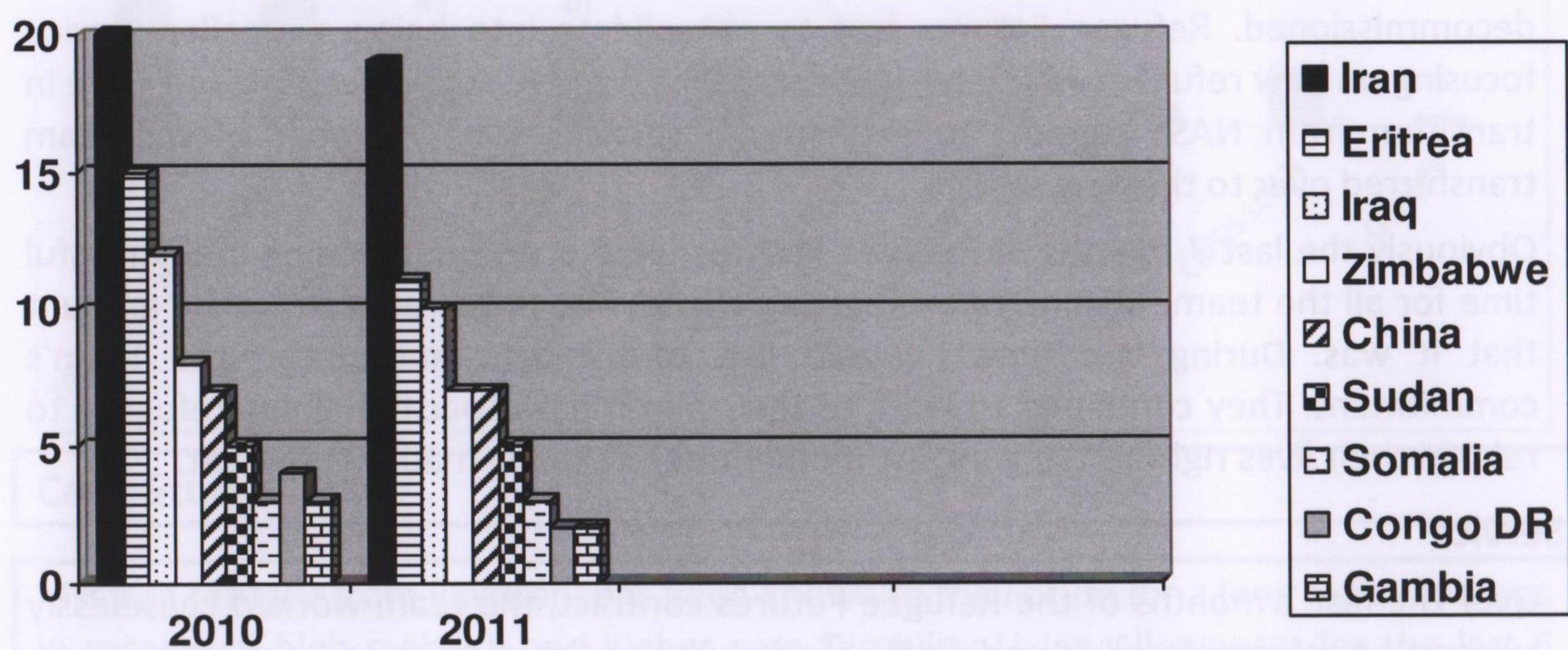
Over the last 7 months of the Refugee Futures contract, the team worked ceaselessly supporting refugee families and single clients who at times seem to have increasingly complex problems. Below is a list of statistics for the final 7 months of the contract covering the period October 2010 to April 2011.

Total number of clients supported = 81

Social make up	Family	Single
	40 (49%)	41 (51%)

Gender of Main applicant	Male	Female
	52 (64%)	29 (36%)

Nationality	Number of clients 2011	Number of clients 2010
Iran	19	20
Eritrea	11	15
Iraq	10	12
Zimbabwe	7	8
China	7	7
Sudan	5	5
Somalia	3	3
Gambia	2	3
Syria	2	2
Vietnam	2	1
Nigeria	2	
Togo	2	
Congo DR	2	4
Other countries	7	



At any one time the team was supposed to support a caseload of 42 clients and in theory aimed to support 84 clients over a year or 49 clients over a 7 month period.

As can be seen from the figures above the team has surpassed that target, completing nearly 1 year's work in a period of 7 months! This figure is even more remarkable considering that the service was being wound down with staff facing imminent redundancy.

Themes and trends

- An increase in support of families
- An increase in support of refugee clients with significant disabilities
- An increase in support of male clients or where the main applicant is male

- The top 6 nationalities remained the same as last year, in exactly the same order which is very surprising
- The shift continued from supporting families to settle and manage their tenancies (tenancy support) towards supporting single clients looking for accommodation (accommodation seeking), which of course is very challenging when they do not have any savings or valid ID, let alone language skills to negotiate a tenancy.
- Lack of affordable decent accommodation
- Reluctance of refugees to consider either private rented accommodation or Housing Association properties. There appear to be a lot of misunderstanding and many myths perpetrated by refugee communities around accommodation. Often this is not to the client's benefit as they are given poor, misleading out-of-date advice. There is a need to train and up-skill the knowledge refugee communities have to give accurate non-directive advice and information rather than perpetrate myths.

Team

During the last 7 months the floating support team has continued to develop its expertise in housing related support, homelessness issues and in finding affordable accommodation for clients.

The team made a significant contribution to the success and legacy of the Refugee Futures consortium and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the team for their commitment, hard work and passion to help refugees settle and rebuild their lives in Nottingham.

I would also like to thank our colleagues and partners in the Refugee Futures consortium - particularly Dara Iveyk's team based at Beech Avenue - for their support.

The NNRF Refugee Futures team has consisted of:

Amdani Juma
Jasim Ghafur
Julie Whitehead
Helen Wriglesworth
Saeed Hassani
Sara Abraham
Sonia Bilkhu
Simon Breen

I would like to highlight the resolution of Amdani Juma's immigration issue after 3 long years. Amdani re-joined the floating support team for the final 7 months of the contract and was able to draw upon his considerable range of expertise and experience to help clients.

I would like to thank Sara Abraham and Sonia Bilkhu for providing locum cover, ensuring consistency of support for clients. Both the above team members have greatly expanded their skills and expertise in supporting clients, working to the highest quality standards. Both team members worked on some very difficult and challenging cases.

The team has also been supported by Mussie Kidane as a volunteer, whose language skills and ability to support clients have been greatly appreciated. Mussie has since become NNRF's Benefits Adviser and has made a significant contribution in this role.

Strategic Issues

The past 7 months have seen massive reduction in housing related support services in Nottingham City. Many floating support services and accommodation based services were dramatically reduced or decommissioned in April/May 2011.

The level of support a homeless refugee can expect to receive has been reduced from 6 months to 3 months. At one point the whole Refugee Futures service was going to be decommissioned!

At present NNRF is funding a temporary housing support position to assist refugees - especially those with no local connection who choose to come to Nottingham to settle and rebuild their lives.

Since April 2011 there has been a noticeable decline in referrals and the number of clients needing what I would describe as resettlement work (floating support) - much to my total surprise. I have seen very few clients from the CRD legacy programme or refugees with Limited Leave to Remain. Most of the clients I have been working with have come to Nottingham after they have received their immigration status decision. They have no local connection and the local authority has no duty to house these clients. Much as I hate to admit this, it appears that the Nottingham City Council's projections were reasonably accurate in that there is not a huge demand for a specialist refugee resettlement service. Whilst saying this I would still advocate that there is a need for a specialist refugee floating support service due to the particular difficulties the new refugees face when making a transition into mainstream services.

What is noticeable is that while there is little demand for floating support and resettlement work, there has been a massive demand in refugees needing housing-related support and advice. This includes clients getting into debt and arrears with their rent; living in substandard or over-crowded accommodation; problems with Housing Benefit; not understanding how systems work or being able to complain effectively about poor service provision, and issues with Homelink banding and bidding.

To summarise all of the above, I believe the next 1 to 2 years will be very challenging for refugees with ever-increasing reductions in service provision and advice to help people settle and integrate into local communities. It is likely that there will be an increasing rise in homelessness - particularly for single refugees who cannot access private rented accommodation or hostels, and to whom the local authority owes no duty. There may be an increased risk of homelessness for the most vulnerable clients whom we assist (disabled, those with mental health issues, victims of torture, domestic abuse clients) who are not skilled at accessing services and do not have a voice. It is essential that we advocate the particular needs and vulnerabilities of refugees and seek to develop strategies and services which meet the changing demands of our clients' needs.

Simon Breen
Refugee Futures Team Leader

Children's Project

The Children's Project started in September 2009 with the post of children's worker being secured through Children in Need funding. Last year we also received financial contributions from Nottingham Beyond Borders and Red Cross to help run events. We are now in the third year of the project. The role incorporates many different aspects as the project aims to improve outcomes for refugee and asylum seeking children and young people through the provision of activities, family support, advocacy and awareness raising and developing good working relationships and partnerships with outside agencies.



Issues children face:



The experience of the asylum process impacts on children's lives in many ways. In addition to the financial restrictions, temporary housing and frequent moves, children are faced with uncertainty about their future and high levels of stress and anxiety in their home environment. The financial restrictions and deprivation have far-reaching consequences for children and only add to the social isolation that this group of young people experience. Many refugee children have very limited social circles and do not tend to access clubs, trips and activities. Access to wider services is limited through multiple barriers such as lack of awareness, confidence and language. Without the support of extended family networks

and with a lack of knowledge of, and confidence in, accessing local service provision, parents are at high risk of experiencing anxiety, depression and other mental health disorders. Their levels of emotional and mental distress impact on their ability to respond to their children's needs. Many young refugees and asylum seekers often take on additional responsibilities in relation to supporting their parents and maintaining the home environment, such as interpreting for the family. This level of engagement in adult matters exposes children to material that is of adult content and increases their awareness of the insecurity that their family faces.

Project aims and attendances:

The project widens the horizons of children by providing activities that reduce social isolation, enabling access to leisure opportunities which families could not otherwise afford, as well as catering for children and young people's emotional and developmental needs. Peer interaction and engaging in play-based activities are vital elements in ensuring that children feel settled and secure. The project takes a holistic approach, emphasising parental involvement and the establishment of community links to promote integration and access to wider service provision. There are currently 152 children aged between 0 and 16 years old registered to the project. Ethnic backgrounds include Eritrean, Sudanese, Somali, Nigerian, Zimbabwean, Chinese, Mongolian, Iraqi, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Algerian and Moroccan. From September 2010 to September 2011 we had 805 attendances by children at the project's sessions.

The team has also been supported by Mousie Kidane as a volunteer, whose language and cultural insights have been greatly appreciated. Mousie has since moved to the USA.

Term time activities:

We provide term time activities of crèche provision and a 'stay and play' session on Fridays as part of the women's group. I am also on hand at Women's Group to provide informal advice and guidance to families. During the last year we also provided the crèche for 2 women-only ESOL courses for those who could not otherwise access classes. Young children who access the crèche provision, either through attending the women's group session or the ESOL classes, have benefitted greatly from the opportunities the crèche provides. For most children this is a first experience of nursery. Initially there are a lot of issues relating to separation, both from parents and children. With limited social networks young children often spent all day every day with the mother. In some cases they have never been separated at all. Often this is the only time in the week that the children see other children which is an incredibly important aspect of their social and emotional development. Reports show speech and language development, social development and confidence using English have all progressed. Settling in to the crèche is an important step and children are more prepared when they have a place at mainstream provision.



Holiday activities:

During holidays we extend provision to cater for older children as well. Friendships have developed between regular attendees and children ask for friends when they are



not present. In the last year activities have included a trip to the bowling alley, a visit to Wollaton Hall, and a session held down at Stonebridge City Farm. In the summer we piled on to a double decker bus and took 81 children and their families to Birmingham Sea Life Centre. Increased confidence in using buses and knowing where to access free activities has led to some families revisiting local amenities such as the City Farm and Nottingham Contemporary.

In December we held our annual 'End of Year' party which happened over two venues to accommodate the numbers. We were able to provide a fun-filled afternoon including face painters, stilt walkers, drumming workshops and a live African band thanks to financial contributions from Red Cross and Nottingham Beyond Borders and provided presents for each child due to generous donations from supporters.

Through outreach work the project is building strong relationships with different community groups across the city and we plan to deliver a number of sessions to particular groups to further develop links with the communities and promote our services. We have also worked with Nottingham University's Children and Childhood Network this summer, becoming involved in a detailed consultation around children's interests and experiences of home life as part of a pilot research project. We will receive a written report with the results; 14 children are participating.



They were eager to take part and those who have completed the video interviews found the process very exciting.

Referrals:

In receiving referrals and working with families to provide one-on-one support we have been able to address a number of issues for individual children. Over year 2 of the project I received 19 referrals for detailed one-to-one support. Cases include supporting children who are struggling with learning English, addressing bullying and behavioural difficulties and supporting families whose children are being assessed for additional needs. There is often limited awareness of additional needs within refugee and asylum seeking communities. Families have experienced increased social isolation through feeling excluded from social activities. In another case we have worked closely with other organisations through initiating and leading a CAF multi agency meeting to improve the emotional development of a young child experiencing anxiety following being removed from the home and held in an immigration detention centre. We coordinated a package of care involving children's centre home visiting, targeted child and adolescent mental health work around social and emotional development and specific health needs support. Over the year of intensive support the child is now able to sleep through the night and see workers in uniforms without experiencing panic. Her social interaction at school and nursery has markedly improved as her fear of being separated from her parents has reduced.

