

Arts

and Refugees:
History, Impact and Future



Belinda Kidd, Samina Zahir and Sabra Khan
Hybrid

Arts Council England, London
The Baring Foundation
The Paul Hamlyn Foundation

2008



Hybrid

Studio 1/105, Greenhouse, Gibb Street, Birmingham B9 4AA

Telephone: 0121 270 6389

Mobile: 07946 579 655

Email: info@hybridconsulting.org.uk

Arts Council England, London

2 Pear Tree Court, London EC1R 0DS

Telephone: 0845 300 6200

Email: enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk

www.artscouncil.org.uk

The Baring Foundation

60 London Wall, London EC2M 5TQ

Telephone: 020 7767 1348

Email: baring.foundation@uk.ing.com

www.baringfoundation.org.uk

The Paul Hamlyn Foundation

18 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AA

Telephone: 020 7227 3500

Email: information@phf.org.uk

www.phf.org.uk

ISBN 978-1-906172-02-2

Designed and printed by: Luminous Frog www.luminousfrog.co.uk

(4259)

Foreword

This report was commissioned by the Baring Foundation, Arts Council England, London and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation – three funding bodies with a shared interest in an area of arts practice we have called, for short, ‘the arts and refugees’.

All of us have been making grants to support arts activity by and with refugees and asylum seekers for several years. As the field has grown in size and diversity, we have become increasingly conscious of the value of recording and analysing what has been happening. To this end, in spring 2007, following an open bidding process, we contracted Belinda Kidd, Samina Zahir and Sabra Khan, of Hybrid, to undertake the work. Their brief was to trace the history of the arts and refugees in the UK over the past 20 years, to identify trends in practice and funding, to report on the outcomes of this activity and to make recommendations for its future support.

This is not, in any sense, the final word on the arts and refugees, nor does it claim to provide a comprehensive overview. Many of the organisations featured in the pages that follow have received funding from one or more of us and our shared interest in participatory arts practice is clearly reflected in the examples given.

We are grateful to the many individuals and organisations who have given their time, experience and ideas to this project and we hope they feel the report does them justice. We would like to thank the providers of the photographs, our fellow steering group members – Almir Koldzic (UK Refugee Week Team), Nathalie Teitler (Refugee Action) and Phyllida Shaw (former Arts Adviser to the Baring Foundation) – and above all, Hybrid, for fulfilling the brief with such energy and commitment.

We hope that arts practitioners, refugee community organisations, funders and policy makers will find this report an interesting read and that it adds to our shared knowledge and understanding of the arts and refugees.

David Cutler, Barbra Mazur and Karen Taylor

The Baring Foundation, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Arts Council England, London

Contents

Summary	4
1 Introduction	10
1.1 The brief	10
2 Methodology	11
2.1 Research structure and methods	11
2.2 Definitions	11
3 Context	14
3.1 Global context	14
3.2 The development of UK refugee policy 1997 to 2007	14
3.3 A statistical overview	15
4 The Arts and Refugees in the UK: past and present	17
4.1 Early developments	17
4.2 The past ten years	18
5 Arts and Refugees in the UK: some findings on impact	31
5.1 Participation	31
5.2 Artistic practice	42
5.3 Strategic interventions	47
6 Conclusions	51
6.1 Participation	51
6.2 Artists and artistic/cultural development	52
6.3 Strategic impact	53
Appendices	
1 Methodology	54
1.1 Desk research	54
1.2 Artists' interviews	54
1.3 Stakeholder interviews	54
1.4 Interviews with organisations involved in the delivery of arts work with refugees and asylum seekers	54
1.5 Focus groups	56

2	Bibliography	57
3	Consultees	58
3.1	Interviews	58
3.2	Focus group participants	60
3.3	Organisations to which questionnaires were sent	60
4	Organisations undertaking arts and refugees activity in the UK	61
4.1	Organisations working nationally or in more than one region	62
4.2	England	62
4.3	Northern Ireland	63
4.4	Scotland	63
4.5	Wales	63
5	Further information on UK refugee policy, and the influence of international events	64
6	Further information on developments in the past ten years	70
6.1	Overview of participatory arts activity with refugees and asylum seekers in the UK	70
6.2	The Arts Councils	72
6.3	Some examples of arts and refugees projects led by local authorities	76
6.4	Summaries of artists' interviews	77

Summary

1 Introduction

This report provides a national survey of the arts and refugees across the UK in the context of government policies and demographic changes, that have shaped the cultural climate at both local and national levels.

There is evidence from this research that cultural activities have proved to be an effective means of promoting community cohesion, creating better understanding and mutual acceptance between host communities and refugees and asylum seekers. The research has also demonstrated that participation in the arts can help to build confidence and to develop key skills amongst new arrivals. The report considers the impact that the new influences brought by refugee artists can have on UK cultural life and recommends that the particular support needs of refugee artists should be addressed.

The report argues that a UK-wide, strategic approach is needed in order to grasp the opportunity offered by cultural engagement to address current government policy on community cohesion. The role of culture in addressing issues of community cohesion has been recognised in Public Service Agreement 21, recently issued by HM Treasury. This emphasises the need 'to help people from all sections of society to understand and celebrate the contribution made by a range of cultures to Britain', and 'to help immigrants to integrate into our communities', and sets a cultural participation indicator to help measure achievement. This creates a policy context which should inform the establishment of a stronger national lead on the use of the arts in working with refugees and asylum seekers across the UK.

The research was commissioned in spring 2007 by Arts Council England, London, the Baring Foundation and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Hybrid was engaged to undertake the project. The research is structured across three key fields: participation in the arts, both in terms of creative activity in its own right and in terms of the instrumental use of the arts to address social objectives; artistic and cultural development, including the interests of artists who are refugees; and strategic interventions that support this area of work.

It is acknowledged that definitions in relation to this sector are far from straightforward. The terms refugee and asylum seeker are legal terms that refer to an administrative status, but at the same time carry significant emotional and political weight. It is recognised that being a refugee is a transitional process, not a lifelong identity, although the sense of loss and exile may last for many years. It is also recognised that considerable differences exist within refugee communities, and that these are not homogenous groups. Although this report is focused on refugees and asylum seekers and has not specifically set out to examine cultural issues in relation to economic migration, there are many common issues faced by all migrants where cultural engagement can play a valuable role.

2 History

Although artistic practice led by and engaging with refugees has been active in the UK from at least the 1970s onwards, the development of a clearly articulated strand of arts practice working

¹ http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/E/9/pbr_csr07_psa21.pdf

with refugees and asylum seekers is a relatively recent phenomenon, emerging during the 1990s and gathering critical momentum from 2000 onwards.

The key factors in the growth of this sector in recent years can be identified as the impact of the dispersal policy, established in 2000, by which asylum seekers were housed across the UK; strategic initiatives and funding programmes initiated by a range of agencies from the late 1990s onwards; and a desire to provide a positive response to negative media coverage of refugee and asylum issues.

The research identified some 200 organisations that are actively engaged with arts and refugees programmes in the UK, and there are certainly many others. Broadly speaking, the pattern of activity follows that of the dispersal programme, although it is also driven in some regions by the particular interests and capacity of key agencies and cultural organisations.

2.1 Participation

The majority of the organisations identified through this research focus on participation in the arts, using cultural engagement to foster interaction, to promote community cohesion, and to develop the skills and capacity of both individual refugees and refugee community organisations.

2.2 Artistic practice

A relatively small number of organisations focus on the needs and professional development of individual refugee artists. In some areas, networking and development projects that focus on individual artists are emerging, but these are still at an early stage of development.

2.3 Strategic interventions

There has been a series of strategic interventions from the late 1990s onwards, ranging from the UK-wide activity of Refugee Week to the strategic funding and development programmes of regional Arts Council offices, the Baring Foundation and Paul Hamlyn Foundation and the establishment of a small number of arts and refugee development posts. There have been relatively few conferences, training and research programmes, with only one previous UK-wide research project on the arts and refugees, although some universities are now developing research programmes in this area.

3 Impact

3.1 Participation

The research found that participation in the arts has been used to address a broad range of social objectives. Many organisations considered that utilising arts based processes provided a means of communication that overcame the language barriers present when working with refugees and asylum seekers, whilst at the same time helping to build participants' communication and language skills.

Social and community cohesion

The research found that arts projects have had a beneficial impact on building positive relationships between the host community and refugees and asylum seekers. This was observed both in economically deprived urban areas, such as North Glasgow and in less deprived areas that have received fewer asylum seekers, such as Warwickshire.

Many of the participatory programmes reviewed in this research focus on assisting refugees and asylum seekers to develop the skills and understandings they need to cope with their new life in the UK, mostly focusing on young people. The practitioners involved emphasised that the value of the work lies not only in the skills and confidence that young people gain, but also in giving them respite from the difficulties in their lives and the chance to develop social networks.

Engagement in the arts has been clearly demonstrated to contribute to the mental and physical health of participants in other sectors, for example prisons. Many refugees suffer from significant levels of mental and physical health problems due to the experiences they have gone through. Some organisations have found the arts valuable in addressing these issues, using a range of general and specifically therapeutic approaches.

Capacity building

Many of the organisations working in this field prioritise capacity building and skills development within refugee community organisations and with individuals. In some cases this is done through formal training, such as structured volunteer programmes. In other cases there has been 'on the job' training. The key impact achieved through these approaches has been to stimulate individuals' confidence and their interest and engagement in personal development, ultimately leading towards fuller roles within society.

Challenging negative representations

Negative and sometimes inaccurate reporting on refugee and asylum issues has hampered possibilities for the development of positive relationships between individuals and communities. Several organisations, both within the charitable/voluntary sectors and within the arts, have sought to address this issue by creating work that helps to increase understanding of the real issues involved. Evaluations that are available on some of these projects have demonstrated the positive impact achieved in changing attitudes.

3.2 Artistic and cultural impact

In common with other refugee professionals, artists have to rebuild their careers and establish new networks and contacts. Given the high levels of demand for the specific training and networking initiatives that have been developed, it is evident that artists find these valuable.

Refugee Week is a national event that showcases the talent and expertise that refugees bring to the UK. In recent years, some of the commissions for Refugee Week have provided a space for artists to adopt a more experimental approach, subverting and at times playing with questions of refugee identity. However, for many refugee groups, arts activities are important because they help to maintain and celebrate their cultural heritage.

3.3 Strategic interventions

Due in part to the lack of a nationally coordinated strategic approach, patterns of support vary across the UK. In some areas, arts and refugee development posts have been established, for

example in Scotland where the Scottish Refugee Council arts development post is partly funded by the Scottish Arts Council, and in the South East where Arts Council England, South East and Refugee Action have developed a partnership post. Such an approach has been effective in developing a closer working partnership between the cultural sector, refugee agencies and the voluntary sector, including major charities. In other areas, local authorities, cultural and refugee community organisations have sought to develop regionalised strategic overviews, such as in the work of Exodus in the North West or the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Arts Agency (RASAA) in the West Midlands. In other areas, the Arts Council regional office or its predecessor Regional Arts Board has led a strategic approach, as in London.

The dedicated arts and refugee funding programmes of the Baring Foundation, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and the former London Arts Board have had a significant impact in supporting the development of a critical mass of work in this area, particularly where the funders have added to the strategic impact, for example by running evaluation programmes or establishing artist exchange days.

A high level of specialist expertise in working in this complex area has developed amongst several organisations across the UK, although in some cases it appears that projects are being initiated with insufficient groundwork or prior research. There have been some initiatives that provide a space for people to share skills and gain mutual support, but people working in this area all consider that there is a need for more such opportunities, supported on a longer-term basis. There is also a need to develop stronger evaluation skills and capacity within the sector. Practitioners do gather information on the impact of their work but often do not have the capacity to draw this together into a full evaluation and they rarely have the funds to employ external evaluators.

The lack of consistent evaluation across the sector curtails the dissemination of learning and good practice. It has also limited levels of impact assessment, weakening the possibilities for strategic advocacy for the work. Hence, whilst there has been some recognition of the value of cultural activities in working with refugees and asylum seekers, there is no strategic engagement with the refugee sector on a national level.

4 Future

The recommendations arising from this research aim to provide a framework that will help secure the role cultural interventions can play in addressing social agendas and in recognising and sustaining the creative contribution made by refugees.

4.1 Participation

4.1.1 Key agencies in the arts and refugees sector should support programmes of **skills development for practitioners undertaking participatory arts work with refugees and asylum seekers**. This will require a partnership approach at national level and should be linked to the work of Skillset and Creative & Cultural Skills, the sector skills council.

4.1.2 A suitable organisation should be commissioned to **develop internet-based support** that includes current databases of high quality, participation-led projects, relevant contacts (artists and project managers), toolkits and other forms of support for those newly engaged in this field and for refugee sector organisations looking for potential partnerships and ways of utilising the arts.

4.1.3 The Arts Councils should **actively promote to partners in the refugee sector, the value of arts education programmes** in promoting greater understanding of refugee issues and supporting the integration of refugee and asylum-seeking children in schools.

4.1.4 The DCMS, the Scottish Executive, the Welsh Assembly Government and the Northern Ireland Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure should encourage their Non Departmental Public Bodies to **ensure that more arts and cultural organisations (including the larger, national institutions) include consideration of refugees and asylum seekers in their diversity or race equality action plans** (a move already proposed by Arts Council England).

4.2 Artists and artistic/cultural development

4.2.1 The Arts Councils should **work with partners to support specialist agencies** that provide peer support for artists who are refugees, whilst encouraging these agencies to maintain their strategic focus by signposting their members towards regional and national professional support agencies such as the Independent Theatre Council, [a-n] and others.

4.2.2 Suitable agencies should be encouraged to **establish a mentoring programme** between professional refugee artists and host artists, based on art form and/or field of interest and that engages key organisations/agencies in supporting the relationship.

4.2.3 Cultural organisations should be encouraged to **recognise and act on the artistic potential of including the voices of artists from the increasing diversity of newly arrived communities** in the UK, within their mainstream programmes. They should also be encouraged to profile work that recognises refugees as complex, multi-dimensional individuals and groupings and does not seek to absorb individuals under the collective banner of 'refugee'.

4.2.4 In addressing these recommendations, all partners should **recognise the need to broaden their networks** to achieve an effective engagement with the many refugee arts and cultural groups that operate on an informal basis and are not necessarily reached through existing refugee agency structures or arts networks.

4.3 Strategic interventions

4.3.1 The Arts Councils should adopt **a national strategic lead** on arts and refugees, working with DCMS, the Scottish Executive, the Welsh Assembly Government and the Northern Ireland Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure to establish cross-departmental strategic relationships to promote the value of culture in addressing key government agendas on community cohesion and integration. In adopting this strategic approach, all involved should also recognise and promote the inherent value of the intellectual and creative capital contributed by artists who seek refuge in the UK.

4.3.2 A key part of a new national strategy should be to **identify how longer-term funding opportunities can be accessed** to sustain the development of arts and refugees programmes.

4.3.3 The commissioners of this report should consider **following up their investment in this area of work by establishing a joint evaluation programme** with a suitable agency or academic institution. This could include a strategically chosen range of in-depth evaluation studies, including a training element that transfers knowledge from the evaluation agency or institution to the cultural organisations involved, to support their future evaluation practice.

As some universities are developing particular interests in research on the social impact of the arts, and on the arts and refugees, the partners involved in establishing this evaluation programme should be alert to opportunities for linkage with such institutions.

4.3.4 The Arts Councils should work with the Refugee Council and Refugee Action to **support a central networking function to develop mutual support and good practice** in the arts and refugees sector. This should not supplant regional networks but act as an overall network of networks. Activities might include a biennial conference, regular national networking meetings between key people in the field, such as UK Arts Council officers with responsibility for refugee issues, Refugee Council arts development officers and refugee artist support agencies.

4.3.5 In regions where there are significant numbers of refugees and asylum seekers, the Arts Councils, refugee sector agencies and local authorities should adopt **regional strategies to foster a coherent approach to arts and refugees development**. The solutions for each region may be different, but in each case they should adopt a long-term approach. For example, if it is decided to establish a dedicated post to support the strategic development of arts and refugees work, this should be funded over a period of at least three years.

1 Introduction

This research report was commissioned by Arts Council England, London, the Baring Foundation and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. They considered that the growing interest in the field that has come to be known as ‘the arts and refugees’, justified a report on the history, impact and future of the role of funded arts activity in the lives of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK.

Arts Council England (ACE) is the national development agency for the arts in England, with responsibility for distributing funds on behalf of the Government and the National Lottery. Arts Council England, London is one of nine regional offices of the Arts Council. During the period of this research (and until April 2008), its priorities were taking part in the arts; children and young people; the creative economy; vibrant communities; internationalism; and celebrating diversity. Although ACE has no specific funding streams to support arts projects by and for refugee communities or artists, it has funded a significant amount of activity through Grants for the Arts and previous project-oriented programmes.

The Baring Foundation is an independent, grant-making trust, founded in 1969. Its aim is to support the voluntary sector in tackling discrimination and disadvantage. Since 2004, the Foundation’s Arts Programme has supported the core costs of arts organisations working with refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. By summer 2008, it expects to have spent £2.5 million in this way.

The Paul Hamlyn Foundation is an independent, grant-making trust committed to long-term change and development. It supports charitable activity in the arts, social justice, education and learning across the UK. Through its Fund for Refugee and Asylum Seeker Young People, set up in 2003, it has supported voluntary organisations (including arts organisations) that are working to help integrate young refugees and asylum seekers into British society. Over the past four years, the Fund has spent £3.3 million in this way, with arts projects accounting for about one third of the total spend (just over £1 million). While the Fund closed in 2007, the Foundation has commissioned an independent evaluation of its impact and is committed to disseminating the learning.

This research was undertaken by Hybrid between April and October 2007 and the report was completed in December. Hybrid effects change through the production, development and research of creative, socially engaged work. The company is committed to artistic investment and challenging thinking that encourages wider engagement and diverse cultural representation. As a consulting *and* producing company, Hybrid focuses on breaking down boundaries and crossing borders artistically and socially. Hybrid believes in the development of communities and the potential of the individual to define strategy and develop policy.

1.1 The brief

The brief had three dimensions:

historic and current practice – describing developments in the arts and refugees field since the mid 1980s; considering what has prompted the growth of interest and activity over the past 20 years; identifying the key players; and reporting on the objectives of participating organisations and the constraints encountered. It was anticipated that the description of practice would include a limited amount of quantitative information, in relation to levels of activity and funding.

impact – summarising others’ research findings in relation to the impact of this work.

future – making recommendations to funders, government departments, arts organisations and the wider voluntary sector, including refugee community organisations and the research community, in support of future developments in this field.

2 Methodology

2.1 Research structure and methods

While there is a growing body of research on refugee issues, the study of arts-related work involving refugees and asylum seekers in the UK remains minimal². The research was structured around three themes: artists, participation and strategic intervention. Following an initial literature review, the research was divided into two main phases. The first involved a survey of key strategic agencies and their support for arts and refugees activity. The second involved gathering information on the impact achieved by organisations delivering arts and refugees projects and programmes.

Secondary data was used for mapping and historical analysis, whilst both secondary and primary data were used to draw conclusions about the impact of work. Questionnaires were distributed in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales to the arts, public and voluntary sectors. Interviews were held with a cross section of stakeholders, including artists, arts organisations, advisory bodies, charities, government departments (local and national), refugee community organisations and other voluntary sector organisations. Focus groups were used to contextualise and consider the recommendations. In total, over 150 people were engaged directly in the research (including one-to-one interviewees who were contacted by phone or in person), people responding to questionnaires, and focus group attendees. For a fuller description of the research methodology, please see Appendix 1. For a bibliography, see Appendix 2. For a list of consultees, see Appendix 3.

2.2 Definitions

Definitions are necessary in a report of this nature but are rarely straightforward, given the considerable political and emotional weight carried by refugee and asylum issues. Definitions that should clarify more often merely contain. It is therefore important to note that the terms 'refugee' and 'asylum seeker' are legal terms that refer specifically and solely to an administrative status, although it is recognised that these terms are symbolically laden, and often with considerable negativity. Other more neutral terms include exiled, dispersed and displaced.

2.2.1 Refugees and asylum seekers

A UN Convention³ first defined the term **refugee**, in 1951 and it is a definition still used today. This categorises a refugee as a person who:

'owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.'

(2) One national study has been produced, Gould, H. (2005) *A Sense of Belonging: Arts and Culture in the Integration of Refugees and Asylum Seekers*, Creative Exchange.

(3) Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, adopted on 28 July 1951 by the United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons, convened under General Assembly resolution 429 (V) of 14 December 1950, entry into force 22 April 1954, in accordance with article 43. Since its inception, 145 states – including the UK, which became a signatory in 1954 - have acceded to one or both of the convention's rulings.

Individuals seeking asylum/refuge were required to meet these criteria. Deprivation (caused by natural disasters or environmental change) rather than persecution, did not entitle a person to asylum.

The term **asylum seeker** refers to someone who has applied to stay in another country as a refugee, but is awaiting a decision on his or her application. In the UK, there are three possible outcomes to an application: exceptional leave to remain, discretionary leave to remain and humanitarian protection.

People are classed as **illegal immigrants** if they enter a country without the legal requirement for entry, and this may apply to refugees. The reasons can be complex, for example being refused paperwork, such as a passport, on the suspicion that they will flee the country. The term illegal immigrant can therefore be problematic.

The challenges of terminology have consistently been present within the arts and refugees sectors. It is therefore unsurprising that these were raised in the research. For example:

“Young people don’t want to be called refugees or asylum seekers. They want to move away from that.”

“It’s important how you categorise yourself – in this moment of your life...but you never stop moving. Life is a journey.”

“I am a refugee. I’m proud of what I’ve come through.”

“When do you ever stop being a refugee?”

This report does not attempt to offer a definitive term but, for the sake of continuity, uses the terms refugee and/or asylum seeker. To distinguish between refugees and non-refugees, it uses the term indigenous or host communities, whilst acknowledging that these terms also have considerable complexity.

The research recognises that there are issues pertaining to refugees and asylum seekers that are also relevant to new economic migrants⁴. The focus of government departments has shifted in recent years, from refugees and asylum seekers to economic migrants, a feature that is reflected in phrases such as ‘strategic migration’. Whilst economic migration has not been a specific focus of this research, the report does pick up on experiences and themes shared by economic migrants and by refugees and/or asylum seekers.

