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EMPOWERING ASYLUM SEEKERS

Written by the Refugee Council on behalf of the EQUAL
ASSET UK Development and Mainstreaming Partnership

November 2005

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The EQUAL programme aims to overcome discrimination and inequalities faced by disadvantaged groups in the UK and European labour market. ASSET UK is a partnership under the EQUAL programme. It consists of eight agencies that work together to promote asylum seekers' skills, empowerment and training in the UK. Led both nationally and transnationally by the Refugee Council, ASSET UK works to develop and disseminate good practice on information, advice and guidance, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), skills audits, volunteering and working with employers. ASSET UK equips asylum seekers with skills that prepare them for the labour market, either in the UK or in their country of origin, should they have to return. The eight agencies are:

Refugee Council



The Basic Skills Agency



LLU+ (formerly the London Language and Literacy Unit), London South Bank University



National Institute of Adult Continuing Education



Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities



Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit, London Metropolitan University



The Sheffield College



Training and Employment Section (now the Learning and Integration Unit), Refugee Council

1 Foreword

Empowerment is one of the key principles of EQUAL. For ASSET UK Development Partnership it means making a difference in the lives of individual asylum seekers and their communities. It also means building the capacity of other organisations and projects, which are supporting the needs of asylum seekers, and influencing the attitudes of the key actors, such as employers, training/lifelong learning providers and policy makers.

Many asylum seekers bring with them useful work experience, skills and qualifications and many employers want to deploy their skills as paid employees if they have permission to work or as volunteers. It is vital that projects, like ASSET UK Development Partnership, empower asylum seekers to play an active role in their new communities, to support local businesses and to contribute to the local economy.

This publication draws together lessons from our EQUAL ASSET UK Development Partnership on how barriers asylum seekers face were addressed and how asylum seekers were involved in the design, delivery and evaluation of the programme. We hope that the ideas and checklist will help other practitioners engage asylum seekers more effectively in their own projects.

We would like to thank all the ASSET UK partners in particular Lynda Lawrence, Celine Castelino, Susan Davenport and Deng Yai for drawing together this guide.

Anna Reisenberger
Chair, ASSET UK Development Partnership
Deputy Chief Executive, the Refugee Council

2 Glossary

ASSET UK – Asylum Seekers Skills Empowerment and Training Development Partnership

Asylum Seeker – Someone who is fleeing persecution in their homeland, has arrived in another country, made themselves known to the authorities and exercised the legal right to apply for asylum

Beneficiary – The person or organisation receiving support from a Development Partnership

BSA – The Basic Skills Agency

Dispersal – the process by which the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) moves asylum seekers to accommodation outside of London and the South East

DP – Development Partnership. The strategic partnership that implements EQUAL activities. Each Development Partnership addresses one thematic field of its choice

Emergency Accommodation – Accommodation given to destitute asylum seekers

EQUAL GB Programme - Equal is a European Social Fund programme aimed at testing and encouraging new ways of promoting employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability and equal opportunities

ESF – European Social Fund. Aims to improve the employment situation in the European Union, by investing in people

ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages

LLU+ - formerly the London Language and Literacy Unit based at London South Bank University

LSC – Learning and Skills Council

NASS – National Asylum Support Service. The body which provides support to asylum seekers who made their claim for asylum after 3 April 200.

NIACE – National Institute of Adult Continuing Education

NICEM – Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities

RCO – Refugee Community Organisation

Refugee – Someone whose asylum application has been successful and who is allowed to stay in another country having proved they would face persecution back home.

TES – Training and Employment Section, Refugee Council

TNG – Thematic Network Group

3 Introduction

The Equal programme in Great Britain aims to tackle discrimination and inequalities in the UK labour market. One strand, Theme I, aims to support the vocational and social integration of asylum seekers. The strategic objective of the programme is "To develop an employment strategy which is appropriate to the needs of asylum seekers in the UK". It "stresses the need to ensure that tailored provision is made available along the continuum from asylum seeker to refugee" and aims to "enable asylum seekers to play a more active role in [British] society and to enable those who become refugees to gain more rapid transition to the labour market".

