

MRCF Newsletter

Migrant and Refugee Communities Forum

Migration experience: The Good beats the Bad and the Ugly

The MRCF newsletter has always had a challenging task: to celebrate the good work of migrant and refugee communities in the face of a tough immigration debate and the equally tough challenges of integration in the UK.

This task requires an enormous amount of optimism, bordering on denial, to keep us going, and an even greater strength to relate to a challenging reality. So please allow me to chart that challenging reality first and bear with me until I get to the green shoots of optimism that keep us going.

We did not have to wait long in this recession to hear phrases that turned to headlines such as: 'British Jobs for British Workers.'

It took only a few months for those headlines to translate into violence. 115 Romanians, all EU citizens, had to be bussed out of South Belfast on 18th June following racist attacks on their homes.

According to news reports, the police took them to a church and then to a sports centre in order to protect

them from attacks. One local resident barked at a BBC reporter: 'They should not be here in the first place!' And now they will not be – out of fear for their safety, they all want to go back to Romania. The racist mob scored yet another point, only weeks after the BNP celebrated its best election results ever.

In May, the immigration agency's national intelligence unit's report was leaked to the Guardian. It claims that 77 Chinese children in the care of the London borough of Hillingdon have gone missing since March 2006.

It is suspected that organised criminal gangs have targeted a children's home near Heathrow airport in order to exploit children through prostitution and the drugs trade. Only four of 77 have been found. Two girls returned after a year. One was pregnant while the other had been surgically fitted with a contraceptive device in her arm. Recent research by the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre showed at least 325 young people from 52 different



MRCF members on the march for the 'Strangers into Citizens' campaign

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March for 'Strangers into Citizens'

on that kind of imagination, regularisation of the estimated 500,000 irregular migrants in the UK could bring £350 trillion to the UK economy. Imagination is a powerful tool.

And now for the Good. Actress Joanna Lumley had fronted the Gurkha Justice Campaign for years. After a series of dramatic and persuasive interventions, the Government announced that all ex-Gurkhas who have served more than 4 years in the British Army will have the right to settle in the UK if they wish. The victory for the Gurkhas was also an example of how common sense and justice combined with a public profile and true leadership can produce results. Not even Migrationwatch dared to confront the Avenger with their guestimates as to how much each retiring Gurkha, with their family, might cost the UK tax payer. In a spectacular piece of political theatre, with ministers running scared for their political carriers in the wake of the expenses scandal, Ms Lumley refused to back off. Political activism at its best!

On 16th June, the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, honoured his election promise, and launched the report he commissioned from the London School of Economics on the impact of earned regularisation. Apart from its finding that earned regularisation had the potential to add £3 billion per year to the UK GDP, the LSE study is the Mayor's attempt to move away from myths and guestimates in order to inject some hard facts into the debate.

The Good are the people of Great Britain: the

countries were identified as potential victims of trafficking in one year, with the true number likely to be much higher.

And to round up The Bad and The Ugly part of this article, let's consider just one example of a 'sensible' contribution to the debate. In May, Migrationwatch published a report stating that each irregular immigrant given legal status would cost the tax payer £1 million over his or her lifetime. This 'news' featured in The Times and on the front page of the Daily Express. It used the same estimates of numbers of irregular migrants that are generally used in the public domain, but it guestimates that each irregular migrant is a young male and over the next 40 years would only make the minimum wage, have kids and a stay-at-home wife.