Development work:

In terms of development work, I attend forum and network meetings across the city which promoted the inclusion of our client group's needs. I regularly attend the BME play development network and have also attended Nottingham's Women's Voluntary Action Network. In addition to this I sit on the board of Nottingham's Play Partnership in order to ensure the needs of our client group are included in the Nottingham Play Strategy. Existing partner organisations have increased their awareness of our client base's needs and developed targeted sessions to facilitate the access of their services by our families. I have partnership agreements with 2 children's centres and Playworks. We have been invited to be part of the steering group for Nottingham University's Children and Childhood Network, alongside other external partners. The development of these links will extend our networking opportunities and widen the range of organisations we engage with.

Liz Burrell

Into the Mainstream

The Into the Mainstream (ITM) Project, which is funded by NHS Nottingham City and jointly managed by NNRF and Refugee Action, was designed to address barriers to health-care access amongst newly-arrived and newly-dispersed asylum seekers after it became evident that refugee and asylum-seeking communities were significantly disadvantaged in terms of accessing health services in the City. ITM commenced full operation in mid-July 2010. Since the unfortunate closure of the Refugee Action office in Nottingham, both project workers (Eamon and Kinsi) along with a team of dedicated volunteers are now based at NNRF.

There are three main strands to the Project:

1. To register clients with GP practices and to link them with other health services in the City;
2. To provide awareness-raising training to healthcare professionals and 3rd sector/voluntary agencies working with refugees and asylum seekers; and
3. To improve health awareness and deliver health promotion events for refugee and asylum seeker communities.

Details on progress made and difficulties encountered thus far on each strand and its related activities are discussed below.

1. Linking clients to GP practices and other health services.

The UKBA has a duty to inform NHS Nottingham City of all refugees and asylum seekers newly dispersed to Nottingham City, and in turn NHS Nottingham sends details of the new arrivals to the ITM Project. Initial estimates were for about 40 referrals per quarter but, with the exception of one quarter, referrals have ranged between 50 and 80 per quarter. However an increasing numbers of these, around 25 to 30%, are internal referrals from NNRF or from one accommodation provider, Refugee Support. Occasionally referrals also come to the project from other agencies such the Red Cross and Refugee Futures. At the time of writing (30.09.2011) the project has received 286 referrals from 16th July 2010 to date.

Once the team is notified of a new arrival, an initial appointment letter is sent to each individual/family at the address provided by the referrer and clients are generally interviewed within two weeks of the date of referral. If an individual fails to turn up for an appointment, a follow up letter is sent offering them a further opportunity to make contact. Since October 2010, follow up letters have been sent out in the main community languages other than English in an effort to widen participation. This initiative seems to have reduced the rate of non-response from about 28% at the start to around 17% in the current quarter. However the reduction in non-response may also be due to word-of-mouth encouragement amongst clients and the fact that the existence of the project is now widely known amongst colleagues and partner agencies.

So far, it has been possible to facilitate GP registration for all clients referred who are not already registered with a GP, albeit that in some cases it has been necessary to accompany people physically to the surgery. Where an individual is already registered with a GP we try to extend their access to and awareness of a range of other services providing relevant support, both within the healthcare sector and beyond. The ITM works closely with many projects within NNRF including the OSS, OISC project, Women's Group, the employment and education adviser, the anti-destitution group, general advice and the Red Cross. We also increasingly refer clients to external services including community midwives, health visitors and the Creative Links Project.

Difficulty in registering certain groups such as failed asylum seekers, who are often also homeless and destitute, continues to be an issue as most GP practices insist on proof of address and/or entitlement to healthcare. This week the project is in discussion with one practice where two undocumented, destitute migrants have been refused GP registration and the matter is still ongoing. However, on the whole, we are successful in securing GP registration for all clients. We try to overcome barriers by

various methods, including using the NNRF itself as an address for correspondence, by reminding GP staff that they can use the practice as a "c/o" address, by explaining the rules and regulations where appropriate, and by physically accompanying clients to surgeries as and when necessary.

2. Awareness training for GP Practices and their staff.

Over the past 14 months the Project delivered 11 separate sessions attended by around 290 health professionals and third sector personnel working with refugees and asylum seekers. The objective of the training was to engage key GP practices and healthcare services by equipping and working with them to address the health needs of their asylum seeking patients. The sessions were designed according to need but in general covered the following topics: background to Nottingham City Asylum Seeker/Refugee Community; access to health care rules; the asylum process including definitions of asylum seekers and refugees; the health care needs and experiences of refugees & asylum seekers; barriers to healthcare; torture, and local and national services. The project also compiled and distributed at each session a directory of resources to be used by health professionals.

3. Community Health Promotion



The project also carried out a number of health promotion sessions for refugee and asylum seeking communities. These sessions were designed to raise awareness about the nature and availability of key health services in Nottingham and to support refugee and asylum seeking communities in better understanding the role and use of NHS services in Nottingham. So far around

170 community members have attended health promotion events organised by the



ITM Project, either on its own or in collaboration with partner agencies such as Red Cross and the NNRF Women's Group. Health topics covered to date included: mental health; maternity/midwifery care; sexual health including contraception, STIs and HIV/AIDS; smoking; TB; female genital mutilation (FGM); physical activity/outdoor living; and entitlement/access to healthcare.

More than 50 professionals have attended and/or contributed to these community health promotion sessions which overall achieved the following:

- they created a forum for healthcare providers and refugee and asylum-seeker communities to come together
- they disseminated health awareness messages among community members and supporting agencies
- they raised the profile of the healthcare needs of refugees and asylum seekers
- they highlighted the availability and accessibility of key health services in Nottingham City
- they generated networking opportunities for professionals working with refugees and asylum seekers in Nottingham

4. Volunteers

ITM has benefitted hugely from the input made by a team of volunteers, some of whom have been with the project from the start. There are 4 volunteers still supporting the project and Eamon and I would like to thank the project volunteers for their invaluable contribution.

5. Focus Group

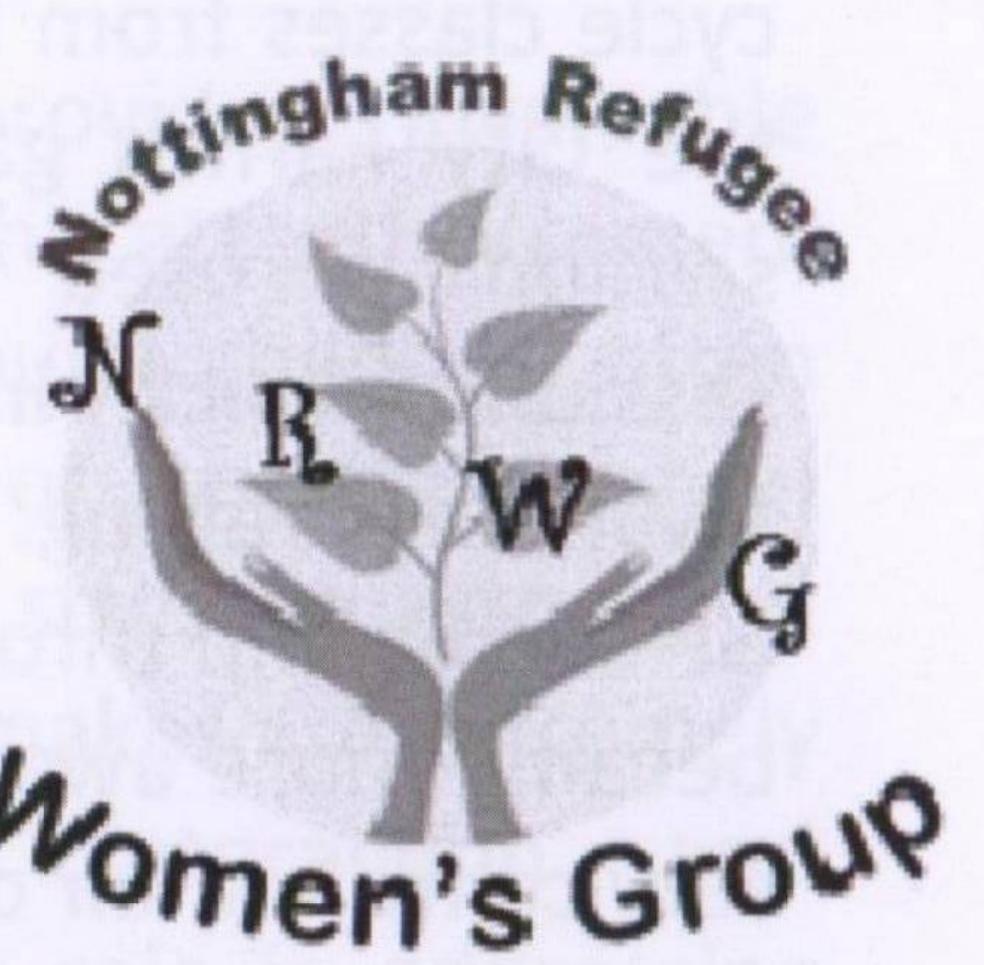
After consultation with NHS Nottingham the ITM conducted 8 focus groups with approximately 60 participants in total from different communities including Zimbabwean, Malawian, Eritrean, Somali, Kurdish, Vietnamese, Mongolian and West African. The aim of the research was to hear directly from these community groups in terms of their experience and perception of health services in Nottingham, and for their views to be fed back to NHS service providers and commissioners. It is anticipated that a draft report with key findings will be available within the next two months.

Despite some challenges, particularly in relation to healthcare access for specific client groups, the project continues to raise awareness and advocate for access to healthcare in Nottingham for refugees, asylum seekers and others who are facing barriers and/or exclusion from health services.

Kinsi Clarke



Nottingham Refugee Women's Group



The Women's Group at Refugee Forum has been operating since March 2007 and is a focal point for refugee and asylum seeker women to meet, make new friends, share skills and provide mutual support in a safe and welcoming environment. It also provides valuable advice, guidance and information. The group is open to all refugee and asylum seeking women and their children living in and around Nottingham. The group is affiliated to NNRF but has its own constitution. As many old members have progressed and moved on, the women's group is in the process of reforming the management committee. Many are keen to become more involved and take responsible roles. We are being supported in this process by NNRF, NCVS and Playworks. We are also linking with Bright Ideas and the WEA to offer the women the chance to participate in their educational 'Leadership' learning workshops specifically for women.

Our membership:

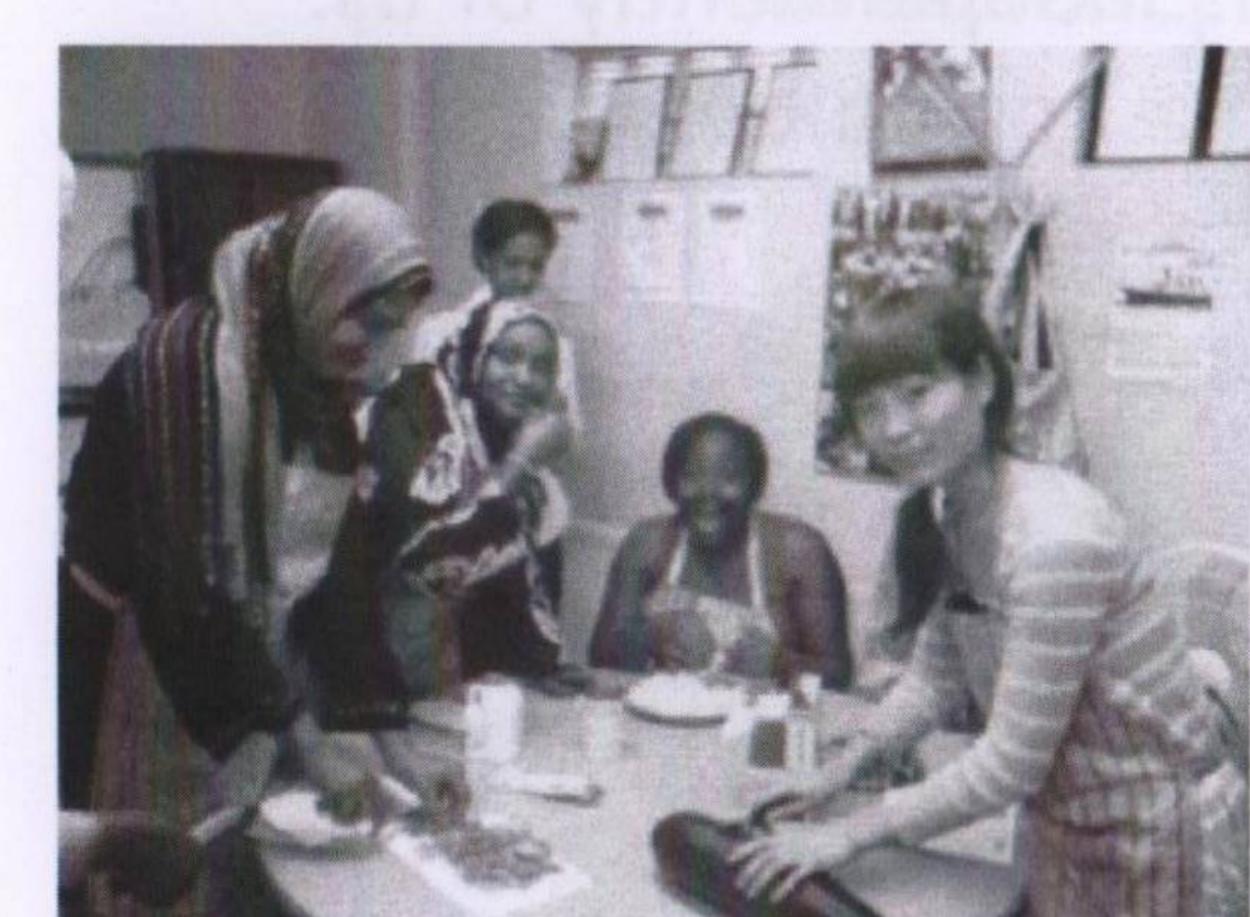
We have 110 women registered to the group from over 23 countries including Turkey, Algeria, Iran, Mongolia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Malawi. From September 2010 to September 2011 we had a total of 551 attendances.