2.2.2 Artists

The scope of our research under the theme of artists has been confined to two areas: artists’ professional development and artistic/creative shifts. The first is concerned with the needs of refugee artists adapting to the UK arts sector and cultural climate. The second is harder to define, since culture is a process and transformational change is constantly taking place.

(4) New economic migrants are defined in this report as migrants from the eight central and eastern European countries that joined the EU in 2004 and other economic migrants who have arrived in the UK within the last few years. Whilst the term economic refugee has on occasion been used it is incorrect, since people who leave their country for economic reasons are categorised as migrants rather than refugees.

We include the experiences of refugee artists but query the helpfulness of the term ‘refugee art’⁵. We have added the term ‘creativity’ because the term ‘art’ on its own is often misinterpreted to mean the visual arts only.

2.2.3 Participation

Our second theme, participation, encompasses individual engagement in arts practice and also the use of the arts/creativity to meet the needs of issue-based community work. The first of these could include individuals taking part in drama workshops within a large-scale organisation, or in visual arts workshops delivered within a community setting, or working with a dance group that focuses on traditional dance from another country. In each case, the primary objective is to offer opportunities for participation that engage individuals in a creative or learning environment. The outcomes will vary but may include, alongside skills development, increased self-esteem, self-confidence and language skills, as well as an increased awareness of cultural and artistic life in the UK.

Participatory arts, or participatory democracy as termed by some stakeholders, utilises arts and creativity to address non arts-led agendas, for example regeneration, health or education. Here, art and creativity are used as a medium for dialogue, expression and communication. This model is particularly prevalent among companies and artists with roots in community arts or theatre in education.

2.2.4 Strategic intervention

Our third theme, strategic intervention, encompasses organisational advocacy and collaborations between the cultural sector and refugee development and community organisations, and also interventions by central and local government and by strategic agencies in the public, refugee, charitable and cultural sectors.

The research considers how partnerships are engendering skill sharing and capacity building from a strategic perspective. This may involve effecting change at policy level, contributing towards strategy, the development of conferences and spaces for networking and exchange, training and developmental initiatives, in addition to targeted funding programmes.

(5) For a more detailed analysis of this term and the visual arts field, see Alex Rotas’ PhD thesis (2006) and essay ‘Is Refugee Art Possible?’ (2004) in *Third Text* (Vol.18 Issue 1)

3 Context

3.1 Global context

According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) there were 20 million ‘people of concern’ in the world, in 2002. Approximately one in every 300 people on earth is a refugee⁶. The world’s poorest countries care for the majority of refugees: nearly two thirds of all refugees are in Africa and the Middle East.

The UK provides support through overseas aid and is one of the top five donating countries⁷. As a percentage of Gross National Product (GNP), donations in the UK amounted to 0.47% in 2007/2008. A target of 0.7% of GNP was set by the UN in 1970 and this has been reached by Norway (0.83%), Sweden (0.7%), Luxembourg (0.8%), the Netherlands (0.81%) and Denmark (0.84%)⁸. At the current rate of increase, the UK will reach it by 2013.

3.2 The development of UK refugee policy 1997 to 2007

There have been a number of changes in UK policy on refugees and asylum seekers over the past 20 years. These are summarised in Appendix 5. A timeline of significant international events that have affected UK policy and the pattern of new arrivals in the UK is attached at Appendix 6.

Some key issues in relation to policy development since 2000 have included:

- the dispersal policy, which began in 2000 and as a result of which asylum seekers were dispersed to areas of low housing demand, in order to lessen the burden on local authorities in the South East and London, where most asylum seekers arrive. The difficulties experienced by new arrivals in these areas, who often faced hostility and harassment, led to a strong response by the voluntary sector, and cultural organisations began to prioritise work with asylum seekers and refugees.
- the refusal, in 2003, of support and accommodation for child-free asylum seekers who failed to apply for asylum as soon as they arrived. This led to a greater focus on the part of the support agencies working with refugees and asylum seekers on meeting basic needs.
- the increasing use of detention centres and a related slowing down of the dispersal process, which changed the pattern of refugee settlement.
- a greater emphasis on ‘managed migration’⁹, which couches refugee issues within a broader approach to managing migration as a whole.
- the New Asylum Model, which was introduced in 2005, aimed at speeding up the whole process of dealing with asylum claims.
- the restructuring of the Home Office and the creation of the Borders and Immigration Agency included a review of how refugee services were delivered. As part of this review, the funding arrangements for refugee services were changed. The new Strategic Upgrade of Refugee Integration Services (SUNRISE) programme aims to provide a more structured and consistent approach to service delivery across the UK.

(6) Taken from *Refugees by Numbers*, 2002 Edition, UNHCR, July 2002

(7) Figures produced by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Assistance Committee (DAC)

(8) For more information see http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/policy/debt_aid/downloads/eu_heroes_villains.pdf

(9) In the UK strategy for asylum and immigration, *Controlling our borders: Making migration work for Britain* (Home Office, 2005) the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, was quoted as saying, ‘managed migration is not just good for this country. It is essential for our continued prosperity.’

3.3 A statistical overview

The number of individuals seeking asylum in the UK is affected by global events. Between 2001 and 2005, for example, the number of asylum seekers from Afghanistan increased by 85%, with a further increase of 8% in 2006, coinciding with the 'war on terror'. Table 1, below, shows the reduction in the number of dispersed asylum seekers awaiting the result of an asylum claim in the three calendar years, 2004 – 2006. The UNHCR confirms that the number of new asylum requests in the UK has been falling, year on year, since 2002. In 2006, the UK was the third largest asylum seeker-receiving country 'in the industrialised world'¹⁰ with just over 9% of all requests lodged. This was a reduction on 2002 levels, when the UK received more than 16% of requests. (For more information on these statistics, see the UNHCR website¹⁰ and Appendix 5.)

Table 1: Total number of dispersed asylum seekers still awaiting results of asylum claim (including dependants) 2004-2006

Nation	2004	2005	2006
England	53,050	41,455	39,795
Wales	2,455	2,350	2,600
Scotland	5,995	5,500	5,205
Northern Ireland	130	125	175
Total	61,630	49,430	47,775

Source: ICAR

Note: These figures do not include individuals who were successful in claiming asylum, those who had their claim rejected, or people who had not yet applied.

Table 2, overleaf, suggests that levels of arts and creative activity involving refugees and asylum seekers may reflect dispersal patterns to some extent. It shows the total number of asylum applications made in the final quarter of 2006 and the number of organisations, identified by this research, undertaking arts and refugee activity in each region of England and nation of the UK. For a list of organisations identified, see Appendix 4.

(10) <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/STATISTICS/460150272.pdf>

Table 2: Asylum applicants supported by the National Asylum Support Service, October – December 2006

Region	Total number of asylum applicants by region, including dependants ⁽¹⁾	Number of organisations undertaking arts and refugees projects by region ⁽²⁾
North East	3410	17
North West	7100	24
East Midlands	2625	12
West Midlands	5920	18
East of England	835	9
London	9480	48
Yorkshire & Humber	8055	11
South East	1145	18
South West	1225	5
Not region-specific	0	11
Total England	39,795	173
Nation		
England	39,795	173
Wales	2600	7
Scotland	5029	17
Northern Ireland	175	2
Total UK	47,599	199

(1) Figures rounded to the nearest 5

(2) Identified by Hybrid for this research project

4 Arts and refugees in the UK: past and present

The emergence of a clearly defined strand of arts practice involving working with refugees and asylum seekers began in the 1990s and gathered critical momentum from 2000 onwards. The key factors in the growth of the sector in recent years appear to be:

- strategic initiatives and funding programmes initiated by a range of agencies from the late 1990s onwards;
- the impact of the Government's dispersal policy adopted in 2000, as a result of which asylum seekers were housed across the UK;
- a desire to provide a positive response to negative media coverage of refugee and asylum issues.

4.1 Early developments

The UK has a long history of migration and movement, from Jewish and Polish refugees, before and after World War Two, to repressive regimes in Latin America and the expulsion of Asians from Uganda in the 1970s. As communities secure their basic needs and settle, they recognise the need for a cultural life. This area is considered in detail by Naseem Khan in her report, *The Arts Britain Ignores*,¹¹ which was the first attempt to chart the arts activities of Britain's ethnic minorities. Examples of arts-oriented centres from this period include the Ukrainian Centre in Manchester and Teatro Technis in London, a facility established for the Cypriot community, which also became an important centre for exiled Latin American artists.

From the mid 1980s, there was a shift in cultural policy whereby the nascent interest in 'ethnic minority arts' (which encompassed the arts of all non-indigenous communities in the UK) moved on to focus more exclusively on the arts of African, Asian and Caribbean communities. This was partly due to the higher political profile of African, Asian and Caribbean communities during the 1980s and 90s, and the development of Black theatre and dance companies, supported by the arts funding system and local authorities. Key players included Black Theatre Co-op, Tara Arts, Union Dance, Kokuma, Akademi and Sampad, and organisations such as the Black Audio Film Collective and Autograph in the visual and media arts.

This shift was mirrored in the establishment of the Minorities' Arts Advisory Service, which was set up as part of the response to Khan's report. At first, MAAS prioritised the arts of all ethnic minorities, but the focus changed in the mid 1980s to a more exclusive concern with Asian, African and Caribbean artists. The arts funding system¹² also developed a stronger focus on African, Asian and Caribbean arts. This developed during the 1990s. Its most recent manifestation, in England, has been Arts Council England's decibel programme¹³, which focused on Asian, African and Caribbean artists and arts practice but included no specific reference to more recent refugees or asylum seekers.

(11) Khan N. (1977) *The Arts Britain Ignores*, Arts Council of Great Britain, Commission for Racial Equality and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

(12) By the arts funding system, we mean Arts Council England and its various predecessor bodies, including the Arts Council of Great Britain and the Regional Arts Boards and Regional Arts Associations through which ACGB directed part of its national remit prior to the unification of the system in 2002/3.

(13) The decibel initiative was launched, by Arts Council England, in 2003 and is funded until 2008

In many ways, this need to focus is understandable, given the breadth of issues involved. However it means that there has been no clear strategic lead on the needs of refugees and asylum seekers within the arts funding system. Strategic development has, instead, been driven on a region by region basis, either in response to changes in the local population, and/or where the initiative has been taken by an individual, an arts organisation or a strategic partner such as one of the Refugee Council's regional offices.

4.1.1 Responses from the cultural and charitable sectors

In the period up to the late 1980s, there were instances where artists and arts organisations, particularly those in the community arts sector, worked with refugees as part of an overall objective to support social inclusion and cultural diversity. In the 1970s, Dartington College of Arts organised arts activities with new Ugandan Asian arrivals, who were being accommodated in a centre on Dartmoor. Organisations such as Green Candle Dance Company, Grand Union Orchestra and Cultural Co-operation all worked with refugee communities and artists, but there was no strategic context at the time to give a higher profile to their work.

Major charities and non-governmental organisations, including Save the Children, Amnesty International, the Red Cross and Oxfam used the arts with refugees and asylum seekers in the UK as part of their ongoing development work. For example, Save the Children commissioned Small World Theatre Company to work in schools to help foster greater understanding of the situation of refugees, and of Vietnamese children in particular.

With the outbreak of war in the Balkans in the 1980s, the plight of refugees was brought sharply into focus in Western Europe. Some British arts organisations responded by taking work to the Balkans and organising activities for Balkan refugees in the UK. B Arts (formerly Beavers Arts), for example, worked in Mostar, in Bosnia and then brought the work 'back home', creating links between their work in Bosnia and their work in North Staffordshire.

4.2 The past ten years

The past ten years have seen an increase in the amount of arts activity with and by refugees and asylum seekers, and in opportunities for professional development for artists who have recently arrived in the UK. This section of the report looks at the scale and characteristics of the sector, at sources of funding and at some of the strategic interventions that have taken place in relation to participatory work; artists and artistic and cultural development; and strategic interventions by bodies such as the UK Arts Councils, local authorities and refugee agencies.

4.2.1 The scale of the arts and refugees sector

The pattern of development in each region has varied considerably, influenced partly by different levels of refugee and asylum seeker dispersal and settlement and partly by the capacity of the cultural sector to respond. This research has identified almost 200 arts and other cultural organisations of different kinds that are actively engaged in this field. (See Appendix 4.) They include organisations that use the arts to work with refugees and asylum seekers as well as refugee-led groups. The list was derived from research into grants awarded by various funding bodies, through internet searches and through discussion with local authority arts development officers and organisations working in the sector. It is inevitable that this will be an understatement of the full volume and range of work being undertaken, particularly in regard to refugee-led cultural activity.

The distribution of organisations across the UK is shown in Table 2 (p.16). It has not been possible to quantify the total investment in the sector, since few funding bodies code their grants in such a way that this information can be extracted. While it is clear that a wide range of funding sources have been drawn on to support arts and refugees programmes, many cultural organisations have said that it is not easy to convince non-arts funders of the ability of arts and other cultural activities to achieve social objectives.

Over the three years from 2003 – 2006, Arts Council England invested just over £1 million, from its Grants for the Arts programme, in projects that had a major focus on refugees¹⁴. The Baring Foundation will have invested £2.5 million by 2008, when its five-year arts and refugees funding programme concludes. The Paul Hamlyn Foundation invested just over £1 million on arts projects from its Fund for Refugee and Asylum Seeker Young People¹⁵ in the period 2003-2007. Other charitable trusts, including the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund, which invested over £10.5 million from 2001-2003, have also supported arts and refugees projects.

The Heritage Lottery Fund has invested £2.35 million in this field since 1994 and the Big Lottery Fund and its predecessor bodies (the New Opportunities Fund, the Community Fund and the National Lottery Charities Board) were significant supporters of refugee projects, some of which have involved the arts.

The Home Office has supported arts activities through its Purposeful Activities Fund for Asylum Seekers and the Challenge Fund. The DCMS and Department for Education and Skills (now the Department for Children, Schools and Families) used their joint Strategic Commissioning Fund to support Engaging Refugees and Asylum Seekers, a programme delivered by National Museums Liverpool, Leicester City Museums Service, Salford Museum and Art Gallery and Tyne and Wear Museums. Other projects have been supported by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. More recently, the Government's Cultural Leadership Programme has funded Creative Exchange to facilitate a Peer Leadership and Learning Network on Culture, Arts and Refugees. This involved 17 members of staff from ten arts organisations in England, Wales and Scotland meeting to share and develop their knowledge and expertise.

Although many organisations are skilled at raising funds for this work, they find it difficult to make long-term plans when most of the funding is for time-limited projects. The availability of three-year grants from the Paul Hamlyn and Baring Foundations has therefore been significant in supporting the growth of the sector. The ending of these programmes (in 2007 and 2008 respectively) together with changes at the Home Office, a reduction in European structural funds and changes in the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme have added to the climate of uncertainty about future funding for arts and refugees activity.

4.2.2 Participation

Most of the activity identified by this research has been about participating in the arts to achieve other objectives, such as integration, community cohesion and learning English. While the work is concentrated in those urban centres with relatively high levels of dispersal, there is evidence of arts and refugees projects and programmes in every nation and region of the UK, including Northern Ireland and South West England, which have relatively low dispersal levels.

(14) Arts Council England has a system of coding grants that allows a percentage rating to be allocated to the levels of engagement with a particular priority group. The research found that grants coded at 75% and over did have a significant level of engagement but below that level the engagement of refugees in the project was generally not a dominant focus for the project.

(15) The total expenditure under this Paul Hamlyn Foundation programme was £3.5 million. It is notable that even where projects were not specifically arts focused, several have undertaken cultural activities as part of their overall programme of work.



National Museums Liverpool and artist Charlotte Brown worked with Get Connected, a group of young refugees, to explore their heritage and stories.

London has the highest level of dispersal and the highest concentration of cultural organisations, so it is unsurprising that a large proportion of the organisations identified are located in the city. The growth of the sector in London has also been stimulated by investment by Arts Council England, London and its predecessor, London Arts Board (see 4.2.3 below). In common with the rest of the UK, there is an emphasis on work with young people in London and a number of organisations have developed particular expertise in this area.

The strength of arts and refugees activity in the North West can be attributed to the work of a number of organisations including Community Arts North West, through its strategic programme *Exodus*, National Museums Liverpool and Salford Museum and Art Gallery, and the University of Manchester's *In Place of War* project¹⁶. Glasgow is another major centre of activity. A brief overview of participatory activity in the four nations of the UK and each of the English regions is given in Appendix 7.1.

4.2.3 Artists and artistic/cultural development

The cultural life of the UK has been enriched by individuals who first came to the country as refugees, bringing new voices and a wider range of cultural influences. Some refugee artists have commented that the intensity of the experience of exile has had a major impact on their creative sensibility.

(16) See www.inplaceofwar.net for more information

The artists interviewed for this research all consider themselves firstly as artists and secondly, if at all, as refugees. They have all experienced, and in many cases continue to experience, significant difficulties in maintaining and developing their creative practice since arriving in the UK. Some have noted that, in their home country, the role of the artist is more respected than it is in the UK. Others have felt that there is an unnatural division between the work of an artist and everyday life. For example, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Network has remarked that arts and creativity are perceived differently in their country, where they are part of expressing one's cultural life, rather than as something distinct from one's daily lived experience. (A selection of summaries of interviews with artists can be found at Appendix 7.4.)

While many artists are reluctant to accept the refugee label, they have appreciated the specific help and advice received from the small number of organisations with a particular interest in supporting refugee artists. Beyond information and advice, the research has identified opportunities for professional development and employment, notably in delivering participatory activity involving other refugees. For example, in the East Midlands, Long Journey Home supports exiled artists' development, while in London, the Oval House Theatre, the Lyric Hammersmith and Greenwich & Lewisham Young People's Theatre have run *Flight Paths*, a training programme that equips artists with the knowledge and skills they need to work as artists in the English education system.

Outside Refugee Week, there are few events with a specific focus on professional refugee artists (as distinct from showcasing the results of participatory work). In many ways, this is appropriate since the critical issue for refugee artists is to gain entry to the mainstream rather than to be boxed in by the refugee label. However, given the many difficulties facing refugee artists, it is sometimes helpful to have a specific focus that gives profile and exposure either to the artists themselves, and/or to the issues of refuge and asylum. One such project has been developed by Index Arts, which is part of Index on Censorship, an organisation established 35 years ago to promote freedom of expression and human rights. *imagine art after*¹⁷, curated by Breda Beban, brought together pairs of artists from seven countries with a high level of asylum applications to the UK. In each pair, one artist still in the home country and one now in the UK explored the insecurities triggered by the tension between migration and the social and geographical sense of the local. The project started in 2005 with an on-line dialogue between the artists, hosted by Guardian Unlimited. From these dialogues, an exhibition of newly commissioned work was developed and shown at Tate Britain in autumn 2007. This was a professional development project that focused on the artists as practitioners and on the quality and imagination of their work.

4.2.4 Strategic interventions

The pattern of strategic support for the development of arts and refugees activity varies considerably across the UK. To date, there has been no nationally co-ordinated, strategic approach, although some interventions, notably Refugee Week, have had an impact across the UK. This section of the report considers the strategic approach taken by central government and its agencies (the UK Arts Councils, the British Council etc), by local government and the refugee and third sectors, and interventions by cultural organisations. Further information is given in Appendix 7.

(17) www.imagineartafter.net, also <http://arts.guardian.co.uk/imagineartafter>

Central government and its agencies

The Home Office has lead responsibility for refugees and asylum seekers, although other departments have a key role, for example the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), which leads on the community cohesion agenda. There has been some recognition by the Home Office of the value of cultural activities in addressing refugee integration. It has, for example, supported cultural activity through some of its funding programmes and it invited Creative Exchange (see below in this section and 5.3.3.) to speak at the National Refugee Integration Forum conference in 2006. However, there has been no specific strategic focus on the value of culture in relation to refugee and asylum seeker integration.

The announcement, in October 2007, of a cultural participation indicator as part of the new Public Service Agreement 21: Build more cohesive, empowered and active communities could give the impetus for a more strategic approach – across government departments – to the value of culture in addressing refugee integration and community cohesion. PSA 21 emphasises the value of cultural participation in creating active communities. The high level aims include the following:

- to help people from all sections of society to understand and celebrate the contribution made by a range of cultures to Britain;
- to help immigrants to integrate into our communities¹⁸.



A participant in PhotoVoice's New Londoners project, summer 2007. *Photo: New Londoners/PhotoVoice.*

(18) http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/E/9/pbr_csr07_psa21.pdf

While social inclusion has been a priority for DCMS since the late 1990s, there has been no particular emphasis on refugee issues to date. However DCMS will be responsible for ensuring that the targets developed to meet the cultural indicator in PSA 21 are met, and for monitoring performance. As cultural participation by refugees could play a significant role in meeting PSA 21, this could be the right moment to develop a high-level, cross-departmental focus on arts and refugees.

The UK Arts Councils

Arts Council England has given priority to increasing cultural diversity within the arts, with particular emphasis on African, Caribbean and Asian artists and on audience development within these communities. While many refugees do come from African and Asian countries, there has been no specific focus on refugees in ACE's most recent diversity programme, *decibel*, or in any other national strategy or programme.

Some of the Arts Council's regional offices have developed regional strategies. This has been particularly evident in London, where London Arts Board (predecessor to Arts Council England, London) initiated a strategic development programme in 1999. This included two refugee-specific funding schemes, artists' exchange days, support for London Refugee Week, engaging with policy development and strategic initiatives led by other agencies, such as the British Council and the creation of the Refugees and the Arts Initiative, which is now an independent organisation. The overall programme was underpinned by strategic partnerships with the Refugee Council and UNHCR, which were seen as essential to its success. The focus on refugees has been continued by Arts Council England, London, as part of its objectives relating to social inclusion.

Arts Council England, South East has worked in partnership with Refugee Action, commissioning research and creating a development post. The Yorkshire and North East offices are currently developing strategic plans on refugee issues. Other examples include the support given by the North West office to Community Arts North West's *Exodus* programme and the Refugee and Asylum Seekers Arts Agency (RASAA) in the West Midlands.



