



ESOL FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS

A SURVEY OF PRACTICE



Funded by:



The UK Asylum Seekers Development Partnership – ASSET UK is part funded by the European Social Fund under the Equal Community Initiative Programme . The dissemination and mainstreaming phase is co-funded by the National Learning and Skills Council

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Section 1: Background and Content | 2 |
| Introduction | 2 |
| Definitions of Integration | 3 |
| Methodology | 6 |
| Language as a Barrier to Integration | 6 |
| | |
| Section 2: ESOL + | 8 |
| ESOL + Vocational Integration | 8 |
| ESOL + Voluntary Work | 18 |
| ESOL + Mentoring | 26 |
| ESOL + Cultural Activities | 34 |
| | |
| Section 3: Conclusion | 41 |
| Funding | 41 |
| Working Conditions | 42 |
| Unrealistic Outcomes | 43 |
| Flexibility and Adaptability | 43 |
| Staff | 44 |
| | |
| References | 45 |
| Acknowledgements | 48 |

Section 1 Background and Context

Introduction

The national policy on the dispersal of refugees and asylum seekers has meant that many organisations with little experience of working with people from minority linguistic backgrounds are developing English language provision alongside other services. This report identifies a number of elements of emerging practice which have the potential to increase the chances of inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers in UK society. The research is a strand of the Basic Skills Agency's contribution to ASSET UK, a national project part-funded by the Equal Community Initiative European Structural Fund programme and the LSC. The ASSET UK Development Partnership brought together voluntary and educational agencies working on a national level to develop improved ways of helping newly arrived asylum seekers dispersed into the regions in their process of social and vocational integration.

The ASSET UK Development Partnership comprised the following agencies:-

- The Refugee Council, as lead partner.
- The Basic Skills Agency.
- Language and Literacy Unit (LLU+), South Bank University.
- National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE).
- Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM).
- The Sheffield College.
- Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit (RAGU), London Metropolitan University.
- The Training and Employment Section (TES), Refugee Council.

Carrying out research into vocational integration for asylum seekers is challenging within a legal framework which no longer allows asylum seekers to apply for permission to take up paid employment. Until the government's promise of rapid processing of asylum applications it would seem that 'realistically the more intensive element of support will need to be made available after positive decisions have been taken.' (Hudson 2000) The decision was taken, therefore, to extend the remit of this investigation to include projects for refugees and asylum seekers with the right to work. As such, and as most ESOL classes have a very mixed profile and include beneficiaries other than refugees and asylum seekers, it has not always been possible to isolate the benefits for asylum seekers alone.

This report aims, albeit on a very small scale, to provide a brief glimpse into some of the lessons learned from programme delivery, along with recommendations for future success. It forms part of our disseminating effective practice series which focuses on what basic skills programmes have achieved to enable others to build on the lessons they have learned avoid 'reinventing the wheel' and alert them to potential pitfalls they may encounter.

Implementation of some of the schemes surveyed could be very challenging and time-consuming, whether attempted alone or in partnership; others are smaller scale and potentially more manageable. It is helpful, however, to be aware of the transferability of promising practice – while it may not be replicable there will be elements which could be adopted and adapted to meet local needs.

It is also important to recognise that a collaborative approach and partnership working, although initially time-consuming, can reap enormous dividends, even on a small scale. This not only has the advantage of pooling resources and expertise, but it can mark the beginning of successful networking and exchange of knowledge.

Definitions of Integration

It would be useful to explore just what the term 'integration' means, before we look at how best to facilitate it and promote promising practice.

Integration is a long-term process

ECRE, the European Council on Refugees and Exiles, considers that integration is a long term 'process of change'

From a psychological perspective integration often starts at the time of arrival in the country of final destination and is concluded when a refugee becomes an active member of that society from a legal, social, economic, educational and cultural perspective. ECRE 2002c:1

This is reinforced by research carried out in Coventry, which shows that the main indicators of integration perceived by stakeholders working with refugees in the area included/were:

- Language (being able to speak, understand, read and write English)
- Economic (including having a job and/or being financially independent)
- Self-sufficiency (including understanding UK culture, structures and services)
- Community (including mixing with local, being accepted and respected)
- Self-esteem (including having and meeting aspirations and feeling safe)

from Phillimore et al 2003:64

The length of time it would take a refugee to reach this level of integration depends on many factors, including how well his or her basic needs were being met, the welcome and support from the host society; the background, personality, motivation and capabilities of the individual concerned. These issues are clearly interrelated but without the first, proficiency in English, achieving the others is less likely to be successful. The process of integration is not a swift one and the more that can be done to smooth the progress towards true integration the sooner people seeking asylum can fully participate and contribute to society in the UK. This report seeks to explore just how this process can be facilitated.

Integration is a two-way process

Integration is also generally deemed to be a 'two way process'

It places demands on both receiving societies and the individuals and/or the communities concerned. From a refugee perspective, integration requires a preparedness to adapt to the lifestyle of the host society without having to lose one's own cultural identity. From the point of view of the host society, it requires a willingness to adapt public institutions to changes in the populations' profile, accept refugees as part of the national community, and take action to facilitate access to resources and decision-making processes. ECRE 2002c:1

In her speech to the Irish Presidency Conference on reconciling Mobility and Social Inclusion, Sarah Spencer suggests that a more satisfactory term for this process would be 'inclusion' rather than 'integration', as it captures "the essence that it is not only migrants who need to want inclusion and adapt, but society that needs to open up to allow them in: a two way process, a process not of absorption but of change. Migrants cannot be included, cannot feel included, unless we include them." (April 2004)

The objective of integration should encourage self-determination and sustainable self-sufficiency for refugees while at the same time promoting positive action in the public and government domain. ECRE 1999:1

Integration should start early

For refugees as human beings, the integration process begins from day one of exile, not from the date of being granted refugee status or leave to remain. Sinkil, 2002:24

Unfortunately, however, few governments view the reception stage as an integral part the integration process.

The real business of integration begins when an asylum seeker is recognised as a refugee and receives indefinite leave to remain in the UK Home Office 2004:32

Integration of refugees is a huge challenge. It is more so because of the unnecessary dichotomy between policies for asylum seekers which seek to deter them, and policies for refugees which are intended to support their integration into the labour market and society. Reisenberger, 2004

Right to work

Up until July 2002, asylum seekers were allowed to apply for permission to work in the UK if they had not received a positive decision on their asylum application after 6 months. From this date the government withdrew the concession, forbidding asylum seekers to engage in paid employment, or undertake vocational training however long the delay in the decision-making procedure. Thanks to the EU directive on the Minimum Standards for Reception of Asylum Seekers, asylum seekers, who have waited for the initial decision on their asylum applications for more than 12 months, are once more able to apply for permission to work. The Home Office also made access to vocational training for asylum seekers conditional on access to paid employment.

Training

The exclusion of asylum seekers from further education or training courses on the same basis as home students and those with refugee status has been a further obstacle to successful vocational integration, .

We ask asylum seekers not to study then we suddenly expect them to be finding work. It is a denial of freedom. If they learn, they can integrate better. Education is the key.

Director of a Women's Refugee Centre

While there is specific funding for initiatives to support asylum seekers the conditions attached to some, cannot be said to truly facilitate integration as they create separate provision with limited flexibility. Fortunately mainstream ESOL provision with full fee remission remains accessible to asylum seekers and allows them to learn English alongside other people, but not to progress to other courses. Many are anxious to find work in keeping with their prior training and experience or continue their studies as early as possible following a positive decision. In general they are limited to attend generic English language courses, rather than those that are contextualised to specific vocational or academic programmes, such as conversion courses that would smooth the path to employment commensurate with their skills and qualifications.

ESOL providers have the scope to choose the content in which to develop English language skills and a growing number are beginning to develop *pre-vocational* courses, e.g. ESOL + basic skills, guidance and orientation. ASSET UK instance has piloted programmes that focus on meeting the needs of asylum seekers in terms of preparing them to join the labour market more quickly once they receive a positive response. If not allowed to stay at the very least, they have the opportunity to learn English in a context relevant to their experience. This report explores the variety of creative approaches ESOL programmes have found to rise above the restrictions and assist asylum seekers in these early stages.

Ideally, refugees should get social and vocational training from the beginning of their arrival in the host country. France Terre D'Asile, 2002:2

Methodology

Literature Review

Our report has been informed by many different studies, from the UK and abroad, on ESOL and refugees and asylum seekers. The European context is illustrated in part by statements and reports from ECRE, including their good practice guides to integration published in the late 1990s. Particularly pertinent are the ECRE guides on training and education and its policy papers on integration.

Those recommendations relevant to the ASSET UK project were highlighted and then compared with research in the UK to see if similar findings were reflected at a national level. Within this context, the Refugee Council's draft 'Agenda for Integration' (May 2004) was particularly helpful, as were documents from the Scottish Refugee Integration Forum (2003). Recent documentation on integration issues, in particular the Home Office Integration Strategy (HO 2004) and various regional integration strategies (e.g. Yorkshire and Humberside Consortium 2003-2006) have also helped to inform the report, as have documents produced by local authorities, councils and colleges (e.g. London Borough of Camden 2004, AET 2002).

Case Studies

Whilst these documents have informed the research, the body of the report is based on feedback from people involved in the delivery of programmes and to their beneficiaries. We interviewed ESOL practitioners and staff from other training programmes in different parts of the UK to find out what they considered to be the most important elements of their courses as far as assisting integration was concerned. The interviews were supplemented by classroom observation and consultation with refugees and asylum seekers attending the programmes. The consultations were carried out either on a 1-1 basis, via informal interviews, or as a group activity within ESOL courses. Students were invited to give their views not only on ESOL provision but also on their experiences of life in the UK and barriers to inclusion, employment and training. They were also encouraged to give their own recommendations as to how these barriers might be overcome.

Language as a Barrier to Integration

It is commonly agreed that one of the major impediments to inclusion and integration for refugees and asylum seekers is language, with virtually all respondents in recent research citing lack of English as the main barrier to employment and training (e.g. Salinas and Muller 1999, Bloch 2002, Griffiths 2003). Our own interviews and discussions concurred, with most ESOL students (80%) identifying language as an issue in preventing them from finding work, and 60% maintaining it was the main barrier. Our respondents also agreed that that a swift introduction to English language learning on arrival is vital to resettlement.

The most important thing for learning is to do English as soon as you arrive. Get it quick. If you wait and leave it, it is harder. Hisham, 32, ESOL learner

When someone is new in the country, they should go to classes the minute they arrive, otherwise it is not good for them. They lose motivation. Lydia, 50, ESOL learner

Access to good quality effective ESOL provision is key to assisting students to overcome language barriers if they are to integrate successfully.

The two most important determinants of fast assimilation identified in all countries are language skills as well as attachment to the labour market in order to accumulate labour market experience. These results indicate that effective integration policies should concentrate in particular on language courses. European Commission 2001: 2

However, both providers and learners share the view that provision of ESOL alone may not always be sufficient to ensure access to the labour market or, indeed, to a feeling of 'belonging' in the host community. Rather, the content of language programmes need to include a simultaneous vocational or cultural element to any course aiming to facilitate vocational and indeed social integration. This is corroborated by research (e.g. AET 2002, Griffiths 2003), which recommends that refugees should be assisted in participating in employment and cultural activities to consolidate their developing language skills, to use them appropriately and develop a better understanding of the society they have joined.

ESOL is not just about language and literacy but culture and context. Discrete provision is not always enough; it needs to be contextualised (particularly workplace). Barry Brooks, ABSSU/DfES 2004

Barriers to vocational integration

Research commissioned by the Department of Work and Pensions (Bloch 2002) showed that one of the most important reasons for attending English courses cited by respondents was 'to get a job' (72%) but the use of English in the context of job-seeking was perceived as more difficult than any other (34%). Whilst most ESOL learners with permission to work whom we interviewed, professed general satisfaction with their English classes, 40% claimed that these classes had not helped to increase their confidence to find work. Worryingly, this figure also includes students attending English + job search classes, with half finding the combination useful, but half feeling it was a mere cosmetic exercise.

They need proof you are looking, but it is not useful. It is just killing time.

Job search is just filling in applications then sending them. Nobody replies.

While the general dissatisfaction may be attributed to the frustration at the lack of positive responses, the content of some courses did little to stimulate the learners or, at the very least, give them as sense of progress and achievement in improving their English.

Barriers to Social integration

Other research (AET 2002) has shown that refugees feel there were few opportunities for them to mix with British people in a social setting (and only 8 from 138 respondents knew any British people they would consider as friends - 3 of whom were met through employment). Similarly 76% of our respondents claimed not to have any British friends or neighbours and 80% said they never socialised with native English speakers. Whilst most (62%) said they used English outside the classroom, only half (48%) said that the English language classes were a factor in increasing their confidence to do so.

Where would I meet English people? I only ever meet people like me. ESOL Student

ESOL +

In ESOL classes learners often express satisfaction with their classes, but issues remain, including needing more free use of language and “bringing the outside in”. Barton et al 2004:6

It is important, therefore, that we consider solutions and strategies to assist in overcoming these barriers to integration. What can be done to bridge the gap between using English in the classroom and in the wider community? If providing English language tuition is not in itself enough to ensure integration, are there any other elements we can incorporate into our teaching to assist the process and, in addition, to educate our students as to what they can do to help themselves? What can we do to try to ‘bring the outside in’?