When we meet:

The group is held every Friday during term time. From 10-12 we go to Playworks where we run a programme of activities for the women while the children access crèche provision funded by the Children's project and delivered by Greenfields. At 12 we return to Refugee Forum where women eat together and socialise while their children play. The One Stop Shop advice sessions operate a women-only drop in service on Fridays so members of the group can receive support from Fiona while they are attending the Friday sessions.



Our activities:



Activities are a mix of skills sharing, information and advice from outside agencies, creative activities and therapeutic pamper sessions. Recent sessions have included art workshops, sewing, team building and massage. We have continued to run the 6 week healthy eating Level 1 Food Skills course provided by the community nutrition and dietetics team. This was held 3 times over the last year - one course a term. The plan is to hold another 2 classes before the end of the year. There are still at least 20 people seeking a place. We set up a continuation course to run for 6 weeks at a local children's centre for those who had completed the course which led to a weekly refugee women's group being established at the centre.

We also held a 'Wellbeing' event in collaboration with 'Into the Mainstream' at which women had taster sessions of different exercise classes and local organisations had

stalls. From this we participated in Ride Wise's women-only cycle classes from Refugee Forum and developed links with the City Farm's gardening project. Many of our weekly sessions focused on emotional wellbeing and we held sessions which included relaxation and mental health awareness raising. The group acted as a focus group for a GP survey and through these discussions many felt that they became more aware of their rights and how to get the best service from their doctors.



Successes - Raising awareness and confidence:

Our families are now accessing support from wider services across Nottingham to a greater extent than before. Feedback from last year showed that women are reluctant to access other services without knowing staff in those agencies and understanding how those agencies support families. We addressed this through having staff from key

agencies visit the group regularly to develop relationships with the families. This has had more of an impact than a single visit particularly as the group is a drop in and not all families visit each week.



The Women's Aid session has had a significant impact. A number of women have sought advice on behalf of friends who would not otherwise know about the service. This has resulted in domestic violence being more widely discussed across different communities. Further sessions are planned for next year which will draw on the views of regular women as to which issues particular communities face.

Our cohort of women changes as families move on and as new families are dispersed to Nottingham. We have developed a strong working relationship with the Red Cross who send all new families whom they support to our group as part of an Induction to Nottingham package. Many of these families have emphasised that until attending the group they knew nothing about services in Nottingham or the UK and that they had limited or no social networks. Confidence levels have continued to rise amongst the women who attend.

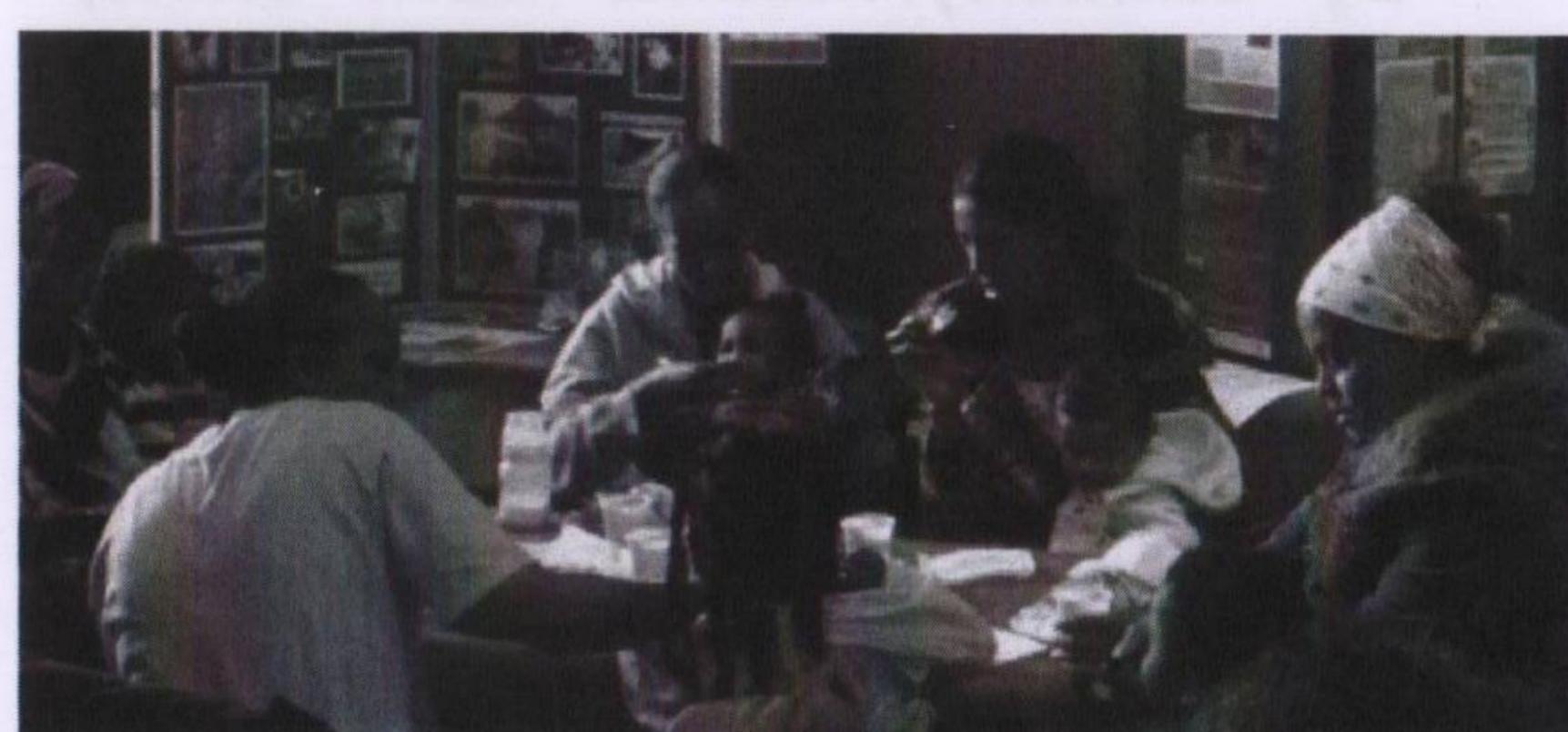
Many of our regular women now deal with their letters and calls independently of us. A number of our long standing members have gained confidence to the degree that they will interpret and fill in forms for newer families.

With the increase in organisations making regular visits to the Friday sessions, more women are approaching services directly as opposed to coming through advisers at the Forum. Access to wider service provision has increased across the board with a significant number of women accessing sessions at Children's Centres and visiting local activity venues such as the City Farm.

Through taking families out to activities across the city, knowledge of the local area and bus routes has increased which has impacted on the number of women who feel confident accessing support from outside agencies directly once provided with a map.

Refugee Forum and the City Farm have also organised a legal advice session for the group. This was a great success and provided valuable information for the women.

Why women come to the group:



The women's group provides invaluable support to the women who attend. Women, particularly those with young children, often experience high levels of social isolation which, coupled with the stresses associated with the asylum process, makes life extremely challenging. The peer interaction and

supportive environment of the Friday group plays an important role in addressing these issues. During a recent team building activity women were asked why they come to the group. Reasons included to talk with others, to meet people who are going through similar experiences, to try new activities and to feel supported. A number of women said that they look forward to Friday all week.

Liz Burrell

Training and Employment Advice Sessions

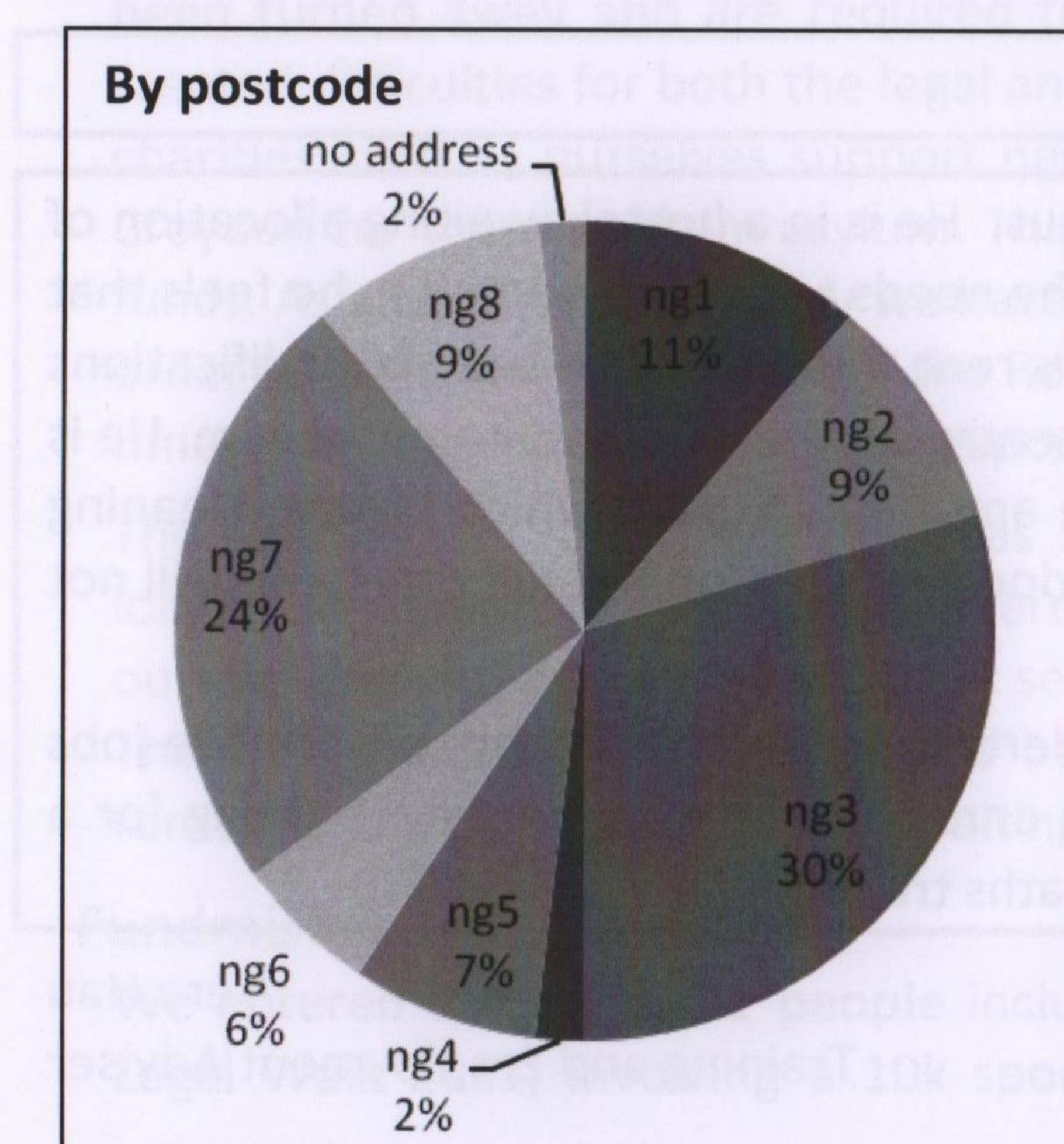
Introduction

Training and Employment advice sessions were introduced in January 2011 to help individuals from all walks of life and backgrounds to achieve real career success and personal fulfillment. These sessions are offered once a week with hourly appointments for each client. The aim of these sessions is to help clients to understand and assess their own achievements, abilities and interests. This then leads to them making informed decisions and enables the creation of a career plan.

Some of the key areas covered are job search, application forms, CV writing and college or university enrolment.

Statistical Data

54 clients have been seen since January 2011. Out of these, 39 had been granted Leave to Remain by the Home Office, 14 were asylum seekers and 1 was on a student visa. Other statistics are broken down as follows:



Gender

Male	31
Female	23
	54

By Immigration status

Asylum seekers	14
Student visa	1
Granted leave status	39

Year Granted status	
2003	1
2007	5
2008	4
2009	6
2010	19
2011	4
Total	39

By ethnicity: clients from China, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Zimbabwe, Gambia, Somalia and Iraq among others.

By benefits claimed

Benefits Claimed	
JSA	25
IS	5
NASS	10
Total	40

Issues

The main barriers to employment or training are:-

1. lack of basic skills
2. lack of interview techniques
3. housing problems
4. funding for either college or university
5. CV/cover letter
6. low qualifications
7. no qualifications
8. language barriers
9. job search
10. lack of training

Successes

By destinations after intervention

In training (including basic skills)	10
Working + volunteering	12
CV updated	35
University	1
No further contact	15

Case Study

X is a refugee who has just been granted status. He is in a hostel awaiting allocation of accommodation. While he understands that he needs to be job searching, he feels that he cannot work while he is in the hostel as his rent will go up. He has no qualifications and feels that the cleaning jobs that the job centre offers are not suitable for him. He is a Muslim so he does not want to undertake any cleaning jobs which involve cleaning toilets. The Jobcentre has told him that if he does not take up the job offers, he will not be entitled to JSA.

After intervention the client is willing to undertake training and work experience jobs as part of his on-going plan. He is currently enrolled with Critical Skills training for a security job while undertaking English and Maths training.

Vera Hau
Training and Employment Adviser

Immigration and Asylum Advice regulated by the OISC

The Project

The Immigration and Asylum Advice service is regulated by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioners (OISC) which allows the Forum to provide legal advice to refugees and asylum seekers. The volunteer advisers regulated at level 1 provide legal advice every Wednesday by appointment. The project offers our service users assistance in making applications for travel documents, seeking confirmation of status in a passport, naturalisation and registration as a British citizen. Additional appointments are offered by Bahman Mohammed on Mondays and Fridays to respond to the high demand for this service. Appointments are also offered by Barrie Ward, a long-standing volunteer, who deals with more complex legal matters primarily with a view to assisting service users by making referrals or liaising with their legal representatives.