In practice, empowerment¹ means involving the target beneficiary group(s) in project design, development, management and evaluation; and changing attitudes and behaviours of key partners, systems and structures.

Asylum seekers and refugees are among the most disadvantaged groups in the UK. They face significant barriers to volunteering. Due to these multiple barriers, unemployment amongst refugees and asylum seekers with permission to work in Britain is estimated at being at least six times the national average. Even when they do find employment, refugees and asylum seekers with permission to work often do work for which they are overqualified.

An additional issue for asylum seekers arose with the Government's dispersal policy enacted in 1999, which sent asylum seekers to often deprived areas throughout the UK, which were ill-equipped to receive them. To address some of the difficulties, the Equal Programme funded the ASSET UK Development Partnership (DP) to support the social and vocational integration of asylum seekers in these dispersal areas.

One of the inherent problems for our Development Partnership was the withdrawal of the concession to work for asylum seekers by the Home Office in July 2002, without any prior consultation or warning.² This report draws on the experience of the ASSET UK Development Partnership in empowering asylum seekers and those working with them and aims to share useful lessons and outline tested new approaches that are adaptable and transferable to other settings. We hope that the innovative approaches cited will stimulate thinking and inspire new work to benefit and empower asylum seekers to participate more actively in their communities.

¹ Empowerment is used here to mean "the development of capacity and the opportunity for individuals and groups to play a full role in society in general, not only in economic terms but also in social, psychological and political terms, with those involved in the implementation of activities also taking part in decision making". Empowerment also means that "those who have little or no influence, such as excluded people, are able to acquire the capacity to voice their opinions, to take initiatives, make independent choices and influence change" and "that those with influence actively change their attitudes and the way decisions are made through engaging with excluded people".

² On 23rd July 2002, the Home Office withdrew the right to work for asylum. It also made access to vocational training for asylum seekers conditional on access to paid employment. As from 6th February 2005, the Home Office started implementing the EU directive on the Minimum Standards for Reception of Asylum Seekers in the EU in the United Kingdom. The law gives the right to work to asylum seekers who have waited for the initial decision on their asylum applications for more than 12 months provided it was not their fault that they waited for such a long time.

4. New Approaches To Empowerment Of Asylum Seekers

ASSET UK proposed to address the issues of access, lack of capacity, quality of services and social marginalisation in the dispersal areas and planned and implemented measures to promote empowerment at various levels. It sought to empower asylum seekers as individuals and groups. It involved asylum seekers in aspects of the design, development, management and evaluation of its projects. It made an effort to change the attitudes of the key actors in the UK – employers, policy-makers and training/lifelong learning providers.

ASSET UK built in measures to reduce the barriers to participation for asylum seekers such as:

- 1 Ensuring asylum seekers had equal access to all courses and activities available to them by making learning materials, books, stationery and other resources freely available
- 2 Covering out of pocket expenses including public transport costs to and from learning/volunteering venues and subsistence costs.
- 3 Providing items of equipment and clothing necessary for some volunteering placements
- 4 Providing free childcare places
- 5 Ensuring all venues were accessible and welcoming
- 6 Providing interpreters
- 7 Supporting asylum seekers with individual training/coaching/information sharing prior to any activities/events/presentations to ensure they were fully able to participate in presentations, meetings, dissemination and evaluation events

ASSET UK also built in measures to reduce barriers to participation for professionals, practitioners and employers such as by providing:

- 1 Training opportunities to make them fully aware of the rights and responsibilities of asylum seekers with regard to training and volunteering opportunities.
- 2 Training on the different rights and responsibilities of asylum seekers and refugees
- 3 Training on cultural awareness and needs of asylum seekers

4.1. Promoting Individual Empowerment

ASSET UK represented asylum seekers within the partnership's management structure and drew on the experience of refugees employed within the partnership when designing, developing, implementing, evaluating, disseminating and mainstreaming the lessons learned from the partnership's activities.