Research carried out for this report suggests that a ‘layered’ approach of ESOL + another element, underpinned by a collaborative approach with community, vocational and other organisations, can have a hugely beneficial effect on students in terms of paving the way toward successful integration.

Vocational integration may be assisted by including elements such as:

- vocational training
- work placement
- volunteering
- involvement of local employers

And possible solutions to barriers to social integration include:

- Mentoring
- Cultural orientation
- Involvement of local communities

Section Two looks at some of these elements individually, under the following headings:

- ESOL+ Vocational training
- ESOL + Volunteering
- ESOL + Mentoring
- ESOL + Cultural Activities

Section 2: ESOL +

Introduction

Ideally, refugees should get social and vocational training from the beginning of their arrival in the host country. France Terre D'Asile 2002:2

In this section we explore some of the ways that social and vocational training can be incorporated into or linked with language provision for refugees and asylum seekers. As noted above, English language provision is vital to assisting integration but it is potentially much more potent when combined with other elements such as vocational training, work placements, introduction to UK culture and mentoring. We have included snapshots of promising practice, interspersed with advice and quotes from those involved in delivering such programmes and their beneficiaries. References to current research will endeavour to reflect the international, national and local perspectives identified earlier.

Whilst the projects highlighted within the following pages provide useful examples, it is important to acknowledge that there are many similar programmes and much promising practice being delivered throughout the UK.¹

ESOL + Vocational Training

The provision of appropriate vocational training for young asylum seekers is of fundamental importance for the well-being of the individual and the cohesion of the host society as a whole. Vocational training would facilitate the access of asylum seekers to the labour market as soon as they have the legal right to do so and allow them to end their reliance on social benefits. ECRE 2002:1

The ECRE definition of vocational training is:

the acquisition of new skills in order to obtain employment (this includes language skills for relevant professions Aferiat, Y 1999:8

France Terre d'Asile, lead agency on vocational training in the ECRE task force on integration, agrees that the aim of vocational training is not just the acquisition of knowledge but the eventual access to employment. It stresses that participation on vocational training programmes should be based on the actual needs (i.e. skills and competence) of trainees and programmes should be adapted to those needs. Any vocational training should include job search technique modules and specific provision should be developed for refugees as bridges to mainstream training. It recognises that vocational training is not a guarantee of employment success, but maintains that there should be realistic expectations of work at the end of the programmes and trainees should be guided to sectors within which they are most likely to find work. (France Terre d'Asile 2002:3)

These principles were apparent in the design of the programmes outlined in the pen portraits below. These programmes demonstrate the importance of a 'layered' approach to the delivery of successful vocational training programmes for ESOL learners, including refugees and asylum seekers and identify the challenges this can pose. Factors that influenced the success of the programmes are revealed via individual examples.

¹ Quotes from staff and learners are not limited solely to those from institutions used as main examples of promising practice for this report. Consultation was carried out with a wide range of people in the field, not all of whom can be included as individual case studies (and not all of whom wanted to be identified).

Sheffield College: ASSET UK funding enabled Sheffield College to set up courses to prepare ESOL students to enter mainstream vocational courses. These include ESOL + hairdressing, childcare, business and motor vehicle work. They are seen as a form pre-vocational training, necessary to ensure students do not struggle when they eventually progress to mainstream programmes.

West Thames College Destinations Courses: 'Destinations', a 15 hour a week Level 1 course comprising ESOL and Vocational training plus ICT and Mathematics started in 1999. The first Destinations course offered was Office Skills, followed by Retail and IT. Then 2-hour introductions to Childcare, Hairdressing and Ticketing and Tourism were established in the main ESOL classes, and these developed into further 'Destinations' courses. A First Aid course was included in the Childcare and Hairdressing options.

Springboard Hackney Trust English and Construction course: Springboard Hackney provides English and Numeracy training to students to prepare them to attend mainstream training for a Foundation Construction Award at John Laing, their partner in the project.

Language2Work: Launched in Brent in 2000, this programme was set up to assist those with little or no English to gain the skills necessary to enter the UK labour market. It involves language training and job-focussed activities, including Health and Safety training, and students are supported with advice and guidance throughout.

Fashionworks: Hands on training in fashion and clothing skills is provided in order to equip the long term unemployed with skills required within the industry. Basic skills support and guidance is offered throughout the 5 month course and students are matched to work placements within local institutions.

Build Up: A course for asylum seekers, run by Peterborough College as part of the ASSET UK project, which provides a general introduction to the construction industry in Britain. It offers 60 hours of class contact and methodologies include portfolio building, site visits, guest speakers, and computer assisted language learning.

ESOL for Childcare and Employability: Another ASSET UK project and delivered by the Parade ESOL Service, Cardiff Council, the course is designed for asylum seekers interested in working with children in the UK. The programme runs for 12 hours a week for 12 weeks and includes visits to childcare settings, guest speakers and computer assisted language learning.

Programmes based on the actual needs of trainees

It was encouraging to note the number of courses that had been set up by ESOL staff in direct response to unmet needs of their students:

I noticed that our students were getting to the top in ESOL, but rarely getting jobs or moving on within Further Education. I started to question why this was, noted that something was very wrong with the system and came up with the idea of combining ESOL with vocational training, ICT and mathematics. West Thames College

Many of our students were struggling in the mainstream vocational courses, which is why we decided to offer these ESOL + courses to help prepare them for the mainstream. We did a survey with refugees and asylum seekers to find out what subjects they were interested in and started the courses based on this information. Sheffield College

The course was based on the needs of the learners. They will have to re-train in this country but they need to understand the vocabulary and Health and Safety issues beforehand. Build Up

Many of our students from a construction background were finding the Health and Safety exams a barrier to employment. We decided to set up a course to prepare them for the exams. Working Links, Brent

We have high unemployment in our area and Construction was seen as the key area with a need for skilled labour – so we decided to run an ESOL and Construction course. Springboard Hackney Trust

Realistic expectations

It was considered vitally important to ensure that the learners were matched to the right courses. This was not only crucial to the success of the course but, just as importantly, to the confidence and self esteem of the learners. Providers felt that only those individuals who are ready to undertake courses intended as a bridge to vocational training should be encouraged to enrol. As one teacher explained *“It is vital to be realistic – and not to raise hopes too high. If students are not capable of doing the work it’s no point accepting them on the course. We would be doing them a disservice as they would lose, rather than gain, confidence.”*

Example: To avoid mismatches at West Thames College a lecturer attends mainstream ESOL classes to introduce their ‘Destinations’ courses to students (and also to informally assess their eligibility to join the classes). The suitability, or otherwise of students is discussed with the ESOL staff so that they became more aware of when their students were ready to progress to vocational training.

Motivation is high: prospective participants interviewed in June would be told what to do to get up to the entry for the course. Many do so; one for instance went from being barely at Entry 2 returned in September ready to join the course.

“Students are told constantly how demanding the course is and how hard they will have to work and most rise to the challenge. On the course there is usually a big jump in English proficiency by the end of the first term.” ESOL Manager

Expectations of work: Very few of our respondents saw themselves as being able to do the same job as they had done in their home countries. Many said that they would do any work to bring money into their households, although the majority felt that once their English language skills had improved their employment prospects would improve accordingly. Interestingly, whilst the majority of Entry 1 and 2 students cited language as the sole barrier to employment, most Entry 3 students pointed to other barriers in addition to language, e.g. lack of certificates, references and experience, problems with literacy and numeracy and racism. They appear to recognise that once language improves there are still many more challenges to overcome.

A number of studies have shown (e.g. Bloch 2002, Charlaff et al 2004) that whilst many refugees have high levels of qualifications, the percentage of those in work is much lower than that of the indigenous population. Of those who were in paid employment few were work in jobs commensurate with their experience and skills and ‘refugees tend to be clustered in secondary sector jobs within a few industries, with poor terms and conditions of employment’ (Bloch 2002:81)

This occupational downgrading is a matter for concern and individual organisations are taking steps to address this, particularly in the areas of health care and education. Slow but sure progress is being made with the provision of programmes and support dedicated to refugee doctors, dentists, nurses and teachers (e.g. Refugee Health Professionals, Refugee Doctor Liaison Group, Refugee Nurses Task Force, Refugee teachers steering group) although there is still enormous room for improvement.

The issue of occupational downgrading is exacerbated by targets set for getting people into work by the end of particular courses as a condition of funding. Asylum seekers who have been granted positive decisions frequently find they have to leave ESOL classes to enrol on such provision. Whilst the courses are intended to help them they may be pressured to take work that they do not necessarily wish to do and which does not utilise their skills.

I say to Job Centre that I want to be an accountant because I worked in a bank for 12 years in my country. They say I should be cleaner as I can't be accountant. I said 'Please give me 1 year to improve my English and to get book-keeping course,' but still they tried to get me to be a cleaner. I wanted to do this English course. I begged them. I wait 2 months. They lose my papers. I get in touch again. I do not give up, so I am here now. Female ESOL student

One of our clients, who was a lawyer in his home country, was being pressurised by the Job Centre to become a cleaner. Coordinator of a Mentoring Scheme

However, it is also important to note that many of the refugees consulted for this report were impatient to start working as soon as possible in whatever job they could find, irrespective of their previous employment and qualifications.

After this class I want to work. I am looking now in cafes and shops. Yes, I sometimes feel bad that I was journalist and am now looking for shop work but I can't get such a job because I have no experience here and it will take me too long to get it. Money is important, especially now that my wife is expecting our first baby. Ahmed, 28, ESOL student

Low jobs. Not the jobs that I used to do but I am trying. I need to have money for my family. Samir, 44, ESOL student

It can be very difficult for staff to bridge this divide wherein students wish to learn English and fulfil their potential, yet at the same time have financial constraints which may push them into taking any job they can. It is, indeed, important to take a realistic approach to expectations of work at the end of these courses.

We teach reality not theory. We tell it like it is to our students and guide them to where there are gaps in the market and where they are likely to find work Fashionworks

Language2Work

The notion of taking 'small steps' was constantly reinforced by teaching staff on this course. Learners were continually reminded that the course was just one of the small steps that had to be taken in order to reach their goals.

You have achieved so much in the last 6 weeks. You have learned job skills and language. Now you are ready for your next step. ESOL teacher to students on their 'graduation'

Depending on previous experience and progress made in language learning, that 'next step' might be another English class or other training; it may be a work placement or, indeed a job. That job itself may not necessarily be the job that the students did in their home country, but students were encouraged to view any 'small step' as progress en route to fulfilling their potential.

It is vital to let people know that a) they don't have to settle and b) it is a step-by-step approach. It is not about lowering their standards and expectations, but about having a long-term, rather than a short-term, view. Language2Work Adviser

Students were introduced to a very realistic view of the world, wherein many people whose first language is English do not necessarily get the jobs they would like initially. Past students who had been successful were invited to talk to present students about the often 'scenic' routes they took to their current job – e.g. a student who had been a dental nurse in her home country started work as a receptionist at a local dental surgery, then became a dental assistant and is now a research assistant whose work appears on the Internet. These positive role models helped enormously to encourage current students to 'keep the faith' and to continue to look forward.

Programmes adapted to the needs of trainees

Flexibility and adaptability are vital to the successful delivery of vocationally oriented ESOL programmes, and to ensuring that individual needs were being met. It seems that effective programmes are those that work within a framework, but are not constantly constrained by it.

Flexibility is the key to delivery here. Lots of students have jobs and are constantly asking if we can change their timetable. We have to be able to respond to these requests. This is the real world. We try to help students with their programmes, not be a stumbling block
Sheffield College

We have to be flexible, as our students have such demands on their time and often such problems outside of the classroom. Students can even transfer mid-course, if they decide they would be better suited to another Destinations courseWest Thames College

The tailor-made elements to the course are made possible by the flexibility and adaptability of the staff and the fact that consultants are empowered to do whatever they feel would meet the needs of the client. Language2Work

We aim to provide a meaningful, relevant and appropriate syllabus and scheme of work with built-in flexibility to cater for different levels of experience and ability. Manager, Build Up

Ticketing and Tourism 'Destinations' Course, West Thames College

The liaison between the vocational tutor and the ESOL teacher was vital both within their formal weekly meetings, and outside the system. Such was their level of cooperation that they even swapped classes sometimes. The ESOL teacher ensured that the ESOL technical and job-specific vocabulary was introduced prior to the vocational training elements of the course. The vocational tutor, in turn, had a very flexible approach to the ESOL students, even to the extent of providing extra lessons, where needed, and moving exam dates round to accommodate students' external demands and was generally very sensitive to their needs.

Job Search and Introduction to UK job culture

As noted above, it is commonly agreed that any vocational training programme should not just include introduction to the terminology necessary for working within a certain field, but also a general introduction to labour market culture in the UK and job search techniques. The layered approach worked best when collaboration was in evidence (and, again, the calibre of staff involved in delivery was a vital aspect).