Working in partnership with legal aid providers

We have worked closely with local law firms in order to make effective referrals; we have good working relationships with the three Immigration and Asylum legal aid providers in Nottingham. This was crucial in seeking to respond to the demand for legal representatives following the demise of Immigration Advisory Service.

Changes in the Immigration and Asylum sector

There have been some significant changes within the immigration and asylum sector which have had a direct impact on the work carried out at the Forum. The two major changes have been the introduction of the telephone booking system at the Asylum Screening Unit and the Case Assurance Audit Unit.

The Asylum Screening Unit based in Croydon introduced a telephone booking system to book an appointment to claim asylum. This system has created practical difficulties for people seeking to claim asylum as it is near impossible to get through to make an appointment, while those attempting to access the walk-in service have frequently been turned away and are required to book an appointment. The new system has created difficulties for both the legal and voluntary sector. Within the voluntary sector charities such as ourselves support new arrivals by assisting with travel expenses to Croydon for them to claim asylum. This has become increasingly difficult with limited funds. As a stakeholder agency we have worked together with Citizens for Sanctuary in order to raise our concerns with the Regional Director of UK Border Agency and at the time of writing we are awaiting a response.

The Case Resolution Directorate was set up to conclude all legacy cases and is no longer in operation. However, there is a large number of cases that remain outstanding and a new unit has been set up to review cases awaiting a final conclusion. The Case Assurance Audit Unit has been slow to respond and many of our clients remain in the same position, still waiting for a conclusion on their case.

Fundraising

We entered a team of 22 people including staff and volunteers for the Nottingham Legal Walk 2011, involving a 10k sponsored walk organised by the Midlands Legal



Support Trust. We raised £2,500 through generous sponsorships which was added to by the Midlands Legal Support Trust, resulting in a total of £4,000. We wish to thank all the participants and everyone who supported us. This will further our legal and training expenses fund.

Training and development

As part of the regulation by the OISC, advisers must comply with the Continuing Professional Development scheme. We were able to meet this requirement through a two day training course provided by Immigration Advisory Service while they were still operational earlier this year. This was supplemented through regular in-house training and support for volunteers. Since then we have had four new members join the team after they successfully completed the OISC level 1 assessment.

Legal Casework

In order to identify cases which are better suited to legal aid providers, a review of files resulted in findings such as 35% having no legal representation at the time of the initial meeting. A further 65% were refused asylum seekers without prospect of legal representation. Reduced legal aid contracts and file transfers to different providers meant that 13% had potential difficulties and challenges with their legal representation.

Gaining exemption at a higher level last year meant that we were able to expand the Immigration and Asylum Advice service. However, the implications of the severe funding cuts have reduced our capacity to develop this aspect of the service. Nonetheless, a small number of cases has been undertaken over the past year including human rights applications and fresh claims; these are awaiting decisions.

The Future

To increase the legal casework aspect of the project will require further financial investment in order to expand our service. However, with the lack of funding and resources, this remains uncertain. Nonetheless the project will continue to offer the current volunteer-led service. As well as ensuring that we work towards improving the quality of the service, we will continue to meet the standards set out by the regulatory framework. The success of the project has been largely due to the dedication and enthusiasm of our volunteers.

Rakiba Khatun

Refugee Community Organisation (RCO) Support Work & Routes Development Work

This year my work has been split between RCO Support work and Routes Development work.

RCO Support

The main focus has continued to be the African Community Steering Group (ACSG) which has been meeting regularly for the last 18 months and attempting to build on the success of the 'Community & Skills Audit' completed in April 2010.

In December 2010 NCVS's Community Development team started working with the group to develop a long-term strategy. The group agreed that a loose consortium or network was the way forward and a 'frames of reference' document together with a proposal for an 'Outreach Volunteering Project' was slowly developed over many months. The main aims of both the network and 'Volunteering Project' were to:

- Provide one-to-one support to Africans living in Nottingham
- Develop the skills of volunteers in African community associations
- Develop a strong network of African groups to share information and resources
- Improve public information on services and social support for Africans
- Provide office space for those organisations without premises
- Increase the membership of all organisations
- Advocate for all Africans in the city

The group also agreed to organise a free 'Africa Unite Celebration' event in May as a trial project to see if they could all work together collaboratively. Unfortunately the event was very poorly attended and although there were a number of extenuating circumstances, the main reason was the lack of commitment from the majority of groups. This resulted in the 'Volunteering Project' being put on hold due to the feeling that if the ACSG was not capable of organising a one-off party then what hope was there in them managing a large three year ongoing volunteering project. A major rethink about how the group should function and proceed took place and it was agreed to elect a Chair, Secretary and Vice Secretary in order to give some kind of leadership and direction.

Unfortunately 3 months later, despite some very committed work from a small number of organisations, attendance at meetings has dropped even further and the future of the ACSG hangs in the balance.

Over the last year governance and funding support and advice has also been provided to both the Eritrean Community Group and a newly formed Nottingham Afghan Youth Group.

Routes Development

Routes is a partnership between NNRF and the Hostel Liaison Group (HLG). It aims to improve the housing advice, access to housing and housing support available to people from Black, Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BMER) communities across Nottingham City.

The Routes team comprises two part-time workers, Stuart Brown at NNRF and Israr Raja based at HLG, with support from Fiona Broome (NNRF One Stop Shop). Our primary aim is to deliver a capacity building service which:

- Helps BMER voluntary and community groups, particularly small groups, to be more effective in their approach to housing issues
- Helps housing providers to provide suitable housing and services for people from BMER communities
- Assists Nottingham City Council to become better informed about the housing needs and aspirations of people from BMER communities

It was recognised early on that there was a crossover between a number of the organisations that fell into the BME category and those within the Refugee category e.g. the Chinese community comprises a well-established community. However there has been an increase in Chinese asylum seekers and more are anticipated; similarly

with the Vietnamese community, the majority of whom have been here since the mid-80s. There is also a growing problem of trafficked new arrivals.

Because of this we have taken a joint approach to all the communities and have had discussions and meetings with a variety of BMER community groups about their specific 'housing' needs. This approach came in very useful when the previous worker at HLG left and there was a long gap before the new appointment was made. During that time I was able to cover two key projects which had been started:

A housing information event for the Signpost for Polish Success (SPS) which comprised presentations from Nottingham City Homes (NCH) and Notts Housing Advice (NHA), with SPS providing the interpreting. Attendees were then given the opportunity to ask questions and receive one-to-one advice. The event was very successful and the general format will be used for other community housing information events in the future.

A Housing Guide which could be used by community organisations and 'housing advice volunteers'. This has since been taken on by NHA and will form the basis of 'volunteer' training in March / April 2012.

Fiona Broome also took part as a 'housing & homelessness' facilitator in a broad ranging consultation event organised by Al Nisa, a Muslim Women's Forum. The event was very successful with over 120 women attending. Key findings related to the need for better quality information and more outreach work from the relevant agencies and organisations in the sector. These have already been fed into our future plans.

Despite a slow start, due not only to it being a new project but also because it coincided with City Council funding cuts, potential changes in housing policy and a turnover of staff, the first year of the Routes Service has finally taken off. A clear plan of action for the next 12 months has been developed and includes:

- Organising two housing information events at the YMCA.
- Organising two 'open' housing information events in the Meadows & Hyson Green as well as other single nationality / language based events.
- Organising a briefing session for agencies working with A8/A2 Nationals regarding the benefits they are entitled to as well as developing strategies to address the growing issue of homelessness.
- Developing strategies with other providers and agencies for the Czech Roma community who have no recourse to public funds.
- Developing and fundraising for a 'volunteer training' programme in partnership with other organisations - The Welcome Project, NAT, RCOs, SPS, and other BME community groups.
- Producing basic housing information flyers aimed at 'managing expectations' in relation to social housing and translated into a variety of community languages.
- Researching & developing web-based / video 'housing information' materials.

In relation to both areas of work, I have attended or organised 87 meetings throughout the year and have circulated 302 emails to RCOs with information ranging from Voluntary Sector Partnerships & BME Forum meetings, education, immigration, housing and healthcare, training courses, jobs & volunteer opportunities, arts & cultural events, and funding opportunities.

Stuart Brown
NNRF RCO Support Worker

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision at NNRF

Autumn 2010 – summer 2011 saw us completing the classes funded by the Migration Impact Fund. We worked only with Asylum Seekers, spouses and Refugees. Sheila Jones taught a mixed class for four/six hours per week and Naomi Jemmett taught a class with crèche, for women. See below.

Sheila's class varied in numbers because of the poor weather in January and February but on average eight students attended weekly. There was regular contact with BEGIN and New College and students were supported to attend college courses after leaving us. There were visits from the Community Police Liaison Officer, trips to the Nottingham Contemporary Art Gallery and social events. Although funding ended Sheila very kindly continued to work voluntarily with some of her students. We are extremely grateful for this. Naomi finished her school based job and has returned to being an Occupational Therapist. We wish her good luck.

In addition Maggie Reeves, an experienced EFL tutor, taught a young refugee doctor who is planning to work in the NHS. He has now moved to Cardiff.

Lynda Wilson



Women's ESOL Class at Playworks

This class started in November 2010 and ran for 3 hours every Tuesday morning at Playworks. A crèche was provided. The intake was made up from women who were contacted via the BEGIN waiting list. The first 6 weeks of the course saw an average attendance of 5 students per week. We were also affected by the bad weather over

the winter period impacting on attendance. After the Christmas holidays, the class continued with an increased attendance of 7 on average each week.

Due to the variable numbers and the ongoing uncertainty in funding affecting Refugee Forum at the time, the class was postponed in February.

After a 10 week break, we were delighted to be able to open up the class again. Together with Liz Burrell, Children and Families Worker, the places were offered initially to the women who attended the Friday women's group. This worked very well as the women were already familiar with Refugee Forum and Playworks, and knew each other. Other places were offered to women known to the Forum. Attendance improved with 13 on the register and a weekly attendance of between 7 and 10 women each week. The crèche was also well used with up to 7 children using the crèche each week. Due to the funding cuts the class time was reduced to 2 hours a week.



The women came from the following countries: China, Iran, Sudan and Eritrea. The group contained a mixture of abilities, with some of the women wishing to broaden their vocabulary and writing skills, whilst others needed to build confidence with basic spoken English. The women were supportive of each other and work was differentiated to meet individual needs. The women were very keen for homework and often asked for more each week! We covered a variety of topics - mainly from the Skills for Life material - including work, shopping, food, health, and clothes. The women particularly found the lesson on understanding the British Education System helpful, and they practised making a phone call to a school to report an absence, and practised dealing with correspondence to/from school. Some of the women were surprised to learn of the age of compulsory schooling in the UK and they were able to take away a useful handout of the different school years/ages and key stages/exams for each level. It was a useful session to build confidence and encouraging engagement with the education system that their children will be entering.

The class finished at the end of June, and we all went for a picnic in the Arboretum Park.

Naomi Jemmett
ESOL Tutor

Report from the Volunteer Coordinator

There are not many activities at the NNRF that take place without the commitment and support of volunteers and we are very proud to be a volunteer-led organisation. Having been at the NNRF for one year now, it has been a real pleasure to get to know the many familiar faces whose dedication to the work that we do has ensured that services to our client group continue to be delivered despite the climate of cutbacks.

One of the significant features of NNRF's volunteering programme is the diversity of our volunteer base and the fact that many volunteers are also service users. Reading through the rest of this report will give you some insight into just how much volunteers do for us. The motivation for people to volunteer with us includes those who share concerns about the injustices of the current asylum system, a desire to help others and show solidarity with asylum seekers and refugees, and those who want to give back to the NNRF after they themselves were helped out in some way. The enthusiasm that I see among the volunteers certainly attests to that passion!

While not wishing to single out one particular group of volunteers, I do feel that special thanks need to be made to Reception volunteers. Since losing our Reception Coordinator, Victor Simonian, earlier this year Reception volunteers have shown tireless dedication and assumed additional responsibilities to keep the heart of the NNRF going. These volunteers answer phone calls, meet and greet service users and visitors, locate files for staff and volunteer Advisers and much more, often under a great deal of pressure. They have shown great tenacity in what is a very demanding post and despite losing a staff member who was directly responsible for supervising them, they have continued to keep the Reception functioning and we would truly be lost without them! To help new Reception volunteers adapt to the role, we have put together a Reception Manual that guides volunteers on policies and procedures at Reception, and will also be running in October 2011 a practical training session on Reception duties in addition to a well-being training session to help volunteers manage difficult situations on Reception and manage stress. We are lucky that one of our own NNRF volunteers with teaching experience has offered to deliver the well-being training to volunteers - an example of just how diverse our volunteer base is and how we benefit from their skills!

I would also like to extend NNRF's thanks and gratitude to the Red Cross, and in particular Bill Walton who was the former Volunteer Coordinator at the NNRF before I stepped into the role. As many of you know, Bill remains a regular face at the NNRF and has been very helpful in assisting our volunteers access training through the Red Cross. This has included training on General Health Safety and Environmental Awareness, Fire Safety, Manual Handling, Stress Management and Data Protection.

Other training that volunteers have attended throughout the year includes an Introduction to the Asylum Process delivered by Refugee Action in February 2011 and attended by 20 volunteers; a First Aid training delivered by the Red Cross in April 2011 attended by 23 volunteers; an Adviser skills training delivered by Rakiba Khatun in June 2011 attended by 11 advice volunteers; and an Alcohol Awareness Raising training delivered by Last Orders in September 2011 attended by 16 volunteers.