Audience participation at a Music for Change Bhangra Vibes event, part of Make it Real Urban Cultural Programme, November 2006.
Photo: Matthew Andres, commissioned by ACE

The Scottish Arts Council addresses refugee issues through its support for cultural diversity. It has invested in a range of arts and refugees projects and has contributed to the establishment of an arts development post at the Scottish Refugee Council. More information on the work of the UK Arts Councils and the regional offices is given in Appendix 7.2.

The British Council

The British Council has helped to profile the value of the arts in working with refugees and asylum seekers. This was initiated through the Brussels office, as part of a focus on European-wide shifts in migration. A conference on the theme of how cultural engagement can promote the integration of asylum seekers was held in Brussels in 2002, followed by a second British Council-supported event in Cardiff, in 2004. A photographic exhibition was developed as a result and toured several European cities and the British Council's think tank, Counterpoint, has published *From Outside In*¹⁹, which tells the stories of individual refugees using poetry and short stories as well as personal testimony²⁰.

Local government

Local authority arts development officers were surveyed, for this research, using a questionnaire followed by a telephone call to increase the number of responses. The low response rate could suggest that only a small percentage of officers engage in arts and refugees activity. We have, however, identified a number of arts and refugees projects led by local authority arts officers in, for example, Calderdale, Doncaster, Oldham, Walsall and Wigan. (See Appendix 7.3.) Other local authorities have actively engaged with Refugee Week, but with non-arts departments taking the lead. For example, in Brighton & Hove it is part of the remit of the Community Safety Department, as part of its work on alleviating levels of racially motivated crime.

The lack of a 'visible' refugee community has been frequently cited by local authorities as the reason for their lack of engagement, as well as funding pressures. In some areas, the reason is a lack of political will. To quote one respondent, there was a '*perception that this is an issue that affects other parts of the country*' with the result that there was '*little political impetus to focus upon this area*'. Even in areas with higher levels of asylum seekers, there is sometimes a political sensitivity about providing support.

The refugee sector

Refugee Week

Refugee Week has been organised in some major cities since the early 1990s and was formally established across the UK in 1998. Refugee Week has been key to raising the profile of cultural activities led by or engaging with refugees. It provides a unique annual platform from which to promote the importance of sanctuary and the benefits this can bring to both refugees and host communities. Refugee Week aims to:

- encourage a diverse range of events to be held throughout the UK, which facilitate positive encounters between refugees and the general public, in order to
- encourage greater understanding and overcome hostility;
- showcase the talent and expertise that refugees bring with them to the UK.

(19) *From Outside In, Refugees and British Society*, Ed Nushin Arbabzadah, British Council, 2007

(20) There is continuing discussion in the refugee sector about the ethics of using personal testimonies from refugees, and the need to balance the impact achieved by learning from individual experiences against the importance of allowing refugees to be seen as complex and multi dimensional people.



Status, a pop group with a difference – a boy band made up of four asylum seekers performing in Refugee Week 2006.
 Photo: Tobias Madden

Refugee Week is managed by the Refugee Week Team which consists of the UK Coordinator for Refugee Week, Welsh and Scottish Coordinators and a small number of volunteers with specific skills. Different regions, areas and towns have their own Refugee Week Steering and Operational Groups, which manage and coordinate activities in their areas²¹. In 2007, Refugee Week promoted 450 events, more than 75% of which were arts related.

Refugee Week has received a mixed response in terms of the depth and breadth of work achievable, as well as in the audiences accessed by the range of showcase events. Nonetheless the week is seen as a reason to come together and as a good opportunity to form new partnerships, gain media profile and raise awareness. A business planning exercise, in autumn 2005, renewed the strategic direction of Refugee Week, setting out a long-term vision and planning structure for the event.

The Refugee Councils and Refugee Action

The Refugee Councils and Refugee Action are vital partners for the development of arts projects with refugees, both in their own right and as a conduit to partnerships with refugee community organisations. The English Refugee Council hosts the Refugee Week Team and the UK Coordinator. The Scottish Refugee Council has had an Arts Development Officer for six years. The Welsh Refugee Council also has an arts development post, and published an informed and thoughtful response to the Welsh Assembly on the Wales Arts Review²².

(21) Refugee Week is a multi-agency project, with representatives from the partner agencies forming the UK Steering and Operation Groups. The partner agencies currently include: Amnesty International UK, British Red Cross, the Children's Society, the Home Office, Oxfam, Refugee Action, Refugee Council, Save the Children Fund UK, Scottish Refugee Council, STAR (Student Action for Refugees), Timebank and Welsh Refugee Council.

(22) <http://new.wales.gov.uk/walesarts/WARConsultResp/WARConsultRespOrgs/SE214WRC?lang=en>

Refugee Action has supported a range of arts-led initiatives, consistently demonstrating a commitment to arts and creative activity. The Refugee Awareness Project is a national initiative utilising the arts as a means of communication and encouraging engagement between host and refugee groupings. The *Wellbeing* project, in the North West, is described in Section 5 below. As already noted, Refugee Action has also worked with Arts Council England, South East to develop a strategic approach to arts and refugees in the region.

Whilst arts and creativity are seen positively (by contributors to this research) as a means of developing refugees' sense of self-worth, discussion with the Refugee Council in England and Refugee Action confirms that they are not part of their core role. A number of development workers stressed that they were exclusively engaged in case work and that the arts were not a priority when individuals needed food and shelter. That said, a number of arts projects have been initiated by these agencies. They include *My World Your World*, by Leeds Refugee Council, Birmingham Refugee Council's theatre in education project, which has been in operation since 2005, and several arts projects run by Refugee Action in Ipswich.

The schools and academic sector

Schools

The DfES report, *Aiming High*²³, highlighted the fact that a large number of local education authorities have refugee pupils within their schools and it recognised the need for guidance and support to help local education authorities and schools develop appropriate policies and action plans. MultiVerse²⁴ and the Network for Global Perspectives in Schools have both been proactive in trying to improve the experiences of refugee children in formal education and producing information resources. Major charities active in the schools sector include Save the Children, and an increasing number of arts organisations, including Banner Theatre, Greenwich & Lewisham Young People's Theatre, Music for Change, Oval House, Soft Touch, and Small World Theatre – to name a few – are supporting and raising awareness of children and young people of school age through their work.

Academic research

The academic sector has engaged in a considerable amount of research on the theme of refugees and asylum seekers. There has been much less work on arts and refugees, although there are some notable exceptions. Dr Maggie O'Neill and Dr Bea Tobolewska at Loughborough University have used participatory action research to develop work with refugees and asylum seekers. This was funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and provided the basis for a regional cultural strategy for refugee and asylum seeker-led work in the East Midlands.

Professor Yuval-Davis, at the University of East London, has led research into identity, performativity and social action, researching community theatre among refugees. The research aims to explore constructions and politics of identity and belonging among refugee communities, as they are narrated and performed during interactive community theatre events and consequent reflections in several community centres in London. The research draws on two experimental theatre techniques, Playback and Forum theatre, which allow participants to reflect on what is taking place in a performance, intervene in it and explore alternative strategies of social action.

(23) *Aiming High: Guidance on Supporting the Education of Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children*, DfES, 2004

(24) MultiVerse is a consortium of eight Initial Teacher Training institutions from across the country, Research Machines plc and Trentham Books, in partnership with local education authorities and community groups. The following universities are also involved: London Metropolitan (Institute for Policy Studies in Education), Middlesex, Northumbria, St Martin's College, Lancaster, University of Chichester, University of East London, University of Northampton and University of Sunderland



Music for Change Dhol drumming workshop involving asylum seekers and host community young people as part of the *Cricket Roots* programme, April 2007. Photo: Julie Palmer.

At Manchester University, *In Place of War* is active in both academic research and in forming partnerships with theatre-based organisations in the North West, while the Information Centre for Asylum and Refugees (ICAR) in the School of Social Science, at City University in London, uses academically sourced information to inform understanding, policy making and public debate in relation to refugees.

The charitable sector

Grant-making trusts

Over the past eight years, a number of grant-making trusts have identified support for refugees as a priority, in response to concerns about the intense deprivation faced by many refugees and asylum seekers, and the need to support better integration of refugees into the UK. In 1999, the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund was the first to adopt a specific refugee priority and it has supported a number of arts projects amongst its general support for refugee projects. Other trusts prioritising refugee issues include Comic Relief, City Parochial Foundation, the Barrow Cadbury Fund, the Mackintosh Foundation, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and the Lloyds TSB Foundation. Some trusts are adopting specific refugee funding priorities and programmes for the first time, such as the Rayne Foundation Refugee Fellowships, launched in 2007. Several other trusts have provided support for arts and refugees projects as part of a general focus on social inclusion, for example, the Lankelly Chase Foundation.

The most significant support for arts and refugees projects in the UK has come from the two trusts that commissioned this report – the Baring Foundation and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. The Baring Foundation is the only funder to have focused its arts budget solely on arts and refugees. It was decided in 2004 that the Arts Programme should have a specific strategic focus over a period of several years, with a view to achieving a greater impact in one field.

The decision to focus on refugees arose partly out of a perceived synergy with the Baring Foundation's support for international development work and partly out of recognition of the value of supporting the core costs of organisations that were committed to this emerging area of arts practice. The Foundation was also interested in supporting activity likely to help new arrivals to become more fully integrated in British society. By the end of the final funding round in 2008, £2.5 million will have been committed to arts organisations working with refugees and asylum seekers and with host communities. In addition to the financial support, the Foundation has organised regular, day-long seminars, offering organisations the opportunity to learn from each other's experiences.

The Paul Hamlyn Foundation made support for refugees a priority in 2003, focusing specifically on unaccompanied young asylum seekers and refugees. The Fund for Refugee and Asylum Seeker Young People had a general focus, with arts projects accounting for about one third of the total spend of £3.3 million over four years. However it is notable from looking at the funded activity that, even where the arts were not the main focus of a project, some element of cultural activity was often included. The Foundation had previously supported work with young refugees as part of its focus on young people and social justice, but in 2003 it decided that, given the particular problems faced by young unaccompanied refugees and asylum seekers, a dedicated programme was justified. The Fund for Refugee and Asylum Seeker Young People placed a strong emphasis on the need to work in partnership, with arts organisations strongly encouraged to link up with refugee community organisations. In common with the Baring Foundation, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation organises opportunities for funded organisations to meet together to share experiences.

During the period of this research, the Fund was being independently evaluated by Jane Thompson and Jane Pitcher. The interim report identified the positive impact that many projects were having in boosting the confidence and self esteem of participants, and in helping them to develop networks of friendship and support. The challenges identified were that many projects were working with smaller than anticipated numbers of participants, partly because of a difficulty in recruitment, but also due to the intensive support needs of participants. Partnership work was seen as essential to the success of the projects, but setting up and maintaining effective partnerships was also seen as a significant challenge. Part of the role of the evaluators was to work with the funded organisations, helping them to develop their evaluation techniques and capacity through a participatory action research approach.

Other major charities

In addition to the Refugee Council and Refugee Action, major charities including Save the Children, ActionAid, the Children's Society, Amnesty International and Oxfam have all supported or commissioned arts and refugee projects in the UK. This has been out of recognition of the value of creative activity in promoting integration and better understanding amongst the host community. Several of these charities are represented on the steering group for Refugee Week.

The British Red Cross has been particularly active, and has supported a range of arts projects. Its main interest is in the use of the arts as a vehicle to communicate a more positive and nuanced understanding of refugees. Arts projects offer an alternative to a campaigning approach and can provide more subtle and imaginative ways of helping people to engage with refugee issues.

The cultural sector

Some strategic initiatives are being led by cultural organisations themselves, recognising the need to provide opportunities to share information, provide mutual support and encourage good practice. Creative Exchange, a cultural development and research agency, has played a significant role in promoting the value of cultural development with refugees and asylum seekers, through research, publications, conferences and other advocacy activities (see 5.3.3). Stella Barnes, Head of Arts in Education at the Oval House Theatre, in London (and who previously worked with Greenwich & Lewisham Young People's Theatre) has written guidelines to using the arts with young refugees and asylum seekers, which have been published by Artsworld, the national youth arts development agency. Jan Lennox, Director of Watermans Arts Centre, also in London, organised a national seminar in 2005 and subsequently established a West London refugee and the arts forum, bringing together health trusts, refugee community organisations, arts organisations and others with a direct interest in this field of work. The Refugee and Asylum Seeker Arts Agency in the West Midlands and Community Arts North West's *Exodus* programme have both hosted professional development events.



Kim Aral performing at *Exodus Sparks* at Contact Theatre as part of the *Exodus on Stage* theatre season. November 2006. Photo: Damien Maguire

Exodus is one of a handful of regional development projects aimed at supporting refugee artists. This emerging infrastructure is still at an early and tentative stage. The main challenge for these projects is how to balance their strategic role with the high level of demand, from artists, for one-to-one advice and support. The following paragraphs briefly describe some of these projects.

Community Arts North West/Exodus (North West)

Exodus was initiated by Community Arts North West in 2004, starting with the Greater Manchester Refugee Arts Partnership. The programme of activity includes participatory work and events, such as the *Exodus Festival*, which takes place during Refugee Week and a film festival, *Exodus Shorts*. There is also a refugee artists' training programme which includes both courses and one-to-one surgeries for groups that want to strengthen their operation or access funding for arts projects.

Artists in Exile Glasgow

Artists in Exile Glasgow was the result of a series of workshops organised by the Glasgow Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA) as part of an overall programme on the theme of sanctuary. Held at the Arches Theatre and supported by Glasgow City Council, the workshops included members of the London-based group Artists in Exile, who inspired the establishment of a similar group in Glasgow. The group is now going through the process of becoming a registered charity. It has its own project space in Glasgow's Merchant City and a growing membership of artists from various art disciplines, including visual arts, film, music, literature and theatre. It has always been a central part of the group's ethos that membership should be open to both refugee and non-refugee artists, including international and indigenous artists, in the belief that it is essential for refugee artists to make links into the host community of artists.

Long Journey Home (East Midlands)

Long Journey Home began life, in 2002, as a festival to celebrate the creative contribution of minority ethnic communities in the East Midlands. The organisers subsequently raised funding with which to develop a network to work with artists in exile and to provide them with links to the mainstream arts sector. The co-ordinator is often approached by arts organisations seeking to work with refugee/asylum seeker artists. This has not always been an easy position since many organisations lack the specialist knowledge and level of support that artists might need. With its time-limited funding about to run out, the future of the network is uncertain and research is underway to determine the best way forward for the region and the network.

RASAA (West Midlands)

The Refugee and Asylum Seeker Arts Agency (RASAA) was set up through a collaboration between Tricia Yarwood and Samina Zahir²⁵ working in the refugee and arts sectors, with support from Arts Council England, West Midlands and the Midlands Refugee Council. After a period of activity with a part-time worker, which has now ceased, the advisory group for RASAA is carrying out additional research to consider the most appropriate framework for future development, whether a consortium approach, a separate agency or an individual curator/producer. It is seeking to re-engage Arts Council England, West Midlands in its development and is looking to strengthen partnerships with arts organisations engaged in this field in the region.

Refugees and the Arts Initiative (London)

The Refugees and the Arts Initiative (RAI) was the name given by London Arts Board to the range of initiatives it developed from 1999 onwards. In 2003, the RAI became independent, employed a part-time worker and moved into an office at Theatre Royal Stratford East. The priority thereafter was to support individual refugee artists and membership numbers grew to more than 1,000. However, while the coordinator was busy providing advice and information and organising artists' exchange days, she could not undertake any strategic work. Following a period of review, the ambition is that the organisation will become refugee led. This will mean changing the composition of the board from one dominated by arts practitioners from the host community to one on which the majority of members are refugees. International links are also being strengthened, with a planned collaboration with a refugee camp in the Western Sahara with a strong arts programme.

(25) Samina Zahir is also one of the authors of this report.

5 Arts and refugees in the UK: some findings on impact

This section considers the impact of:

- the use of participatory engagement in the arts
- initiatives that aim to support artists and artistic development
- interventions that aim to achieve a strategic impact
- the lack of robust evaluation in the sector.

In each case, examples are given to demonstrate how these impacts have been achieved. These are drawn from interviews with organisations delivering arts-led work with refugees, and evaluation material they or their funders have supplied. The examples used are drawn from the arts, museums, local authority, refugee and voluntary sectors. The projects described have taken place across the UK, from the concentrations of activity in major cities to examples drawn from rural areas and smaller towns.

Overall, much significant work has been undertaken. Participatory projects from Brighton to Glasgow and from Swansea to Norwich have supported refugees and asylum seekers in learning new skills and settling into their new society. Participatory arts projects have also helped to bridge the divide between refugee and host communities, alleviating hostility and suspicion and building greater understanding and acceptance on both sides.

Artists who have come to the UK seeking asylum and those who have settled as refugees have been supported with training, networking and opportunities for showcasing their work. To a certain extent, there is now some development of opportunities for artists to develop work that challenges and goes beyond a focus on their stories of transition and loss.

There have also been strategic interventions, ranging from the funding and development programmes of London Arts Board and the Baring and Paul Hamlyn Foundations, to the conferences and projects organised by the British Council, to dedicated arts development posts within the refugee sector, to networking and training initiatives led by cultural organisations.

However in the course of this research, it has become clear that people working in this sector face challenges that limit what can be achieved. These include working with a fragmented refugee community sector that has little spare capacity to focus on cultural issues; the pressures that affect the lives of refugees and asylum seekers as many struggle to meet the most basic requirements for survival; the impact of the trauma and loss suffered by many refugees; and the difficulty in accessing significant, long-term funding and convincing non-arts funders of the value of their work. Both host community and refugee practitioners have stressed the need for more opportunities to network and to develop their skills. The research has confirmed the sector's lack of capacity to commission external evaluation.

5.1 Participation

There is evidence to suggest that participatory projects with refugees and the host community, involving the arts, have delivered a broad range of social impacts, including

- social and community cohesion
- community development and capacity building
- challenging negative representations of refugees and asylum seekers.

The following paragraphs offer examples of each.

5.1.1 Social and community cohesion

Supporting the integration of refugees and asylum seekers

The majority of integration-focused, participatory projects identified by the research, focused on young asylum seekers and refugees. This could be due to the particular expertise of some arts organisations in working with young people, which is simply reflected in their work with refugees, or it could be due to the greater availability of funding to work with this age group.

Many of the practitioners interviewed emphasised that the value of their work lies not only in the skills and confidence that the young people are gaining, but also in giving them space to be playful and to have fun. Aileen Ritchie, a writer in residence at the Mitchell Library in Glasgow, who ran a project with young African teenagers in the city, found that one of the high points was taking the group to participate in a national, youth theatre event. They were able to be simply young and carefree, and their parents were able to see them in a different light, performing their work in a 'proper' theatre.

A cluster of expertise in South East London

A particular focus of activity has developed in South East London in the use of drama in working with young refugees and asylum seekers, through the work of Greenwich & Lewisham Young People's Theatre (GLYPT), Oval House Theatre and Hi8us South. The practitioners link up to provide advice and support on each other's projects, and Oval House has instigated the Refugee Youth Arts Network, a London-wide network for practitioners working with young refugees and asylum seekers. Another project in South East London is Rewrite, which brings young people from refugee and non-refugee communities together in drama and creative writing projects.

GLYPT has been working with young refugees and asylum seekers for more than nine years, and has developed considerable expertise and skill in this area. *Voices*, its programme with refugees and asylum seekers, delivers creative drama work in school, while *headstArt* is a year-round programme for young asylum seekers who have not yet been given a school place. The work in schools is highly valued by the main partner, Kidbrooke School and the partnership has now been running for four years. Evaluation of both programmes has shown that the participants have grown in confidence and self esteem, as well as in the acquisition of language skills.

The Oval House programme of work with young refugees and asylum seekers is led by Stella Barnes, who has been active in this field for nearly ten years, having set up the GLYPT's *Voices* programme. The Oval House team now has considerable experience working with young refugees and asylum seekers. Their approach is designed to work at whatever level of language skill the young people have, but they have seen significant improvements in confidence and speaking ability through their work. Evaluations demonstrate the progress made by individual young people over a period of time, and their work is much in demand by local schools.

More recently, Hi8us South has established a programme working with young refugees and asylum seekers in South East London, using a number of different art forms. A key objective has been to establish youth leadership of the project, and there is a 'ladder of engagement', which enables young people to take the level of responsibility for which they are ready. This ranges from young people taking a core role in shaping and managing the project, through to helping to run creative arts sessions. Several of the young people have joined the Millennium Volunteers programme as a result.



Young People from GLYPT's *headstArt* programme perform at the launch of the English National Youth Arts Network, in 2006.
Photo: Alex Soulsby

Artists from the original *Voices* programme now work across all three projects, which means they have developed a high level of expertise. Some have been trained in the development programme for refugee artists, *Flight Paths* and they all continue to receive regular professional development. The artists are also able to cross-reference and to support referrals and progression routes for young people between projects. All three projects are committed to long-term relationships with young people and aim to be sustainable in an uncertain funding situation.

PhotoVoice

Having been influenced by arts and creative-led work in international settings, the directors of PhotoVoice have used similar methods in the UK. They see photography as an active way of learning that is non-verbal and therefore not subject to the constraints of language. PhotoVoice believes that, by engaging with photography – an accessible artform – individuals can form a new understanding of their personal histories. Participants have been encouraged to explore new areas, thereby challenging parochialism and enjoying a sense of freedom within lives that are often extremely regimented.

PhotoVoice collaborates with refugee community organisations working with young, unaccompanied minors in London. The primary aim of working in partnership is to add value and while initially there was a steep learning curve, more than five years later, PhotoVoice feels it



Self portrait by Martin Bbosa, a newly arrived young refugee who participated in PhotoVoice's project in partnership with the Children's Society. 'I am always trying to aim higher. I want to die believing in the sky.' *Photo: Martin Bbosa*

has developed a strong methodology. Its major partner since 2002 has been DOST, at the Trinity Centre in east London. Both organisations have experienced considerable growth, due partly to the increased dispersal of new arrivals to the capital²⁶.

PhotoVoice has developed a structured programme of participatory photography activity with young refugees. Since 2002 it has run a number of different programmes including a photographic mentoring project for young people awaiting a school place. Working in partnership with DOST's educational support project it has designed an eight-week, modular programme that explores areas such as health, identity, gender, sex and relationships, with a view to bringing about greater cultural understanding. Each module can stand alone, as a learning output, which is important when the dispersal policy means that the young participants could be moved out of London at any time and may not be able to complete the programme.