A brief introduction to job culture and employment law is given prior to placement. Also all students are invited to consider what the employer is to expect of them and what they can expect in return. We also provide a 'Living in Britain' tutorial once a week which covers the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and living in the UK. West Thames College

The New Glaswegians project

This project aims to make employers more aware of the skills and experience which the refugee community has to offer. An important element of this project is an Introduction to Job Skills course that aims to prepare participants for work. It also includes business etiquette training which offers advice on dress code, networking and cultural issues

Particular Issues for ESOL + Vocational Training

For combined ESOL + vocational training programmes there will obviously be additional elements necessary for successful delivery. The most commonly encountered challenges are set out below together with responses to these challenges.

Good communication between ESOL and vocational staff

According to those involved in the delivery of ESOL + vocational training, good communication amongst staff was considered one of the most important elements to a successful programme. The success of the course and achievements of the students were dependent on a sustained, collaborative approach to teaching. It was essential that vocational and ESOL staff remained in constant contact to share their expertise and highlight and avert any potential problems as quickly as possible

.Examples

Sheffield College: An ESOL teacher is initially paired with a vocational trainer and attends the mainstream vocational classes in order to assess just what ESOL learners may need to equip them to join mainstream vocational training. The ESOL teacher helps the vocational staff to amend and simplify texts so that students can be taught appropriately within the ESOL + courses. They are devising subject-specific dictionaries.

West Thames College: Language support is provided in the vocational classes. This not only supports the students but also alerts vocational tutors to potential language problems. While not all vocational tutors may require language support, the hour that the ESOL and vocational tutor spend together remains a good time for liaison.

English for Construction, Working Links: ESOL staff sat in on a Construction Health and Safety course, to identify the language requirements of the course and what the learners would have to know in order to pass the Health and Safety exams. A syllabus for ESOL for Health and Safety was devised accordingly.

Comments from managers

On a wider level, we have many links with other organisations and at an institutional level our tutors link with consultants. This ensures the best possible provision for our students.
Working Links, Brent

Parade ESOL Service is sited within the Community Education section of Cardiff Council – enabling access to a wide range of networks. This has been beneficial in terms of recruitment of asylum seekers and engaging of partner agencies for direct input into the programme.
ESOL for Childcare and Employability

A collaborative approach is essential. We are constantly liaising with colleagues in the mainstream Construction department. Build Up

Materials

One of the major problems identified by those offering ESOL + vocational training for the first time was the lack of good materials. ESOL teachers are well used to adapting existing materials. However, the lack of good, relevant and accessible material for ESOL + vocational training was a common matter for concern amongst staff consulted for this report. They worked tirelessly to find materials within their particular field and then, in most cases, had to work even harder to ensure that the language and terminology was simplified for the ESOL classroom. Many staff felt it would be helpful to form 'support groups' of colleagues in similar situations so that they could share their materials. To some extent this is beginning to change with materials being developed as part of the Skills for Life strategy, available from www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/embeddedlearning, and other websites such as www.talent.ac.uk and other initiatives.

Quotes

"I thought of myself as an interested English speaker. I do DIY and am interested in building. So I went to various places for materials, including builders' yards and merchants, DIY organisations, specialist magazines and books and, of course, the internet. Thank God for the internet. You can find many special web pages on construction and Health and Safety video clips. The internet is very useful for this." ESOL + Construction Teacher

We were initially shocked at the lack of materials available, and have had to work extremely hard to produce tailor-made resources for this course. ESOL + Car Maintenance teachers

There was very little material for ESOL + construction, so we had to work hard to design and develop materials specific to the needs of our clients. All our materials have been adapted from authentic sources; they include a wide range of activities for all types of learning styles and area easily adaptable for any ESOL level. ESOL + Construction manager

This project has enabled us to develop ESOL perspectives to the Basic Skills Agency Family Programmes 'Language and Play' and 'Keeping Up With the Children', alongside ESOL for Childcare and ESOL for Work materials and schemes of work. ESOL + childcare course manager

Springboard Hackney Trust

The teacher for ESOL and construction compiled an impressive scheme of work. Materials were all prepared before the course began. She attended the Foundation Course at the partner institution to do a needs analysis of the skills and vocabulary. Use of realia was a key element of classroom work. Language and numeracy was closely linked to the subject area – e.g. working out the dimensions of a room to ascertain how much wallpaper and/or paint would be needed to cover the walls and how much this would cost. Students were provided with folders which included a glossary of useful and much used technical terms and a portfolio of vocabulary sheets. The course content was reinforced by 'field trips' to local builders' merchants and DIY stores.

Attitude of staff

As expected, the demands on ESOL teachers in delivering such programmes are enormous and everyone consulted for this research admitted that the calibre of staff employed to deliver these programmes was the most important element in their success.

In addition to language teaching, teachers were involved in:

- Setting up and overseeing work placements
- Keeping course paperwork in order
- Liaising with other staff
- Pastoral care of students
- Regular tutorials
- Providing reports on student progress

It is a fine balancing act for ESOL tutors to attempt to boost the self esteem of students, many of whose most recent experiences have shredded their confidence, whilst at the same time ensuring that their expectations for future work remain realistic. It was heartening to see how many people did this successfully with humanity and sensitivity.

All the institutions in our survey had an open and flexible approach to student support. While there has been some resistance to the introduction of Individual Learning Plans among some ESOL staff, its was a delight to see them being used to support individual learning naturally, and to stretch and extend learners' skills and knowledge.

As one manager explained:

So many students on the courses have had such hard knocks and they may consider that this is their one chance to succeed. Teachers have to believe in the students, believe in the process and encourage them to succeed. Self-esteem often has to be lifted. For example, in recent work on CVs, 80% of students did not put down their qualifications from their home country – only what they had achieved in the UK!

An Example of What not to do

As we have seen, such courses can be very demanding and there are so many elements that have to be coordinated in order for them to be a success. As one ESOL manager said 'It's a little bit like plate spinning and the potential for the crockery to come crashing down is quite high'. Here is an example of an English for Construction course* that was not successful because it did not follow the principles highlighted above.

Programme was not based on the actual needs of trainees

The funders wanted this to run, not the college. An external body estimated that there would be a number of construction workers in the area who needed English. They decided the course should run as soon as possible.

Unreliable initial needs analysis

When ESOL tutors met the construction workers targeted for this course, they found that most of them did not think they needed English, did not know why they had been asked to come to college and seemed resentful at having been sent there.

Lack of communication between partners

The decision was taken by the funders that this programme should run in the summer, but the college had no staff available then. Only two inexperienced members of staff were available, one of whom could teach for only 2 weeks, the other for only 4.

Programme was not adapted to the needs of trainees

The classes were duly scheduled for 7pm every day, but this was no good for the targeted learners. Most of them were actually working most days and many of them not locally, so only 2 people turned up on a regular basis.

Materials

Materials were a nightmare. The only stuff that staff could find in a hurry – and it had to be in a hurry - was on Health and Safety and DIY materials. These students were already working in construction and needed much more input than that.

(*for obvious reasons the people involved did not wish to be identified).

Work Placements as an Aspect of Vocational Training

Ensuring that refugees are fully involved in work experience programmes will give refugees a chance to show employers what they can achieve if given a chance. mbA 1999:19

It is generally accepted that any vocational course should, if possible, include an element of work placement in order for students to be able practise what they have learned in the classroom and gain a better understanding of the culture of the workplace. A work placement can break the vicious circle of 'no UK work experience-no reference-no job-no UK work experience' (London Borough of Camden 2004:102). It provides practical evidence of practical skills and is often the only way for refugees to gain employers' confidence, yet it is not always easy for refugees to find work placements.

According to refugees and training organisations, the following elements are important to successful work placement schemes:

- reasonable length of placement
- positive management attitude
- reasonably resourced placement, with staff able to give time and support
- appropriate level of work for level of participant's expertise
- proper induction and regular appraisal of progress
- rule that English should be spoken at all times
- help given with CVs, work history, filling in application forms and mock interviews
- reference at end

London Borough of Camden:2004: 102

Of course, with asylum seekers, securing work placements can be problematic, as employers are concerned about their ineligibility to do paid work, even where they have documentation that shows that they have permission to work. This is often due to a lack of willingness of local employers to take on refugees. According to the Institute of Employment Studies (2004), whilst the benefits of employing refugees can be enormous in terms of diversity of workforce, high calibre skills and, often, financial savings (less costly than employing agency staff), many employers remain reluctant to consider employing refugees for the following reasons:

- Concerns about negative publicity
- Fear of hostile media coverage
- Fear of how customers and the rest of the workforce might view them
- Concern about language skills
- Worry about paperwork and extra administration
- Fear of unwittingly transgressing asylum laws

Skills Audit Project, NIACE

One of the ASSET UK partners, NIACE has been successful in finding meaningful volunteering placements with local employers in the East Midlands as part of their project which has developed a methodology for undertaking skills audits with asylum. Their activities have enabled asylum seekers to gain relevant experience of the UK labour market through volunteering, thus contributing towards their employability. They have been able to gain references from within the UK and one individual who gained a positive decision was then employed by the company in which they had been volunteering. For a detailed report visit www.niace.org.uk/projects/ASSET-UK/Default.htm or www.asset-uk.org.uk

Diversity Works

Another ASSET UK Partner, RAGU has set up a programme, which works with London employers to provide placements for refugees with higher-level qualifications. Placements are in the public, private and voluntary sectors and are for a minimum of 3 days a week for 3 to 6 months. All participants undergo eight training sessions in preparation for the placement and the programme is supported by seminars for local employers and local authorities. The programme has been developed to include work in a specific area of employment, i.e. Diversity works in the NHS.

Of course, a major barrier to setting up work placements (particularly in areas such as childcare) is the risk assessment that must be carried out prior to work placement. In the current climate, this is becoming increasingly difficult (see CRB checks in 'Volunteering' section) and, in response, many organisations try to provide some form of work experience on site, where possible.

West Thames College

Students are asked to decide for themselves where they would most like to work. They are encouraged to do research and come back with reasons as to why they'd like to work in certain places, and the process is taken from there.

In terms of who takes the students for our 2-week work placements, it tends to be the Civic Council for Office Skills and local 'blue chip' companies for Retail. However, there is often a problem with setting up the placements, in that Managers in favour of the placements often leave and we may be faced with a replacement who is not interested in continuing the good work. Manager - Destinations

College networks are used as often as possible for pre-placements within a familiar environment. Office Skills students, for example, practise using office equipment within the Administrative Departments of the College, and Childcare students attend the institution's nursery for pre-placement orientation and practice.

Outcomes

The majority of students on our Retail course were offered work. Interestingly, some didn't take up the offer, as their confidence had risen so much throughout the course that they felt there may be something else they could do instead. West Thames College

Many of our students are now successfully participating in mainstream vocational courses. Sheffield College

Many students just need help with their English. We had a trained engineer who was working as a packer in a factory. After attending one of our courses, he is now mending the machines there. Manager of an ESOL + Vocational training course

This project has enabled us to offer a support group for beneficiaries on completion of their course for continued language assistance and for working towards identified progression aims. And, whilst the status of asylum seeker has made a smooth transition from the course to other opportunities a bumpy ride in many cases, over 20% of our beneficiaries are now engaged in voluntary work and others have progressed to mainstream ESOL classes. Parade ESOL Service

The realistic outcomes for our students were progression onto other ESOL courses as well as applying for a mainstream Foundation Construction course (and also some people realised they did not want to work in construction any more!) Build Up

Many of our staff are former students. This is equal opportunities in action. 5E

Refugees and asylum seekers do not necessarily have to be enrolled on a vocational course to benefit from the experience of working within the UK. The alternative is volunteering and this is particularly pertinent for asylum seekers who, at the time of this report, are not allowed to attend many vocational courses. Volunteering is the subject of our next section.

ESOL + Voluntary Work

“Volunteering is recognised as a route into employment and an opportunity for refugees to gain UK employment experience, acquire or develop skills and obtain UK references. For asylum seekers, without permission to work, volunteering can provide them with a purposeful activity, give them an opportunity to contribute to their new communities, maintain their self esteem and motivation as well as gaining experience, knowledge and skills. Refugee Council 2004:12

After a period of confusion, with a number of organisations seeking clarification on the issue, the Home Office has finally given clear written confirmation that asylum seekers are allowed to volunteer.

We are keen to see asylum seekers and recognised refugees take an active interest in the welfare of their own communities’ and the local community by undertaking voluntary activity while they are in the UK.

- *Care should be taken to ensure that the activity being undertaken by an asylum seeker is genuinely voluntary and amounts neither to employment nor to job substitution.*
- *We would not expect asylum seekers to be out of pocket as a result of volunteering. Reimbursement should be made for meal or travel costs actually incurred, not as a flat-rate allowance.*

Home Office clarification, quoted by NASS 2004

This is a welcome clarification, as hitherto the interpretations of the rules had been many and varied, with organisations not knowing whether asylum seekers were permitted to do voluntary work or whether, by allowing them to engage in such activities, they would be inadvertently transgressing some aspect of asylum law.