Some statistics on Volunteering at NNRF:

- o Nearly 100 volunteers engaged in activities across all projects.
- o Just over 60 volunteers engaged in projects which take place during weekday office hours (this excludes the Tuesday Night Project and the Food Group). Among these volunteers, 22 come from asylum seeking and/or refugee backgrounds.
- o New faces at NNRF: it is always a pleasure to welcome new faces and this year we had at least 45 new starters among the various projects. Of these new starters, 15 have been from an asylum seeking and/or refugee background.
- o Our volunteers come from 15 different countries from Angola to Zimbabwe bringing with them over 20 different languages.

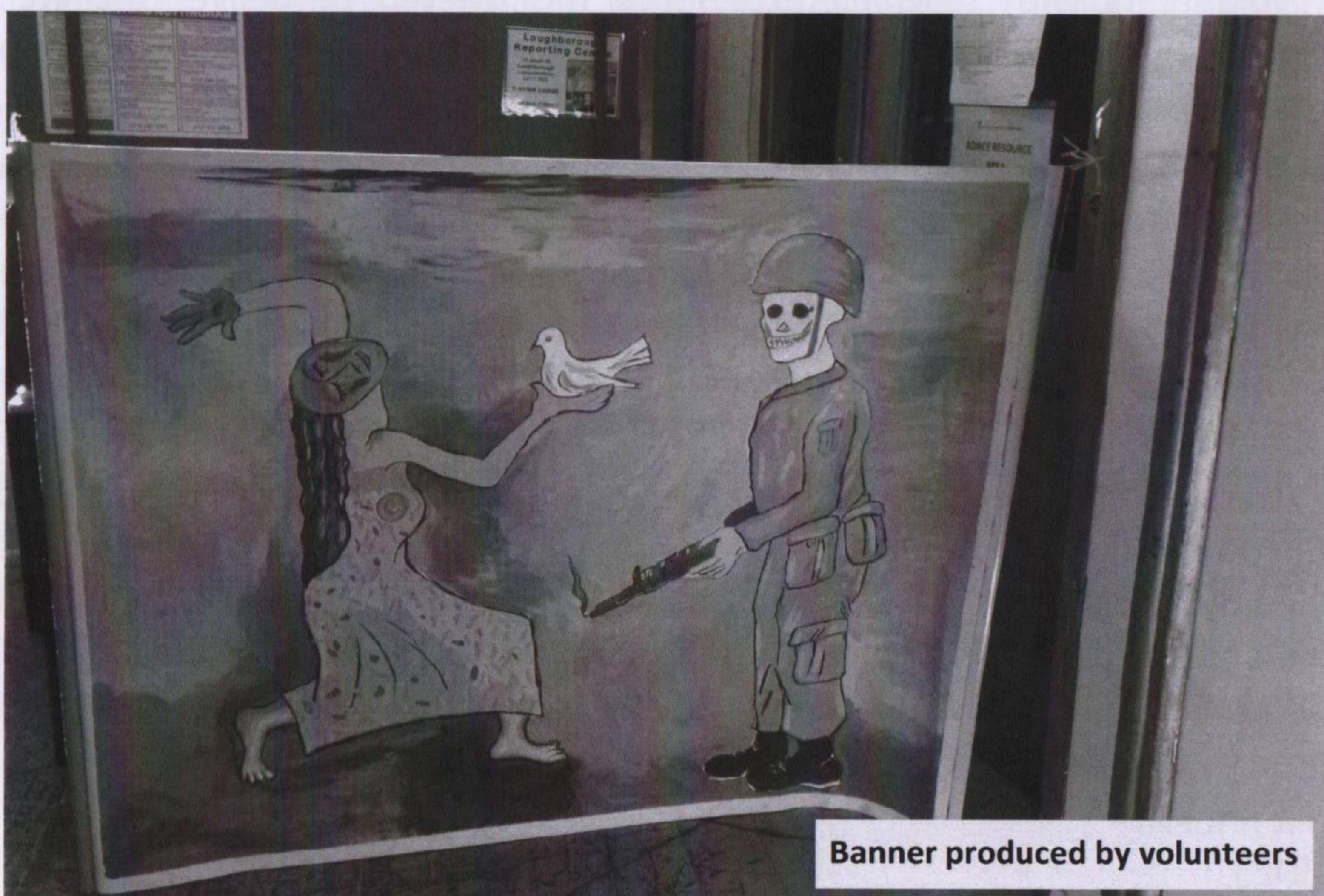
I am confident that the New Year will continue to bring in fresh faces to the NNRF with their own skills and experience to add to our already rich volunteer base.

It is greatly satisfying to hear the words of one volunteer about his experience at NNRF:

"Being at the Forum gives me such a wonderful social experience due to the fact that I am a volunteer here and also a service user. It gives me the chance to interact with people in similar situations to myself and opens opportunities for me to share my experiences and hear from others."

Working with such a diverse range of people has helped me become more patient, understanding and positive about our capacity to help others in a time of need; I hope that volunteers have also been enriched by their time at the NNRF and send a message of thanks and gratitude to all volunteers for the difference that they make to so many people's lives.

Wesal Afifi
Volunteer Co-ordinator



Banner produced by volunteers

Anti-Destitution Group - NNRF Cash Group

Anti-Destitution Cash Group

The Cash Group has had another busy year, trying to alleviate the destitution of refused asylum seekers. Many of these are appealing their judgments, have no recourse to public funds and are not allowed to work. This leaves them utterly destitute and homeless, reliant on charity and the kindness of friends. People in this situation include the sick and the elderly, as well as torture victims. Anything we supply to them has to be raised by donation, as state organisations cannot/will not help.

Therefore we are extremely grateful for the one-off donations, standing orders, membership subscriptions and fundraising events which continue to help us alleviate the edges of these desperate situations. We have been offering basic support for over seven years now; in this time we have distributed around £135,000; this is a testimony to the tremendous generosity of NNRF members and supporters.

Unfortunately, even with such generous support, we are only able to give each destitute asylum seeker £10 (or £20 if they have verifiable ongoing health/medical problems) every four weeks. This sounds – and is – a tiny amount, but it is in addition to the food supplied by the Food Group (funded from the same pot), and confers a tiny amount of choice and dignity. It is often used for phone calls, transport or urgent personal needs. We interview people regularly to find out if they have any other needs we can assist with, and this often results in referrals to NNRF advisers or other courses of action.

If you would like to make a contribution to the Anti-Destitution fund, please see the forms at the end of this report or email:
info@nottsrefugeeforum.org.uk

The Cash Group comprises volunteers, many of whom have been working on this project for a long time. We distribute the cash on Tuesday mornings, and three or four group members will be present at any session. Although we operate every week, people collect cash on a four-weekly basis, so not everyone needing support turns up every

week. The work is sometimes emotional and difficult, especially when we see people in absolute desperation to whom we can only give so little help. Homelessness is a great problem, and although we try to make referrals or otherwise help how we can, too many people are left sleeping rough. The Arimathea Trust housing has been a great help, and we are hopeful for the new Host Nottingham scheme.

Happily, some of our long-standing users have come off our books as they have gained Leave to Remain. They often come to tell us, and to express gratitude for the support they have had from us. Therefore, the number of people we need to support has decreased a little, although there are always new claims.

The last date for which I have details is September 20th, 2011. Below is some information for the 52 weeks leading up to and including September 20th. In this year there were a total of 889 individual visits from 198 separate asylum seekers. (The previous year, there were 213 asylum seekers).

The table on the following page shows which countries our users came from.

Country	Visits	People
Unknown	2	1
Afghanistan	25	10
Algeria	41	12
Angola	12	2
Cameroun	11	1
China	24	5
DR Congo	38	6
Egypt	3	2
Eritrea	35	7
Gambia	2	2
Ghana	1	1
Guinea	5	1
Iran	153	36
Iraq	60	15
Jamaica	10	1
Kenya	11	3
Kuwait	4	1
Malawi	32	7
Mongolia	105	15
Nigeria	18	6
Pakistan	35	6
Palestine	1	1
Romania	2	1
Russia	1	1
Rwanda	3	1
Sierra Leone	13	1
South Africa	20	2
Sudan	19	7
Swaziland	3	1
Syria	16	2
Tibet	1	1
Turkey	16	4
Uganda	6	3
Zambia	1	1
Zimbabwe	160	32

There is a great increase in the number of visits from people from Mongolia. There have always been a lot of people from Iran and Zimbabwe.

50 were female, many of who were pregnant, or had recently given birth; and 148 were male. 1 was born in the 1940s; 13 were born in the 1950s; 29 were born in the 1960s; 62 were born in the 1970s; 79 were born in the 1980s; 11 were born in the 1990s. We do not know the birth year of 3. 91 received an extra £10 because of health problems. (In reality, most people seeking our help had some kind of health problem – the life possibilities of a failed asylum seeker are not conducive to good health – but we could only afford to support the most desperate or vulnerable with the extra payment).

In the last 52 weeks we handed out a total of £13,210 (previous year £16,080). Many of the people who come to us tell us how important the support is; as well as enabling them to buy something personal or top up their mobiles, it helps to give them some choice, and means they can feel part of the adult world. We rely on your support to be able to continue this work. Many, many thanks to all who have donated, and are continuing to donate.

Chris Cann

Anti-Destitution Group - Food Group

The Food Group meets every Saturday to distribute food to destitute asylum seekers. It is run by 20+ committed volunteers, both users and from the host community. It offers a welcoming, family friendly, communal space with a hot meal where users can meet others and share their skills e.g. cooking, volunteering. We are totally dependent on donations for purchasing food and we are very grateful to everyone who donates and contributes e.g. British Red Cross, Cost Co, The Abundance Project. This year we have gained the support of some student, Church and Muslim community groups who have brought along food (and cooked the mid-day meal); muffins and coffee; ready cooked meals and meals to take away during Ramadan, and raised money to buy food. Thank you to IFeed, The Community

Church, Muslim Communities UK and Himmah. At the beginning of the year numbers attending the Food Group were falling. Since April they've increased beyond the previous average of 45 per week with rises in the numbers of certain nationalities e.g. more people from Malawi and Mongolia. The overall majority of users are African e.g. 35 out of 51 on 1.10.11 and more women are now attending. Last week we registered our first user from Libya. This year has seen users successfully taking more responsibility for coordinating the group. In response to requests from the users we now provide washing up liquid, cooking oil, maize flour & deodorant.

Dave Fenerty who acts as registrar writes:

There has been an increase in the numbers dependent upon food hand-outs in 2011. Up until and including 2nd April the average number to benefit from this service per week was 34, since then the number has jumped to nearly 50, essentially a rise of 50%. One major factor is the increase in the number of children being supported in the latter period, rising from an average of 5.3 per week to 14.25. Coupled with the increases to food prices generally, this has limited the amount we are able to give to each destitute asylum seeker who comes to us for help. Despite the hardships, those who attend on Saturdays for a hot meal and shopping do seem boosted in terms of morale by the social atmosphere, and are genuinely grateful for what they do receive. It would be nice if, in spite of cost of living increases, we were able to give each person a little more each week to support themselves.

Between January and September 2011 numbers of adults attending each week varied from 19 to 42 (though mostly in the 30s), and children from 0 to 20 (generally rising).

Frank McMahon who coordinates the food purchasing and distribution writes:

Most of the food for the Anti-Destitution Group is ordered online from Asda every week. The online expenditure averages about £150 per week. Some items are bought elsewhere if they are cheaper (e.g. cooking oil is cheaper at Aldi or Lidl than Asda). The oil costs about £30 per week (24 bottles). The amount of food that needs to be ordered every week is determined by checking how much food is left after each Saturday food group. The food is delivered every Tuesday evening at the Tuesday Night Project, where it is checked by a group of volunteers to ensure that all the ordered items of food have been delivered. Fresh fruit and vegetables, eggs (local, very cheap and free-range), sweet corn and tinned fruit are ordered every week from Thompson's grocers. A check is done to see if all the items need ordering e.g. there may be a surplus of tinned fruit or there may be sufficient potatoes for the coming Saturday.

Food is also delivered through the Red Cross once a month. This order is £160 per month and enables us to get the items that we cannot get enough of through the online Asda order e.g. we need 40 tins of tomatoes each week and can only order a maximum of 24 each week online. We would therefore order the difference through the monthly Red Cross order.

To ensure that we do not run out of food on a Saturday and that all volunteers are being consistent in giving the same amounts, we have a short (five minute) meeting going through how much of each product can be given out. The amount of food that we give out of each foodstuff is listed on the door of the food storeroom. We try not to exceed this e.g. we put out 24 bottles of oil each week, so that we are not short or overspend the following week.