Promoting community cohesion

Difficulties have arisen when refugees and asylum seekers have been placed in challenging, urban environments. When asylum seekers arrive in these areas they often suffer isolation and hostility, sometimes resulting in intimidation and assault. In Glasgow, this situation has resulted in various responses from the cultural sector. A range of organisations are not only engaging in projects with refugees and asylum seekers on their own, but also doing work that aims to build bridges with the host community. Strathclyde Police took a positive approach by supporting the development of the North Glasgow International Festival, which made a strong contribution to bringing communities together. Issues of community cohesion in other cities, such as Derby, Bradford and Norwich, have also been addressed through the use of the arts.

The Village Storytelling Centre

The Village Storytelling Centre is located in Greater Pollok, Glasgow and has had core support from regeneration programmes since it was established eight years ago in a local church. It works in schools and with the local community and has developed a particular interest in refugees and asylum seekers. The work has been supported by one particularly active asylum seeker volunteer, and through a series of strong partnerships, for example with the local integration network.

The centre has done a series of projects involving both the host community and asylum seekers. *The Flats* was a community play, based on the experience of living in the high-rise flats in the area, produced in collaboration with Confab, a new writing development organisation. One of the participants from the host community spoke out on television to explain how far her attitudes had changed towards refugees and asylum seekers and she became a strong advocate for them in the local community. The next project, *From Plantation to Pollok, From Kabul to Kennishead*, brought people from the host community and refugees and asylum seekers together to explore common issues of loss and moving on. Plantation was an area of traditional tenements in Glasgow, from which many of the local residents in Pollok first came, escaping high levels of poverty and illness. Local young people interviewed asylum seekers to find out where they came from, to learn about their childhoods and what led them to come here. Young asylum seekers interviewed older adults about the experience of leaving the tenements and moving to Pollok, their pride in the area when they first arrived and its subsequent deterioration. A book on the subject has been published, there is a website (www.doorsopen.org.uk) and there are plans for a film. The feedback on the website shows the impact of the project on its participants in building better understanding across generations and across boundaries.

(26) London has the largest number of asylum seekers assigned through the dispersal system.

The work of the Village Storytelling Centre was reviewed by HM Inspectorate of Education (Scotland), which described it as ‘an outstanding example of a project that promoted social and cultural diversity, and whose work contributed to developing community cohesion’²⁷.

The Derwent Refugee Community Development Support Project

Refugee Action’s Derwent Refugee Community Development Support Project was funded by the New Deal for Communities to support the integration of refugee and asylum seeker families in the Derwent area of Derbyshire²⁸. Derwent was a predominantly white area with low ethnic minority representation and a poor history of minority integration. Asylum seekers housed in the area were immediately and highly visible. Derby had been nominated as a dispersal area but, due to initial forecasts being lower than actual asylum numbers, support agencies lacked the services necessary to provide assistance for the numbers of asylum seekers housed in the area.

Staff at Refugee Action therefore worked with existing services to develop and extend support systems locally. They produced a range of initiatives, the majority of which were not arts led. However, a number of activities did utilise arts or creative processes to engage participants and draw in members of the community. These included cultural visits, as well as supporting the development of the Zambezi community group, which has a strong focus on music and has established a choir. The group draws its membership from various communities, including refugees and the settled African Caribbean community, taking its name from the African river that flows through eight different countries. The evaluation report on the project makes it clear that the creation of the Zambezi group has been a major achievement: ‘The early work with Zambezi has had a real impact and the partnership is resulting in many opportunities to raise awareness and change negative attitudes about minority communities.’

Encouraging better understanding of refugee issues within society as a whole, including areas where local residents have little contact with refugees

Globalisation and the increasing diversity of the population mean that society as a whole needs to achieve a deeper understanding of migration and refuge. It is not just an issue for areas receiving asylum seekers and refugees.

Warwickshire County Council

Through the Eyes of... was the first arts project for young asylum seekers run by Warwickshire County Council, linking the Asylum Seekers Project and the County Arts Service. Whilst Warwickshire is not a major dispersal area, the project sought to increase awareness and understanding of the issues facing refugees and asylum seekers. The fact that the Community Arts Officer chose to develop this project is interesting precisely because there is such low refugee/asylum seeker visibility in the area²⁹.

A key component of the project was to encourage participants to engage with the urban and rural landscapes of Coventry and Warwickshire. This was achieved through a series of photographic days, which included visits to places such as Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum and Compton Verney Art Gallery. The project had some very clear outcomes. More than half of the young people who produced an exhibition of their work said they now had ambitions to undertake further, similar training. Organisations in Warwickshire that had not previously

(27) *How Good is our Community Learning and Development*, HM Inspectorate of Education

(28) A full report on the project can be accessed at www.refugee-action.org.uk/information/documents/DerwentProjectReport.pdf

(29) Recent figures suggest that Coventry has a refugee/asylum seeker population in the region of 5,000, about 1.7% of the population, although this figure is considerably higher than that identified by Phillimore et al (est. 2002) who suggest that within Coventry and Warwickshire there are approximately 3,000 refugee/asylum seekers. Whilst the majority of refugees/asylum seekers are based in Coventry, Warwickshire County Council has a duty of care for a number of young asylum seekers.

engaged in this area of work developed an interest. There were showcases of the young people's work at the Hope Centre in Coventry, at Warwick Record Office during Black History Month and in the form of a slide show at Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum. Compton Verney expressed an interest in working with young asylum seekers again and other local arts organisations said they were keen to work with Warwickshire County Council Asylum Seekers Project on future arts projects. This project helped to create a positive image of young asylum seekers in an area that has had little opportunity to interact with, or understand, experiences of asylum and refuge.

Music for Change

Music for Change, an educational charity based in the South East, often works in schools that have no, or very few, minority ethnic children. The need to educate children about the world in which they live is fundamental to Music for Change's desire to work in schools, preparing the children for cultural change and multi-cultural encounters. At the start of a recent programme of activity at one school, students said that they saw asylum seekers as terrorists. Following the initiative, Music for Change noted a shift in their attitudes, reflected in discussions that began to draw out a sense of shared marginalisation rather than focusing upon notions of 'us and them'. The students began to consider the multiple ways in which they were each marginalised, for example being categorised as a 'chav' or a 'hoody'. From this they developed a better understanding of the situation of newly arrived children and young people.

5.1.2 Community development and capacity building

Capacity building within refugee and community organisations

Many of those consulted have referred to the need to build capacity within the refugee and community sector, given the plethora of organisations that are emerging and the lack of connectivity in the sector. The sheer diversity of refugee communities poses challenges in achieving this objective, but cultural organisations have adopted strategic approaches to addressing the issues involved.

Bosnia & Herzegovina UK Network

The Bosnia & Herzegovina UK Network has been running since 1994 and now consists of 23 groups. Fifteen groups provide an active service across the UK, through events, language courses, arts classes and projects. Individuals staffing the network have consistently drawn on arts and creativity to engage individuals and have developed partnerships within the arts sector, for example, co-curating an exhibition with Leicester Museum and Jubilee Arts.

Heads Together

Heads Together uses the arts to work in communities, with individuals. For example, it worked with refugees and asylum seekers, in Leeds, to run a temporary radio project that broadcast over the internet and on FM radio. Heads Together's approach to capacity building connects with its fundamental approach to identity, processes of communication and participatory democracy. It was commissioned to work within the refugee sector, developing the Leeds Refugee Forum, which is made up of 20 refugee community organisations. Drawing on a range of arts and creative practices, it increasingly found itself acting as a facilitator and broker for organisations with very different ideas and visions. These differences might be related to service provision, with some groups feeling that they had a right to specific support services and others feeling this was too simplistic a view, or it might be a more complicated debate about the vision of the forum and how to manage the developmental process. Heads Together found itself having to tread a

difficult balance between holding on to control for too long and handing over to the Forum, before it was ready.

Craftspace

Craftspace is a contemporary crafts development agency, based in Birmingham. It worked with the Community Integration Partnership (CIP) and a group of women refugees and asylum seekers to respond to a touring exhibition that looked at issues of identity. The project included a series of photography and jewellery-making workshops. In developing its work with refugees and asylum seekers, Craftspace was signposted to CIP by Tricia Yarwood and Samina Zahir, both of whom have experience of working with refugees and who have continued to support the partnership as it has evolved.

CIP was a relatively young refugee community organisation and the idea of arts-led work was new to the chief executive. The partnership therefore required considerable commitment and energy from Craftspace. Its role developed beyond delivering a participatory project, to supporting the thinking and critical engagement of the chief executive in building the capacity of the organisation and in increasing her understanding of how the arts could make an impact on the culture of the organisation. Such outcomes are crucial for developing understanding of how the arts can engage in a non-threatening way, changing the outlook of the participants. Their self-esteem was raised, their confidence reinvigorated, they began to look more closely at the other services and courses provided by CIP and they began to see themselves as having the right to enjoy a fulfilled and active life. CIP subsequently started fundraising to create a post to embed arts and creative activity within the organisation.

Investing in people – building the capacity and skills of individual refugees and asylum seekers

Engagement in arts projects can help to develop the capacity and skills of individual refugees and asylum seekers. Whilst the majority of the skill-based arts projects identified have focused on general skills of teamwork and communication, others have more specific targets. A project run by Yorkshire Sculpture Park, with a group of young Kurdish men who undertook an expedition into rural Yorkshire to introduce local residents (including a group of Morris Dancers) to their traditional dances, was accredited by the Duke of Edinburgh's Award³⁰. The Victoria and Albert Museum has a programme designed to improve the English language skills of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) students. The following paragraphs offer more examples.

Salford Museum and Art Gallery

The *Embrace* project at Salford Museum and Art Gallery sought to address isolation by engaging refugees and asylum seekers in arts and cultural services. They developed a volunteer training scheme through which volunteers received a one-month, bespoke induction to the Heritage Service. At the time of writing, 17 volunteers had taken part in the programme, each working two to three hours a week. In the majority of cases, volunteers used the experience as a stepping stone towards college. Engaging in voluntary work helped them to build their self-confidence and to bridge the gap in their knowledge and understanding of cultural life in the UK.

B Arts

B Arts is an artist-led, community-based, participatory arts organisation based in Newcastle under Lyme in North Staffordshire. Out of a core team of eight, three of B Arts' employees are from refugee backgrounds, with further refugee artists working as freelancers.

(30) The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is for personal achievement and is open to anyone aged between 14 and 25.

The current refugee employees are all former participants in projects, who have been identified by other members of staff. *'They stood out because they so clearly had 'under-used skills.'* B Arts is committed to supporting the long-term development of its refugee employees, while acknowledging that *'sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't.'* B Arts encourages them to test and build on their experience, to try out new ways of working, to connect right across the organisation and not just be *'the refugees working on the refugee and asylum projects'*.

B Arts has encountered people who are highly focused and clearly able to identify their needs, for example recognising that they could improve their English by engaging in the work of the company. The organisation quotes the example of a participant who saw very clearly the conduit provided by B Arts, taking advantage of the opportunity it afforded and subsequently moving on to college. He now refers other people to B Arts.

Supporting the personal development of the children of refugees

Iranian Association

The Iranian Association in West London established an arts programme for young Iranians, in 2005. The Art Director, Parvaneh Soltani, was concerned at the sense of displacement and confusion felt by the young people. She perceived their identity as being confused by a strong pull towards a country from which their parents are still exiled, and their own experience of growing up in London. The programme has included drama, film, creative writing and visual arts. The young people's confidence and creative skills have grown significantly and they have also learnt organisational skills through putting on events.

Improving the mental and physical health of refugees and asylum seekers

Many refugees suffer significant levels of mental and physical ill health and there is evidence that the arts can help to address this issue. The Pan Centre for Intercultural Arts, for example, has developed a programme working with traumatised young people, working in partnership with the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture. Mother Tongue Counselling in Reading has found that arts activities are a useful and effective means of helping to develop confidence and coping skills amongst refugees and asylum seekers.

Refugee Action Wellbeing Project

Refugee Action's *Wellbeing Project* in Manchester developed out of services targeting individuals at risk from mental health problems. The project encourages asylum seekers and refugees through arts and sport-based activities. The project acknowledges that refugees may be vulnerable to mental health problems due to having to overcome traumatic experiences, as well as being isolated in the UK³¹.

Whilst the original brief had not envisaged the project as arts led, project managers decided that this could be an appropriate and non-threatening means of working with the participants. Utilising the arts was also useful in cutting across language barriers and so it became a key focus for the work, alongside sports. The project focused on the fact that engaging in a creative process moved individuals from being passive victims to active participants.

(31) More information on the *Wellbeing Project*, including a full evaluation, can be found at www.refugee-action.org.uk/ourwork/projects/Wellbeing.aspx

Examples of the work undertaken by the *Wellbeing Project* included a short course of samba dance classes for the Angolan community, an Ethiopian community festival, and a Ndebele Zimbabwean cultural group (Izinyane Lesilo – ‘the Kings Descendants’) to provide dance, poetry and music sessions. The project recognised the role that group activities could play in improving mental health, wellbeing and physical health. A number of group activities took place, including an Ethiopian sewing group, Somali traditional dance, a Ugandan women’s dance group and an Angolan music project. There was also an Iranian drama project (*Rozaneh*), which sought to provide an opportunity to tell some of the participants’ stories, but also to distract individuals from problems prevalent within the community. The group worked with a refugee who had been a theatre director in Iran.

The *Wellbeing Project* also delivered training to a range of providers in the North West, including Creative Arts Network, Salford Art Gallery and Arts About Manchester. The training focused on refugee awareness, then explored links between the arts and wellbeing and the issues involved in setting up and developing effective arts projects for refugees and asylum seekers.

Music in Detention

Music in Detention was set up by a group of organisations and individuals who were involved in a pilot programme in 2004³² that took participative music activities into four Immigration Removal Centres (IRCs). Its starting point is that collective music-making crosses cultural and language barriers and makes a significant impact by relieving the stress suffered by detainees.

Evaluation of the pilot phase of the programme demonstrated that participants welcomed the activities, for the pleasure of music making, for increasing their sense of wellbeing and for the opportunity to work with and learn about others, including fellow detainees. ‘*You feel broader – you see you are somebody who can do something.*’ Detention centre managers recognised the benefit to their staff, with the exposure to different cultural activities and an opportunity to develop their skills. Since 2005, Music in Detention has worked in all the UK’s IRCs and is gaining a profile for its work within the Home Office and elsewhere. It is now a constituted organisation with a salaried director.

5.1.3 Challenging negative representations

Negative and sometimes inaccurate reporting of refugee and asylum issues creates a climate that militates against the successful integration of refugees and against the development of positive relationships between communities. Several organisations, both within the charitable/voluntary sectors and the arts, have sought to address this issue by creating work that helps to increase understanding of the real issues involved. Some of this work, as with Actors for Refugees, is targeted at a wide audience, whereas other companies, such as Small World, have developed a particular focus on working in schools, aiming to influence both children and their parents.

Banner Theatre, based in the West Midlands, finds there is a high demand for plays on refugee issues, with requests for performances coming from across the UK. Banner has also worked extensively in schools, with one survey showing that 83% of young people who had seen its work had experienced a positive change in their attitudes towards asylum seekers.

(32) *In Tune with Detainees*, conference report. Refugee Action in partnership with the Helen Tetlow Memorial Fund and Amnesty International, 2005

Influencing a positive change in attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers

Actors for Refugees

Actors for Refugees aims to reverse negative public attitudes to asylum seekers and refugees, with a particular emphasis on reaching people who are not predisposed to be sympathetic, or those who have little or no understanding of the issues. The actors use their performance skills and public profile to counter the negative information in the media. Actors for Refugees was set up as an outreach project of the theatre company Ice and Fire. It responds to requests to perform its testimony-based production *Asylum Monologues*. This is a piece with few technical requirements, enabling it to be seen in easily accessible settings such as community centres, universities, museums, libraries, open spaces and churches. The project works in partnership with a range of national agencies including the Refugee Council, Refugee Action, Church Action on Poverty and Amnesty International, as well as grassroots organisations across the country.

Audience surveys have demonstrated that audience members are gaining new information about refugee issues, and that the performances reach people who would be unlikely to gain this information otherwise. Surveys also indicate that the majority of respondents agree that seeing the production has encouraged them to become more actively involved. Regional partner organisations have reported an increase in volunteers following performances by Actors for Refugees in their area.

Small World Theatre

Small World Theatre is based in Ceredigion, in west Wales and has had a longstanding engagement with refugee issues. At the point when the dispersal policy started, Small World decided to work in communities that would be receiving asylum seekers, but that had little experience of multi-culturalism. The company created a schools project, *Diogel?/Safe?*, which worked with school children to look at the idea of community and at how people might feel when arriving in *their* community. The project was researched with newly arrived asylum seekers in Wales and involved a refugee from Sierra Leone as a key figure in the work with schools. In each school the children worked with Small World to produce a show for parents, to stimulate awareness within the wider community. This was followed up with a coffee morning for the parents and refugees from the local area, creating a safe space in which to meet and learn about each other. An independent evaluation by Swansea Institute of Education concluded that 'the involvement of Small World Theatre in a school can prepare the ground for the arrival of asylum seekers, and increase the likelihood of them being well received.'

Small World Theatre's latest project, which has Home Office support, is focused on developing the advocacy skills of refugees. The company is training a group of refugee women of all ages to act as advocates for refugees and asylum seekers in their dealings with public services, including the health service. The first training workshop took place in summer 2007, training the women in both physical theatre techniques and forum theatre techniques (in partnership with Theatr Fforwm Cymru).

Challenging stereotypes through encouraging interaction between young asylum seekers and young people from the host community

Some projects with young people have focused on bringing young people from the host community together with young refugees and asylum seekers, in the belief that this interaction would help to break down prejudice and foster better mutual understanding. This process is not always straightforward and takes time and care to achieve results.

Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees (ICAR), City University

ICAR commissioned *foCUS – Connecting Futures*, a film project designed to bring young people together with those they may have felt different from, and to build understanding between them. The project was delivered by Coventry-based Frontline AV and Living Lens, from London. It took place in summer 2005 and involved 25 young people in Peterborough and Coventry. Participants included both young people from the host communities and young refugees and asylum seekers. The intention was as much to document and analyse the process of building understanding, as to build understanding itself.

Evaluation of the project demonstrated some interesting findings, exploring the complex issues involved. The young people clearly demonstrated a growth in mutual understanding, confidence and group work skills, but there was a less consistent result in terms of a change in attitudes. Many shifted their perspectives significantly but, for some, the project did not lead them to question the validity of negative stereotypes. Initial preconceptions were mixed on both sides: young refugees considered that young people from the host community were more sophisticated and knowledgeable but inclined to be greedy and materialistic, whereas the young people from the host community had both negative preconceptions about asylum seekers and a degree of openness. It was also evident that the young refugees generally had a higher level of multi-lingual language skills, and a more informed and wider world view. In terms of the video-making skills, host community participants had a more playful and confident approach, whereas the young refugees brought a greater sense of ‘cine-literacy’. It was also clear that no easy assumptions could be made about the life experience of either group. In Coventry, it became clear that some of the host community young people had suffered traumas and upheavals at least as great as those of the young refugees.

5.2 Artistic practice

This section considers the issues involved in providing support to artists from refugee backgrounds, and the impact achieved through creating cultural productions led by artists who are refugees.

5.2.1 Supporting the professional development of refugee artists

In regions where there is a critical mass of artists who are refugees, some specific development initiatives have developed, as described in Section 4 above. The high levels of take-up suggest that many artists value these services. The benefits can include gaining a higher profile which helps to find paid work as an artist; training in arts in education skills; access to a wider professional network; learning about the structure of the UK arts world and mutual support from other artists in a similar position. Translation is another vital service that is required for refugee writers, which is provided by Exiled Writers’ Ink.

Some of these agencies, such as the Refugees and the Arts Initiative in London, have experienced levels of demand from artists for information and advice that are beyond their capacity to deal with. Hence it is important for these agencies to develop the means to signpost artists to more established, specialised services that can give particular art form advice.

Cultural Co-operation

Cultural Co-operation has been developing a network of London-based artists, known as London Diaspora Capital (LDC), since 1999. The network currently comprises 260 London-based cultural groups and solo artists – nearly 1,000 individual practitioners from over 80 national and

faith communities, across 29 London Boroughs. LDC aims to ‘draw attention to the economic and cultural capital that incoming populations from around the world contribute to London’s – and the nation’s – long-term prosperity’. It generates profile and visibility for BME and refugee artists through an interactive database – Find an Artist – on Cultural Co-operation’s website.

LDC has helped network members to secure performance engagements and earn income in other ways, for example by working in schools and museums, making CDs and so on. Members take part in, and often lead, *London Diaspora Live*, a regular show on Resonance FM, a community radio station. Cultural Co-operation runs professional development training courses and events for LDC members, encouraging the more experienced ones to play a mentoring role. Artists from newly arrived communities have found this kind of peer-learning particularly beneficial.

Cultural Co-operation plans to extend this professional development work through accredited training programmes, one-to-one advice surgeries, individual and group coaching and longer-term organisational development. The aim is to provide artists in this chronically under-represented sector with the skills and opportunities to make a sustainable, professionally managed livelihood from their creative practice.

Artists in Exile Glasgow

The pilot project for Artists in Exile Glasgow (see page 30) was independently evaluated. This initiative resulted from a collaboration between Glasgow Gallery of Modern Art, the Arches and Glasgow City Council (now Culture and Sport Glasgow). The pilot stage included a series of artists’ meetings at the Arches Theatre, followed by a showcase event. Artists in Exile has continued since that time, establishing its own project space, including a gallery, promoting its own events, and participating in other initiatives, including events such as The Glasgow Art Fair, Refugee Week and Merchant City Festival among others.

Key findings from the evaluation stressed the value that the artists put on the opportunity to come together for critical debate and discussion, although they had also found the early stages frustrating at times, because of the ‘talking shop’ element and some language difficulties. Nonetheless they recognised the importance of this discussion of values and aspirations in laying a firm theoretical framework for future development. The artists’ primary interest was in professional development opportunities – ‘the ability to produce and exhibit work, to be judged by their peers, and to contribute to an international community of artists within the city’. The evaluation also found that language skills and self-confidence had developed, social networks had been established and mutual advice on a range of practical needs had been exchanged. As well as valuing the space for critical debate, artists also emphasised the value of the emotional support they had received from participating in the project.