It aimed to promote individual empowerment for asylum seekers by supporting their vocational and social integration needs by:

- 1 Facilitating access to quality essential life resources, orientation or information on housing, health, credit, citizen information.
- 2 Providing asylum seekers with access to job-related opportunities or resources such as information about education, training and the labour market, advice, training, volunteering opportunities.
- 3 Providing personal development opportunities to build up individual's self-confidence, self-identity, motivation, initiative-taking, problem-solving, ability to make independent choices, leadership, organisational skills, political awareness.
- 4 Supporting personal acquisition of knowledge and skills: basic skills, 'soft' social interaction skills, communication, vocational skills.
- 5 Tailoring its services to, and effectively supporting, the employment and personal development needs of individual asylum seekers and supporting them to overcome multiple barriers to employment.
- 6 Carrying out skills audits and testing new ways of supporting the process of recognition of overseas qualifications particularly through the activities of NIACE, NICEM and RAGU to enable asylum seekers to use their existing skills; to provide opportunities for them to contribute to the local communities and to increase their self-confidence and motivation.
- 7 Addressing the issue of "poor information about asylum seekers", which was a barrier to their empowerment, by disseminating quality information about the needs and rights of asylum seekers to, and through, a network of educational institutions using online resources and providing an opportunity, for the first time, for asylum seekers to access a dedicated site with information and resources especially designed for them.
- 8 Collating and disseminating good practice in working with asylum seekers that focussed on ways in which asylum seekers could support the local economy through a series of regional events and establishing new networks for practitioners and policy-makers.
- 9 Testing innovative models to help asylum seekers learn English and develop their basic skills to increase their ability to access other services, to prepare for

employment in specific vocational areas and to have a greater control of their situation.

- 10 Designing and testing models of orientation programmes for asylum seekers to provide them with job search training; to raise their awareness of the UK work culture and labour market; to provide them with information about employment support and training services (including jobcentres); to ensure they know how to access these services and to provide them with information about refugee support networks and organisations.
- 11 Developing multi media materials and resources aimed at teachers of asylum seekers that focuses on citizenship and creating and testing a range of advice, guidance and orientation provision.
- 12 Working with employers to create opportunities for asylum seekers to volunteer and gain UK work experience and references by piloting bespoke volunteering programmes for asylum seekers in Northern Ireland to enhance their skills and employability and introducing new pathways into volunteering and employment orientation in the East Midlands.
- 13 Helping asylum seekers acquire and/or improve IT skills and help them bridge the digital divide.

One asylum seeker has recently been appointed to become one of NICEM's Trustees. In addition, two asylum seekers organised the Christmas Party in partnership with a volunteer and member of staff; they arranged the venue, food, music, and games for the children. Asylum seekers are involved in the organisation of most of the social and recreational activities from within the project

ASSET UK achieved specific objectives to promote the empowerment of individual asylum seekers:

- It supported 210 asylum seekers to learn English language- which is a prerequisite to mobility, orientation and the seeking of job opportunities - by developing and testing innovative ways of delivering ESOL in comparative settings.
- ASSET UK undertook a baseline audit of the skills and qualifications of over 658 asylum seekers on arrival in dispersal areas of the East Midlands and Northern Ireland, and facilitated their access to appropriate opportunities for volunteering and labour market orientation alongside learning support. It also tracked their progress through the different processes.
- The partnership created over 100 opportunities for asylum seekers to undertake volunteering so that they have basic work experience and have initial exposure to employers and the labour market.

- NICEM supported 16 asylum seekers to access employment. It also helped 25 asylum seekers to access volunteering opportunities and 99 asylum seekers to enrol and attend a wide range of courses including ESOL, Plastering, Engineering, IT (including A+ PC Maintenance & Troubleshooting & ECDL), Beauty Therapy, Cookery, Marketing, Access to Nursing, Journeys for Women, 'A' Levels, Anatomy and Physiology.