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info@nottsrefugeeforum.org.uk

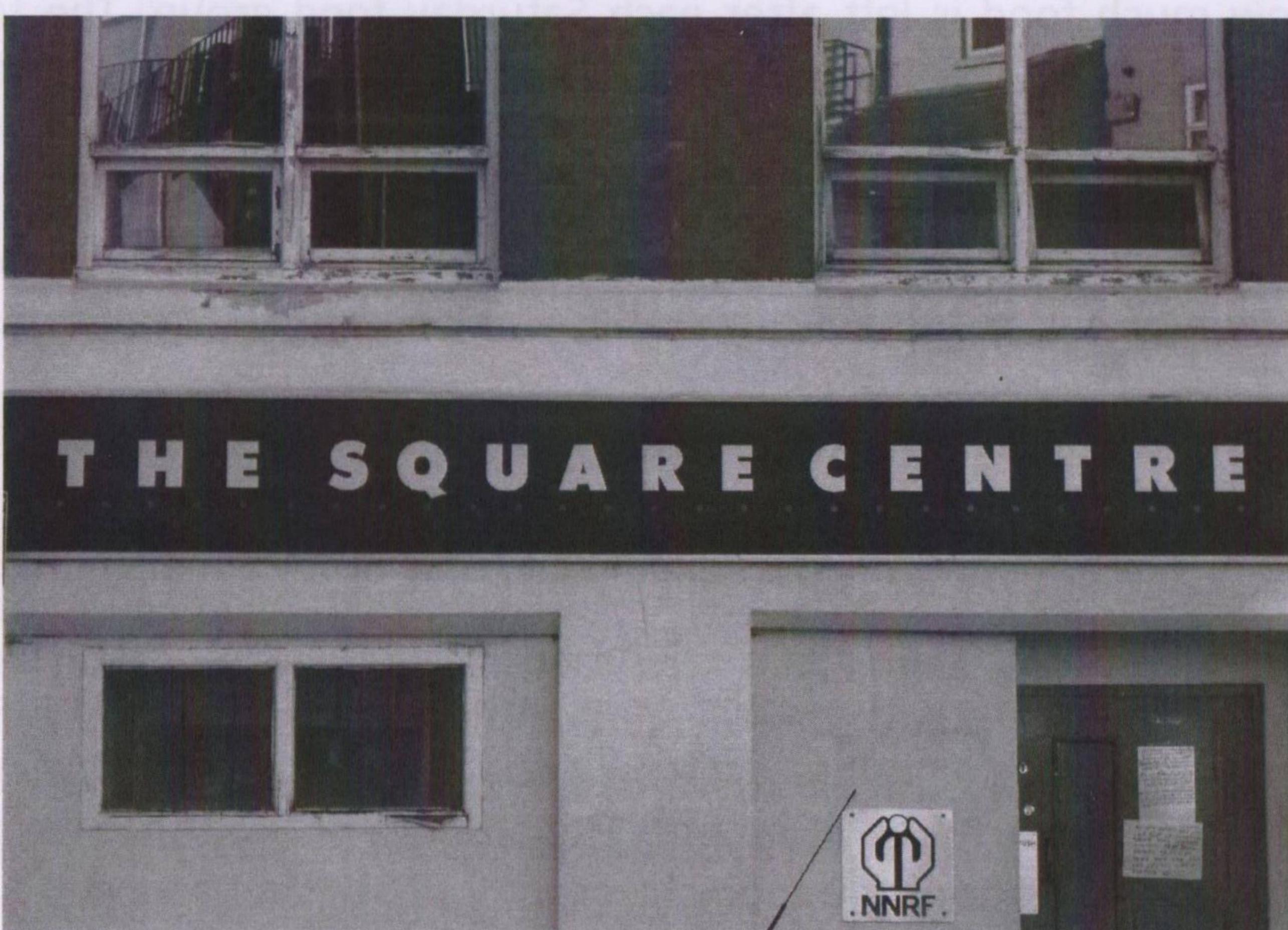
Lu Blackband, food group volunteer and fundraiser writes:

I work in the local authority arts sector, and have volunteered at the Saturday morning sessions for just over three years. My role involves fundraising and, on Saturdays, the sorting of toiletries (and a bit of washing up!). Extra cash raised by me is used in two ways; it enables our volunteers to join in Forum outings and group socials, and also provides funds to pay for essentials which are beyond our monthly budget - typically items such as deodorants and nappies.

My particular type of fundraising takes many forms; I run an office tuck shop and book exchange, quarterly coffee mornings, an annual car boot stall and through my various networks, I hijack any PTA/school or church fete that can accommodate me. The annual Lowdham Book Festival also allow me a free stall pitch every June. For a donation, I sell books supplied by friends, family, colleagues and neighbours. They don't have deep pockets but they are incredibly supportive and tolerant of my constant badgering for the new or nearly new! Unwanted gifts surface after Christmas and birthdays and these are neatly stockpiled ready for the next fundraising opportunity for which I ensure NNRF literature is on display along with gift aid/standing order mandate forms. It's small scale, it's all I have time for, but 'every little helps' (as the jingle goes).*

On Saturday mornings, we volunteers come together to share our weekly trials and tribulations whilst welcoming the steady stream of service users. Most volunteers would agree that no two Saturdays are the same. I have proof-read emails to solicitors, helped decipher letters, supported volunteers cramming for Citizenship tests... and then swept the floor. With plenty of variety, our little community is always lively and welcoming, it's never dull! No visitor to our Saturday morning sessions can fail to be impressed by the diversity of our service users whose different nationalities can number from 25 to 40 and more. I'm glad for the opportunity to both practice my French and learn of other cultures (my geography is also a little less rusty these days). On a personal note, volunteering has allowed members of the host community like me the privilege of making many wonderful friends amongst the wider NNRF family of service users, community supporters and regular volunteers. For that I will always be truly grateful.

Allan Njanji coordinator, Charity Kachione coordinator & Julia Howell (Management Comm link)



* If you have any further fundraising ideas, please get in touch, come and say hello on Saturday mornings!

Tuesday Night Project

The Tuesday Night Project is now in its third year, and is still pulling in an eclectic mix of asylum seekers, refugees, students and members of the local community. Our large shared meal for around 30-50 people is still the main focus of the night, and anyone is welcome to come along and cook a meal. We have been treated to some amazing food this year, reflecting cooking styles from all around the world. Meals are for donations, and people are not expected to pay if they cannot afford to. As we receive no regular funding we have benefited greatly from the regular surplus food collected from Costco by the Red Cross volunteers, for which we are very grateful!

Other regular activities include art workshops and banner painting, board games and pool, guitar playing, language sharing, and also dance workshops. The Tuesday Night Project is essentially what people make it, and we are always open to new ideas regarding how people want to use the space. Many attenders seem to benefit from the opportunity to socialise with such a wide variety of people in an environment that is relaxed, informal and free to attend, making it a quite unique space in Nottingham. The friendships and sense of community which develop can offer an invaluable source of social support to those who attend and also help to lessen isolation.

Penny Dale



Nottingham Refugee Week 2011



Ngoma performing at Breaking Borders

This year's Refugee Week was another big success with well over 1,000 people attending and participating in the activities. Over 70 musicians, poets and artists performed and exhibited their work.

80 volunteers contributed their time and 15 organisations were involved in the planning and programming with at least 20 different nationalities participating.

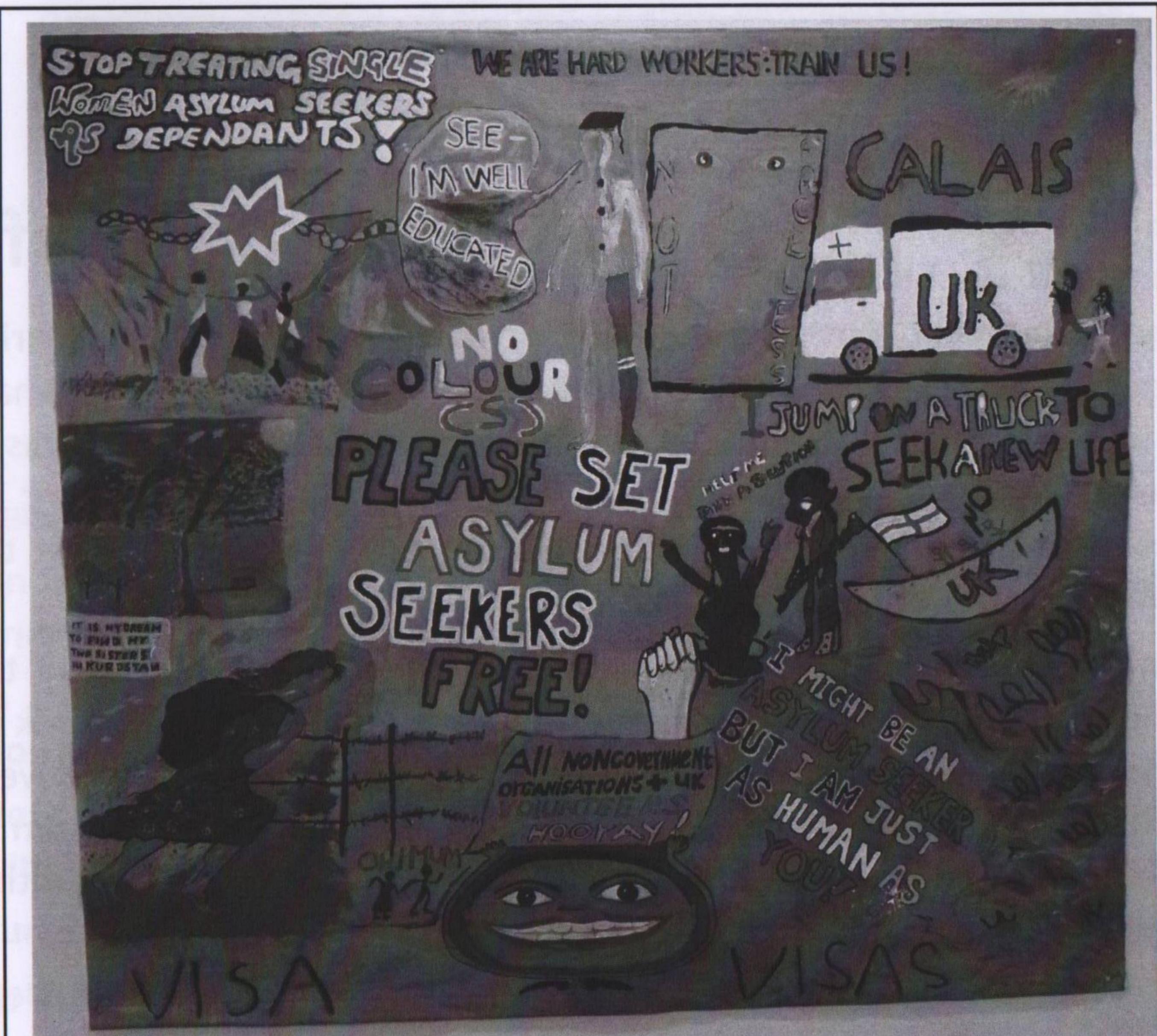
12,000 copies of an expanded 32 page **Beyond Borders**, Nottingham's Refugee Week publication, were distributed across the city.

Highlights of the week included:

Breaking Borders, the launch event, which comprised an afternoon of family friendly dance and arts workshops followed by a packed evening of performances from local bands, musicians and poets - over 300 people attended and £600 was raised for the Anti-Destitution Fund; An exhibition of

work from migrant artists and a family project entitled **Journeys** were displayed in the Central Library for 7 weeks; The **Detained Lives Roadshow** at the Refugee Forum saw the formation of a Support Group for all those detained at the newly opened Morton Hall Immigration Detention Centre in Lincolnshire; **Seeking Stories Exhibition**, the culmination of a creative arts project that originated from the heart-rending suicide of a young Kurdish asylum seeker in July 2010 was on display at the Photographers Hub for two weeks; A **Q&A with Marilyn Heward Mills**, author of 'The Association of Foreign Spouses', took place at the Central Library; **Culturebox Language Cafe Special**, comprising multilingual songs, poems, performances and dance and music workshops took place at the Refugee Forum and was hugely successful; **Solo Art, Solo Heart** comprising workshops in mask making, beat boxing, and African and traditional Kurdish music, followed by an evening of solo performances from 16 Kurdish, African and British dancers, musicians, poets, photographers and filmmakers took place at Nottingham Contemporary and the New Art Exchange – with the evening culminating in a fantastically enjoyable mass improvisation as the 160 strong audience joined the performers on stage.

Funding came from Nottingham City Council, NNRN, Refugee Futures, and Comic Relief, with a significant amount of money raised through advertising revenue.



A banner produced by refugees and asylum seekers at the Refugee Forum and displayed at the Central Library

Borders will continue and I'm sure that Refugee Week 2012 will be yet another Refugee Week to remember.

Stuart Brown
Nottingham Beyond Borders



The families that took part in the Journeys project

Once again without the hard work, dedication and commitment of everyone involved in Nottingham Beyond Borders, as well as other professionals in the sector, community groups and activists, Nottingham Refugee Week 2011 would not have been anywhere near as successful as it was.

On a personal note, after 8 years of helping to organise Refugee Weeks in Nottingham, I have decided to take a break from next year's event. However Nottingham Beyond

CULTUREBOX

Culturebox Language Café

The Language Café is an informal adult learning initiative which uses the learning and sharing of language skills as a mechanism to facilitate intercultural dialogue. Originally a Nottingham City Libraries project, it was put on hold in summer 2010 while the Central Library was in refurbishment. Overwhelming popular demand for a return of the project led it to be 'adopted' by local not-for-profit organisation, Culturebox, and to make its home at the Refugee Forum every Saturday afternoon between January and July 2011.

All Language Café members agree that this period was a real high point in the life of the project - largely due to the contribution of NNRF service users. They enthusiastically took on a hosting role and became involved with delivery of the project as volunteers at all levels. We understand that Culturebox volunteers have also become involved with the Forum as volunteers. Over 100 people joined the Language Café during its time at the Forum, with a multitude of language skills and from vastly diverse cultural and social backgrounds.

On behalf of Culturebox I would like to extend our sincere thanks to the management of the Refugee Forum for what was a highly valuable and productive partnership experience for us. We would particularly like to thank Amdani Juma, who contributed to almost all of the sessions and also to the many volunteers and service users who welcomed the newcomers so warmly.

We look forward to continuing to collaborate with the NNRF in the future.

Juliet Line

www.cultureboxlanguagecafe.wordpress.com

Partnership Working and Networking

Our achievements in supporting asylum seekers and refugees have been greatly enhanced by the quality and range of our partnership working with both statutory and voluntary sector organisations. This has become even more important this year as the voluntary sector has faced severe funding cuts.

In 2011 we have continued to develop our range of services and capacity by developing and jointly delivering services in partnership with other organisations including:

- **Refugee Action:** Sadly a reduction in funding forced Refugee Action to close its Nottingham office in March. Since then the Forum has provided a weekly base for their surgeries which assist asylum seekers to claim UKBA support. Our partnership in Nottingham with the start of the PCT-funded 'Into the Mainstream' Health Project has continued, with their worker Eamon Collins moving into the Forum to work alongside Kinsi Clarke.
- **Hostels Liaison Group (HLG)** – 'Routes Project' - BMER Capacity Building around housing advice.
- **Tuntum Housing Association:** in the 'Refugee Futures' consortium, providing support with housing to individuals and families awarded a recent positive decision.
- **British Red Cross:** Joint working to support destitute refused asylum seekers.