5.2.2 Achieving cultural change and development as a result of new voices in cultures in the UK

New arrivals bring new voices that can enrich and change cultures in the UK. This has been a continuous process throughout history, but it is all the more vital at this point, when the debate on inward migration is constant and heated. Not only can culture provide a vehicle for greater understanding but new and interesting forms of cultural expression can be life enhancing in their own right.

Including the voices and perspectives of refugees within mainstream venue programmes

Theatre Royal Stratford East

Theatre Royal Stratford East has a long history of reflecting the voices of its local communities on its stage. It has significant expertise in developing new writers and bringing them to a mixed audience that will appreciate and find resonance in their work. The theatre is based in Newham, East London, the most culturally diverse borough in the UK (over 140 languages are spoken in its schools) and the one with the most transient population. The local population reflects the wider picture of migration to the UK. In response to this, Theatre Royal has developed a strand of work to engage with these new communities, working with artists from the refugee and asylum seeker community and investing in young people from Newham's new communities, developing them as writers, mentored by more experienced writers. At the time of writing, two adult refugee writers had plays in development, which may be produced at the theatre in the future. The long-term aim is to nurture the careers of younger writers who may emerge from the youth and outreach workshops, thereby increasing the range of creativity and new voices available to the theatre.

Watermans

Watermans, an arts centre in the west London Borough of Hounslow, provides a platform for the work of refugee artists, alongside a programme of participatory work with refugees and asylum seekers, which started in the mid 1990s. In 2002, Watermans was one of the main venues that showcased the work resulting from London Arts Board's funding programme, *Senses of the City*. Watermans reports that many of the artists considered this exposure to have been a turning point in the development of their work in the UK. Since then, other projects have included a collaboration with Virtual Migrants, which resulted in a touring exhibition using video, installation and digital techniques. Over 12,000 people saw the exhibition over two months, or were engaged in the programme of related events at Watermans. The arts centre also presented *Between*, a collection of installation pieces by the Iranian artist, Zory. The work explored the dehumanisation of the refugee, linking this to the ease with which we can all be objectified in the modern world. Placed in the context of a mainstream arts centre, the work had a powerful impact on its audience.

New artistic collaborations – work that changes perceptions

Artangel & Migrant Helpline

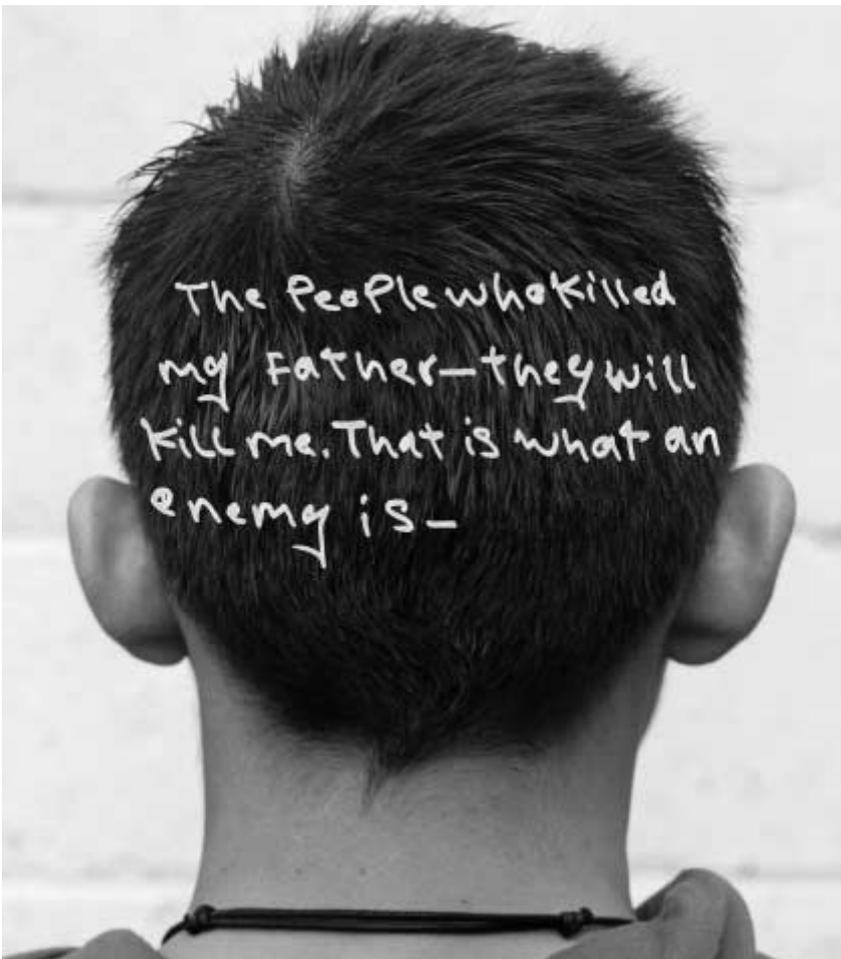
The Margate Exodus was produced by Artangel, in collaboration with Migrant Helpline. The piece formed the basis for Artangel's first feature film³³, *The Margate Exodus*, which re-imagined the biblical story of Exodus in Margate. It drew together participants, organisations and artists from wide-ranging backgrounds and was inspired by an ambitious artistic vision.

The work included the creation of a large ghetto in Margate's disused amusement park, Dreamland and the burning of Anthony Gormley's *Wasteman*, made entirely out of waste found locally. The project included internationally known actors and musicians such as Rufus Wainwright and Brian Eno, and a cast of thousands from Margate and Dover, many of whom connected with this large-scale project through Migrant Helpline. Artangel specifically sought to maintain contact with young people who had engaged with the two-year project, providing funding to cover travel expenses to the final September performance.

(33) *The Margate Exodus* was shown on Channel 4 on 19th November 2007



A scene from Penny Woolcock's *Exodus*, commissioned and produced by Artangel in 2006 and released in 2007. Photo: Thierry Bal



Banner image from *Towards a Promised Land*, by Wendy Ewald, Margate, 2005. Commissioned and produced by Artangel Interaction

The Margate Exodus also tied in with a photographic project co-produced by Migrant Helpline and the artist Wendy Ewald. *Towards a Promised Land* was developed by Wendy Ewald with newly arrived young people, with whom she lived for a while in Migrant Helpline's accommodation in Margate. She produced a series of large banner photographs that formed part of a walk featured in *The Margate Exodus*. Audiences followed an audio trail of the photographs by means of a headset and/or a downloadable podcast. The work was published, by Artangel and Steidl, in a book of images and text.

Vitaly, this work was closely linked in to the refugee/asylum seeker communities in the area. It was informed by the difficulties caused by the

combination of a strong BNP presence in the town and Margate's role as one of the first points of arrival for many refugees and asylum seekers. An ambition for the project was to change local perceptions of refugees and asylum seekers. The local paper, which had frequently included negative stories on the issue of refuge and asylum, highlighted the arts-based work taking place and included a number of positive stories about the project and the participants. The high profile of the event in the national media also helped to raise awareness of the issues of refuge and asylum at the heart of the project.

Hybrid: Fragment

In 2006/7, Hybrid (the authors of this report) developed *Fragment*, a project which explored the construction of cultural barriers and questioned why there is often cultural clash in how individuals and groups respond to each other. The aim of the project was to highlight artistic processes through which people might connect with individuals from different backgrounds. The project brought together 12 artists, six from refugee backgrounds (Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Cameroon, Iran, Togo) and artists from different host communities in the UK (of Irish, English, Caribbean, Nigerian, Malaysian and Pakistani origin). The aim of the project was to explore, through a process of creative action research, how creative practices might be utilised to communicate and challenge understandings of 'us' and 'them'. The resulting work provided a unique blend of flavours and techniques from the journey and experiences of each artist. The work produced formed the basis of a series of discussion sessions with different community groupings in Birmingham.

Tees Valley Arts

The starting point for Tees Valley Arts was in developing links with the Northern Refugee Forum. They developed a substantial programme of projects and events, as part of which they focused on working intensively with four aspiring refugee/asylum seeker writers. This in-depth mentoring and support highlighted some of the challenges faced by artists, not only in their artistic and professional development but also in the challenges raised by their personal circumstances. One of the most promising artists, from Liberia, began writing poetry as a response to his experiences of exile. The work was published locally and he was awarded a place at college, despite having arrived in the UK unable to read or write. He was unable to take this up because his asylum claim was rejected and even a subsequent campaign led by Middlesbrough Council could not alter the decision. Another artist had a series of children's stories translated into English and another went on to study for an MA. Three other refugees who took part now earn their living wholly or partly through music and story telling.

5.2.3 Cultural heritage

Cultural expression is a vital means of affirming personal identity. Refugee and migrant communities have often organised cultural activities to bring the community together, as described elsewhere in this report. This cultural activity tends to remain low profile, and is often self-funded. Where funds are accessed for cultural heritage projects, the projects are often led by refugee or cultural agencies rather than by refugee community organisations (RCOs).

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is an important source of funding for refugee heritage projects and has supported 193 of them, since it was established in 1994. However the HLF reports that only a minority of these are led by RCOs and that there seems to be a lack of capacity within the sector to manage the grant application process. One exception was the grant given to the Roma Support Group, which involved older and younger generations of the East European Roma refugee community in enhancing the knowledge of their cultural heritage.

Museums are also an important source of support for refugees to explore both their own heritage and to learn about the cultural heritage of other communities. National Museums Liverpool (NML) has been working in this area since 2003. NML has not only organised its own programmes, but has also engaged with other museums around the country, in Salford, Leicester and Tyne & Wear. The impact has been significant, demonstrating to other agencies, such as social services and refugee support agencies, that ‘museums are a place for integration’ – a cultural hub where refugees and asylum seekers can ‘find out where they live and meet other people³⁴’.

Below are two examples of organisations that were set up to support new communities of refugees in the UK. Both organisations have had some success in attracting funds for their cultural activities, including support from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

Bosnia & Herzegovina UK Network

For staff at Bosnia House in Birmingham, arts and creativity is one of a number of services that they offer. They currently run a range of programmes, including dance classes and during 2006-7 they co-curated an exhibition with Leicester Museum. As part of the exhibition they worked with Jubilee Arts to produce large banners. These picked up on some of the skills in crafts and textiles that are used within the Bosnian community.

The dance classes are mixed-gender and involve young people aged between seven and 18. They are seen as a source of exercise as well as enabling access to cultural heritage and promoting greater understanding for young people who have grown up in the UK. When the Bosnian community first settled in the UK, there was a period of instability and there was a time when no children joined the class. Slowly this has changed, as families have become more settled and made the decision to remain in the UK. This transition has been evident in the make-up of the dance classes.

IRMO (Indo American Refugee and Migrant Organisation)

IRMO was set up in 1984 as Chile Democratico, to support refugees from the Pinochet regime in Chile. It changed its name in 1994 to reflect a wider remit, working with refugees from other Latin American countries. IRMO’s core work is to provide welfare, legal advice and ESOL classes. It has always been involved in cultural activities, seeing this as crucial to its role in supporting its communities. IRMO has been working in partnership for seven years with a voluntary, youth-led group called New Generation. The focus of New Generation is to build a sense of community and to empower young people through the arts. Its activities have included folk dance and traditional music but there is now more of a focus on film and photography. New Generation is developing international links. There was, for example, a recent exchange with young people from a Palestinian refugee camp. The group sees the benefits as giving newly arrived young people a sense of identity, supporting them to establish their place in a new society and helping to address the questions raised by the children of refugees.

5.3 Strategic interventions

The number of strategic interventions over the past ten years aimed at supporting the use of the arts in addressing social agendas and the development of artists who have come to the UK as refugees has been fairly small, but all of those surveyed appear either to have delivered strategic benefits, or to have the potential to do so.

(34) Quoted from the case study on National Museums Liverpool on the Baring Foundation website, which also has case studies on other Baring Foundation-funded arts and refugees projects. www.baringfoundation.org.uk/

Three different approaches are considered below. In addition to these, it is important to note the impact achieved by the dedicated funding and support programmes run by the former London Arts Board, the Baring Foundation and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. More information on these programmes is given in section 4.2.4 above.

5.3.1 Refugee Week: the impact of a major, UK-wide event on artistic development

About 75% of all Refugee Week events across the UK are arts based, ranging from *Celebrating Sanctuary* (the large-scale opening event usually held on London's South Bank) to arts in schools projects and a host of performances, exhibitions, film screenings, literary events and workshops held across the UK. Refugee Week is therefore an important opportunity for refugee artists to gain profile for their work. It is also used as a focus by many participatory arts projects to showcase the work created by participants.

The impact of Refugee Week on refugee artists has been measured in some regions, as reported in the evaluation of Refugee Week 2006³⁵. The feedback from artists demonstrated that many had found the event a useful means of raising their profile and gaining new bookings. The report considered, however, that there was significant potential to achieve further development in the strategic benefit for artists. For example, it was recommended that refugee artists should be more involved in the planning stages of the event, that mainstream arts organisations should be encouraged to become more directly involved and that artists' experiences within Refugee Week should be more consistently evaluated.

In some cases, the programme of Refugee Week is now evolving to include work that stretches and plays with the expectations of the nature of the work that might be undertaken in this context. From an artistic perspective, this is a valuable progression as it demonstrates that Refugee Week is supporting artists in the development of challenging and innovative work. These projects³⁶ have included exhibitions, poetry schemes and a controversial live art project, *Fame Asylum*, led by Richard Dedomenici, which created a boy band of young asylum seekers, with the process filmed for a Channel 4 documentary³⁷.

Insomnia

The exhibition, *Insomnia*, is an example of how Refugee Week has given a platform to work that is more innovative and reflective. *Insomnia* was commissioned by the Red Cross. The exhibition was shown at the Bargehouse Gallery at the Oxo Tower in London in 2005. *Insomnia* was an analogy for the inability to access a place of security, rest and recuperation and presented visual arts works, texts and poems, with a series of performances, discussions and readings. The exhibition took its inspiration from Emmanuel Levinas, a Lithuanian-born philosopher whose approach was explained on the Refugee Week website: 'Levinas describes insomnia as those certain times when the boundary between what is inside and outside ourselves disappears, and that which we experience we are no longer able to internalise, control or make sense of...the state of insomniac vigilance or wakefulness Levinas also likens to the experience of meeting a new person – the other, a face.' The exhibition included performance art and installations addressing these themes.

(35) Scott-Flynn, Nick (2007) *The Evaluation of the Refugee Week 2006*

(36) More information on these projects can be found on Refugee Week website, <http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk/Events/Examples+of+Refugee+Week+events/>

(37) This can be viewed on Channel Four's on-line on-demand service 4OD.

Katherina Radeva's sculptural performance, *Settling Dirt*, used the artist's presence within 'a simple environment of iconic images and objects to create a gentle but unsettling contemplation on abandonment, displaced comfort, unfulfilled desire and loss of past times from the lived experiences of her own body within a foreign society'³⁸.

5.3.2 The strategic impact of establishing a dedicated post for arts and refugees development

Scottish Refugee Council

The Scottish Refugee Council (SRC) has developed an effective strategic approach, which has had the support of a dedicated arts development post, partly supported by the Scottish Arts Council. The establishment of the post has been critical to maintaining the kind of momentum for strategic development identified as vital by many people consulted in the course of this research. The original post was solely focused on Refugee Week. It now also has responsibility for supporting a year-round programme of arts projects, the development of strategic relationships in support of arts development, and working closely with the SRC's press office to attract positive media coverage.

The SRC does not directly deliver arts projects but works with partners such as the Village Storytelling Centre in Glasgow, Glasgow Media Access, Street Level Photoworks and Confab, a development agency for the written and spoken word. Other partners include NGOs and voluntary sector groups including Amnesty International, British Red Cross and Oxfam in Scotland.

Arts Council England, South East and Refugee Action

A dedicated arts and refugees post resulted from a collaboration between Arts Council England, South East and Refugee Action. The postholder has worked to increase the level of arts and refugees funding applications to Arts Council England and other agencies, providing support and advice to over 30 groups and individuals over the course of a year. This has worked particularly well when backed up by the support of other community development officers working with refugees. There has also been a focus on professional development, providing advice on how to find jobs and training, to hold exhibitions, publish and perform, as well as producing a bulletin outlining job and training opportunities.

The benefits of such posts are evident from the examples quoted above and elsewhere, for example in Manchester, where the *Exodus* programme of Community Arts North West has a dedicated coordinator and in Wales, where the Welsh Refugee Council has had an arts development post.

5.3.3 The strategic impact achieved by an independent agency with a longstanding focus on arts and refugees

Creative Exchange is a cultural development and research agency founded by Helen Gould. The organisation has particular interests in international development and social inclusion, and developed a focus on arts and refugee issues in the late 1990s. This began with a study on the creative dimension of humanitarian aid in the Kosovo crisis, in 1999. As part of the scoping study for this project, Creative Exchange considered work taking place with Kosovan refugees in the UK, as well as in the Balkans. This sparked an interest which led to Creative Exchange

(38) From the catalogue for *Insomnia*, by Lois Keidan, Director of the Live Art Development Agency

initiating its research project, *A Sense of Belonging*. This first national study of the arts and refugees in the UK included a conference in London, in 2002 and a body of research that culminated in the publication of the same name, in 2004.

A Sense of Belonging was a seminal report and included a number of illuminating case studies. Creative Exchange has remained active in this field. It participated in the National Refugee Integration Forum conference in 2006, which gave a platform to discuss the use of culture in refugee integration, reaching senior ministerial advisers and Home Office staff. The organisation has also been funded by Arts Council England (through the Treasury-funded cultural leadership programme) to facilitate a peer leadership network for arts practitioners working with refugees and asylum seekers. The aim is to develop their thinking on issues such as ethical practice and how to understand and influence policy development.

6 Conclusions

The research and consultation process has identified many issues that need to be addressed to support the effective use of the arts in addressing social agendas, and in capitalising on the intellectual and creative capital offered by artists who have come to the UK as refugees. This section summarises the key issues and conclusions.

6.1 Participation

6.1.1 The development of good practice – an ethical approach

Refugee and asylum seeker participants are likely to be facing major pressures in their lives that make it hard to give a regular and consistent commitment to arts activities. This means that there is a need to develop a flexible and responsive method of working that respects the dignity and privacy of individuals and allows them to benefit, even if they are unable to attend regularly.

Several experienced arts and refugees practitioners emphasised the particular need for an ethical approach in working with refugees and asylum seekers. Participants may wish to tell their stories of loss and transition, but there should be no expectation that this will be their only interest and it should be their choice whether to offer these stories or not. There needs to be a clear understanding of the demarcation between arts activities that may have a therapeutic benefit but that are not primarily set up for this purpose, and the delivery of arts-based therapy programmes by professional therapists.

6.1.2 The need for more training and professional development opportunities for arts practitioners working with refugees and asylum seekers

The majority of practitioners consulted during this research put the need for more opportunities to develop their skills and share good practice with others in the field high on their list of priorities, second only to the need for sustained financial support. Opportunities such as the Creative Exchange Cultural Leadership programme and the Baring Foundation exchange days are highly valued and it would be useful if a means could be found to build on these for the future.

6.1.3 Planning, consultation and partnership

As with all development, the strongest projects are based on sound planning and consultation. The contributors to this research emphasised the value of strong partnerships, but also the challenges involved in creating and maintaining them. A partnership approach ensures that planning is considered from multiple perspectives, acknowledging the needs of refugees and asylum seekers as well as how arts practice can best engage people and effect change in their lives. The multi-faceted education that occurs through partnerships often results in productive interchange and shared objectives. The issues of partnership are discussed in the Paul Hamlyn Foundation's interim evaluation report on its refugee funding programme, referring to the particular need for partnership in working with refugees, and the particular challenges that arise in this context.

6.1.4 The challenges of addressing community cohesion

Many asylum seekers have been dispersed into areas of social and economic deprivation, encountering high levels of hostility and suspicion. Organisations working in these areas stress the need to avoid a didactic and confrontational approach and the success that can be achieved through a more thoughtful and imaginative way of working. Projects located in such areas can also face challenges in ensuring the personal safety of both participants and practitioners.

6.1.5 The difficulty of working with a weak and fragmented infrastructure

The refugee community sector is highly fragmented and can be difficult to engage with, given issues of lack of capacity. In some areas of the country, there is also a lack of a significant infrastructure of refugee support organisations, making it harder for arts organisations that want to establish effective links with individuals and communities.

6.2 Artists and artistic/cultural development

6.2.1 The need to avoid labelling versus the value of specifically targeted services

Artists who are refugees or asylum seekers identify primarily as artists. They want opportunities to meet with other artists in a similar situation to theirs and particularly value the peer support these can provide. Refugee-specific artists' networks clearly do have a valuable role to play, since many artists consulted in the course of this research are not linked into mainstream networks and will only find their way to general artists' support services through specific initiatives that are linked in to the refugee sector. However, the artists were all clear that, whilst they might value specific help, they do not want to be labelled as 'refugee artists'.

6.2.2 The particular challenges facing artists who are refugees

Artists face many of the challenges that other refugee professionals face – the loss of networks, the difficulty of navigating a new professional infrastructure and the loss of access to essential equipment. It could be argued that these challenges are even more significant for artists, given the inherent difficulties for all artists in establishing a profile and an income within the arts world in the UK.

6.2.3 The space to stretch and expand artistic practice

Artists do not want to be limited to a constant examination of their experience of exile, even though this may influence their work. Many bespoke commissions and productions are focused on building awareness of the refugee situation. Refugee artists have commented that they find it hard to access opportunities within the mainstream, particularly since this requires them to compete with artists who are far more experienced in submitting applications and more familiar with the UK arts sector. This means that refugee artists can find their opportunities limited to bespoke, refugee-focused commissions and productions.