4.2. Promoting Group Empowerment

ASSET UK promoted empowerment of asylum seekers as a group by:

- 1 Representing asylum seekers and refugees on the Partnership Board, Task Groups, Steering Groups and consulting about project activities:
 - 1.1 The Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit (RAGU) involved asylum seekers in the development of a website of information for asylum seekers through focus groups.
 - 1.2 The Training and Employment Section (TES) of the Refugee Council involved asylum seekers in developing an Information Pack for asylum seekers in emergency accommodation in Birmingham.
 - 1.3 The Basic Skills Agency (BSA) and The Sheffield College (SC) consulted groups of asylum seekers and refugees on the content of the vocational language courses.
2. Facilitating the creation of small working groups/consultation groups:
 - 2.1 TES carried out support and supervision sessions with asylum seeker volunteers and encouraged them to participate in focus groups as part of the evaluation of the partnership.
 - 2.2 Sheffield College set up an asylum seeker steering group to enable the college to shape the programme and guide the project team to find the best ways to create volunteering opportunities for asylum seekers.
 - 2.3 Asylum seekers participated in NIACE project team meetings providing feedback and helping to shape the work of the project. NIACE also involved asylum seekers in evaluating the project and in a wide range of dissemination activities where they spoke about their own experiences of being involved in the project. Recently, this has involved speaking about their experiences at a ministerial visit by the Immigration Minister and a joint ASSET UK and Business in the Community event to promote the project to businesses in the East Midlands. This has resulted in discussion of the barriers created by Government policies and practices.

3. Encouraging groups to set the agenda for meetings with representatives of external organisations:
 - 3.1 The Basic Skills Agency's pilot project in Cardiff co-opted two asylum seekers from the first course onto the steering group and involved asylum seekers in trialling new materials which assisted the teachers to adapt the materials as appropriate.
 - 3.2 TES supported asylum seekers to use the skills they had gained in their countries of origin by taking on an English Language Teaching Assistant position in Emergency Accommodation centres where TES was providing English language classes. This enabled asylum seekers to build upon their teaching skills. and to improve their employability in the UK.
 - 3.3 NIACE has collected new evidence about the skills and qualifications of asylum seekers, which they are using to raise awareness of potential employers. They involved asylum seekers in the work of local forums to help agencies to understand the difficulties asylum seekers had faced and how to overcome them NIACE supported some asylum seekers to set up refugee community organisations (RCOs) and helped them in developing working relations with statutory service providers.
4. Supporting asylum seekers to make presentations at national events:
 - 4.1 TES actively encouraged asylum seekers to participate in workshops and to deliver presentations at internal and external training and dissemination events.
 - 4.2 NIACE supported a number of asylum seekers to tell their stories through the media and founded an annual ASSET UK Volunteers Award Ceremony, which have been well attended by both asylum seekers and practitioners and reports about the Award Ceremony were very positive in the local media.
5. The issue of empowerment for asylum seekers was highlighted through ASSET UK's organisation of or contribution to a number of conferences, meetings and networks such as:
 - 5.1 NIACE ran a series of 10 regional conferences, which highlighted issues affecting asylum seekers; shared good practice in empowering asylum seekers to contribute to local economies and facilitated networking and discussions of these issues among key regional stakeholders.
 - 5.2 ASSET UK played an important role in the sub-group for Employment, Training and Adult Education of the National Refugee Integration Forum (NRIF) and contributed to the development of the Department for Work and Pensions' Working to Rebuild Lives – the national refugee employment strategy. It also contributed to discussions with Jobcentre Plus about its services to refugees.