The benefits of volunteering to the building of an inclusive and cohesive society have been emphasised by the government on many occasions (e.g. Home Office 2002, 2003, 2004) and reinforced by research (e.g. Aldridge and Waddington 2001, AET 2002)

It is part of the Home Office’s commitment to increase voluntary and community engagement, especially among those at risk of social exclusion.

Press statement by Fiona Mactaggart, Charities Minister, 25 August 2004

This section aims to set give ESOL tutors an insight into the potential benefits of volunteering to their students as a supplement to and development of their classroom learning experience.

Social and Vocational Benefits

Research into the effects of volunteering on refugee and asylum seekers (e.g. Stopforth 2001) shows that it can help them to:

- build confidence and skills
- improve English language skills
- gain contacts and references
- broaden experience
- make new friends
- increase employment chances

However, many barriers remain to be overcome – for asylum seekers, refugees or employers - before volunteering programmes become as effective a tool for integration as they could be.

Barriers for Refugees and Asylum Seekers

The main barriers to volunteering for refugees and asylum seekers have been identified as:

- lack of information about opportunities
- concern that skills and qualifications have no value in the UK
- differing cultural perceptions of 'volunteering'
- prejudice about working with people of other cultures
- poor knowledge of English
- family and other commitments
- feeling transient and unable to commit
- lack of confidence and low self-esteem
- anxiety about the future and expectation of deportation
- depression, disability, illness
- poverty
- lack of knowledge of right to volunteering expenses, or embarrassment about claiming expenses
- difficulties getting a reference

(Wilson 2004:27)

This is reflected in responses from our interviewees. Among those at Entry 1 and 2 most said they would not consider doing voluntary work (with the main reasons being the need for money to support their families and the fear that their English was not good enough). Entry 3 students, however, were much more enthusiastic about the idea of volunteering with the majority saying that they would consider it, and some had already contacted voluntary organisations with a view to offering their services.

Strategies to overcome these barriers

Whilst it may not be within the ESOL teacher's remit to address all of the above issues, there are approaches that could be used within the ESOL classroom to help to overcome some of the barriers. These include:

- using volunteering as a classroom topic
- forging links with local and national volunteering organisations
- inviting volunteer managers and volunteers as guest speakers
- incorporating issues of rights and responsibilities into the syllabus
- building up an information resource on local services etc. that can be consulted in the classroom
- encouraging students to reflect on the skills they can offer

Islington Orientation Project

By getting asylum seekers involved in voluntary work, it means that you are already half way towards integration when they get their positive decision. Project Coordinator

This project started in 2002, as part of a government initiative to help refugees to integrate and contribute to the local community. It offers a 6-week orientation programme that runs three times a year. Jointly run by the Islington Volunteer Centre (IVC) and RETAS, the first part of the programme involves classes in general orientation (including an introduction to life in the UK and voluntary work) and arranging volunteering placements; the second part of the programme involves delivery of classes on education and training in the UK and a mentoring programme. After 6 weeks of training participants are placed as volunteers within organisations for 16 sessions.

Strengths:

Partnership working: Collaboration and pooling of resources is vital to the success of the programme. The two organisations are already known in Islington, have links in the local community and have existing expertise in the field of volunteering (IVC) and training (RETAS) respectively.

Support for Learners: Learners are supported and monitored throughout the 16 sessions of volunteering by both partners and mentors. They receive expenses for travel and help with childcare throughout – without which financial support many asylum seekers would be unable to participate.

Consultation with Learners: Learners are consulted as to the kinds of areas within which they would like to volunteer and, as far as possible, they are matched according to their choices.

Strong links with local ESOL providers: students are referred to the programme from local ESOL providers and the Orientation programme, in turn, refers students for ESOL training.,

Positive Outcomes:

The students find it very helpful. We get positive feedback that their English has improved, they have learned new skills and learned about the UK labour market. Project Coordinator

Next steps:

Involvement of local businesses: The volunteering programme could be expanded to include local businesses, in addition to the charity and voluntary organisations already involved.

Length of programme: Many participants have expressed a desire to continue volunteering after the initial 16 sessions, as it is often only at this stage that they are beginning to make progress and see the gains. (Also most organisations can only give references to people who have volunteered with them for at least 3 months.)

Barriers for Employers

“We couldn’t take someone like that on. Their English wouldn’t be good enough, I wouldn’t know how to cope with their past and they’d need more support than I could possibly provide”
Volunteer manager, quoted in Volunteering magazine, October 2002

According to the Islington Volunteer Centre over 60% of voluntary organisations would not consider involving refugees as volunteers. Many, like the manager quoted above, fear that the process of using refugees and asylum seekers as volunteers would be far too complex and time-consuming. They are worried about the ‘issues’ that refugees and asylum seekers may bring with them and they are concerned about the legal implications.

The main reasons given by volunteer managers for not employing refugees and asylum seekers include:

- The administrative work will be too complex
- There may be legal problems around employing asylum seekers
- The English language skills will not be sufficiently high
- Refugees and asylum seekers may not be reliable and may disappear at any time
- Cultural differences
- No references

Whilst there may be an element of truth in all the above, the National Centre for Volunteering makes it clear that, with a little flexibility and creative thinking, organisations can quite easily and safely welcome refugees and asylum seekers into their volunteer workforce. Our next example shows how the Volunteer Manager from one organisation addressed each of these concerns.

Royal Free Hospital

The administrative work will be too complex

Everyone is screened in the same way. We don't just have application forms. We also interview everyone, regardless of their background. We need to find out quite a lot, including how much time people are willing to offer and how regularly, and we use the same methods for everybody.

There may be legal problems around employing asylum seekers

Refugees and asylum seekers are entitled to be here and entitled to do voluntary work, so they should be treated as any other individual. I know there is confusion around this issue, and I'm afraid often the statutory agencies are just as confused as the general public at times. I discovered that one refugee had told her Benefits officer that she was doing voluntary work and they suspended her benefits for around 3-4 weeks.

The English language skills will not be sufficiently high

We have never said 'No' because of language problems. People can always be used within the hospital. However, I have to say that many refugees and asylum seekers who lack confidence in their language ability are quite capable of talking to me when they are on their own – it's a question of confidence, really. People learn quickly in the right environment and volunteering does help people to improve their English. This is one of the benefits. It also helps them to get to know people and to make friends – to feel a part of things. Indeed, many refugees offer our patients language support which can really help patients who are isolated because they do not speak English.

Refugees and asylum seekers may not be reliable and may disappear at any time

As for the fear that they may drop out, the nature of volunteering is such that this is not an uncommon experience for anyone. People's circumstances change. We both expect and accept that. Refugees and asylum seekers are no exception, but it is more likely to be due to economic restraints and family obligations, rather than a lack of motivation. Refugees and asylum seekers are usually very motivated.

Cultural differences

We have people working in the wards and just talking to people. This is a big help. It is particularly helpful when people come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. It enriches the workforce.

All volunteers are encouraged to attend a Cultural Awareness Training Day. Other staff may attend but it is voluntary – which is a shame in some ways, as everyone could benefit from this training.

No references

I understand the difficulty of getting references for refugees, so flexibility is the key. They sometimes have their English teacher to comment on their suitability, for example, but most people get a support worker who will vouch for them. I need two references and I will keep trying on their behalf to chase up if nothing is coming through.

Note: Criminal Record Bureau checks

This was also one of the barriers to employing refugees identified by employers. CRB checks are now required for all jobs, voluntary or otherwise, particularly those involving contact with vulnerable children and adults.

We now have to check all volunteers who have contact with patients. Royal Free Hospital

Gaining CRB checks for volunteering with children/vulnerable adults has been a real challenge
Parade ESOL Service

There are particular problems for refugees and asylum seekers in this area, as many have not been resident in the UK long enough for these checks to be useful. Organisations now need to have a designated signatory and reference number, but the main problematic area is in finding enough documentary evidence to support applications: If students have a passport or full driving licence they need to find 3 other pieces from a list including things like utility bills, NI cards letters from Inland Revenue etc. If they don't in addition to a passport or driving licence they need 5 other documents such as utility bills, letters from the Inland Revenue, National Insurance cards. As such, asylum seekers may well find the procedures more difficult than refugees. RAGU, who have experience in setting up successful work placements for refugees, have also developed a website providing advice and guidance to asylum seekers www.londonmet.ac.uk/ragu/asset. This includes a useful guide for asylum seekers on issues surrounding volunteering and answering potentially difficult questions

These difficulties should not preclude asylum seekers from undertaking voluntary work per se. Refugees and asylum seekers have to sign the same legal documents as every other volunteer, and should be monitored throughout their placement, again like everyone else. There are many placements in areas where contact with vulnerable people is not an issue and, as such:

Strategies can be found to ensure that volunteers are very well supervised, particularly in the first few months Royal Free Hospital

Benefits of volunteering

This is what some refugees and asylum seekers have to say about their experience of volunteering:

I have been in the UK for 4 years and hoping to start an MA course next year. Meantime, this work helps me to have contact with other people, keep active and give something back.

Working as a classroom assistant is not using all my talents as I used to be a lecturer in my country, but I do feel more useful now that I am using some of my talents to help other people. I feel better about myself.

My language has improved and I feel so much more confident now I am meeting native speakers naturally.

Working with my colleagues has been very helpful and I know a lot more about what to do and say and how to behave. This is very useful.

Widening participation

It is important to try to avoid assumptions about the kind of organisations with which refugees and asylum seekers would prefer to work. It may not be the case that they wish to be matched with other refugees or people from their own community. In fact, this could actually reduce the potential benefits of volunteering to refugees and asylum seekers (e.g. socialising with people from the UK, improving English language skills etc.)

Unfortunately, our research indicates that those organisations willing to employ refugees and asylum seekers as volunteers are predominantly refugee agencies and community organisations. Whilst this is to be welcomed, it is regrettable that other institutions appear more reluctant to get involved, for without the involvement of local business and communities there is a risk of keeping people hermetically sealed within their own culture – the very antithesis of integration.

Information on the outcomes of volunteering as regards progress to paid employment is patchy. However, the reluctance of those beyond the voluntary and community sector to get involved, means it is more likely that employment offers to refugees would come from within their own refugee community, and even then, the number of such organisations employing a substantial number of refugees remains low (Hudson and Kerrigan, 2002).

Volunteering with refugees and asylum seekers

In the following section we will look more closely at the benefits of the host community volunteering *with* refugees and asylum seekers. When members of the local community are involved in assisting refugees the effect can be catalytic in terms of altering perceptions and assisting cross cultural communication.

This is definitely a dynamic, two-way process and the benefits include reducing the isolation of the beneficiaries and sensitising volunteers to the particular needs of the refugee community.

Volunteers working to support refugee resettlement often report that they have themselves been enriched and changed because of the experience. Ferris 2001: 14

Volunteers in the host community often become advocates on behalf of refugees as a result of becoming aware of the situation in which refugees find themselves. Parkins, R 2001

In many organisation it is not only members of the indigenous population who volunteer with refugees but refugees and asylum seekers themselves. It is vitally important to acknowledge this as it is a step towards eradicating the labels we tend to put upon each other. As one respondent pointed out:

We have a wonderful mix of people volunteering. We don't view people as 'refugee volunteers' or 'non-refugee volunteers', just volunteers RETAS Leeds

Training and Employment Section, Refugee Council, Birmingham

The Training and Employment Section [TES] of the Refugee Council, put into practice the Council's policy of integration starting as soon as possible after arrival by providing ESOL classes for asylum seekers in accommodation centres, a Sudanese and a Somali refugee community organisation in Birmingham. These classes were taught by fully qualified teachers who donated their time on a voluntary basis, and supported by volunteer language assistants some of whom were also asylum seekers. Another group of volunteers undertook a small research project.

Each class was taught by two volunteer ESOL teachers. The five volunteer language assistants, registered and assessed new arrivals and assisted learners on a one-to-one basis within the class at one of the emergency accommodation centres. At the Somali community organisation where Somali volunteer taught English, Maths and IT, TES helped with lesson plans, schemes of work, learner records of work and transport costs for learners.

Three volunteers, all asylum seekers, produced an information pack for new arrivals. TES assisted them in registering at the Central Library, ensuring that they knew how to use the internet for research, how to borrow books and showed them the language support centre where they could access ESOL materials and support. They identified contact details of useful organisations, as well as information that they felt would be beneficial for asylum seekers to know when they arrived in the UK.

Support and supervision from the project co-ordinator, an experienced ESOL teacher:-

- Regular lesson observation followed by debriefing and support and supervision sessions
- Visits to the classes at least every two weeks to ascertain who was attending, who was being dispersed and to get an overall feel for how things were progressing.
- Student evaluations to see how the class was progressing, whether the students were happy and whether there were any issues that needed to be addressed.
- Informed and sent tutors on relevant external training events: on-line ESOL curriculum training, ESOL resource training, sessions on new ESOL and ASSET UK events.
- Provided a support and supervision session following any training, not only to see how beneficial it was for volunteers, but also to ensure that we were sending them on the most relevant kind of training.
- Reimbursed volunteers' travel expenses to and from their volunteer placement and for any training they attended.