6.3 Strategic impact

6.3.1 The need for strategic leadership at a national level

In England, there is no clear strategic lead on arts and refugee issues from either Arts Council England's national office or from the Home Office's Borders and Immigration Agency. (In Scotland, by contrast, there has been a clear strategic lead from the Scottish Refugee Council, supported by the Scottish Arts Council.) However, in both cases there has been recognition of the value of cultural interventions in addressing refugee integration and community cohesion and funding has been awarded to arts and refugee projects. If a more strategic approach could be adopted across the UK, it would help to maximise the benefits that could result from a greater use of culture in addressing key government agendas, and to create a strategic framework across the UK to underpin the emerging arts and refugees sector. The adoption of a cultural participation indicator within the recently published Public Service Agreement 21: Build more cohesive, empowered and active communities could give the impetus for such a development.

6.3.2 The diversity of refugee communities

The sheer diversity and range of refugee communities and the widespread of needs and interests pose a challenge to strategic agencies responsible for developing new interventions to stimulate arts and cultural development. Even within specific communities, there can be significant differences and hostilities. It is therefore essential that arts and cultural agencies work in partnership with the refugee sector to ensure that their interventions are appropriate and developed with a clear awareness of the needs of the refugee communities they aim to support.

6.3.3 The lack of capacity for evaluation

Although most organisations reflect on their practice and keep records of outputs and impacts achieved, there is little systematic collation of evaluation material other than in the form of reports to funders. This limits opportunities for learning within individual organisations and across the sector. Independent evaluations are rare, partly due to lack of funds. There are some useful academic evaluations of arts and refugees projects, but given the growing interest in refugee issues within the academic sector, it would be helpful for evaluation partnerships to be brokered between the academic and arts and refugees sectors. The approach adopted by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation is an interesting model that could be developed by other funders⁴⁰.

These conclusions form the basis for the recommendations set out, in full, in section 4 of the Summary (pages 7-9). Our ambition is that the implementation of all or some of the recommendations will help to inform and support the activities of organisations and individuals working, in and through the arts, with refugees and asylum seekers; the progression and integration of artists who are currently refugees or asylum seekers; and the decision making of policy makers and funders, who help to shape the wider environment in which all this activity takes place.

(40) The Paul Hamlyn Foundation Evaluation Resource Pack is available at www.phf.org.uk/page.asp?id=11

Appendix 1: Methodology

This appendix gives further details of the methodology employed in the research for this report.

1.1 Desk research

A cross section of journals and publications was accessed, the vast majority of which considered issues specifically relating to non arts practice and refugees/asylum seekers. The focus was on writing produced since 2000, following the introduction of the dispersal policy. A bibliography is at Appendix 2.

1.2 Artists' interviews

An ethnographic approach was adopted with artists encouraged to tell their stories and talk about their experiences of 'arts' and 'refugees'. These are autobiographical stories. Clearly there are research issues to be aware of here as in telling one's story one is always selective. This selectivity can vary from day to day, dependent on the experiences and thoughts at the forefront on any one day. However selectivity takes place at every level of engagement, research is always, by necessity, selective; filtering can take place at many levels. These autobiographical artists' stories were therefore considered to be as important as any other source of data collation.

The identification of artists for the autobiographical feedback was based on a matrix which included a range of indicators, art form, current employment/income generation (as an artist or not), ethnic/cultural background, approximate age, gender, geographic location in the UK, length of time in the UK, level of arts-based training (formal qualification here or abroad), means of artistic engagement – including participatory arts, socially engaged work, practice led, issue led etc.). The summaries of artists' interviews are at Appendix 6.4.

1.3 Stakeholder interviews

Interviews were held with individuals within organisations with strategic responsibilities in this area and with key individuals who have been closely engaged in this field over a number of years. Most of these were undertaken by phone, with some face-to-face interviews where possible. A list of consultees is at Appendix 3.

1.4 Interviews with organisations involved in the delivery of arts work with refugees and asylum seekers

In order to produce findings relevant to the impact dimension of the brief, we collated a list of almost 200 organisations engaged in arts work with refugees and asylum seekers, derived from our discussions with strategic agencies such as the Refugee Councils, Refugee Action, local authorities, funding agencies and others, and from on-line research. Interviews were undertaken with 48 organisations, and documentation provided by them was reviewed, including evaluation reports. These interviews are drawn on in the body of the research.

The selection of organisations to interview was drawn up against a comprehensive matrix (see below). This helped us to achieve a representative overview. The selection was driven to a certain extent by practical considerations including the ease of making contact with the selected organisations, and the degree of evaluation they were able to provide.

Issues addressed	Geographic location	Art form	Demographic target
Artists			
Diversify programming			
New artistic collaborations			
Arts development/Artists development			
Cultural exchange/Growing cultural awareness			
Maintaining cultural heritage			
Audience development			
Strategic Intervention			
Changes to strategy/actions			
Sector development			
Participation			
Social cohesion			
Community development			
Challenging representation			
Challenging isolation			
Breaking down stereotypes			
Increased engagement			
Issue-led work: regeneration, health, social care, mental health			
Tackling racism			
Consultation			
Two-way education			
Raising inter/national awareness			
Building personal skills, self esteem, self confidence, communication			
Increased language skills			

Geographic location

The research sought to identify work taking place in a range of geographical spaces within England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. This included urban and rural locations, as well as drawing upon a range of cities, districts and boroughs.

Demographic target

Demography was also considered; both that of refugees and asylum seekers but also the demography of the region or area in which they were based. The aim was to compare whether projects that took place in regions with large minority ethnic communities had contrastingly different experiences to those with a smaller minority ethnic demographic.

Art form

In developing discussion around art forms the intention was to encourage people to consider art in the fullest sense, using terms such as creativity, cultural engagement and entertainment.

It was necessary to use these terms as people in the voluntary and community sector often do not identify cultural events such as an evening of music and dance as 'arts projects' – sometimes perceiving arts as solely meaning visual arts.

Within the research we included all art forms recognised by Arts Council England, as below, but also included film and documentation that was creative in its approach.

- Crafts
- Dance
- Drama/Theatre
- Multi-Art Form/Inter-disciplinary
- Multimedia Film/Video
- Music
- Live Art
- Visual Arts
- Writing/Literature

1.5 Focus groups

The focus groups had a very specific role, which was to draw in the thinking of those experienced in this field in order to contribute to the production of a range of relevant and realistic recommendations. Two focus groups, involving 23 people, were held, one in Manchester and the other in London. The list of focus group participants is at Appendix 3.

Appendix 2: Bibliography

- Audit Commission Briefing (June, 2000) *Another Country: Implementing dispersal under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999*
- Blaker, Candida (2003) *Senses of the City and London Arts' support for refugees 1999-2002*, London Arts
- Bloch, Alice & Schuster, Liza (2005) 'At the extremes of exclusion: Deportation, detention and dispersal', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (28:3, pp. 491-512). An article on the Home Office publication *Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain*, 2002
- Griffiths, David, Sigona, Nando & Zetter, Roger (2005) *Refugee Community Organisations and Dispersal: Networks, Resources and Social Capital*, The Policy Press
- Fortier, Anne-Marie (2005) 'Pride politics and multiculturalist citizenship', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (28:3, pp. 559-578)
- Flynn, Don (2005) 'New borders, new management: The dilemmas of modern immigration policies', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (28:3, pp. 463-490)
- Gilbert, Alan & Koser, Khalid (2006) 'Coming to the UK: What do Asylum-Seekers Know About the UK before Arrival?' *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (32:7, pp. 1209 -1225)
- Gould, Helen (2005) *A Sense of Belonging*, Creative Exchange
- Griffiths, David, Sigona, Nando & Zetter, Roger (2006) 'Integrative Paradigms, Marginal Reality: Refugee Community Organisations and Dispersal in Britain', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (32:5, pp. 881-898)
- HM Treasury (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 21: Build more cohesive, empowered and active communities*
- The Home Office (2005) *Controlling our borders: Making migration work for Britain – five year strategy for asylum and immigration*
- The Home Office (2002) *Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain*
- Hutton, Ceri & Lukes, Sue (2004) *Fugitive Arts: Arts and Refugees in the South East of England* (Executive Summary), Arts Council England, South East and Refugee Action
- ICAR (2007) *Reporting Asylum – the UK Press and the Effectiveness of the PCC Guidelines*, City University, London
- Khan N. (1977) *The Arts Britain Ignores*, Arts Council of Great Britain, Commission for Racial Equality and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation
- Modic, Kate & Kirby, Ron (1997) *Refugee Arts: A Strategy for Successful Settlement: A manual for refugee service workers and refugee artists*, Institute for Cultural Partnerships
- Lemke, T (2001) 'The birth of bio-politics: Michel Foucault's lecture at the Collège de France on neo-liberal governmentality', *Economy and Society* (30:2, pp. 190-207)
- Lewis, G. (2005) 'Welcome to the margins: Diversity, tolerance, and policies of exclusion', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (28:3 pp. 536-558)
- MORI (2002) *Attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers: A survey of public opinion*. Study conducted for Refugee Week, Refugee Council
- O'Neill, Maggie & Tobolewska, Bea (2001) *Towards A Cultural Strategy For Working With Refugees And Persons Seeking Asylum In The East Midlands*, Arts and Humanities Research Board and East Midlands Arts
- Pitcher, Jane & Thompson, Jane (2007) *An Evaluation of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation's Fund for Refugee and Asylum Seeker Young People* (Interim report), The Paul Hamlyn Foundation
- Rotas, Alexandra (2006) *A Soft Touch: Visual Artists from Refugee Populations (UK) and Representations of Asylum in Contemporary Art* (PhD thesis)
- Rotas, Alexandra (2004) 'Is 'Refugee Art' Possible?', *Third Text* (Vol 18, Issue 1)
- Salter, Katherine (2000/2001) *Imagining a Perfect World*. Evaluation of the Young Refugees Arts Project, The King's Fund
- Tyler, Pip & Khan, Nahida (2006) *Funding For Refugee and Asylum Related Projects: Availability and Access*. Produced by the National Consortia Support Team on behalf of the National Consortia Co-ordinating Group
- Welsh Refugee Council (2007) *Response from the Welsh Refugee Council to the Wales Arts Review*
- Yuval-David, N., Athias, F. & Kofman, E. (2005) 'Secure borders and safe haven and the gendered politics of belonging: Beyond social cohesion', *Ethnic & Racial Studies* (28:3, pp. 513-535)

Appendix 3: Consultees

3.1 Interviews

Arts and cultural organisations

Christine Bacon, Director, Actors for Refugees

Colin Virr, Education Manager, Aldeburgh Productions

Chelsea McKinnon, Administrator, Artists in Exile Glasgow

Hilary Hughes, Director, B Arts

Ian Gasse, Development Co-ordinator, Banner Theatre

Sandra Mills, Youth Arts Development Officer, Chichester Festival Theatre

Andy Horn, Exhibitions Curator, Craftspace

Helen Gould, Director, Creative Exchange

Prakash Daswani, Chief Executive, Cultural Co-operation

Tim Yealland, Artistic Associate Education, English Touring Opera

Erin McNeaney, Exodus Coordinator, Exodus/Community Arts North West

Linda Strudwick, Director, Heads Together

Jack Shuttleworth, Outreach Officer, The Herbert Museum and Art Gallery

Carolyn Axtell, Development Manager, Hi8us South

Sarah Walker, Project Manager, New Londoners, Hi8us South

Alison Jeffers and Rachel Finn, In Place of War

Katie Bruce, Social Inclusion Co-ordinator, Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow Museums

Julia Farrington, Director and Ade Lukes, Index Arts (Index on Censorship)

Stuart Brown, Regional Co-ordinator, Long Journey Home

Aileen Ritchie, Writer in Residence, Mitchell Library, Glasgow

Douglas Noble, Community Projects Manager, Music for Change

Shenaz Kedar, City of Refuge Programme Manager, New Writing Partnership, Norwich

Stella Barnes, Head of Arts in Education, Oval House Theatre

Tiffany Fairey, Director, PhotoVoice

Theodros Abraham, Reconnect

Stella Barnes, Chair, Refugees and the Arts Initiative

Tricia Yarwood, Refugee & Asylum Seeker Arts Agency

Beverley Davies, Embrace Project Officer, Salford Museum

Alice Joseph-Harney, Development Worker-New Arrivals, Soft Touch

Ann Shrosbree, Director, Small World Theatre

Iseult Timmermans, Projects Co-ordinator, Streetlevel Photoworks (by email)

Rowena Sommerville, Director of Programmes, Tees Valley Arts

Kerry Michael, Artistic Director and Chief Executive and Jan Sharkey Dodds, Head of Youth Arts & Education, Theatre Royal Stratford East

Eithne Nightingale, Director of Learning and Interpretation, Victoria and Albert Museum

Rachel Smillie, Director, Village Storytelling Centre

Jan Lennox, Director, Watermans Arts Centre

Anna Bowman, Head of Education, Yorkshire Sculpture Park

Arts Councils

Hassan Mahamdallie, senior strategy officer (diversity), Arts Council England national office

ACE regional offices

Hutton Lo, Officer (Diversity), East

Utkarsha Joshi, Officer (Diversity), East Midlands

Cheryl Gallagher, Officer (Diversity), North East

Padma Rao, Officer (decibel), North East

Paulette Clunie, Officer (Diversity), North West

Julia Keenan, Officer (Social inclusion), North West

Caron Wint, Officer (decibel), North West

Julie McCarthy, Officer (Social inclusion), North West

Mary Shek, Officer (Diversity) South East

Joanne Peters, Officer (Diversity & Social inclusion), South West

Abid Hussein, Officer (Diversity), West Midlands

Emily Penn, Officer (Social inclusion), Yorkshire

Milica Robson, Officer (Diversity) London

Femi Folurunso, Diversity Officer, Scottish Arts Council

Edel Murphy, Arts Development Officer for Community Arts and Social Inclusion, Arts Council of Northern Ireland

Diane Hebb, Head of Planning and Development, Arts Council of Wales (by email)

Other funding bodies

Gill Aconley, Grants Officer, Allen Lane Foundation

David Cutler, Director, Baring Foundation

Ann Bridgwood, Head of Evaluation & Research and Jill Wiltshire, Senior Policy Adviser, Big Lottery Fund

James Middleton, Grants Manager, Camelot Foundation

Rachel Billett, UK Grants Officer, Comic Relief

David Farnsworth, Head of Refugee and Asylum Seekers, Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund

Barbra Mazur, Grants Officer, Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Steve Dewar, Director of Funding and Development, The King's Fund

Ailsa Holland, Programme Director, Lankelly Chase Foundation

Birgitta Clift, Head of Grant Making South, Lloyds TSB Foundation

Julie Larner, Information Manager, Migrant Helpline

Tim Joss, Director, Rayne Foundation

Nick Scott Flynn, Head of Refugee Services, British Red Cross

Emma Stone, Principal Research Manager, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Foundation

Nick Lane, Head of Communities and Inclusion, Heritage Lottery Fund

Alex Sobel and Alex McLeod, RISE (Refugee Initiative for Social Entrepreneurs) (Southern & Northern offices)

Government agencies/departments

Michael Dewey, Project Manager, and Stephen Blackmore, Home Office

Andrew Lewis, Policy Adviser, Department of Culture Media and Sport

Ian Bennett – Creative Industries Sector, Leader North West Development Agency

Jon Williams, LORECA Project Co-ordinator, London Development Agency – LORECA (London Refugee Economic Action)

Clare Marett, Head of Communities and Culture, Government Office South East

Pauline Beaumont, Chief Executive, Culture North East

Libby Raper, Chief Executive, Culture North West

Individuals

Naseem Khan

Sue Lukes

Phyllida Shaw

Local authorities

Charles Bell, Head of Arts Development, Glasgow City Council

Doff Pollard, Arts & Leisure Development Officer, Teignbridge District Council

Elaine Richmond, Outreach Information Officer, Libraries, Museums and Arts, Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council

Lucy Bryson, Policy and Development Coordinator for Asylum Seekers and Refugees Partnership, Community Safety Team, Brighton and Hove City Council

Deb Slade, Creative Development Team Manager, Walsall Creative Development Team, Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Sarah Richards, Arts Manager, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council

Samantha Dawson, Arts Development Officer - Community Engagement (Arts and Festivals), Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust

Cathryn Ravenhall, Community Arts Officer, Warwickshire County Council

Refugee Council

Tim Finch, Director of Communications, Head Office

Almir Koldzic, UK Refugee Week Team, Head Office

Abbie Wallace, Arts & Cultural Development Officer, Scottish Refugee Council

Anna Nicholls, Policy & Campaigns Coordinator, Welsh Refugee Council

Refugee Council Offices

Dave Brown, Yorkshire & Humberside

Dagmar Grafton, East of England

Demelza Jones, West Midlands

Anne Marie Leach, Oakington Detention Centre

Refugee Action Regional Offices

Demelza Jones, Birmingham

Eleanor Harris, Bristol

Mani Thapa, Leeds

Gail Pringle, Leicester

Caroline Gashi, Liverpool

Tim Hilton, Manchester

Alma Rephsa, Nottingham

Jane Robinson, Plymouth

Tony McCarthy, Portsmouth

Refugee Organisations

Tricia Yarwood, Birmingham Lifeline

Selim Zlomuzica, Bosnia & Herzegovina UK Network

Dally Panesar, Chief Executive, Community Integration Partnership

Rafael Ayala Silva, Co-ordinator, IRMO (Indo American Refugee and Migrant Organisation)

Parvaneh Soltani, Art Director, Iranian Association

Universities

Adrian Chappell, Arts Learning Partnership, London Metropolitan University

Maggie O'Neill, Loughborough University

Rachel Finn, In Place of War, Manchester University

Ali Jeffers, In Place of War, Manchester University

Sophie Wainwright, Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees (ICAR)

3.2 Focus group participants

London

Karen Taylor, ACE London
David Farnsworth, Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund
Almir Koldzic, Refugee Week, Refugee Council
Nathalie Teitler, ACE, South East
Emily Hunka, Greenwich & Lewisham Young People's Theatre
Suzanne Lee, All Change Arts
Liz Orton, PhotoVoice
Sophie Wainwright, ICAR
Candida Blaker, Independent
Mohammed Hussaini, Artist
Carlos Reyes-Manzo, Artist

Manchester

Caron Wint, ACE North West
Julie McCarthy, ACE North West
Eithne Nightingale, Victoria and Albert Museum
Samantha Dawson, Wigan MBC
Tricia Yarwood, Birmingham Lifeline
Rachel Finn, In Place of War
Linda Strudwick, Heads Together
Erin McNeaney, Exodus
David Martin, Community Arts North West
Alison Jeffers, PhD student, In Place of War, Manchester University
Beverley Davies, Salford Museum
Alam Amin, Artist

3.3 Organisations to which questionnaires were sent

Councils for Voluntary Service

West Midlands (36)
East Midlands (34)
East (40)
South West (39)
South East (65)

Yorkshire (38)
North East (23)
North West (47)
Greater London (34)

Race Equality Councils

East (5)
West Midlands (9)
East Midlands (8)
South West (9)
South East (10)
Yorkshire (7)
North East (1)
North West (9)
Greater London (20)

Refugee organisations

Refugee Council, including regional offices (4)
Refugee Action, including regional offices (10)

Regional Development Agencies

Advantage West Midlands
Yorkshire Forward
North West Regional Development Agency
One North East
East Midlands Regional Development Agency
South West Regional Development Agency
London Development Agency
South East England Development Agency

Regional Cultural Consortia

Culture West Midlands
Culture North East
Culture North West
Culture South East
Yorkshire Culture
Culture South West

Other regional and local government bodies

Government Offices for the Regions (9)
Association of Councils of the Thames Valley Region (ACTV)
East of England Regional Assembly
Greater London Authority
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Government Association
Local Authority Arts Development Officers (336)
Local Government Association
West Midlands Local Government Association
South West Local Government Association

Funders

The Allen Lane Foundation
Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA)
Awards for All
Barrow Cadbury Trust
Big Lottery Fund
Camelot Foundation
City Parochial Trust
Comic Relief
Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund
Joseph Rowntree Foundation
Jill Franklin Charitable Trust
Heritage Lottery Fund
King's Fund
Lankelly Chase Foundation
Lloyds TSB Foundation
London Councils
The Mackintosh Foundation
Rayne Foundation
Red Cross
RISE (Refugee Initiative for Social Entrepreneurs)
Runnymede Foundation
West Yorkshire Grants

Non-departmental public bodies

Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA)

Appendix 4: Organisations and initiatives undertaking arts and refugees activity in the UK

The following lists have been compiled largely by research on grants awarded by a range of bodies including:

- Arts Council England
- Scottish Arts Council
- Arts Council of Northern Ireland
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Baring Foundation
- Paul Hamlyn Foundation
- Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund
- Lankelly Chase Foundation
- Lloyds TSB Foundation
- RISE

Other information has been supplied by Arts Council England regional officers, local authorities and organisations working in the field.

Any list of this nature will inevitably miss some organisations that should have been included, and will be out of date almost as soon as it is published. However it was felt that this list would give an indication of the size and scope of this growing sector, and could help organisations in identifying others who are undertaking work in this field.

The list does not include work undertaken by local authorities, nor does it take in the full range of organisations that undertake projects during Refugee Week. It will also under-represent refugee-led cultural groups.

The term organisation is used, although some of those listed are in fact projects hosted by other organisations and/or are not yet constituted as independent organisations. Generally, projects are listed under their own name rather than that of the host agency when there is clearly a separate identity.