- **Library Service:** including English conversation sessions and **Language Café** which was held at the Forum for several months.
- **BEGIN & local FE colleges:** ESOL provision.
- **Nottingham Arimathea Trust:** referring refused asylum seekers for short to medium term accommodation whilst they prepare fresh submissions.
- **Playworks and Greenfields Children's Centre** have been our partners in providing a crèche and rooms for The Refugee Women's Group meetings and our ESOL classes.
- **Refugee Council:** from July, they have provided fortnightly surgeries for young asylum seekers at the Forum.

In addition, we have worked closely with the following:

On asylum accommodation issues we have continued to liaise with **Refugee Support** and **Priority Properties North West**.

In the difficult search for accommodation for those granted leave to remain, Council's **Housing Aid & Homeless Gateway & the YMCA**.

New refugee tenants are referred to **Family First** and the **Vineyard Arches** for assistance with furniture and household goods.

SureStart Children's Centre have supported the Women's Group and individual mothers.

Both **STAR (Student Action for Refugees)** at Nottingham University and **Beyond Borders** have made a great contributions to the life of the Forum this year, setting up regular Tuesday social evenings, volunteering and contributing financially to further events.

We have close links with the **Rainbow Project** based at St. Stephen's (Bobbersmill).

Health service links have continued to be important – with GPs, health visitors, the NHS.

Direct, the Positive Care Team, Terence Higgins Trust and mental health teams – we are members of the Primary Care Trust's Asylum, Refugee, and Migrant Health Forum.

We have good working relationships with **Nottingham City Council** staff in Housing Aid, the Homelink Team, Supporting People, Nottingham City Homes, Community & Culture Department, Children and Families Department, Welfare Rights and the Race Harassment Team Social Services

Nottingham Law Centre and both **St. Ann's** and the **Meadows Advice Centres** have also provided expert advice.

NNRF has continued to take part in relevant forums including the Multi Agency Asylum Seeker & Refugee Forum, the BMER Domestic Violence Forum and the Floating Support Providers' Forum.

It is important that Forum staff and volunteers keep up-to-date with national developments relating to asylum and immigration issues. We rely heavily for this on bulletins from, among others, the **Refugee Council**, **Refugee Action**, the **Institute of Race Relations (IRR)**, the **National Coalition of Anti-deportation Campaigns (NCADC)**, **The No Recourse to Public Funds Network (NRPF)** and the **East Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership**.

Other organisations that we are pleased to have collaborated with this year with include **Long Journey Home**, **Connexions**, **Groundworks** and the city's network of **Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs)**.

We are grateful to all these and other agencies and organisations involved in working with refugees and asylum seekers for their support and co-operation over the past 12 months.

Patsy Brand

Comments from some of our partners:

Nottingham City Library and Information Service has a very longstanding relationship with NNRF, having worked closely in partnership with them since 2005. As a key referral partner, NNRF is crucial to the Libraries' outreach and development process.

Juliet Line
NCC Library Service

The One Stop Shop Advisor and I have worked very closely together by working in partnership to support families with multiple and complex needs or referring clients to one another's service for specialist advice

Shama Sharif
Creative Links - NCC

My links to NNRF are community health and skills that I provide to African and BME Communities and in the City. I have used NNRF since 2006 to signpost people for help that NNRF provides in Housing, Health and Education but also I use their community space for outreach work, community training in HIV and health promotion.

Amdani Juma
African Institute for Social Development



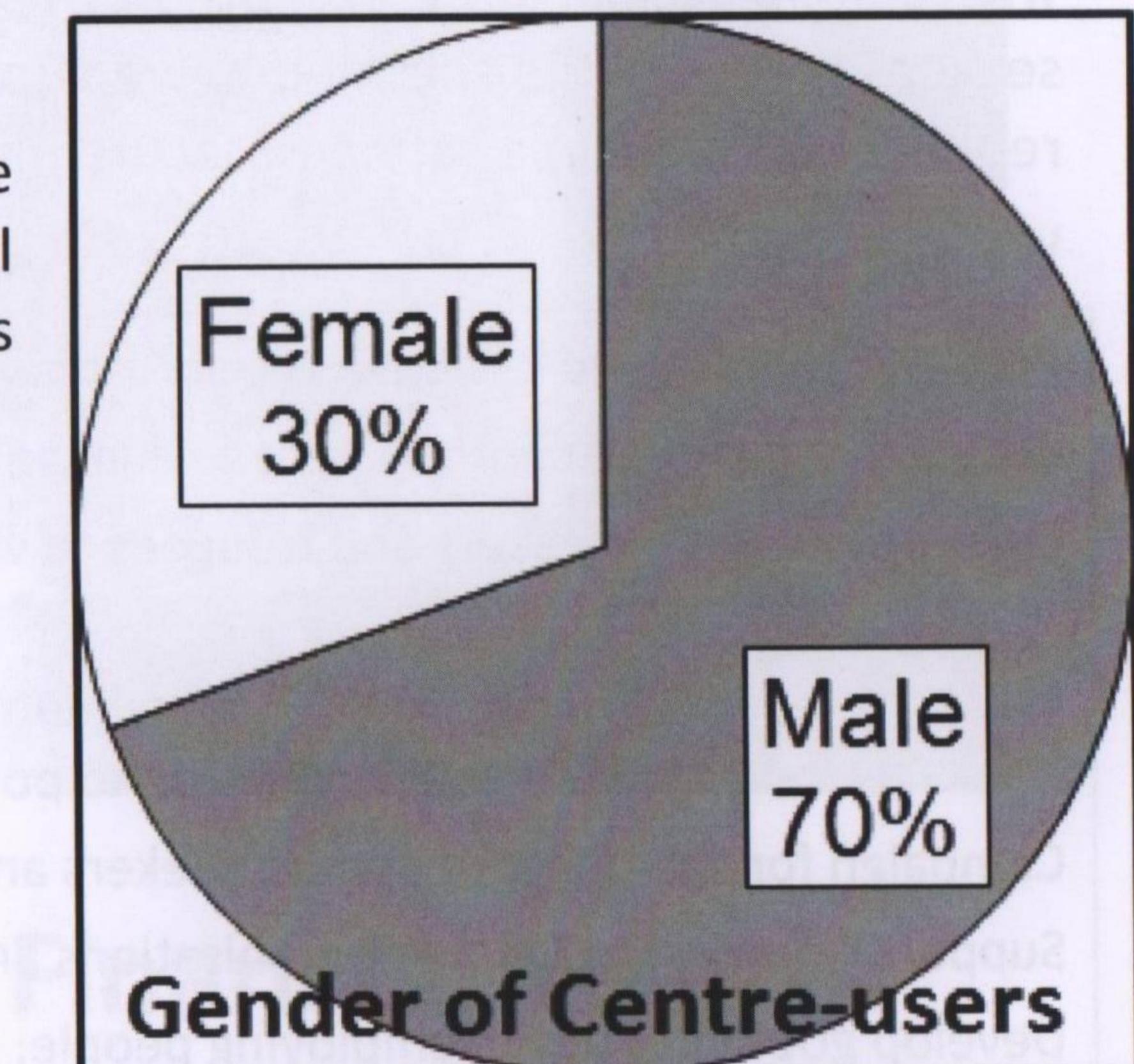
Who used the Centre this year?

When refugees and asylum seekers visit the centre during the day from Monday to Friday, reception volunteers record basic personal information so that we can monitor trends. NB. figures do not include people who visit in the evenings or weekends.

This information relates to the nine-month period January to September 2011:

Number of user visits: 9,516

NB. In the case of a couple or family, only one name (usually the man's) is taken, so the actual number of users (especially female users) was higher.

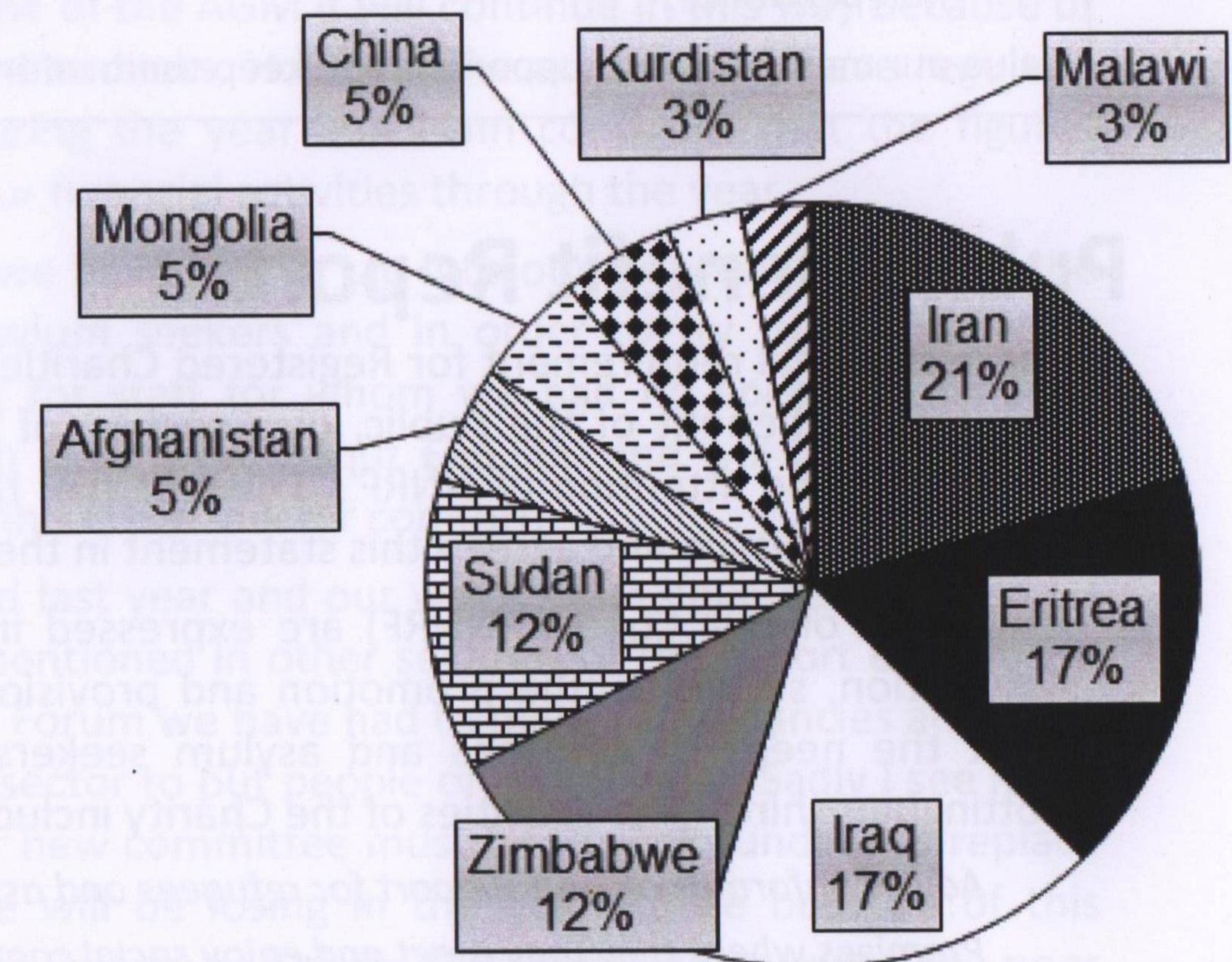


Country of origin

59 different nationalities were recorded.

The top 10 of these were:

Iran	21%
Eritrea	17%
Iraq	17%
Zimbabwe	12%
Sudan	12%
Afghanistan	5%
Mongolia	5%
China	5%
Kurdistan	3%
Malawi	3%



Where do our clients currently live?

In addition to serving asylum seekers and refugees from Nottingham, between April and September 2011 we supported people from Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, Lincoln and Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire

NNRF Statement of Values and Aims

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum is a voluntary sector organisation which defends the rights of asylum seekers and refugees, supports asylum seekers and refugees in practical ways, and campaigns for a just and generous response from Government to people who seek asylum in the UK.

We oppose the oppressive and inhumane treatment of people who claim asylum in the UK, whether their claims are accepted or rejected; we challenge the negative images of asylum seekers presented in the media; we support asylum seekers and refugees in their efforts to rebuild their lives in a safe and secure place.

We aim to:

- Provide practical and effective support to asylum seekers and refugees;
- Create a welcoming centre where asylum seekers and refugees feel valued and respected;
- Encourage asylum seekers and refugees to volunteer and participate as activists, workers and committee members;
- Work together in an inclusive, open and democratic way so that paid staff, volunteers, asylum seekers and refugees contribute to policy and decision making;
- Campaign for the rights of asylum seekers and refugees;
- Support refugee community organisations and networks;
- Develop good practice in employing people; recruiting, training and developing volunteers; and in governance;
- Encourage asylum seekers and refugees to access mainstream services, to make use of their qualifications and experience, enable them to acquire new skills and move towards independence;
- Value our members and supporters and keep them informed and aware of our work.