Additional Support and Supervision for Asylum Seeker Volunteers

In addition to regular support and supervision sessions and access these volunteers were given:

- day-saver bus passes to travel to placements.
- Subsistence costs when a placement took place over a lunch break. .
- training to complement overseas qualifications and experience from overseas, and to work towards their employability in the UK
- ensured that asylum seeker volunteers' placements supported them in their English language progression.

Towards the end of the project, TES arranged a day-trip for everyone involved to get together socially..

Outcomes:

The benefits for all teachers, language assistants and learners are described in detailed in the project report (see Evans, 2005). Some examples include:

The volunteer researchers were able to access an important service in their local area which could support them beyond the initial volunteering placement. They all felt their confidence, English language skills, IT skills and motivation were supported and increased.

A language support volunteer, an asylum seeker and a trained teacher had been frustrated, bored and depressed. His main reason for volunteering was to alleviate his boredom and frustration and to become part of an activity that enabled him to contribute to the local community and to address his own social and vocational integration.

The Project Co-ordinator felt that it would assist him as and when he came to look for employment in the UK. TES would be able to provide him with a professional reference, as well as a task description for his role which he could use to begin building up a portfolio of his volunteering experience since arriving in the UK.

ESOL for Childcare and Employability

Participants on this programme were encouraged and supported to secure volunteering positions for themselves. 12 of the 33 participants were successful in doing so by the end of the project. The voluntary posts are not only in groups connected with asylum seekers and refugees but also in the wider community including:

- Age Concern
- Cardiff Institute for the Blind
- East Moors Community Centre
- PURL – A mentoring project based in local schools
- Somali Advice Centre
- Welsh Refugee Council
- Whitchurch Hospital
- WomenConnectFirst
- Workers Educational Association (WEA)

ESOL + Mentoring

In the previous chapter we explored the benefits of volunteering to refugees, asylum seekers and other UK citizens. This chapter looks at a particular form of volunteering – mentoring – and explores its benefits to both mentors and mentees.

The importance of mentoring to refugee integration was highlighted in the Home Office white paper *Secure Borders, Safe Haven* (2002). This theme was further developed by the 'Life in the United Kingdom' Advisory Group chaired by Sir Bernard Crick to advise the Home Secretary on the development of a curriculum and naturalisation test for prospective citizens.

Mentoring is an important way to support newcomers to the UK and to make them feel at home. The mutuality of the experience of mentoring can help build bridges between the host community and the new arrivals. It allows participants to build relationships, develop mutual respect and become aware of each other's culture. Crick Report 2003

In addition to specific independent living skills training, mentoring gives young refugees the support network that will allow them to get back on their feet and feel a genuine part of British society. It is the form of help they expressed as the most useful. Refugee Council 2003:18

A mentor can help young refugees to deal with some of the difficulties they face. Specifically, it can help in the following ways:

- *Having someone to talk to and share problems with can help build their confidence and reduce their feelings of loneliness and isolation.*
- *Having fun [...] can be a great release from the worries and responsibilities that many young refugees face.*
- *Mentors can offer help in practical issues, for example how to apply for a training course or a job, help with homework, preparing for an interview or applying for a driving licence.*
- *Mentoring helps young people to integrate with their local community, which helps build their confidence and gives them better access to local services. They will gain a better understanding of local culture and be able to improve their English.*

Connexions 2003: 1

It could be argued that refugees have been demonstrating the benefits of mentoring for many years. In the absence of assistance from the host community, they have often been forced into relying upon one another for advice, guidance and support to assist them in finding their way through the resettlement maze. This form of mentoring has evolved naturally and spontaneously from within the refugee communities and it would be unwise to think that any mentoring scheme could always mirror this informal and 'organically grown' process. However, guidelines are given below as to the elements considered most important to a successful mentoring project by those experienced in the field.

Guidelines for successful mentoring schemes from the Refugee Mentoring and Employment Network

The Refugee Mentoring and Employment network developed a mentoring scheme for refugees, the aim of which was to provide a mechanism to overcome barriers to education, training and employment and to assist them in becoming self-reliant. It concluded that:

- Flexibility, adaptability and sensitivity to individual needs and abilities are fundamental to the success of refugee mentoring
- The individual needs of the beneficiaries are different and often change
- Allowances should be made for languages, skills, systems and cultures
- Policies should anticipate problems and offer intensive support to all participants
- Participants need to be supported in order to minimise the risk of negative outcomes

RM&EN 2002:26

Mentoring as a support tool for ESOL

The report of the 'Life in the United Kingdom' Advisory Group advocated mentoring as an informal back up to ESOL and citizenship tutoring (Home Office 2003) and The Refugee Employment and Mentoring network concluded that mentoring can complement all learning schemes (REMNE 2003), so it certainly makes sense to explore the additional benefits it could offer to ESOL students. Here are some examples of mentoring schemes – including general, befriending, home tuition, work-focused and classroom-based - and lessons learned from their delivery.

Mentoring works on a range of different levels. Not only does it impact on the people involved in the mentoring relationships but also on the wider community. Timebank 2003:21

Time Together

A Timebank initiative, Time Together matches refugees over 18 years old to mentors who are UK citizens. The aim is to assist refugees with many of the issues related to settlement in the UK, including employment and training issues, introduction to UK culture, English language and rebuilding self-esteem and confidence.

Strengths :

Training: Mentors receive a day's training and awareness-raising into refugee issues, with education, employment and integration being the key issues, before committing themselves to providing 5 hours a month of support to their refugee mentees. Mentees also have an induction during which they are informed about what they can and cannot expect of the mentoring process.

Matching: A wide selection of mentors ensures successful matching – e.g. mentees from certain professions can be matched to mentors from similar backgrounds.

Flexibility: Once the individual inductions have taken place the mentors and mentees meet on an informal basis ostensibly to talk about previous case studies, but also to get to know one another. After this informal meeting mentees are encouraged to list which mentors they would most like to be paired with. Only then is the matching process carried out.

Continuing support: mentors and mentees are regularly supported and can also exchange views and gain advice via a web forum

Positive Outcomes:

The external report on the first year of Time Together noted that the scheme had become an amalgamation of the best bits of mentoring, buddying and befriending projects :

The evaluation has found this mentoring scheme to be, without any doubt, an excellent tool for refugee integration. The consistency and level of the change in mentees' perceptions of their own integration is startling. (Drake and Ellis 2003: 2)

Participants appear to confirm the success of the scheme, as evidenced by a drop out rate of only around 2% and 90% of the mentees rating mentoring as an excellent or very good method of integration.

Next Steps:

Expansion: Time Together started as a London-based project but has now expanded to Glasgow, Birmingham, Manchester, Plymouth and Southampton.

Closer links with ESOL providers: Time Together is currently seeking to forge closer ties with ESOL providers in order to link the programme more closely with current language provision.

Views of ESOL teachers currently referring their students for mentoring

Mentoring has been a very positive experience for our students. It has helped them with their choice of course, guidance as to what to do next, and has given enormous help with their language skills.

Students are getting additional, invaluable support – support they didn't get before. It helps both their language and with confidence-building.

One of our students, in particular, has positive blossomed thanks to her experience of mentoring. She was a nurse in her country and has been matched with a nurse from the UK. She is far more positive now and has a clearer idea of what she has to do.

Mentoring is a vital part of the job seeking process. It helps students to have someone to look to, who has already been through the system, or who knows the system well.

Views of learners who have been mentored

When you first come, you feel isolated. It was very nice to meet with someone every week. Just to talk and feel less alone.

My mentor was very hopeful and supportive. I learned a lot from him.

I felt shy at first as my English is poor, but I soon felt more confident.

Befriending

Leeds Asylum Seekers' Support Network (LASSN)

LASSN is a network of voluntary, community and faith groups set up in 1999 in response to dispersal in Leeds, and the isolation and racism that asylum seekers were encountering. Two of the main strands of its current work developed from the original provision. These are the Befriending and the English at Home schemes. Both of these programmes rely heavily on volunteers – and their aims complement one another.

Befriending

This scheme aims to assist in early integration by providing asylum seekers with support on arrival for around 6 months. According to LASSN the aim of the befriending scheme is to help people integrate into the local community. Volunteer befrienders are matched to refugees and asylum seekers and weekly or fortnightly visits are arranged with the aim of familiarising people with services and facilities in Leeds and, of course, giving refugees and asylum seekers someone to talk to from the local community, and a chance to improve their English.

Strengths:

Training: Initial training course is 2 days and comprises introduction to LASSN guidelines and asylum seeking issues.

Flexible and sensitive matching: matching criteria can range from language affinity to geographical location. Much depends on the needs of the mentee.

Support for volunteers: Every volunteer gets a mentor and they meet every 6 weeks for 1.5 hours.

Positive Outcomes:

Self-esteem: Confidence building is one of the main outcomes of the scheme as people become familiar with local services and start to lose their sense of isolation.

Progression routes: Some mentees do go on to train to become mentors to newcomers after benefiting from the scheme themselves.

Next Steps:

Expansion: With increased referrals for people in detention, the scheme is seeking to widen its remit to include 1:1 mentoring within this area.

Specialised Training: As mental health issues become more of an issue, specialised training will need to take place in order for safe and successful mentoring of trauma survivors to take place.

Broadening remit: With the addition of a refugee involvement worker, LASSN hopes to increase its involvement in networking, advocacy, campaigning and awareness-raising.

We have professionals, such as lawyers and teachers volunteering with us, not only as a way to keep doing gainfully employed, but also to learn different skills and to use the skills they already have. Volunteer Coordinator

I keep having my asylum appeals turned down. This was making me depressed and I felt I was wasting my life waiting all the time and wasting my skills. Volunteering has really helped. Helping others is actually helping me. Volunteer

One to One English

The LASSN 'English at Home' scheme provides 1:1 English language classes to those refugees and asylum seekers who are unable to access classes due to physical or mental health problems, caring responsibilities or gender constraints. Trained volunteer tutors provide weekly English language classes tailored to the needs of the individual student. The scheme 'is committed to promoting cross-cultural friendship, to fostering self-determination of students and to offering community involvement.' (LASSN leaflet) It also aims to encourage some students to eventually attend classes within the city.

Strengths:

Training: all volunteers are trained and supported by an experienced ESOL teacher.

Flexibility: although there is an established framework for tuition, staff are encouraged to respond to the particular needs of their students and devise a syllabus accordingly.

Detailed lesson plans: all volunteers are required to provide lesson plans for each session they teach.

Progression routes: students are encouraged to eventually attend classes within the city, where possible.

Refugee Education and Employment Project (REEP)

Sheffield REEP, a participant in the Link Project which developed the Level 2 training and qualification for Adult Learning Supporters, offers a mentoring programme for those students who do not feel able to attend classes, due to health or care issues. Volunteers support English language learning on a 1:1 basis. They are guided and supported throughout via regular tutorials throughout and have an extensive resource library at their disposal

It is a situational approach. We aim to meet individual needs.

Many students have literacy and study skills needs and progress can be slow at this level. While accreditation is available for those who want it, few at this stage take up the offer.. Their progress is demonstrated in a variety of ways such as progress through the ESOL curriculum.

It is a safe and supportive environment for confidence, literacy and study skills to blossom.

Progression: REEP takes a flexible approach to supporting their learners to progress to the mainstream by creating a 'bridge' between the individual tuition and mentoring received by the lower level (A) group and mainstream classes of 12 or more. Often, such students are ready to move on, but are not quite prepared to join a class. REEP offers ESOL + literacy + social skills to these students in smaller classes (e.g. 4 students in each), whilst retaining the 1:1 mentoring in the short-term. Again, volunteer supporters are a big part of this.

We are supporting people and assisting them to become independent. These things don't always happen in a large environment.

Work- Focused

Mentoring is key to helping refugees and asylum seekers to make the transition to employment. Mentoring schemes can help refugee professionals to learn from UK professionals, gain essential knowledge, skill and work experience, and adapt to the UK environment. Refugee Council 2004:12

A number of studies have shown the benefits of mentoring in assisting vocational integration of refugees. As such, it is recommended that mentoring schemes be set up and developed in order to enable refugee professionals to develop job experience and awareness of the UK job culture (eg Dumper 2002). Here are two different examples of work-focussed mentoring schemes.

The Refugee Mentoring and Employment Network

The Refugee Mentoring and Employment Network developed a pilot which ran for 6 months and aimed to engage 160 unemployed refugees in a mentoring scheme, some to be trained as mentors and others to benefit from the mentoring. The mentors were refugees who had been in the UK for a sufficiently long time to have gained a knowledge of life in the UK and its systems, and to have built up some knowledge of training and employment opportunities on offer to refugees. The mentoring framework was used to support other elements within the project, including the development of a network with local employers – yet another example of the importance of the ‘layered’ approach to provision highlighted elsewhere.

Strengths:

Partnership work: the expertise and knowledge of the participating ensured a complementary pool of resources and approaches.

Layered provision: The mentoring scheme was supported by work placements, voluntary work, advice and guidance and workshops with employers

Networking: A network was developed between refugees and employers, via workshops and placements.

Support: A positive learning environment was fostered via emotional and social support in order to increase personal, educational and career development

Positive Outcomes:

Accreditation: Mentors had the opportunity to gain accredited mentoring qualifications and mentees received certificates of participation and achievement.