4.1 Organisations working nationally or in more than one region

Afro TV
Actors for Refugees
Bosnia & Herzegovina UK Network
British Red Cross
Creative Exchange
ICAR (Information Centre on Arts and Refugees, at City University)
Music in Detention
Refugee Action
British Refugee Council
Scottish Refugee Council
Welsh Refugee Council

4.2 England

East

Aldeburgh Productions
Bedford African Community Support Project
Bedford Creative Arts
Cambridge Refugee Support Group
Norwich New Writing Partnership
Precious Cargo
SeaChange, Great Yarmouth
Skillz
Theatre Resource

East Midlands

Charnwood Arts
Congo Support Group, Derby
Derwent Community Association
Farside Music
Five Leaves Publications
Leicester City Museums
Long Journey Home
Missing Pigeon Theatre Company
Rega Arts
Soft Touch
Somali Support Group
World in One County

London

Actors for Refugees
All Change Arts
Arcola Theatre

Artists in Exile
Art in the Park
Bang Edutainment Ltd
Bridging Arts
British Afghan Women's Society
Cardboard Citizens
Cultural Co-operation
Enfield Central African Refugee Community
Exiled Writers' Ink
Full Frontal Theatre
Grand Union
Green Candle
Greenwich & Lewisham Young People's Theatre
Index Arts (Writers and Scholars Educational Trust)
Hi8us South
Hillingdon Refugee Support Group
Hoxton Hall
Ice and Fire Theatre Company
Iranian Association
IRMO (Indo American Refugee and Migrant Organisation)
Leave To Remain
Live Art Development Agency
Living Lens
Lyric Theatre Hammersmith
Mayhem Theatre
National Portrait Gallery
Oval House Theatre
Oxford House
Pan Centre for Intercultural Arts
Para Active Theatre
PhotoVoice
Pillion Productions
Project Phakama UK
Reconnect
Refugees and the Arts Initiative
Refugee Arts Project
ReWrite
Roma Support Group
National Theatre
Southwark Refugee Artists Network
Theatre Royal Stratford East
Tricycle Theatre
Victoria and Albert Museum
Watermans Arts Centre
Write to Life

North East

Culture Shock
CCALL (Culture Creativity Art Learning and Language)
Ivorian Community Association
Live Theatre
Media 19
MultiVerse
Nomad Cultural Forum
NECDAF
North Tyneside Art Studio
North East Council for Refugees and Asylum Seekers
North of England Refugee Service
Sage Gateshead
SOKOL
South Tyneside Libraries
Teesside One World Centre
Tees Valley Arts
Tyne and Wear Museums

North West

42nd Street
Afrocats Community Group
Ahmed Iqval Ullah Education Trust
The Bluecoat
Community Arts North West – Exodus
Electric Boogie
Greater Manchester Refugees Arts Partnership
In Place of War (University of Manchester)
Karibu
Lime Arts
Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse Theatres
Manchester Aid to Kosovo
Manchester Museum
National Museums Liverpool
Nia Kuumba
Oldham Coliseum
OK Studios
Manchester Refugee Support Network
Royal Exchange Theatre
Salford Museum and Art Gallery
Sola
Tameside African Refugee Association

Virtual Migrants
Walk the Plank

South East

Asylum Seekers' Activities Project
Bandbazi
BBC Radio Berkshire
Bows Art
Creating Roots
Chichester Festival Theatre
Fusion Arts
IDOLRICH TheatreRotto Productions
InTENCity
Kent Refugee Action Group
Migrant Helpline
Mother Tongue Counselling
Music for Change
Oxford Brookes University, Connecting Communities
Oxford Literary Festival
Partnership Community Safety Team
Pukaar Project
Real Time Video

South West

Community At Heart
Eden Arts
Miren Theatre Company
Wolf and Water
Young Bristol

West Midlands

ARC
ArtSites
B Arts
Banner Theatre
Birmingham Rep Theatre
Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery
Community Integration Partnership
Craftspace
English Touring Opera (Wolverhampton project)
Foleshill Multi-Cultural Forum
Frontline AV
The Herbert Museum and Art Gallery

Iranzad
New Vic Theatre
Race Equality West Midlands
RASAA (Refugee and Asylum Seeker Arts Agency)
Sound it Out
Walsall Creative Development Team

Yorkshire and Humberside

Chile SCDA – Los Andes
DARTS
Grassroots
Heads Together
Leeds Refugee Forum
Mama East Africa
Qdos Dance Theatre
Refugee Schools Drama project
Slung Low Theatre Company
The Theatre in Education Company
Yorkshire Sculpture Park

4.3 Northern Ireland

NICEM (Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities)
Tinderbox Theatre

4.4 Scotland

Artists in Exile Glasgow
Arches Theatre
Castlemilk Youth Project
ConFab
The Elements
Fugees United
Glasgow Gallery of Modern Art
Glasgow Media Access
MacRobert Arts Centre
Mitchell Library, Glasgow
North Glasgow International Festival
Paragon International
Princes Trust Glasgow
Street Level Photoworks
Theatre Workshop Edinburgh
Village Storytelling Centre
YMCA

4.5 Wales

Artworks Wales
Newport and District Refugees and Asylum Seekers Group
Sherman Theatre
Small World Theatre
Swansea Asylum Seekers Group
Theatr Fforwm Cymru
Theatr Iolo

Appendix 5: Further information on UK refugee policy and the influence of international events

This appendix sets out the main changes in UK policy on refugees and asylum seekers in recent years, and provides a timeline demonstrating how global events have impacted on the flow of new arrivals to the UK, linked to the timing of legal and policy changes in the UK.

A number of new laws have sought to discourage asylum claims in the UK. So, for example, early in 2003, child-free asylum seekers who failed to apply for asylum as soon as they arrived were refused support and accommodation. However, research by Gilbert and Koser (2006) suggests that individuals seeking asylum are rarely aware of policy or the legal framework within the country. Rather, the research demonstrated that individuals have little choice regarding the country in which they apply for asylum since these decisions are often made by traffickers⁴¹.

Dispersal became part of government policy in 2000. It was at this time that the national government agency, the National Asylum Support Service was given the task of coordinating the removal of asylum seekers away from what were considered geographical pressure points, namely the ports and airports of London and the South East, to areas where there was lower housing demand nationally.

A Home Office report⁴² identified factors associated with successful dispersal⁴³ alongside key challenges⁴⁴. They recognised that local authorities with a higher proportion of dispersed asylum seekers tended to have greater availability of vacant housing stock alongside residents in social grade E⁴⁵, all of which contributed towards increased likelihood of harassment and assault of asylum seekers.

Both the Refugee Council and Refugee Action felt that due to the changing face of refugee/asylum work much of their attention was on and was likely to continue to be on destitution-led work⁴⁶. Refugee community organisations were also focusing on issues of need, with no room to develop work in other areas. Whilst events were still produced as part of a yearly programme, picking up on the community cohesion agenda, their focus was likely to remain on destitution as the key issue facing the refugee sector. The impact of Home Office funding was also a factor, since caseload workers commented that the focus was increasingly upon core service delivery and away from innovative or arts-based work.

A number of Arts Council regions identified the challenges raised by dispersal, highlighting a considerable amount of work which had focused on ex-mining sites within areas such as South and West Yorkshire. This was also the experience of Refugee Action which developed a long-term, multi-disciplinary approach in Derwent, in Derbyshire. Similarly, local authorities in ex-mining areas such as Rotherham and Barnsley developed projects that provided showcase opportunities, in part to acknowledge and address issues of dispersal within what had been perceived as so called mono-cultural spaces.

(41) For more information see Gilbert and Koser (2006) 'Coming to the UK: What do Asylum-Seekers Know About the UK before Arrival?' *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (32:7 No.7, pp. 1209-1225)

(42) *An Exploration of Factors Affecting the Successful Dispersal of Asylum Seekers*, Home Office, 50/05

(43) They considered successful dispersal to refer to decreased the incidence of verbal harassment, racial harassment, physical assault of asylum seekers, quality of life for asylum seekers, provision of information and briefing for asylum seekers before and after dispersal.

(44) A study conducted by Refugee Action found that one in five of their clients had experienced some kind of harassment while 83% of asylum seeking women do not go out at night for fear of being abused and harassed.

(45) E refers to individuals on state benefit, unemployed or in low grade jobs.

(46) See the full report, produced in association with support agencies, by Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust at www.jrct.org.uk/text.asp?section=0001000200030006

The principle of dispersal is slowly being replaced by immigration detention centres⁴⁷. These are holding centres for foreign nationals awaiting decisions on asylum claims, or awaiting deportation following a failed application. The new 'reception centres' developed after 2002⁴⁸ specifically aimed to improve the management of the asylum system. The use of detention has been questioned in some quarters, primarily because no crimes have been proven against the majority of those detained. Since there is no legal limit to the time a person (adult or child) can be held in detention in the UK, this has led to an increase in the detention centres required.

Managed migration

Within the UK strategy for asylum and immigration⁴⁹ (2005), the then Prime Minister Tony Blair is quoted as saying 'managed migration is not just good for this country. It is essential for our continued prosperity.' Blair's comment is significant here since we encounter the concept of 'managed migration', regarding which Flynn (2005) highlights that refugees and asylum seekers are seen as a threat to the orderly form of managed migration flows which are now required. Many of the policies and strategies in place today are concerned with managing migration, not only in relation to asylum but also in relation to broader issues of migration.

The UK strategy was followed by the New Asylum Model in 2005. Its aim was to introduce a faster (with a target of six months) more intensively managed asylum process with the focus upon 'rapid integration or removal'⁵⁰. The Refugee Council briefing sets out the positives and negatives of the new approach. There were key areas where this more intensively managed process would impact on arts and creative-led work. The shorter timescale turn round on asylum seeker claims made accessing asylum seekers outside of detention centres extremely difficult. If accommodated outside a detention centre they were likely to be moved on with only a few hours notice. They were subsequently unlikely to be in a position to commit to regular activity of any description. Although asylum seekers are not permitted to do any paid work, they are encouraged to take part in voluntary or meaningful activity.

Stakeholders interviewed as part of this research recognised the need for meaningful activities for asylum seekers and refugees and particularly extended this need to those in detention centres. They highlighted the considerable physical journey that individuals would have undertaken as well as the emotional toll. Therefore, being able to rest and engage in meaningful activities provided a literal and metaphorical space to rest. With the New Asylum Model this space was less feasible.

Young, unaccompanied minors faced particular challenges, not only on arrival but also when turning 18. Whilst under 18 they have special dispensation to remain in the UK. Once over that age they are subject to processes of asylum law⁵¹. This can be a particularly stressful period since it is probable that they will have built friendships, a peer group, a social framework and in some cases, they may have little knowledge or understanding of the 'home' country⁵².

The Government sought to clear a backlog of asylum cases in October 2003 by granting leave to remain to families with children who had applied for asylum before October 2000. Since this was prior to dispersal, the majority were in London and the South East.

(47) Removal Centres: Campsfield, Colnbrook, Dungavel, Harmondsworth, Queens Buildings, Tinsley House, Yarl's Wood; Short-term holding facilities: Dover Harbour, Harwich, Manchester Airport; Removal Prisons: Dover, Lindholme, Haslar; Reception Centres: Oakington

(48) As part of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002

(49) *Controlling our borders: Making migration work for Britain*. Five-year strategy for asylum and immigration. The Home Office, 2005

(50) *New Asylum Model*, Refugee Council Briefing, 2005

(51) http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/caris/legal/asylumproc/ap_s2_09.php#

(52) New Philanthropy Capital (2007) *A Long Way to Go* provides considerable detail and insight into the experiences and challenges facing young unaccompanied minors, drawing out key issues, as well as organisations and agencies working in this area.

Home Office changes

There has been a major review of Home Office structure and policy over the past couple of years. As part of this process, the new Borders and Immigration Agency was established in April 2007. The structure for delivering integration support to refugees has also been under review. In the consultation paper, *A New Model for National Refugee Integration Services in England*, the Home Office set out its plans for developing the content and contractual arrangements for a standard set of services for the integration of refugees in England, with the services to consist of four main elements: the SUNRISE programme, mentoring, employment services for refugee professionals, and advice and consultancy support for refugee community organisations.

The SUNRISE programme (Strategic Upgrade of Refugee Integration Services) will provide 20 hours of individual casework support for refugees. Delivery will be contracted to an agency in each of the UK regions (with some grouped together for BID purposes, e.g. Wales and the South West count as one region). The programme is currently being piloted in four different regions – in London, Leeds/Sheffield, Scotland and Manchester. The intention is to provide a consistent service across the UK, rather than the more reactive approach previously sustained through the grant schemes for work with refugees and asylum seekers previously run by the Home Office: the Challenge Fund, the Purposeful Activities Fund and the Refugee Community Development Fund. The European Refugee Fund will continue to operate but plans for other grant aid funds are not currently clear. This change will have some impact on the delivery of arts projects working with refugees and asylum seekers, as a number of arts and cultural projects have received support through these funds. Social integration will form part of the specification for the casework service, with the intention that refugees should be signposted towards community, cultural and faith organisations as appropriate, although it is anticipated that the main focus of the individual integration plans will be on meeting basic needs for accommodation, employment and so on.

Timeline 1987 – 2007

This timeline shows the key changes in refugee policy in the UK over the past 20 years, and how the global situation has affected the arrival of refugees in the UK over the same time period. It is based on one produced by the Museum of London for its exhibition *Belonging: Voices of London's Refugees*, 2007. The Museum's permission to use the timeline in this report is acknowledged with thanks.

Time Period	Legal Framework in the UK	Global situation – Arrivals in the UK
1987	<p>IMMIGRATION (CARRIERS' LIABILITY) ACT Transport companies had to pay fines for carrying people without the correct passports and visas.</p>	
1990	<p>DUBLIN CONVENTION EU countries could now deport asylum seekers who had travelled via another 'safe' EU country back to that country.</p>	
1993	<p>ASYLUM AND IMMIGRATION (APPEALS) ACT Introducing 'fast track' procedures to process applications judged to be 'without foundation'. Asylum seekers could now be detained whilst their claim was being processed. All asylum seekers now to be fingerprinted and rights to council housing restricted. A right to appeal system for those who were unsuccessful in claiming asylum but within rigid time limits.</p>	<p>Uganda – increased numbers seeking refuge in the UK between 1990 and 1992 due to violence and human rights abuses. Iraq – following the Iraq war in 1991 suppression of rebellions by Shi'ites and Kurds led to many fleeing Iraq and seeking a home elsewhere including the UK. Tamil – fighting continued in Sri Lanka causing many to flee. Algeria – the 1990s saw a very unsettled and violent time in Algeria causing a wave of arrivals in the UK and Europe. Ethiopia and Eritrea 1998 – 2000. A border war resulting in Ethiopia expelling all Eritreans. Those in mixed marriages and of mixed descent found they could not stay in either country. Sierra Leone – a long, bloody civil war in the 1990s caused an upturn in arrivals from Sierra Leone from 1993. Bosnia – conflict and ethnic cleansing after the collapse of Yugoslavia in 1992 resulted in many seeking refuge in the UK. The UK government also organised the arrival of 3000 Bosnians between 1992 – 1996. Kenya – between 1994 and 1996 there were increased arrivals from Kenya as certain parts of the country had power struggles and ethnic conflicts resulting in violence. Democratic Republic of Congo – The harsh regime of Joseph Mobutu saw many flee from 1989.</p>
1996	<p>ASYLUM AND IMMIGRATION ACT Fast track now extended to include more groups of people. Access to benefits was denied to people who did not apply for asylum at their port of entry or who were refused asylum, even if they wanted to appeal; this was later successfully challenged in court. Access to housing was further restricted and employers could be fined for employing people who were not eligible to work.</p>	
1999	<p>EU summit in Tampere in 1999 committed the EU to respect the 'full and inclusive application' of the Geneva Convention. (www.asylumsupport.info)</p>	<p>Afghanistan – many fled the Taliban particularly after 1997. Roma – many from the Czech Republic, Poland and central/eastern European states have fled due to discrimination. Somalia – Violence in the south and east have caused many to flee. Somalis continue to be among the biggest groups of people claiming asylum in Britain and are one of the largest refugee communities here.</p>

1999

IMMIGRATION AND ASYLUM ACT

The National Asylum Support Service (NASS) was set up to process benefits and housing support for asylum seekers. Originally it supported asylum seekers through vouchers which could be exchanged in some shops. This was later replaced by cash worth 70% of income support. Introduced the dispersal policy.

Colombia - Increased paramilitary activity and guerrilla violence led to numbers arriving from Columbia increasing in the 1990s. An estimated 50,000 Colombians live in London.

Sudan – A military coup in 1989 caused conflict for a decade and human rights abuses increased. 6,000 people fled to the UK.

Kosovo – Ethnic fighting saw many Albanians flee Serb armed forces.

China – In 1999 the religious group Falun Gong was outlawed, forcing members to flee.

A list of safe countries introduced (the white list) i.e. countries that are safe and where their citizens have little risk of persecution. These included Bulgaria, Cyprus, Ghana, India, Pakistan, Poland, Romania.

Introduced ‘safe third country’ idea. Asylum seekers who had travelled through a ‘safe third country’ to the UK to claim asylum could be removed to that country and only appeal once they had left.

2002

END OF RIGHT TO WORK

Asylum seekers no longer had the right to work in the UK. Previously they had been able to apply for permission to work after they had been in Britain for six months.

Arrivals in the UK continued after 2000 from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Nigeria and Iraq.

2002

NATIONALITY, IMMIGRATION AND ASYLUM ACT

Introduced accommodation centres with attached health/education facilities and services for asylum seekers. Introduced regular reporting for all asylum seekers and introduction of an asylum seeker registration card. Financial support and housing could be removed from people who did not apply for asylum immediately on arrival in Britain. English language and citizenship tests were introduced for people applying for British nationality. Review of ‘Exceptional Leave to Remain’.

Zimbabwe – Any opposition to Zanu PF the ruling party is forcibly repressed and there is no freedom of the press. Since 2000 the number of Zimbabweans seeking asylum in the UK has been rising and in the first quarter of 2006 Zimbabweans were the largest group to seek asylum.

Iran – Oppression of religious and ethnic minorities and women continues, causing many Iranians to flee.

According to Home Office statistics, in the first half of 2006, 11,945 people applied for asylum in Britain. The top ten countries from which asylum applicants came were: Eritrea, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, Iran, China, Somalia, Nigeria, Pakistan, India, Sudan.

2004

ASYLUM AND IMMIGRATION (TREATMENT OF CLAIMANTS, ETC.) ACT

Entry into the UK without a passport (unless the offender can demonstrate that they have a reasonable excuse) became an offence for which offenders could be tried and given a prison sentence of up to two years.

Failed asylum seekers who did not leave the UK would have asylum support stopped.

The Home Secretary could continue provision of accommodation for unsuccessful asylum seekers who cannot return home immediately, if they participated in 'community activities'.

2005

LEAVE TO REMAIN

Since August 2005, refugees are no longer given indefinite (i.e. permanent) leave to remain when their claims are accepted. Instead they are only given permission to stay for five years, a decision which can be reversed at any time. After five years they can apply for indefinite leave to remain

2006

IMMIGRATION, ASYLUM AND NATIONALITY ACT

Regulations still coming into force.

Tightening up of government powers to penalise employers of illegal workers. New measures to check individuals' identity including ability to retain travel documents for inspection and requirement to provide finger prints within three days.

Local authorities now able to provide accommodation under Section of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (previously only available in areas where there were private accommodation providers).

Introduction of refugee integration loans for refugees who have been given limited leave to enter or remain.

Appendix 6: Further information on developments in the past ten years

6.1 An overview of participatory arts activity with refugees and asylum seekers

East

There have been a few refugee projects led by arts organisations in the Eastern region, including *City of Refuge*, led by the Norwich New Writing Partnership, Sea Change in Great Yarmouth, Bedford Creative Arts and Theatre Resource in Hertfordshire.

East Midlands

There has been some significant work in the East Midlands, particularly that led by Soft Touch and Long Journey Home. Whilst Soft Touch focuses on schools-led work and capacity building within refugee community organisations, Long Journey Home has worked with both professional and amateur artists from refugee backgrounds, linking people in to mainstream services and developing partnership projects.

London

As London has the largest refugee population in the UK, it is unsurprising that it also has a high level of activity. A critical mass of work with young refugees and asylum seekers is developing across a range of organisations, which are establishing mutually supportive partnerships to develop their practice. These include Greenwich & Lewisham Young People's Theatre, Oval House Theatre, Hi8us South, ReWrite, the Lyric Hammersmith and Theatre Royal Stratford East. Watermans is taking a strategic lead within West London and nationally, having started its work with refugees in the mid 1990s, in response to the large numbers of new arrivals in the area, given the proximity of Heathrow airport. Many organisations with particular expertise in working in the areas of social inclusion and cultural diversity have developed work with refugees, such as All Change Arts, the Pan Centre for Intercultural Arts, and PhotoVoice. Some of the major institutions are also now engaging in this area, such as the National Theatre and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

North East

There are some key organisations delivering work with refugees and asylum seekers, including Media 19, which developed *Self Portrait UK*, a national touring exhibition that connected with refugees and asylum seekers. The Sage Gateshead has also engaged in this area, with the *Mongrel* project (a challenging name chosen by the project participants). Tees Valley Arts, with long experience of working in the social inclusion sector, is also active in the field.

Arts Council England, North East, in partnership with the Regional Refugee Forum North East (RRFNE) and North East Cultural Diversity Arts Forum (NECDAF) commissioned research into arts activities for and by refugees and asylum seekers to inform a strategic approach to this area of work. Following this research, a post of arts development worker was created that sits within RRFNE with the purpose of building capacity within newly arrived community groups to create and develop arts projects.

North West

Community Arts North West has taken a leading role in developing work with refugees, through its project *Exodus*. *Exodus* has developed an all-encompassing approach which includes artists' development, community development and a strong participation dimension. In 2007 CAN was

awarded the largest grant in its 30-year history by the Big Lottery Fund, to continue this work with refugees and asylum seekers in the Greater Manchester area. The Big Lottery Fund grant will focus on developing new, grassroots, participatory projects amongst refugee communities, leading to high-profile, public showcases. *Exodus* runs an annual festival and is beginning to develop semi-independent groups such as the AfroCats, a mixed group of refugee and indigenous young Black women.

Other activity taking place in the region includes work by the Royal Exchange and Contact theatres in Manchester, and by the Creative Partnerships schools programmes in Salford and Manchester. Walk the Plank is currently working in Liverpool, from its ship moored in the Albert Dock, and will feature refugee arts projects as part of the 2008 Capital of Culture. Sola Arts in Liverpool is delivering projects through a network of refugee artists that it supports. The academic sector is also involved, through In Place of War, whose work cuts across a number of sectors including arts, refugees, health and education. It has strong partnerships with the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture (NW) and *Exodus*. Other projects have been led by Virtual Migrants, and by the Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse Theatres.

South East

A range of arts organisations in the South East have developed programmes of work with refugees and asylum seekers. These include Bandbazi in Brighton, who have worked with both elders and young people, and Chichester Festival Theatre, who are delivering an integration project with young asylum seekers. There has been some work in Oxford, which for a time had the agency *Creating Roots*. Oxford Brookes University, Migrant Helpline, Music For Change, and the Pukaar Project in Southampton are also active in this field.