(Revised Aug 2011)

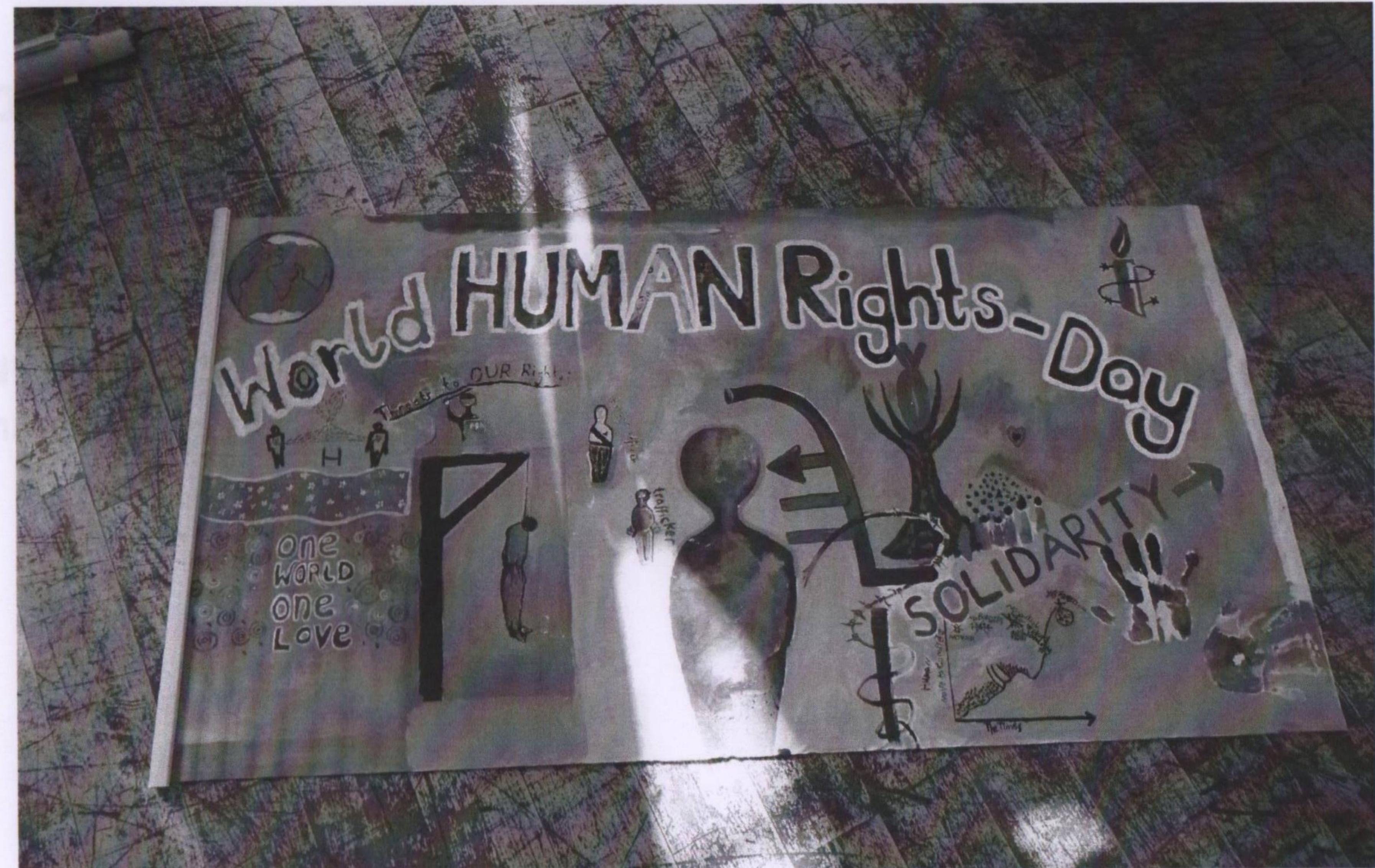
Public Benefit Report

There is a legal requirement for Registered Charities to show that their activities are carried out 'for the benefit of the public, or a section of the public'. This requirement has been brought to the attention of NNRF's Trustees (i.e. the Management Committee). They have discussed the issue and agreed this statement in the Annual Report.

'The Aims of our Charity (NNRF) are expressed in the 'Objects' of the Memorandum of Association, stated as 'the promotion and provision of any charitable purpose directed to meet the needs of refugees and asylum seekers living in the City of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.' The activities of the Charity include the free provision of:

- Advice, information and support for refugees and asylum seekers*
- Premises where they may meet and enjoy social contact and recreation*
- Opportunities to extend their education*
- Small grants of cash and food to people in poverty*
- Campaigning about issues relating to refugees and asylum seekers*
- Opportunities to interact with members of the host community.*

We believe that this Annual Report, together with the annual accounts and financial statement of the Charity, will demonstrate that its income has been applied towards its objects.'



Treasurer's Report for the Financial Year ended 31 March 2011

I am presenting again the accounts before they have been finalised and audited but this is now normal and unless we move the time of the AGM it will continue in this way because of the time needed by our accountants and auditors. However the accountants have regularly monitored our financial procedures during the year and I am confident that the figures herewith are an accurate reflection of our financial activities through the year.

For the first time I have to report that we have had to tap into our reserves to provide the much needed support for destitute asylum seekers and in order to try to maintain the overall level of our services by paying for staff for whom we had no specific funding. I estimate that our reserves at 31 March 2011 were about £66,000 and will be at a similar level at the end of the current year and this is too low for comfort.

I mentioned the potential cuts we faced last year and our worst fears have been realised. I imagine that these difficulties will be mentioned in other sections of the report but for the first time since I became involved in the Forum we have had to make redundancies and none of us became involved in the voluntary sector to put people on to the dole. Sadly I see more of this to come. The first priority of our new committee must be to seek funding to replace what we have lost and that which we will be losing in the near future because of this government's bizarre concept of the Big Society and their determination to make the poor pay for the mistakes of the rich.

I said last year that I wished to move on from the job of Treasurer but strangely no one has come forward to take over. I live in hope.

My thanks to all of the staff who have been involved in supporting me in my role.

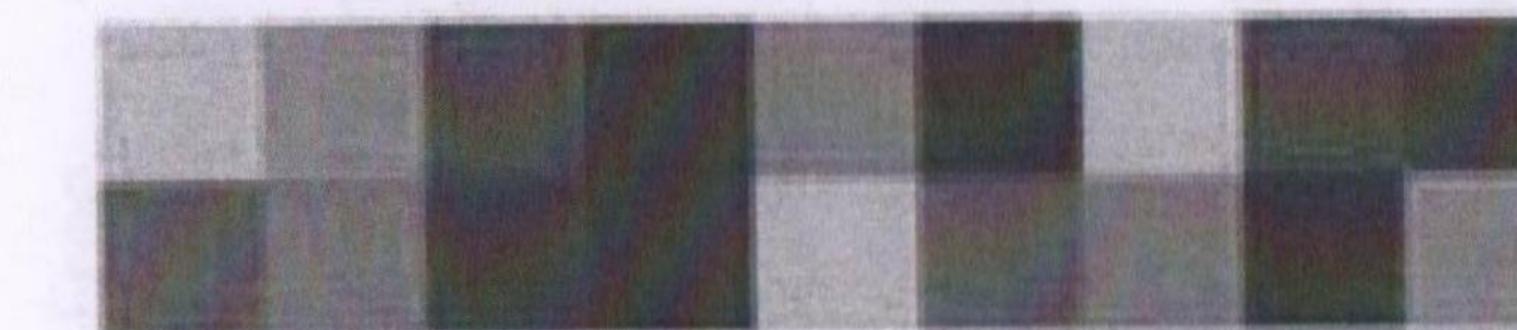
Leo Keely
Treasurer

A big Thank You

Income and Expenditure for the year to 31 March 2011

Income	
Bank interest	142.23
Donations & Subscriptions	28,435.23
Grants	550,805.32
Sundry income	2,586.13
Total Income	581,968.91
 Expense	
Activities	1,841.18
Bank charges	5.00
Consultancy	3,063.98
Crèche	9,059.50
Donations & grants awarded	21,968.16
Food & refreshments	18,779.03
Insurances	715.41
IT software & maintenance	14,552.05
Legal & professional fees	4,710.57
Materials & equipment	7,577.28
Other expenses	-797.29
Payroll Expenses	114,654.69
Photocopying & printing	8,012.07
Premises repairs & maintenance	4,230.95
Publications & subscriptions	2,564.09
Rent & services	34,031.54
Staff expenses	1,721.11
Stationery & office supplies	6,033.45
Telephone, post & internet	18,424.59
Training	5,585.11
Uncategorized Expenses	3,162.65
Utilities	8,518.06
Volunteer expenses	8,185.31
Wages & NIC	309,054.47
Total Expense	605,652.96
 Profit for the Year	-23,684.05

NNRF is grateful to all of the organisations and individuals whose generosity enables us to continue to support asylum seekers and refugees in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire



SUPPORTING PEOPLE in nottingham



Nottingham City Council



LOTTERY FUND

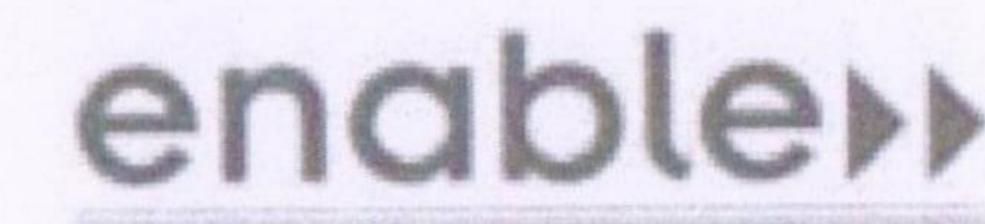
the Tudor trust



Supported by
BBC
**Children
in Need**



NHS
Nottingham City



working with refugees to build new lives

The logo for HLG (Hyundai Logic Group) is displayed. It features a large, stylized letter 'H' and a smaller, overlapping letter 'L' to its right, both composed of dark, overlapping hexagonal shapes. Below this graphic, the letters 'HLG' are written in a large, white, sans-serif font, centered on a dark hexagonal background.

HL

112

Photos courtesy of Imran Asif, Liz Burrell, Kate Mack, Azad Mohammed, Tina Patel, Bill Walton, Stuart Brown.
Not Just a Refugee produced by Refugee Action.

Dear Sir/Madam or whatever you happen to be!

The Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum
The Square Centre, 389-394 Alfred Street North, Nottingham, NG3 1AA

Dear Supporter,

Thank you for your interest in the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum (NNRF). To continue helping us in our work, we wondered whether you might like to join NNRF. Membership gives you the benefits of: receiving occasional mailings, being able to vote at the AGM, receiving emails to keep you informed if you wish, and the chance to join yahoo or Facebook groups where you can post and read messages, photos, files etc. We get the benefit that our membership base is larger so we can speak with a louder voice, and we can disseminate information further.

We currently give small cash grants of £10 per month to each person who's destitute, or £20 for those with poor health. We also give each person a bag of groceries worth around £5 each week so they don't go hungry. The grocery parcels are improving in quality, and any contributions will help towards sustaining this small humanitarian gesture. All this work is done by volunteers, so the entire donations are used directly to help people who would otherwise starve.

If you would like to become a member, please complete and return the attached forms to The Square Centre.

Again, many thanks for your generosity,

Membership Secretary

 - Please detach and return to the address below

The Nottingham and Notts Refugee Forum

Membership Form 2011

Membership fees: Free unwaged / low waged / volunteer
£10 minimum organisation / waged individual

If you can afford more please consider a larger donation or why not set up a monthly standing order to help support destitute asylum seekers in our community

Please tick as appropriate:

I / we would like to join the NNRF
 I / we would like to renew my / our membership of the NNRF
 I / we would like to make a single donation of £.....
 I / we would like to set up a monthly standing order of £.....
(Please complete the direct debit mandate form)
 I / we would like more information on how we can help NNRF
 I / we would like all donations to be eligible for Gift Aid
(Please complete the Gift Aid declaration form)

Name:

Address:

Email:

Telephone:

Mobile phone:

Date:

Group memberships:

Organisation name:

Number of copies of newsletter needed:

Please make cheques payable to: The Nottingham and Notts Refugee Forum. Return forms to Membership Secretary, NNRF, The Square Centre, 389-394 Alfred Street North, Nottingham NG3 1AA 0115 9415599 www.nottsrefugeeforum.org.uk Please note that your information will be stored on a computer database

STANDING ORDER MANDATE

Account holder(s)	
Address	
Bank sort code	
Account number	
To the manager of:	
Bank name	
Bank address	

PAYMENT AUTHORITY: Please debit my/our account in accordance with the following details:

Please pay The Co-Operative Bank,
PO Box 101, 1 Balloon Street, Manchester, M60 4EP
Sort code 089299 / Account 65226311

Monthly amount	£
Day of month for payment	
Starting from	
Until further notice in writing, or	
Date of last payment	
Signed (account holder 1)	
Signed (account holder 2)	

Please complete and return to NNRF.

Gift Aid can also apply to membership subscriptions, so it would help us if you complete the Gift Aid form whether or not you have made extra donations. Thanks.

GIFT AID DECLARATION

To
Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum,
The Square Centre,
389-394 Alfred Street North,
Nottingham NG3 1AA

Registered Charity No. 1086962

I (full name).....

of.....

.....

.....

Postcode.....

Telephone.....

would like all donations I make to the Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum from the date of my first donation to be treated as Gift Aid donations. I understand that I must be paying income or capital gains tax at least equal to the amount being reclaimed by the Forum. I understand I can cancel this Gift Aid Declaration at any time.

Signature of donor..... Date.....

Notes:

1. You can cancel this Declaration at any time by notifying the Forum.
2. You must pay an amount of income or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the Forum reclaims on your donations in the tax year (currently 28p for each £1.00 you give).
3. If in the future your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income and capital gains tax equal to the amount the charity reclaims, you can cancel your declaration.
4. If you pay tax at the higher rate you can claim further tax relief in your Self-assessment tax return.
5. Please notify us if you change your name or address.

Please complete and return to: NNRF, The Square Centre, Alfred Street North, Nottingham, NG3 1AA
(www.nottsrefugeeforum.org.uk)