Progression: Mentees were encouraged to become mentors once it was felt they had the necessary skills and confidence. (Conversely if a mentor found the work too hard, s/he would be encouraged to become a mentee for a while, rather than dropping out of the scheme altogether.)

Mentoring into Employment

In 2004 Leeds Metropolitan University launched a ‘Mentoring into Employment’ project in partnership with the Refugee Council, St George’s Crypt and RETAS. it aims to work with refugees with professional or vocational qualifications who are actively seeking employment relevant to their particular profession.

Strengths:

Recruitment of mentors: Rather than advertising for volunteers, individuals are targeted who can be of specific help to particular mentees, as far as possible. This is currently working well as the scheme is relatively small-scale (16 matches so far).

Inclusion: in addition to the wider partnership work, collaboration within the university has encouraged access to mainstream provision for mentees. For example, mentees are offered guest membership to the university library, and are assisted by library staff, and they also have the opportunity to participate in the Skills for Learning sessions available to university students.

Positive Outcomes:

Progression routes: 5 mentees have already progressed to HE courses and 2 have been assisted into employment. Other progression routes 'tailor made' to the individual have included work shadowing and job placements, waiving fees for an intensive language course and an offer of part-time lecturing.

The outcomes are very much about developing confidence in applying for jobs and, in particular about applying for courses at Universities and finding out more about a specified profession

Next Steps:

English provision: whilst mentees are expected to be moderately competent in English, the Students' Union intends to develop provision of English conversation classes to complement the mentoring aspect of the scheme.

Increasing training provision: In addition to the 2-day training sessions held specifically for this project, mentors are encouraged to attend mentoring training provided by the University. It is anticipated that further training opportunities will be developed.

Refugees who have made their way into employment have an important role to play as role models and mentors (Employability Forum 2004:4)

Refugees have much to gain from learning from those who have already been successful in finding work in the UK. However, whilst any scheme which links UK employers and professionals with refugees is extremely helpful, it will be cause for celebration when more refugees are able to share the secrets of their success with others.

Attitudes of Asylum Seekers and Refugees towards Mentoring

Whilst the outcomes of mentoring seem to be positive, there is often initial reluctance from prospective participants who do not necessarily understand the nature of the process. Some refugees are understandably suspicious of the idea of being asked to talk to a complete stranger about themselves, their lives and possibly their problems. This scepticism may lead to a reluctance to participate as the potential benefits of the programme may not necessarily be apparent initially. This is why a thorough induction process is very important and, as far as possible, it would be useful to engage those who have already benefited from the programme to talk to prospective mentees. According to Time Together, the initial period of drought is broken once people start to feel the benefits of the programme and tell other people. Word of mouth recommendation cannot be underestimated as a means of ensuring the success of such a project. 44% of mentee survey respondents found out about Time Together this way.

Differences in English Language Ability

Whilst development of English language skills are an important element of many such mentoring schemes 'mastery of the English language is not necessarily a requirement for all mentors and mentees in the mentoring process.' (RM&ET 2002:43). Whilst some schemes require a certain level of English (e.g. for access to employment and training), others rely on mother tongue for 1:1 matching, and still others take a 'learning through differences' approach and do cross language, cross gender and cross cultural matches. Much depends on the context within which the mentoring is taking place.

There is an understandable difference in attitude towards between those refugees with a high level of English and those with lower level skills. Of those ESOL students consulted for this report, most felt that mentoring might make a difference to their sense of isolation, although those at Entry 1 (and this would include many of those just arriving in the UK) felt that they would need to improve their English before this could be of any use to them. Ideally, such students could benefit from an expansion of the informal networks of ‘mentoring’ that they have within their own communities – i.e. bilingual assistance.

Mentoring for those with lower level English language skills

Here is an example of a programme which not only sought to overcome this language problem but also demonstrates that setting up a mentoring programme does not always need to be on a wide scale.

Redbridge College set up an ESOL mentoring project within which mentors from advanced ESOL classes used their first language to support and help develop the language of the beginner or elementary student. Mentors were trained to help induct new students in their first language and the support continued within weekly sessions with the mentees.

Positive Outcomes:

Benefits to mentors:

- Improved communication skills
- Training in tutoring skills
- Addition of voluntary work to CV
- Increase in self-confidence

Benefits to mentees:

- Advice and guidance in their first language
- Opportunity to recap on work covered in ESOL classes
- Signposting to other help needed
- Assistance with translation and interpretation

Next Steps:

Expansion: The scheme could be adapted to all levels (e.g. entry-level students have a lot to offer pre-entry students)

Cross-cultural communication: The initial scheme matched people from the same language but developing the project into a cross-cultural exercise would be a valuable exercise for students.

Learning mentor: The college has now hired a learning mentor to assist students in their endeavours. He is looking at ways of re-instigating the scheme, with an eye to broadening its remit.

Comments from ESOL teachers on classroom-based mentoring

It gave the advanced level students a lot of incentive and encouraged students to feel better about themselves. It is so empowering for students.

The students felt good because they got extra training and then they were involved in meetings etc. It gave them a bit of kudos.

Mentoring is really more about giving back. Everyone wants to be taught. I also ask them what they have to offer. It's about identifying skills within and using them in class.

ESOL + Cultural Activities

As noted in Section 1 the way asylum seekers are treated within the initial phase of resettlement can have significant consequences in terms of eventual successful integration. Furthermore the process of integration is both dynamic and two-way, and what happens in the early stages is important to the way asylum seekers view the host community and vice versa.

We have also noted, however, that many refugees and asylum seekers do not appear to have much contact with people in their local community and the majority do not feel confident in attempting to make contact, nor do they know how to make the first move. In addition, many British people have a negative view of refugees, quite often fuelled by hostile media so they too are often reluctant to make attempts to build bridges.

This stand off could lead to further isolation of asylum seekers, cultural division and a widening of the chasm between 'us and them', so this section of the report aims to look at what can be done to help build bridges, via cultural activities.

What exactly do we mean by the term 'cultural activities'? The term can cover any number of activities, some of which can be easily integrated into ESOL classes, others which may require a little more planning. They include:

- social activities
- introduction to UK culture
- 'citizenship' skills
- outings and field trips
- guest speakers in the classroom
- cross-cultural awareness

Such activities can help enormously in easing the path to inclusion into the host society, particularly when underpinned by involvement of others within the community, including faith and community groups, schools, universities, sports institutions etc.

Benefits to students include

- An increased knowledge of host culture
- Assistance in understanding community services
- Reduction of isolation
- Empowerment – encouraging students to do things for themselves
- A sense of belonging
- Increase in confidence

One of our students had to be brought to the classes at first, as she dare not use the local buses. By the end of the course, she had volunteered to take our next intake of students on a bus tour of the town, to help them to see how easy it is to use public transport. That's how important these classes are. They change people's lives. Project Manager

As we have seen time and time again throughout this report, the importance of partnership work to such projects is enormous, as is the involvement of enthusiastic volunteers. The 'layered' approach towards provision is evident throughout the following examples.

Refugee Project, Coventry

An example of how volunteers can assist in delivering and supporting cultural activities is shown by The Refugee Project in Coventry. In addition to mentoring and befriending, volunteers are involved in a number of social and cultural activities run for refugees, including:

- A football club for 3-18 year olds
- A 'Car Sense class to assist in understanding the possible legal and cultural differences in driving in the UK
- Arts and crafts activities
- A women's social group
- Collaboration on a recipe book containing recipes from every country represented by a refugee

Orientation and Welcome

ECRE recommends that the objective of integration programmes and policies is the establishment of a mutual and responsible relationship between refugees and their communities, civil society and host states. (ECRE 1999:2)

Welcome To Leeds

Established in July 2001, Welcome to Leeds aims to address the needs of newly-arrived asylum seekers through English language provision, an introduction to life in Leeds and Yorkshire, socialising and making friends. The three strands are build on the pastoral and advocacy support already being provided within ESOL classrooms.

The initial programme offered 60 hours of ESOL provision with Thomas Danby College and 30 hours of other activities, including sport, art, trips and information sessions. This led to the provision of outreach programmes at Hillside, the main reception centre for asylum seekers in Leeds, and drop-in social gatherings on Friday afternoons throughout the year. Such events, attended by a range of people, including tutors, students, ex-students and volunteers, encourage the use of English language within informal settings and are a very useful tool for socialisation.

Strengths:

Staff: ESOL teachers and volunteers working together to address the learners' needs

Innovation: creative approaches to language development

Effective partnership working: partnerships were forged between ESOL tutors and refugee and asylum seeker organisations, other agencies and volunteers, thus maximising the benefits to students

Growth from partnership working: agencies involved worked to their strengths, expanding welfare and advisory provision, increasing support to refugee doctors and other professionals and developing mentoring schemes

Positive Outcomes:

Dissemination: the project was seen as a model of good practice and adopted in other areas.

Outcomes: in addition to addressing English language, social and welfare needs of the students, the Welcome to Leeds programme has been developed and adjusted to reflect the needs of different groups, including into those who wish to enter the UK labour market. Whilst the approach to provision is multi-layered, it is the area of English language which underpins the whole process

.The majority of these developments have come out of the Welcome to Leeds programme, but are now seen more generally as part of a rapidly developing ESOL programme. Director

Next Steps :

General provision: Consolidation and growth of internet café and summer school for new ESOL learners and new arrivals.

Support for professionals: Higher level ESOL support for professionals, including growth and development of a pre-IELTS programme and IELTS summer school.

Specialist courses: A range of short and long term courses have been developed in response to identified needs. Courses include ESOL for Health, ESOL for driving and ESOL for work programmes.

Sheffield New Arrivals Project

Orientation class: those new to the city can participate in a 10 week intensive course of literacy, ESOL and socialising. They are taken to various parts of the city and introduced to services and procedures, e.g. a trip to the bus station to see how to use public transport. There is also a drop-in centre in town, where new arrivals can go to get advice on housing, education and legal issues within an informal environment. Refreshments are served and a conversation club is held 2 afternoons a week.

Introduction to UK Culture

Many participants suggested that it would be beneficial to run classes on British culture so that they would have a better understanding of British customs and norms. It was felt that this would help them to integrate better into the host community. Many of the younger participants felt that cultural classes could provide a more practical and fun approach to learning and would help them to meet British people. (AET 2002:31)

Yorkshire and Humberside Consortium Citizenship Project

The aim of this project is to assist the integration of new refugees in Yorkshire and Humberside, both socially and vocationally by familiarising them with important aspects of life in the UK. It provides information on British society and culture, covering issues such as housing, health, employment, volunteering and training. Teachers are mainly from an ESOL background and specialist guest speakers provide essential information on different aspects of life in the UK and Leeds. The course is OCN accredited, providing 48 hours of class contact time and 12 hours of independent study. and is mapped to the National Adult ESOL curriculum.

Strengths:

Involvement of students: learners were consulted for their views on what should be included in the course content.

Materials: A set-up pack is available for staff to adopt or adapt the course. It contains information on areas such as ESOL, targets, guest speakers, suggestions topic by topic and examples of assessment and so on.

We are trying hard not to make the course prescriptive, so that anyone can adopt it and adapt it for their needs. Basic skills teachers as well as ESOL teachers can be involved in delivering this.
Course Manager

Positive Outcomes:

Students talk of increased confidence, feeling less isolated and feeling more in control of their lives because they understand the systems better.

Some learners are now in permanent employment or have taken up volunteering opportunities and others have enrolled on academic or vocational training courses. The best results from the course are people talking about 'belonging' and 'feeling more a part of' UK society. Course Manager

Next Steps:

Expansion: After successful piloting the course at Park Lane College, Leeds, the course is now being mainstreamed. The basic framework of project has been developed by other institutions to meet the particular needs of their students.

Progression routes: it is intended that the course should lead to training for refugees, including a 'training the trainee' course for suitably qualified people who have attended the course to learn how to teach on it in the future.

Getting Involved in the Local Community

One of the most effective ways of encouraging understanding between local people and asylum seekers is for them to meet each other. ICAR 2004:2)

Whilst promising practice aimed specifically at refugees and asylum seekers is to be welcomed in the main, there is sometimes the risk of the beneficiaries feeling stigmatised by programmes and activities run exclusively for them (and of local people feeling resentful of this 'special treatment' (ICAR 2004). Involving refugees in local community activities where they are treated just like everybody else is a very important way of breaking down barriers and all other 'labels' become redundant when people are working together on common pursuits such as sporting activities, arts, crafts, writing, cooking and music.

Here are two examples of projects aiming to build on the common interests shared by so many of us.

Pearson Park Pavilion Project, Hull

The Pavilion Project in Pearson Park originally started as a six-week experiment in 2001 as an attempt to ease racial tensions within the area of the city where most refugees and asylum seekers had settled. A series of sporting activities were devised to encourage people from all sections of the community to engage in shared pursuits and *"after just one week groups of people who had previously been at loggerheads were playing side-by-side in the same football team."* (Hull City Council, 2004). So successful was this project that a multicultural football team was set up to play against other amateur clubs in Hull.