- 5.3 ASSET UK contributed to the business objectives of the Employment, Training and Education Working Group (ETEWG); Refugee Dentists Steering Group, which has been supporting the needs of refugee dentists in the UK; Refugee Teacher Training Project (RTTP), which aims to support refugee teachers to teach secondary school shortage subjects; and Refugee Enterprise Partnership (REP) which aims to support refugees into enterprise in England.
 - 5.4 ASSET UK and its transnational partners, Want2Work DP and Kista Open Academy and Dublin Vocational Education Committee (VEC), organized a number of transnational conferences which provided key stakeholders with opportunities to discuss access to ESOL and equality and diversity issues affecting asylum seekers as a group and share good practice.
 - 5.5 ASSET UK and Want2Work organised an employer seminar to discuss ways and means of engaging employers to empower asylum seekers to contribute to their local economy.
 - 5.6 LLU+ of London South Bank University offered free advice, support and/or training for voluntary sector organisations delivering ESOL to asylum seekers (including embedded ESOL) and set up an ESOL network for the voluntary sector.
6. ASSET UK pursued the following specific objectives to promote empowerment of asylum seekers as a group by implementing a number of measures:
- 6.1 BSA, Sheffield College piloted innovative ESOL learning programmes that empowered many ESOL teachers to respond more effectively to the needs of asylum seekers.
 - 6.2 The projects of NIACE and NICEM, which audited the skills and qualifications of asylum seekers in the East Midlands and Northern Ireland respectively, have provided a tested and proved methodology for practitioners who wish to replicate this success and will benefit many asylum seekers in the future.
 - 6.3 ASSET UK created 100 opportunities for asylum seekers to undertake volunteering which meant changing attitudes of many employers and creating a conducive atmosphere for many more asylum seekers to follow in their footsteps.
 - 6.4 LLU+ developed the skills of 351 teachers (both paid and unpaid) to deliver the ESOL curriculum using a range of new materials and developed their awareness of the barriers which asylum seekers face. British Refugee Council ran workshops in its regional offices and trained 135 Refugee Council staff working with asylum seekers directly. Volunteer teachers have

provided basic ESOL training to 128 newly arrived asylum seekers staying in the emergency accommodation. These teachers went on to support the needs of many of their asylum-seeking students and will help more in the years to come.

- 6.5 RAGU developed a website, Information for Asylum Seekers (www.info-for-asylumseekers.org.uk), which is a useful reference resource for many asylum seekers and will benefit many more even beyond the lifetime of the project. 30 asylum seekers and 20 refugees were consulted in the development of the website. In addition, the training that RAGU provided to 200 advisers and lecturers has contributed significantly to building the capacity of these practitioners to support the needs of asylum seekers as a group.

4.3. Involving Asylum Seekers In Designing, Developing, Managing And Evaluating ASSET UK Activities

ASSET UK encouraged asylum seekers' participation in partnership activity design by:

- 1 Consulting and involving asylum seekers in the design, evaluation and review of activities throughout the partnership.
- 2 Ensuring a balanced involvement of different participants in the projects.
- 3 Taking into consideration the findings and recommendations of recent research reports in relation to asylum seekers and refugees' access to employment in order to support the needs of, and empower, individuals on its programmes.
- 4 Promoting asylum seekers' involvement in management and project design by encouraging their representation on relevant management boards and sub-structures within the partnership.
- 5 Involving asylum seekers in monitoring their own progression routes along the continuum from arrival towards integration over the 3-year period, evaluating different approaches and individual outcomes through the projects of NIACE and NICEM.

4.4. Raising Awareness and Influencing Policy

ASSET UK aimed to influence policy towards asylum seekers through dissemination and mainstreaming activities by:

- 1 Writing policy responses and reports such as *The Forbidden Workforce* and responses to the Home Office's consultations on the national refugee integration strategy and the European Union Directive on the Minimum Standards for the Reception of Asylum Seekers in the EU.
- 2 Organising and contributing to conferences on a wide range of issues affecting refugees and asylum seekers such as 'Towards an Employment Strategy for

Asylum Seekers' which was attended by representatives of the Home Office, DWP, Jobcentre Plus, LSC, and representatives from statutory and voluntary agencies working with asylum seekers.