South West

The majority of refugees and asylum seekers in the South West are placed in the larger cities of Bristol, which enjoys a strong, local authority-led Refugee Week and Plymouth, where much arts and refugee work is dependent on organisations such as Avid, an Arts Council-funded consortium consisting of Plymouth Arts Centre, Theatre Royal and the Race Equality Council. Wolf and Water, based in Devon, have also undertaken work with refugees. The activity in Bristol also includes *Community At Heart*, a New Deal project and Young Bristol.

West Midlands

At one point the West Midlands was the second largest dispersal area. Organisations in the region that have prioritised work with refugees and asylum seekers include artSites, Craftspace, Sound It Out, Banner Theatre, Frontline AV in Coventry, and B Arts and the New Vic Theatre in North Staffordshire.

Yorkshire

In common with some other regions outside London, there is a strong but small core of arts organisations delivering significant work with refugees and asylum seekers. These include Heads Together whose current project, *Hidden Voices*, aims to bring refugees and asylum seekers together with people from disadvantaged communities in East Leeds, using radio, photography and creative writing. In Doncaster, DARTS has undertaken *EPIC*, an action research project exploring the added value that the arts bring to neighbourhood renewal, including a strand involving a group of African women refugees. Yorkshire Sculpture Park and Signposts, a creative writing project, have also undertaken a range of work with refugees.

Arts Council England, Yorkshire has highlighted the strength of work undertaken in the local authority sector and in museums in the region. One example of the museums sector can be seen

in the projects funded by MLA Yorkshire via the DCMS *Invest to Save* programme. These have included a creative arts holiday club run by Yorkshire Sculpture Park for refugee and asylum seeker children and local children, and an arts project run by Bradford Museums.

Northern Ireland

NICEM (Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities) has used the arts in a Home Office-funded project designed to promote good community relations. It has also organised Refugee Week events, including a photographic exhibition and a drama event with Tinderbox Theatre Company, which has resulted in a longer-term project with asylum seekers led by Tinderbox. There is some other activity underway but there appears to be no major focus on arts and refugee work in Northern Ireland, other than the work of NICEM. NICEM has now devolved responsibility for refugee and asylum seeker issues to the Northern Ireland Committee for Refugee and Asylum Seekers (NICRAS), in the belief that a specialist agency is needed.

Scotland

There is a strong focus on arts projects with refugees and asylum seekers in Glasgow, which was one of the first cities to sign up to the dispersal policy in 2000 and has the highest concentration of asylum seekers in Scotland. A key intervention was *Sanctuary*, a two-year programme of work with refugees and asylum seekers by Glasgow Gallery of Modern Art. This included 14 outreach projects, an exhibition and a conference in partnership with Amnesty International. Other projects have been led by the Mitchell Library, the Village Storytelling Centre, Street Level Photoworks, Castlemilk Youth Complex, Confab, the YMCA and the Prince's Trust. Most of the activity is centred on Glasgow, but there have also been film and theatre projects in Edinburgh (Theatre Workshop), and an education project at the MacRobert Arts Centre at Stirling University.

Wales

The major company working with refugees in Wales is Small World Theatre. Other companies such as SWICA, Theatr Fforum Cymru, Theatr Iolo, the Sherman Theatre and Artworks Wales have also undertaken projects. There is also a certain amount of cultural activity work led by refugee community organisations taking place in Swansea, Newport and Cardiff.

6.2 The Arts Councils

Arts Council England regional offices

East

The East is the region with the fewest dispersed individuals⁵³, with the majority in Peterborough and Norwich. It was therefore unsurprising that the focus to date has rested with economic migrants, who are forming an increasing part of the workforce in this region. Arts Council England, East has developed partnerships with businesses in order to explore arts and cultural engagement with, for example, the region's largest migrant community, new Polish arrivals.

Regional developments have focused on internationalism, with specific attention given to Latin America. However, officers are aware of the need for the Arts Council to work with an understanding of the regional demography and are open to potential shifts in the future.

(53) As a region, the East also has England's smallest minority ethnic population.

East Midlands

Strategically, Arts Council England, East Midlands has adopted the approach of including refugee and asylum-led work within work connected to diasporic⁵⁴ communities and migration. This has also included work with economic migrants, such as people from the EU accession countries. The East Midlands office is exploring whether work with refugees and economic migrants could be included within the East Midlands Participatory Arts Forum. This would link refugee and asylum seekers issues to a more general consideration of the instrumental use of the arts, and would work alongside a gradual broadening from 'race' to issues of migration.

London

London Arts Board, the predecessor body to Arts Council England, London, first established a focus on refugees and the arts in 1999. The newly formed Access Unit led the development of the new strategy. The first initiative was to establish a specific focus on refugees within a New Audiences funding programme, which gave £100,000 to 11 projects across London. At the same time, a steering group was convened with the advice and support of the Refugee Council, to oversee the whole programme of work which became known as the Refugees and the Arts Initiative. The partnerships established with the Refugee Council, the UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees) and the British Council were vital in establishing credibility for London Arts' focus on refugees.

Under London Arts' umbrella the Refugees and the Arts Initiative achieved a range of activity. This included the following:

a second specialist funding programme run in 2001/02 – *Senses of the City* – which supported 16 organisations, focusing on work led by refugee organisations and artists. The majority were showcased in Refugee Week 2002. This scheme had a lower budget than its predecessor and grants were limited to £5,000 maximum. The evaluation report⁵⁵, highlighted many benefits, such as the range of interesting work that was produced and the increased profile and organisational development for participants, but also found that the level of funds had made it hard to create work at the level of quality and ambition that organisations would wish to have achieved.

running artists' exchange days, which brought together many refugee artists and which led to the launch of other initiatives such as the establishment of Artists in Exile, a network of over 70 artists, launched in 2001, and other arts groups emerged from the exchange days.

support for London Refugee Week, and particularly for its flagship event, *Celebrating Sanctuary*, including a publication linked to this event.

engaging in policy development with partners, such as the Greater London Authority, other local authorities and the DCMS.

producing a directory of refugee artists and a periodic newsletter.

collaboration with national and international initiatives such as the British Council conference *Journeys in Between*, in Brussels in 2001, on the role of the arts in the integration of asylum seekers.

(54) This term is preferred by some organisations working with both refugees and minority communities in general.

(55) Blaker, Candida (2003) *Senses of the City and London Arts support for refugees 1999-2002*, London Arts

As a result of the restructuring of the Arts Council in 2002/3, the Access Unit at national office was closed. Although a specific strategy for the support of refugees and the arts was not re-established, the focus on refugees was incorporated into the work of the new Arts Council England, London office, led by the Social Inclusion Officer.

Refugee arts projects and individual artists continue to be supported through Grants for the Arts. Some successful applications are now coming forward from this sector, although there is still a need for a higher level of pre-application support and advice than ACE London is able to offer. Strategic engagement with policy development, e.g. with the Greater London Authority's emerging refugee policy is maintained. The London office has been a key partner in commissioning this research.

North East

The North East has the fifth largest dispersal population, although this is 50 percent smaller than the North West, the fourth largest dispersal region. Arts Council England, North East has identified the refugee and asylum seeking community as a key constituency needing targeted services and has now internally prioritised work within this sector. It has produced a brief outlining a period of research and scoping within the region. This research is currently in progress and the management of the project has been delegated to the Refugee Forum.

A strategic partnership with a number of refugee/asylum-related bodies has been initiated, with a particular focus on Refugee Week. Whilst they have also undertaken grassroots development, the lack of a strong refugee community organisation infrastructure throws up challenges in how to progress the developmental nature of the work. Instead the focus has been on capacity building within existing organisations. ACE, NE regards the development of partnerships with museums as significant, given their role in conserving and interpreting cultural heritage.

North West

Arts Council England, North West does not have a specific strategy for refugees and asylum seekers, but it has supported a growing range of activity in the region. The most prominent work is being led by Community Arts North West (CAN), through its *Exodus* programme. The Arts Council sees this as strategically important and if it did not exist, it would encourage the development of a similar programme of activity.

South East

Due to a long history of arrival in the South East, the region has been well positioned to develop a strategic partnership with Refugee Action. The Arts Council and Refugee Action jointly commissioned a report on arts and refugees in 2004⁵⁶. The report highlighted the need to broker partnerships between the arts and refugee sectors, underlining the differences in approach between these sectors. It also identified the need to focus on 'hotspot' areas such as Portsmouth and Crawley.

The partnership between the Arts Council and Refugee Action has continued to develop, leading to a structured project plan that tied in to the needs and wishes of the engaging organisations. A post was also established, based at Refugee Action, supported by an advisory group. This approach acknowledged key development areas, such as engaging local authorities and regularly funded organisations through greater advocacy.

The Arts Council is currently considering how to develop the initiative further, and exploring possible options, whether an independent group, freelance contract or embedding the strategic responsibility within an existing organisation. However, consideration must also be given to the

(56) Hutton, Ceri & Lukes, Sue (2004) *Fugitive Arts*, Arts Council England, South East and Refugee Action

fact that the region's demography has experienced considerable change. In recent years it has moved from receiving the majority of asylum seekers to having the second smallest dispersal figures in the country.

A particular challenge has been to develop the work within a large geographical region, with an undeveloped refugee infrastructure. This raises challenges for partnership working, for example how to agree the focus of longer-term work and how to work with both refugee and arts-led agendas.

South West

Arts Council England, South West has adopted an inclusive approach, with research and mapping taking place around the theme of diaspora, therefore picking up on issues relating to refuge and asylum. No strategic body has emerged to lead development in this area, although there is activity in Bristol, particularly around Refugee Week, and in Plymouth.

West Midlands

Arts Council England, West Midlands has not specifically prioritised arts and refugees, but has engaged with the development of the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Arts Agency (RASAA). This project was spearheaded in Birmingham by a collaboration between individuals. The Arts Council funded a period of consultation with Midland Refugee Council, which led to a successful application to Grants for the Arts. At one point the West Midlands was at the forefront of work with refugees and asylum seekers, but the work has suffered due to the pressure placed on individuals to lead work in this area on a voluntary basis. No single organisation has come forward to take on a strategic role in developing this field.

Yorkshire

Arts Council officers in Yorkshire are developing a Refugee Action Plan as part of their response to Arts Council England's *Taking Part* agenda, aimed at broadening participation. Specific attention has been given to exploring a working relationship with the Refugee Council, since the focus for the region is on establishing strong partnerships. Arts Council England, Yorkshire has emphasised the need for all organisations to include work with refugees and asylum seekers, rather than developing a distinct arts and refugees development agency. Development in the region has largely focused on the dispersal areas, which are mostly in ex-mining areas in South and West Yorkshire.

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland has not had any direct engagement with arts and refugees programmes, but is aware of some work that is underway, particularly that led by NICEM (Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities).

The Scottish Arts Council

The Scottish Arts Council addresses refugee issues within its focus on cultural diversity. A number of projects have been supported over the past few years. These included the North Glasgow International Festival, which was initiated by Strathclyde Police in order to address community tensions arising from the arrival of asylum seekers in a deprived area of the city. The festival is no longer in existence, but SAC considered that it had a strategic impact, and helped to spark off other longer-term projects. SAC has supported the arts development post at the Scottish Refugee Council, and also works with Glasgow City Council arts development team.

Arts Council of Wales

The Arts Council of Wales first engaged with Refugee Week in 2006, and has developed a relationship with the Welsh Refugee Council. The Arts Council of Wales is also supporting a major development programme in partnership with Black Voluntary Sector Network Wales, which aims to significantly increase opportunities for artists from BME backgrounds living and working in Wales, to create and programme their work. This project will in turn increase the profile of artists from within the refugee communities in Wales.

In addition, ACW supports a network of over 20 community arts organisations, many of which work with refugee communities in Wales providing participative arts activities. The Arts Council's *Night Out* scheme has been valuable in supporting smaller community groups in accessing support for arts and refugee performance projects.

6.3 Some examples of arts and refugees projects led by local authorities

Calderdale

Calderdale Libraries, Museums and Arts worked with refugees and asylum seekers as part of its community engagement programme. They partnered with a cross section of centres providing support, advice and activities, such as St Augustine's Centre in Halifax, and Voluntary Action Calderdale, which chaired the Calderdale Refugee Sector Network and which was also responsible for Refugee Week planning. They have also engaged with Calderdale Asylum Seekers Support who, at one time, had provided a social space. These groups have engaged in visual arts workshops on the theme of representations from home, with the resulting work exhibited at Halifax Visitors Centre and Art Gallery during Refugee Week in 2005. Their engagement with Refugee Week remained consistent and in 2006 Libraries, Museums and Arts worked with Voluntary Action Calderdale to organize a school poster competition, resulting in an exhibition during Refugee Week. They expanded this area of work to include a series of family workshops over the summer holiday.

In contrast to much Refugee Week activity, Calderdale continued to open out their approach, for example with a refugee women's textile project, in partnership with the Bankfield Museum, which began in May 2006. It is planned to expand this project further with support being sought from the Heritage Lottery Fund and others.

Doncaster

In recent years the number of refugees and asylum seekers in Doncaster has been quite substantial, and in the past two years large numbers of economic migrants have arrived too. The local authority Arts Service has done some work with people from these groups with arts interests: for example, a small African choir of people newly arrived in the area was involved in a project during the 2004 Defrost arts festival. This required sensitivity to their poor economic situation. More recently economic migrants with arts skills have contacted the Arts Service, for example Polish migrants now settled in the area. Where appropriate, individuals have been signposted towards arts organisations, for example Fringe, a network of visual artists, or DARTS (Doncaster Community Arts), for further development of their arts skills, or the annual Cultural Festival run by DVAN (Doncaster Voluntary Arts Network) as a platform to showcase their arts activities. By making these connections between new arrivals and the local arts infrastructure the process of integration is supported.

Oldham

Oldham local authority engaged in a more proactive manner in programming a number of exhibitions on the theme of asylum and refugees at the local authority art gallery. In 2003 an exhibition called *Migrations* was shown where they worked with Pakistani photographer Shahidul Alam and earlier in 2007, *Refuge*, a video installation and community outreach project with Yasmin Yaqub⁵⁷.

Walsall

Few local authority arts teams are as developed in their thinking and approach to work with refugees as Walsall's Creative Development Team (WCDT). WCDT has for some time led work in the participatory arts field⁵⁸. WCDT has been actively involved in supporting refugees and asylum seekers, working with both individuals and groups to capacity build and work to encourage greater interaction between and within communities. This work has been a discreet part of programmes developed in partnership with BME communities mainly with African and some work with Asian refugees. WCDT has linked up with RASAA to develop and link up support services for refugee artists in the region and to be part of a strategic approach to the work, to learn from other partners to further develop the work in Walsall and to be a contributing partner in the development of participatory arts models of work.

6.4 Summaries of artists' interviews

Artist One – Adisa

Adisa is a performance poet, professional writer and educator who arrived in Britain in 2002 from Angola. In Angola he worked with a group of artists and organised large-scale events with UNESCO and UNICEF. Having been a teacher in Angola, he left his profession in 1994 to work in diamond mining, which then enabled him to open a centre for street children offering education and artistic activities. On arrival in Britain he found it very difficult to continue with his artistic practice. In 2003, through Midland Refugee Council (now closed), he was put in touch with Samina Zahir and Tricia Yarwood and was invited to perform in Symphony Hall. This provided him with opportunities to access a range of services, including:

- training from Sound It Out/Midland Refugee Council's Arts Project
- opportunities to perform in different events including Refugee Week events, ArtsFest (a free annual arts festival in Birmingham), The Drum and the Library Theatre in Birmingham
- a position as shadow artist on Gallery 37
- a commission from Collide Birmingham's showcase of new work by BME artists.

Particular challenges that he has identified include reaching a point at which he could earn all of his income from his arts practice, accessing funding, artistic mentoring and support, and developing links with other writers. The support he received from the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Arts Agency (RASAA) was key to increasing his access to opportunities as an artist. He is less active as an artist in the UK than when he was in Angola but he has improved his artistic practice through the inclusion of another language (he performs in English now).

He identifies himself as a refugee artist, partly because he believes he will always be seen in that way by the outside world, but his work is not necessarily only informed by his experiences as a refugee.

(57) www.galleryoldham.org.uk/exhibitions/past-exhibitions.htm for further information. Yaqub also developed work on the theme of refuge with Shisha in Manchester.

(58) www.walsall.gov.uk/index/leisure_and_culture/creative_development_team.htm

Artist Two – Iqbal

Iqbal arrived in the UK in 1999, from Northern Kurdistan and was dispersed to Stoke on Trent. In Kurdistan he was beginning his life as an artist, having studied for a diploma at school and worked as a caricaturist for a magazine in Iraq.

He first got involved in the arts in the UK through hearing about an artist who was working in one of the local hostels, with asylum seekers. The artist was from B Arts, in Newcastle under Lyme and he started to make a connection with B Arts, a company he found very welcoming and supportive.

He became a volunteer with the company, working on the Newcastle Carnival project. He also started working on his own artistic work and through B Arts was able to organise an exhibition of this work. He is particularly appreciative of the encouragement and personal support that B Arts provided for him.

He is still seeking asylum and has found it very difficult to plan for the future, as his status has not been resolved. He could not afford university fees so would need to work, which he cannot do until his status is resolved.

He has seen his artistic work develop since he has arrived in Stoke and is determined to continue his artistic practice. He would classify himself simply as an artist but sees that classification seems to be something the 'system' requires and therefore can see that he is classified as a 'refugee artist' or 'Black artist'.

Artist Three – Flavia

Flavia is a visual artist who arrived in London in July 2002, from Albania. She and her family moved to Birmingham a year later. In Albania she had attended art college, completing three years at university, studying graphics. She had also worked as an art teacher in a children's centre for less than a year. Her only exhibiting experience had been as part of a group exhibition at university. Whilst in London, she had no connection to the arts. In Birmingham, she was put in touch with Samina Zahir by Albanian community leaders, who were aware of her artistic interests. This introduction enabled her to take part in Refugee Week activities and put her in touch with Melanie Tomlinson at Community Integration Partnership where she has attended an arts class.

She sees herself first and foremost as an artist, not as a refugee artist. Some of her work is influenced by her experience as a refugee, but not all of it is. She is also happy to be a link to the refugee community through her artistic work. Her ambitions are to have her own exhibition, to be self-employed as an artist and to earn a living through that, and to work collaboratively with other artists.

Artist Four – Antoinette

Antoinette is from a theatre background. Her involvement in this area began in 1986, when she first started to work with actors and to do theatre-based work in a voluntary setting in Zimbabwe. In 1986, she was part of a group of theatre professionals who formed the Zimbabwe Association of Community Theatre (ZACT). Following this, she went on to develop the first women's theatre group in Zimbabwe, called Just for Women Theatre Group. They produced

plays highlighting sexual harassment at work, alongside a range of gender-related issues. Due to this she has considerable experience of theatre in education, in community development and capacity building.

She is also a writer and has had a number of poems, and a short story published. Some of her work was published by Zimbabwe Women Writers Anthology. She benefited considerably from having as her mentor, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, the internationally renowned, post-colonial writer formerly known as James Ngugi.

For three years, from 1994 until 1997, Antoinette worked in theatre in education. Participating young people went on to deliver their own training, put on short pieces and use theatre to highlight relevant issues specific to a community. She believes in theatre as a process rather than starting with the answers and using theatre to 'give' the answers to the participants. Consequently, she works with groups in an open-ended fashion and this tends to produce more issues and challenges than the funders may have intended.

Within her theatre work, she utilises participatory development methodologies. This is not an area that she is able to pick up on within her current paid employment although she does occasionally use some of the skills she has learnt. She continues to develop her theatre practice. She recently wrote a play, and was interested in touring it. Her aim was to promote the integration of refugees and asylum seekers, to highlight issues of identity and journeys and to encourage people not to pass judgement on people before knowing them.

She has found the issue of funding a particular challenge. The funding she did receive came through the Scarman Trust, however this was a nominal amount which could not support the development of a full play. Whilst she was in the South East, she was supported by Refugee Action and its community arts development officer, Nathalie Teitler who, while unable to identify any funding streams, did support her development.

Her experience is that theatre projects are particularly hard to find funding for, especially since they involve a number of people and are therefore usually more expensive than work by one person. She contacted a number of organisations and venues but did not find any that were interested in her or the work.

Artist Five – Paulo

Paulo is a fine art and social documentary photographer. He is also a poet and sees a strong relationship between photography and poetry in questioning and documenting society. His vision of practising as a photographer never changed, despite having to flee from his home country, Chile and from the moment he arrived as a political exile to the UK, he continued to take photographs, developing the images in the hostel where he was staying. He stressed the importance of continuing to grow as an artist and making this a priority. Definitions may not be clear – he was unaware of the term 'artist' when he came to the UK – but knew that he needed to remain committed to his practice.

Paulo did not feel himself to be a refugee, either legally or in 'his soul'. He feels that you never stop moving, life's a journey, and how you conceptualise your life in a philosophical way is important. He sees differences between those who have emigrated to the UK and those who have arrived as refugees. Immigrants push forward and are proactive; refugees wait and are far more reactive, hesitant to move forward.

As he developed his arts practice, he increasingly encountered a lack of understanding of the processes which he drew together, images that were both social documentation and fine art. Fine art was perceived as being passive, bar its aesthetic form; images were to be enjoyed rather than to encourage issue-based thinking. In contrast, social documentation was specifically concerned with raising awareness, representing and challenging.

He has faced considerable challenges in developing his practice. He has rarely received support from agencies specifically working with refugees. This has often been because he does not classify himself in this way. He commented that there were real challenges engaging with mainstream, 'grand' galleries that have a specific agenda in the work that they show. This work rarely engages with a social message. This prevents him from developing a stronger reputation within the arts sector – although he is already well known as a photographer and artist. He sees his artistic practice as implicitly linked to his ideology and these cannot be unlinked.

He has found that whilst he receives commissions to photograph internationally, having travelled to, for example, Iraq, Palestine, Mexico, Russia, Nepal, Philippines, Panama, Somalia and the US, he is rarely commissioned in the UK. He sees himself as respected internationally but not in the UK and finds himself pushed into the refugee label. He feels that one is never allowed to be British, one is always asked: 'When will you go back? Where you were born? Where is your home?'





The Baring Foundation