The project has since broadened its activities and evolved into a wide-ranging community project which includes a drop-in centre for local young people, including refugees and asylum seekers. Since the project was set up, local police have reported a 75% drop in youth related nuisance crime and the scheme has been awarded permanent funding by Hull City Council.

The ethos of this scheme is community cohesion. We normalise the issue. We are bringing people together at all levels. Customer Services Manager for Parks

Strengths:

Diversity of activities: Whilst sporting activities continue, the project is now 'as mainstream as possible' and people from different sections of the community use the Pavilion for a range of pursuits

Our project is demand-driven. It is not our job to dictate what happens. The community dictates.

Staff: a small dedicated team are involved in running and developing the project. They bring enthusiasm and a wide variety of experience and expertise to the venture.

Opportunity for cross cultural understanding: The wide range of people using the facilities offers the opportunity for individual interaction, thus encouraging community cohesion.

We have raised awareness of issues, but in a very natural way. It is interesting to see how the desire to come into the building forces some people to change their approach.

Positive Outcomes:

A sense of belonging and sharing common aims: Friendships are forged across cultures, nationalities and age groups as people cooperate and work together. Mixed teams have started to evolve from sporting activities.

People just 'knock about together and start to build bridges. This happens naturally and cannot be forced.

Language used in an informal setting: The nature of the environment means that people communicate in a very natural way about things that interest them. This context increases confidence.

When people come into this building they know they will be talking to people from different ethnic and community backgrounds.

Expansion: The project has expanded and is now 'as mainstream as possible'. The building is open to all and includes.

- Health and lifestyle groups
- Women's groups
- Disabled groups
- Art and craft groups
- Back to education and employment projects
- Translation services

Next Steps:

Dissemination: The project will be featured as an example of good practice at a number of workshops, including the Greenspace seminar.

Partnership work: The scheme remains open to forging links with other partners within the community,

Walking Out, Ramblers' Association

'Walking Out' was instigated by the Ramblers' Association to promote the benefits of walking to those who have not hitherto had the opportunity to enjoy it by developing partnerships with local community groups in three areas of the country. In Sheffield volunteers are working with refugees and asylum seekers, many of who have embraced the idea of rambling with great enthusiasm.

"It is often the case that refugees feel formalised schemes tailored towards their interests don't help them to integrate and often do the reverse and make them stand out. With this, they are just walkers who happen to be refugees." Dr Chris McDowell, Director of ICAR 2004

Strengths:

- An informal activity which is non-threatening
- A safe environment for those refugees who feel intimidated going out in the city
- An activity that can be pursued by the whole family
- An opportunity to discover and enjoy cultural differences
- Use of language in a natural environment
- Little, if any, expenditure required

Positive Outcomes:

- Volunteers have started organising their own clubs
- Locations now include city and 'themed' walks, as well as the traditional countryside walks

Working Collaboratively

Most, if not all, of the above programmes effectively demonstrated a collaborative approach to delivery. The pooling of expertise and resources, with every partner playing to their particular strengths, would certainly seem to have enormous potential for success within this 'layered' approach to ESOL, if handled properly. It is important, however, to be aware that partnership working can be very demanding, and has to be monitored very carefully from start to finish.

Pointers for good collaborative working

The Refugee Council strongly advocates collaborative work to ensure successful integration procedures:

In order to succeed, refugee integration must engage national, regional and local agencies and will require public, voluntary and community sector bodies to work together strategically (May 2004:4)

The 'Evaluation of the Basic Skills and ESOL in Local Communities Project' (2002) reported that partnership working was frequently cited as one of the most important factors in the success of the projects. The following have been highlighted as vital elements of an effective partnership:

- Sufficient time to establish partnerships and plan together
- Partners must be clear about their roles
- Learners' goals are central
- Partners know what they will be getting out of the partnership
- Partners respect the ways of working of the other and are flexible

(adapted from Grief and Taylor 2002:5)

The Refugee Mentoring and Employment Network Project, set up to assist refugees to overcome employment and training barriers, highlighted the following as vital to the success of such a network:

- Openness and effective communication
- Frameworks and ground rules to be established before the project begins
- Different approaches to delivery to be recognised and respected
- Working relationships based on mutual trust and support
- Flexibility and adaptability in terms of goal setting, timing of meetings etc.

RM&EN 2002:39

There is, of course, the potential for partnership working to slow down the process of provision, not only in the initial stages, where time is often needed for each partner to ascertain how the other works, but also throughout the partnership, as there remains the need for regular meetings. However, the reward for such efforts to maintain good working relationships is effective and cohesive delivery.

Comments on Collaborative work

Collaboration is not an easy task; it takes time, persistence and trust. Education, social services, business and labour must develop shared goals. It is then that the refugees' best interests are served. (Seufert 1999:6)

It adds considerably to the workload of all participating organisations if partnerships and networks are to contribute positively to a project (RM&EN 2002:43)

We have links with the refugee forum and other refugee organisations within the city – so we know people within the field and try to coordinate our services. We know where to send people to get the specific help they need. REEP, Sheffield

We have good relationships with other bodies and we take a very collaborative approach. There are many initiatives – e.g. church-based – and we need to get to know about them so we can help each other and advertise each other's work (and stop the risk of 'reinventing the wheel') LASSN

The success of this initiative has been built around partnerships Pavilion Project, Hull

Other common patterns in, and challenges to, provision are explored in the next section.

Section 3: Conclusion

Common Challenges – Common Opinions - Common Patterns

Throughout our survey, it became apparent that there were many shared patterns in and challenges to good practice. Establishing many of the programmes was not easy and continuing some beyond the end of project funding proved insurmountable to some. In addition to funding, issues included sometimes unrealistic targets and outcomes, flexibility and adaptability and teaching commitments and conditions. Whilst an attempt has been made to explore these issues individually, it is evident that they are interlinked in so many ways and impact on one another. Non-linguistic outcomes affect linguistic progress; flexibility of delivery is linked to willingness of staff to go that extra mile which, in turn, ensures that good practice happens naturally within the classroom; funding has the potential to affect all of the above, as do the working conditions for staff. Let's look at each in turn.

Funding

There were two main issues causing problems to staff and learners in the area of funding. First of all, many people highlighted the problem of trying to find funding for programmes that include asylum seekers. Many practitioners have asylum seekers, refugees and other ESOL learners in their classrooms and some expressed their anger at the prospect of being forced to exclude asylum seekers from certain programmes because of funding criteria. As we noted earlier, these restrictions reinforce a two-tier approach to integration, with asylum seekers firmly at the bottom of the pile. Respondents felt very strongly that this was unacceptable and felt frustrated at the lack of funding available for asylum seekers.

In this centre, if the funder says I can't have asylum seekers in my ESOL classes, then I have to reluctantly say 'No' to the funding, as many of my women are still awaiting a decision.

Manager – Refugee Women's Centre

The main complaint concerns the short-termism of funding, as highlighted earlier. It was alarming to find that many projects commonly cited for good practice were no longer being funded. The institutions involved were either struggling to find funding elsewhere to develop their programmes or had given up altogether. This was happening with alarming frequency and it is scandalous that funding appears to be available for so many initiatives, only to be withdrawn once the programmes have proved to be effective.

It would appear that there is a high level of 'initiative overload' in funding priorities. Some organisations lamented the fact they could only get funding if they were encouraged to add 'an element of innovation' to their programmes, but that nothing was available to develop what was already working. The consequences of this lack of resources to develop existing programmes led to reduced impetus and motivation and feelings of resentment amongst staff, but, most importantly, it often stopped learners' progress in its tracks. In addition, there is the loss of valuable experience: when projects ended, and the staff responsible for the projects moved on to pastures new, any potentially useful information on the benefits and outcomes of the programmes often sat gathering dust. At a time when ESOL practitioners are requesting more networking and sharing of good practice, this is frustrating in the extreme.

Now this project is not funded. Oh, fantastic. Well thought through. The project works. The students are making progress. Let's stop it. ESOL teacher

We bring the students up to a point of really feeling good about themselves then we pull the carpet from under them. Bail out. Project stops. Self esteem plummets. Course coordinator

I'd love to see this programme come back but we can't offer the training or attend meetings. Staff would need to be given paid time and a slot to do the training. But that won't happen and our good will is stretched to the limit as it is. ESOL teacher

We did have a very successful course training people to be trainers. The students were snapped up for work quickly and could respond appropriately to the needs of the people they were training as they had the same experiences. However, when we went back for funding, we were told we no longer met their criteria, so we no longer run it. These are the frustrations.
Training Manager

Whilst it could reasonably be argued that institutions themselves are responsible for mainstreaming successful projects once funding disappears, it was evident that not many seemed able to provide the framework to implement the necessary changes (e.g. training and paid time for staff to continue the good work). Exit strategies need to be at the forefront of planning at the earliest stage and major funding bodies need to consider the benefits of funding streams that reward and build on innovative work rather than innovation alone.

On the positive side, in some of our examples, such as Thomas Danby and Sheffield Colleges and the Parade ESOL service, have been able to use their experience to incorporate elements of their ESOL + activities into mainstream ESOL programmes to the benefit of all their ESOL learners.

This model was effective in engaging with, retaining and progressing learners. The model has been adopted for use with Hair and Beauty and Preparation for Work. ESOL for Childcare and Employment Project Report 2005.

Currently a growing number of further education institutions are offering programmes that aim to develop language required for particular vocational areas. Through the Skills for Life Strategy, materials to support embedded programmes are being developed that will support learners moving to the mainstream. Training and Level 2 qualifications for Adult Learning Supporters are also available that may be used to enhance what mentoring programmes can offer their mentees and volunteer tutors supporting asylum seekers in many contexts.

Working Conditions

Many of our respondents felt that the goodwill factor among staff is being stretched to the limit at the moment. While many of the new initiatives have been welcomed, the recent changes in ESOL delivery – the curriculum, training and qualifications, recording procedures – have brought with them an enormous amount of extra administration and paper work. There are inevitable teething problems and it is widely accepted that this is a period of transition. Nonetheless, whilst the developments have brought many benefits they have also caused some disruption and extra work for those struggling to understand and implement the new systems, whilst at the same time trying to minimise disruption to their learners. This is a difficult path to tread and the stress and strain was frequently palpable. Interestingly, amongst all these challenges, it was the amount of paperwork, which is not always recognised by an increase in paid non-contact hours, that was most often cited as the biggest problem.

Good teachers are starting to leave, though. Some have been here for over 15 years, but the pressures are too much. I am worried at the lack of experience in my department now. Head of ESOL

There is too much administration for teachers now. "We are administrators not teachers now." they say. Community Organisation

Many good ESOL tutors that I know are leaving teaching because there is too much bureaucracy and too much paperwork. ESOL teacher

On the positive side there is a greater recognition that teachers new to working with asylum seekers need access to good support systems and referral points to ensure that their learners' welfare and other needs are adequately met. Our examples have highlighted the value of partnership and collaboration whereby ESOL programmes are part of a wider hub of support both within their own institutions and the wider community.

Unrealistic Outcomes

Staff also raised issues about the constraints of the sometimes unrealistic outcomes that they were being set. The beneficiaries of many ESOL programmes often do not fit into the increasingly competitive target-setting culture prevalent in education today, and whilst respondents accepted that linguistic outcomes are their main priority, they were concerned that non-linguistic outcomes, such as confidence-building and raising self esteem, were often not included in the 'boxes to be ticked'. At beginner levels, positive outcomes achievable in a short programme may be difficult to quantify in terms of the targets set, and whilst practitioners recognised that demonstrating progress in language acquisition was absolutely vital, many feared that non-linguistic developments risked being overlooked. The link between growth of self esteem and progress in learning is well researched and it is commonly accepted that good language learners are, on the whole, confident and not afraid of making mistakes. Some felt forced into finding creative ways of interpreting procedures and completing forms, which made them feel very uncomfortable.

Bureaucracy and target setting doesn't actually meet the needs of our clients. ESOL Team Leader

When working with refugees, flexibility is the key, but we are often being forced to bend the rules in order to be of real help to the clients, as the prescriptions by funders often do nothing to meet the needs of our student. ESOL teacher

This is phased learning in action. The first steps we have to take are to get people's confidence back. Once they know they can go out there and not feel afraid, then we can start to work on the next phase. People need space before they can move on. This is often the first stage that we are dealing with. Director of ESOL Programme

The 'outcomes' from my women is independence, the ability to ask for medicine, knowing where to get on a bus and actually doing it on their own, going to school and sticking up for their children. These are real outcomes. These are fixed in reality. The government (local and national) and funders are not and neither are their outcomes. Women's Centre Manager

Flexibility and Adaptability

Another important aspect of good practice in teaching refugees and asylum seekers is the ability to be able to respond quickly to individual need. Flexibility and adaptability are key to ensuring that this actually happens in the classroom. There was concern raised by many ESOL teachers about the speed and number of recent initiatives in ESOL, but it was generally accepted that such a framework was important. And whilst some were daunted by the amount of paperwork involved there was general agreement that recording systems can be helpful in monitoring individual progress towards achieving learner aspirations. Nonetheless, it was felt vitally important to allow for flexible working patterns and 'breathing space' within this framework and some felt that this was not always the case. Despite funding and institutional restraints many have successfully maintained their ability to flexible and responsive:

The tailor-made elements to the course are made possible by the flexibility and adaptability of the staff and the fact that consultants are empowered to do whatever they feel would meet the needs of the client. English for Jobseeking Coordinator

This is an organic programme. Over-refine it and it loses its goodness. Programme Manager

One advantage of our college is to customise programmes quickly to the students' needs. Flexibility is the key. Director of ESOL programme

Our local colleges can't offer the 1:1 that we can. We meet up naturally. Community training coordinator

Attitudes and Calibre of Staff

Most best practice is unsung and unheralded

The positive and supportive ethos created by the practitioners involved in the provision surveyed has been stressed throughout the report. Their enthusiasm and willingness to be flexible and creative is a major success factor. All the above programmes required a level of dedication and willingness from staff which, when evident, was the catalyst to the most flourishing courses. Time and time again managers commented that these are the elements of 'good practice' which really matter – the goodwill, creativity, expertise and dedication of staff. When these are in place, it seems anything is possible. Whilst it is evident that teaching and classroom skills, including differentiation skills, must be of a high standard, characteristics such as creativity, passion, sensitivity, flexibility, resilience, dedication and, of course, patience equally underpin the most successful provision.