- 3 Organising a number of regional conferences which highlighted issues affecting asylum seekers; sharing good practice in empowering asylum seekers to contribute to local economies and facilitating networking and discussions of these issues among key regional stakeholders.
- 4 Contributing to discussions and conferences of the National Thematic Networking Group and the European Thematic Group 5 (ETG5) on asylum seekers.
- 5 Supporting the National Learning and Skills Council in implementing its Widening Participation Strategy and encouraging local LSC staff to participate in conferences and seminars that would raise their awareness and understanding of the issues facing asylum seeker and refugee learners so that they can tailor their provision appropriately.

Raising Awareness for ASSET UK Partners

The Partnership's Central Co-ordination Team supported ASSET UK partners so that they were better placed to empower asylum seekers. The team employed a full time development worker with refugee status to develop the skills and expertise of staff working within the partnership s well as external stakeholders.

The Team delivered training such as "Asylum Support and Cultural Aspects of Working with Asylum Seekers and Refugees". This was attended by ASSET UK partners, staff, volunteers and outside agencies, which gave partners a better understanding of the issues and needs of asylum seekers and assisted them in planning their activities with asylum seekers.

The Central Co-ordination Team organised and facilitated a meeting for representatives of asylum seekers from the different pilot projects within the partnership to share their experience of the projects they been involved in and to give their contribution to the evaluation of the project.

5 Key Challenges To Empowering Asylum Seekers

The key challenges to empowering asylum seekers as individuals and groups were many. They included the following:

- 1 The Government's Dispersal policy had adverse effects on the dispersed asylum seekers. Using availability of accommodation as the main criterion for clustering asylum seekers, the policy sent asylum seekers to some of the most deprived areas without sufficient warning and services or existing networks to support their needs. In so doing, the policy disempowered asylum seekers.
- 2 The asylum determination process makes it difficult for asylum seekers to engage fully in activities that have the potential to support their needs and promote their social and vocational integration in the UK.
- 3 The Home Office's decision to withdraw the concession to work was a major blow to ASSET UK; it undermined the efforts of the partnership to promote the social and vocational integration of asylum seekers in the UK. Asylum seekers may be reluctant to volunteer, as they may not see any sense in doing so when they are not allowed to work. Their access to vocational training is also conditional on gaining permission to work.
- 4 Section 55³ rendered a significant proportion of asylum seekers destitute and unable to prioritise learning, volunteering or training.
- 5 The impact of the continuous negative press coverage of asylum issues is symptomatic of deep-seated attitudes towards asylum seekers that are perpetuated by widespread myths about asylum seekers in the UK. Asylum seekers have become the perfect scapegoat on which each society can blame their ills. The political climate and stance in the UK is not whole-heartedly supportive of and tends to undermine efforts to promote the social and vocational integration of asylum seekers. Recent indications suggest that the political climate does not favour asylum seekers and many of them are regarded with suspicion.
- 6 Employers' attitudes are partly affected by the confusing and restricting guidelines issued by the Home Office relating to asylum seekers volunteering. They present a seemingly impenetrable brick wall to many asylum seekers and those projects that are trying to empower them such as ASSET UK.

³ Section 55 of the National Immigration Act 2002. Section 55 states that asylum seekers who make an in-country asylum claim will be ineligible for any form of NASS support unless they can satisfy officials that they have made their claim for asylum 'as soon as reasonably practicable;'. Exemptions to this rule are:

- families with dependent children aged under 18
- those with special care needs
- those claiming in-country following a change in circumstances in their country of origin (provided they make their asylum claim at the earliest possible opportunity following that change of circumstances)
- those who can show they would otherwise suffer treatment contrary to Article 3 of ECHR

6 Key Success Factors

The experience of ASSET UK suggests that successful empowerment of asylum seekers depends on a number of key factors:

- 1 Planning for empowerment is crucial; the Appendix at the end of the guide, could be used for planning or evaluating a project for empowerment purposes.
- 2 Partnership working is imperative; the whole exercise of empowerment does not involve partnership working but it relies on good partnership working arrangements to succeed.
- 3 Innovative solutions provided by ASSET UK partners are means of helping asylum seekers to overcome the barriers that they face in the UK labour market.
- 4 Responsiveness to the needs of asylum seekers is key to empowerment. Practitioners, professionals and policy makers all need to develop an awareness of the issues facing asylum seekers to be able to respond appropriately to their needs. ASSET UK has recognised the value of training professionals and practitioners directly working with asylum seekers as well as the need to up skill project managers and staff working within the ASSET UK partnership by organising and facilitating appropriate training and support.
- 5 Reaching out to and involving key stakeholders, by organising training opportunities, conferences and seminars to try to tackle the barriers to social and vocational integration of asylum seekers can at the same time build their understanding of how working with asylums seekers and refugees can help them achieve their own strategic objectives in terms of widening participation and Equality and Diversity.
- 6 ASSET UK had access to and links with extensive networks and fora. This made it easier for the DP to network, disseminate and mainstream its work.

Key Factors For Ensuring Empowerment

- Planning
- Involving Asylum Seekers and consulting them throughout project
- Removing barriers to participation eg by providing transport and subsistence costs, translations and childcare facilities
- Appropriate training including language and IT training, coaching
- Providing accessible information on options for education and employment
- Working with asylum seekers to identify existing and transferable skills

7 Conclusion

Empowering asylum seekers is an enormous challenge. It is hoped that this guide will help projects to find ways to overcome the barriers that face asylum seekers in the UK which make it extremely difficult to promote the social and vocational integration for the client group.

In order to help asylum seekers prepare for re-integration in their countries of origin or integration in the UK once they are granted leave to remain, it is important that the current policies towards asylum seekers be reviewed and changed to ensure they are more supportive of their needs. In so doing, everybody benefits: asylum seekers, UK employers and local communities.

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9 Appendix

Empowering Asylum Seekers: Project Self-Evaluation Checklist

Background of the Project	
1. What were the aims and objectives of your project? Please list them below.	
Empowerment at Individual Level	
Please answer the following questions using the space provided below each question. Where appropriate, please circle the answer.	
2. How effective was the project in empowering asylum seekers as individuals? In other words, what was the impact of the project on individual asylum seekers? How many asylum seekers did the project help?	
2.1. Did the project facilitate access to quality essential life resources such as citizen information?	Yes
	No
Comments:	
2.2. Did your project facilitate access to job-related opportunities/resources such as information about education, training and the labour market, advice, counselling, training, job-search assistance, work placements, jobs, self-employment?	Yes
	No
Comments:	
2.3. Did your project promote personal development (e.g. self-confidence, self-identity, motivation, informed opinions, autonomy, autonomous choice, initiative-taking, problem-solving, ability to make independent choices, leadership, organisational skills, budgeting skills, and/or political awareness) for individual asylum seekers?	Yes
	No
Comments:	
2.4. Did your project help individual asylum seekers to acquire knowledge and skills such as basic skills, 'soft' social interaction skills, communication, digital and vocational skills?	Yes
	No

Comments:	
2.5. Did you project provide individual asylum seekers with opportunities to participate in society through working as a volunteer (active citizenship), becoming an elected member or representative, or joining an NGO or informal community group?	Yes
	No
Comments:	
2.6. Did your project provide opportunities for individual asylum seekers to participate in project design, development or management?	Yes
	No
Comments:	

Empowerment at Group Level

Please answer the following questions using the space provided below each question. Where appropriate, please circle the answer.

3. How effective was the project in empowering asylum seekers as a group? In other words, what was the impact of the project on asylum seekers as a disadvantaged group?

3.1. Did the project enable the group members' personal development e.g. acquisition of skills and personal capacities, awareness of strengths and weaknesses of self and others, handling of relationships with peers and others, capacity to work in a team?

Yes

No

Comments:

3.2. Did your project provide the group members with an opportunity to act for change by enabling them to discover similar problems, improve awareness/ understanding of common interests, provide support and make friends within the group, improve knowledge and understanding of social and employment systems, organisational skills, leadership skills, management skills, campaigning skills?

Yes

No

Comments:

3.3. Did the project create and/or consolidate new formal and informal groups (of asylum seekers)?

Yes

No

Comments:

3.4. Did the project improve the group's understanding of the exclusion dynamic in a local setting, enable them to define their own common principles and goals, or define internal power relationships?

Yes

No

Comments:

3.5. Did the project build the group's management capacity (i.e. their ability to set goals and priorities, develop action plans, develop and operate feedback systems, to contribute towards service provision and improve their other organisational and management skills)?	Yes
	No
Comments:	
3.6. Did the project give the group an opportunity for their representation in other settings (i.e. did the project give the group choice of strategies; build their capacity to oppose; enable a representative or a delegate, invested with the full authority of the group, to act or speak on behalf of the group in negotiations; help the group acquire campaigning skills or build the group's capacity to participate in various consultation and decision-making processes)?	Yes
	No
Comments:	

Empowerment at Project Level

Please answer the following questions using the space provided below each question. Where appropriate, please circle the answer.

4. How effective was the project in empowering asylum seekers through their involvement in the design, running and management of the project?	
4.1. Did the project involve the participants/asylum seekers in designing of the project?	Yes
	No
Comments:	
4.2. Did the project encourage the participants to contribute to effective implementation (including seeking and taking seriously the opinions of participants, involving participants in design, evaluation and redesign of activities and achieving a balanced involvement of different types of participants)?	Yes
	No
Comments:	
4.3. Did the project involve the participants/asylum seekers in management (by ensuring representation of participants on management board and the sub-structures; by involving participants in the search for additional resources, in dissemination and in feedback, monitoring and evaluation)?	Yes
	No
Comments:	
4.4. Did your project promote empowerment in personnel management (critical development of empowerment practices, on-going staff support, training and development geared to empowerment practice)?	Yes
	No
Comments:	

Empowerment at community and society level

Please answer the following questions using the space provided below each question. Where appropriate, please circle the answer.

5. How effective was the project in empowering asylum seekers through their involvement in the design, running and management of the project?

5.1. Did your project develop civil society by doing one or more of the following:

(a) Providing training and employment to support the functioning of target group organisations?	Yes
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	No
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(b) Providing knowledge and information on policy development?	Yes
--	-----

	No
--	----

(c) Creating alliances between target group organisations and building bridges with relevant public and private agencies, employers and trade unions?	
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	No
--	----

(d) Providing resources to develop and sustain target group organisations?	Yes
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	No
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Comments:

5.2. Did your project effect changes in decision-making processes to benefit asylum seekers by doing one or more of the following:

(a) Ensuring representation from target group organisations in specific meetings?	Yes
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	No
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(b) Ensuring decision-making processes take account of the rights and opinions of excluded groups?	Yes
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	No
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(c) Enabling co-decision by groups, as of right, in setting priorities and allocating resources?	Yes
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	No
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Comments:

5.3. Did your project effect changes in the functioning of the social and employment systems by:

(a) Promoting equal treatment of excluded people by public agencies and employers?	Yes
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	No
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(b) Promoting employment of asylum seekers in employment and social services and specific professions (e.g. as change agents)?	Yes
	No
(c) Developing social responsibility in companies to benefit asylum seekers?	Yes
	No
(d) Setting of policy priority for inclusion and employment of asylum seekers?	Yes
	No
Comments:	
6. Do you have any other comments about your project and how it empowered asylum seekers?	Yes
	No
Comments:	