We all have a passion for our work and will whatever is necessary to ensure the success of our students. ESOL teacher

You need a certain type of person to teach here. Humanity is important. We know exactly the kind of person we need. Project Manager

“Acceptance is the most important thing. You can teach people but if you don't relate to them, you will not succeed.” Programme Coordinator

In terms of employing people within the organisation, I have to ask myself these two questions: Are you inherently happy and are you flexible? These are the key elements to providing what our students need. Director of Training Organisation

Obviously they need the necessary skills, but it is important that our staff have the qualities that make them willing to 'serve' and move beyond doing a mere job. Director of ESOL Provision

Dynamic ESOL tutors are vital to the success of this programme. ESOL Manager

Our staff need flexibility, adaptability and vision combined to ensure that potential problems are overcome with imagination. Training Organiser

Conclusion

There may be many challenges, obstacles and difficulties along the route to developing innovative and effective strategies that support the social and vocational integration of people seeking asylum in the UK but we hope that our survey has demonstrated that they can be overcome. The wealth of experience and ideas described here represents a small proportion of the wonderful work that is going on throughout the UK. We hope that they inspire many ESOL providers, employers and the many organisations that work in related fields, to adapt them to suit their own contexts and create opportunities for asylum seekers and other linguistic minorities to improve their English, learn about and participate more actively in the communities where they settle with a view to smoothing the path to integration.

References

- Africa Educational Trust [July 2002] *Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the Learning and Skills Council London North Area*. London: Learning and Skills Council London North.
- Aldridge, F. & Waddington, S. [April 2001] *Asylum Seekers' Skills and Qualifications Audit Pilot Project*. Leicester: NIACE.
- Aferiat, Y (1999) *Good Practice Guide on the Integration of Refugees in the European Union: Vocational Training*. ECRE, France Terre d'Asile
- Barton, D et al (2004) *Adult Learners' Lives Project: Setting the Scene*. Progress Report, April 2004. Literacy Research Centre, Lancaster University. NRDC
- Brooks, B (2004) Keynote Speech to Skills For Life English For Speakers Of Other Languages (ESOL) Conference – 28th April 2004
- Brophy M, et al (1997) *Vocational Training for Refugees from the Horn of Africa*. London: Africa Educational Trust
- Chudasama, V (2004) "SHERPA" Support Programme for Individuals Deemed to be at Risk or Socially Excluded in Europe: Final Report from the Mentoring Working Group. Leicester Racial Equality Council
- Connexions (2003) *Working together: Connexions Supporting Young Asylum Seekers and Refugees*. CNSO and Save the Children
- Crick, B (2003) Keynote speech to seminar 'From Immigrants to new citizens ... becoming a citizen in 21st century Britain', UK New Citizen, 18 November 2003
- DfEE (1999) *Mentoring for Work Based Training*. QPID Good Practice Guide. Workforce Development Series
- D'Onofrio, L and K Munk (2004) *Understanding the stranger: final report*. ICAR
- Drake, K A and C Ellis (2003) *Maximising potential: an independent evaluation of Time Together*. 3Consultancy
- Dumper, H (December 2002) *Missed Opportunities: A Skills Audit of Refugee Women in London from the teaching, nursing and medical professions*, Greater London Authority
- ECRE (1999) *Position on the integration of refugees in Europe* September 1999
- ECRE (2001) *Good practice guide on the integration of refugees in Central and Eastern Europe*. September 2001
- ECRE (2002a) *Summary of ECRE's position on access to the labour market for asylum seekers*. February 2002
- ECRE (2002b) 'Vocational Training of young asylum seekers in host countries' 11 March 2002. Doc 9380. Report committee on Migration, refugees and demography.
- ECRE (2002c) 'Position on the Integration of refugees in Europe' updated position, December 2002
- ECRE (2003) *Response of ECRE to the Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: On immigration, integration and employment*
- Employability Forum (2004) *Silver Lining: Integrating refugee skills into the workforce – a strategy for refugee nurses*. Refugee Nurses Task Force
- Estyn (2003) *Aspects of mentoring support provided on work-based training programmes, including the Modern Skills Diploma for Adults* http://www.estyn.gov.uk/publications/mentoring_wbt.pdf
- European Commission (2001) 'Migration and its impact on the Labour Market and Education'. New Perspectives for Learning – Briefing Paper 38
- Evans, K (2005) *Working with Volunteers and Asylum Seekers as volunteers*, www.asset-uk.org.uk

-
- Ferris E (2001) 'Building Hospitable Communities' World Council of Churches, Geneva in *Refuge*, Vol 20, Issue No 1
- France Terre d'Asile (Lead Agency on Vocational Training in ECRE Task Force Integration) (July 2002) *Minutes of the refugee working group on Vocational Training*
- Grief, S and C Taylor (2002) Final Report. Evaluation of the Basic Skills and ESOL in Local Communities Projects, LSDA and NIACE for LSC
- Griffiths, D (February 2003) *English language training for refugees in London and the regions*. HO Online report 14/03
- Home Office IND Communications Team and Home Office Communications Directorate [2000] *Full and Equal Citizens: A strategy for the integration of refugees into the United Kingdom*. London: Home Office.
- Home Office [2002] *Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration for Diversity in Modern Britain*. Home Office. London: HMSO.
- Home Office (2003) *The New and the Old*. Report of the 'Life in the United Kingdom' Advisory Group
- Home Office (2004a) *Integration Matters: a national strategy for refugee integration. A draft for consultation*.
- Hudson, D (2000) *Asylum Seekers under EQUAL*
- Hudson, D and Kerrigan, S (2002) *Models of good practice in employment: working with employers*. Refugee Council
- Hull City Council (2004) 'Experience Prison Life in Pearson Park', Press Office News Release, 16 January 2004
- ICAR (2004) *Media Image, Community Impact: assessing the impact of media and political images of refugees and asylum seekers on community relations in London. Report of a pilot research study*. GLA.
- Ilmolelian, P.D. (1999) *Do Study grants help refugees find jobs? The education, training and employment of African refugees in Britain. A study into the effects of voluntary sector grants*. Africa Educational Trust
- Institute for Employment Studies (2004) *Employing Refugees: Some Organisations' Experience*, Employability Forum
- London Asylum Seekers Consortium (2004) *Draft Refugee Integration – A Strategy for London 2003/2004*
- London Borough of Camden (2003), *Working with Refugees: Report of the scrutiny panel looking at further education, employment and training opportunities for refugees in Camden* London: Camden
- Mayor of London (2002) *Missed opportunities: A skills audit of refugee women in London from the teaching, nursing and medical professions*, Greater London Authority
- mbA Training Research and Development (1999) *Creating the conditions for refugees to find work*, Refugee Council
- National Asylum Support Service (2004) *Asylum Seekers and Volunteering, Guidance on undertaking voluntary activity*
- Parkins, R (2001) 'Extending Hospitality through faith based resettlement' paper given to International Conference for the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees, April 2001
- Phillimore, J., Goodson, L., Oosthuizen, R., Ferrari, E., Fathi, J., Penjwini, S., Joseph, R. [2003] *Asylum seekers and refugees: education, training, employment, skills and services in Coventry and Warwickshire*. Centre for Urban and regional Studies, School of Public Policy, University of Birmingham, NIACE, Bostock Marketing Group
- Refugee Council (2003) *Starting Over: Young Refugees Talk About Life in Britain*. The Prince's Trust and The Diana, Princess of Wales, Memorial Fund
- Refugee Council (2004a) *Agenda for Integration: consultation draft*, Refugee Council, May 2004
- Refugee Council (2004b) *The Forbidden Workforce: Asylum seekers, employment concession and access to the UK labour market*

Refugee Mentoring & Employer Network [September 2002] *Quality Guidelines on Mentoring for Refugees*. London: Refugee Mentoring & Employer Network [RM & EN].

Reisenberger, A (2004) in foreword to Refugee Council (2004b:2)

Salinas C and Muller G (1999) ECRE Good Practice Guide on Integration: Education for refugees in the European Union, London: WUS

Scottish Refugee Integration Forum (2003) *Draft Supporting Document: Section 8 Enterprise, Lifelong Learning, Employment And Training Issues*

Seufert, P (1999) 'Refugees as English Language Learners: Issues and Concerns' in Q&A September 1999, National Center for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE). Center for Applied Linguistics

Sinkil, A (2002) *Quest of Quality Educational Guidance for Refugees in Europe*. ECRE and WUS (UK)

Spencer, S (2004) *Achieving the social inclusion of migrants*: presentation to the Irish Presidency Conference on reconciling Mobility and Social Inclusion – the Role of Employment and Social Policy, 1-2 April 2004,

Stopforth, S (2001) *Volunteering? Is it Worth it? The effects of volunteering on refugees' prospects of getting paid work*. RETAS, IVC

Ter Wal, J (2004) *European Day of Media Monitoring: quantitative analysis of daily press and TV contents in the 15 EU member states. Pilot study in the framework for the Online/More Colour in the Media project 'European day of media monitoring'*. ERCOMER. Utrecht University.

Timebank (2003) *Celebrate Refugee Integration in the UK. Time together refugee mentoring scheme: a report on the first year*.

Voluntary Action, Winter 2001, Vol 4, No 1

Volunteering magazine, October 2002

Wilson R (2003) *The A-Z of volunteering and asylum*. National Centre for Volunteering and Tandem Communications and Research Ltd (www.tandem-uk.com)

Yorkshire & Humberside Consortium for Asylum Seekers and Refugees *Regional Integration Strategy 2003-2006*

Some Useful Websites

ASSET UK www.asset-uk.org.uk

Citizen Skills www.citizenskills.co.uk

Community Service Volunteers, www.csv.org.uk/

Do It – national database of volunteering opportunities in the UK <http://www.do-it.org.uk>

Mentoring and Coaching Council: www.mentoringcentre.org

Institute for volunteering research: www.ivr.org.uk/aboutus.htm 'Voluntary Action' journal <http://www.ivr.org.uk/voluntaryaction>

Talent Website www.talent.ac.uk for teaching materials and other resources

Mentors Forum: www.mentorsforum.co.uk

Mersey Volunteer Bureau www.merseyworld.com/mersey_vol/trng.htm

National Mentoring Network: www.nmn.org.uk

New2Uk A guide for newcomers to life in the UK. www.new2uk.org

Information for asylum seekers website: www.info-for-asylumseekers.org

Skills for Life Strategy Unit: www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus

Save the Children mentoring booklet 'Setting up mentoring schemes for young refugees in the UK'. http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/temp/scuk/cache/cmsattach/47_youngref3.pdf

SOVA (Supporting others through volunteer action): www.sova.org.uk/wa-plethu.htm

Time Bank: www.timebank.org.uk

Time Together mentoring for refugees: <http://www.timebank.org.uk/mentor/latestnews.htm>

UK New Citizen www.uknewcitizen.org

Volunteering England: www.volunteering.org.uk/

The Volunteering and Asylum Project,www.tandem.co.uk

Volunteer Centre Glasgow www.volunteerglasgow.org/4U/refugees.asp

Islington Volunteer Orientation Project. www.islingtonvolunteer.org.uk/

Women's Royal Voluntary Service www.wrvs.org.uk

Acknowledgements

With grateful thanks to staff and/or students at the following organisations for taking the time to assist us with this report:

African Women's Welfare Group

5E, Haringey

Fashionworks, Islington

Hackney Springboard Trust

Islington Volunteer Centre

Language2Work

LASSN

Leeds Metropolitan University

Leicester Racial Equality Centre

Parade ESOL Service, Cardiff Council

Pearson Park Pavilion Project

Peterborough College

Peterborough Women's Centre

Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit

Ramblers' Association

Redbridge College

RASAP

REEP

Renaisi

RETAS

Royal Free Hospital

Sheffield College

TES Birmingham

Time Together

Welcome To Leeds

West Thames College

Yorkshire and Humberside Consortium Citizenship Project