This anti-immigration group claims that these guestimates are not misleading, and are for illustration only. Interestingly, Migrationwatch did not choose another possible guestimate. For example, it is equally possible to imagine that each imaginary irregular migrant could be a genius of some sort such as Sergey Brin, the Russian immigrant better known as a founder of Google, with a net worth of 11 billion US dollars (around £7 billion). Based

hundreds of thousands who signed a petition in support of Ghurkhas; the 20,000 who marched in support of the Strangers Into Citizens campaign in Trafalgar Square on May 4th; the thousands who opened their places of worship to destitute asylum seekers and brick-fleeing Romanians; the thousands who celebrated Refugee Week and welcomed refugees around the country; the hundreds of volunteers at MRCF who give their time and skills to mentor migrants and refugees trying to settle in London. **To them, and the millions of people in the UK whose simple acts of kindness and sense of humanity and justice still make Britain a welcoming and safe place, we say THANK YOU!**

Zrinka Bralo, Executive Director



Engage to Change at MRCF: An MP talks with Waris Mahamoud, of Midaye Somali Development Network



The Changing Face of Engagement

MRCF's Engage to Change initiative gives migrants and refugees an opportunity to engage directly with decision makers and opinion formers.

Over the last few months, this initiative has delivered another series of Question Time-type meetings that have raised the profile of engagement and provided a space for a productive debate on issues of integration, identity, the international and national migration policy framework, human trafficking and racism in the new equalities framework in the UK.

MRCF members hosted 42 MPs from Commonwealth and EU Countries, as well as UK MPs and Peers, as a part of a conference on International Migration and Human Trafficking organised by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

Apart from showcasing their work—which hugely impressed the visiting MPs—MRCF members had an opportunity to discuss the impact of international and national immigration policy on integration in the UK.

The lively debate was started by speakers Waris Mohamoud, Midaye Somali Development Network, Yvonne Marimo, Zimbabwean Women's Network in the UK, Canon Reverend Nicholas Sagovsky, Commissioner of the Independent Asylum Commission, Dr Anwar Tappuni, Coordinator of MRCF's training programme for foreign Dentists, and Dr Naomi Hartree from Project London Clinic, Mediciens du Monde UK.

In his final remarks at the conference, Chair Professor Lord McColl of Dulwich CBE commented that the visit to MRCF was a highlight of the 4 day conference for participating MPs. For more information, go to: <http://www.cpaukbranch.org/2009/02/06/international-conference-on-international-migration-and-human-trafficking/>

MRCF members also engaged in a debate about their role in the new discourse on equalities and human rights, as well as about the age-old issues of immigration and racism. In light of the closure of the local Race Equality Partnership, in a debate with the Right Honourable Tony Benn and Karin Woodley, Chief Executive of the Stephen Lawrence Trust, community leaders and representatives spoke about the disempowerment



Karin Woodley and Tony Benn spoke at Engage to Change

of their communities, especially within the education system and their daily experiences of discrimination and racism.

In another form of engagement and empowerment, more than 200 MRCF members voiced their support for fellow migrants by attending the Strangers Into Citizens rally on 4th May. It was organised by The Citizen Organising Foundation, the country's largest alliance of civic institutions, and called for a pathway into citizenship for irregular migrants who have made new lives in the UK. The campaign is asking the Government to implement an 'earned amnesty' as part of its overhaul of the UK's immigration policy. Over the years, MRCF has contributed to its work on initiatives such as the Independent Asylum Commission, and is currently involved in the Citizens for Sanctuary campaign which aims to rebuild public support for sanctuary and to continue the legacy of the Commission.

To find out more about these campaigns and how to get involved visit www.strangersintocitizens.org.uk and www.citizensforsanctuary.org.uk/

The final in this series of Engage to Change meetings was a round table discussion on barriers to local participation facilitated by the Migrants Rights Network. Community activists from 12 distinct migrant communities working across London took part in a discussion on political engagement, including who they have access to, and where they feel disempowered and excluded. This round table discussion will feed into the research report due to be published by MRCF in July 2009.



Where Strangers Become Friends — Mentoring at MRCF

Where Strangers Become Friends is a short comic book that tells the story of a young Iraqi refugee who arrived in London and was supported by a volunteer mentor who helped him find his way in this unfamiliar environment.

MRCF’s mentoring work would not be possible if it was not for the contribution of individuals from a wide range of London communities and walks of life who donate their time, skills and goodwill to help make MRCF and indeed London such a special and welcoming place.

The comic was created by Lucie Trinephi, a cartoonist and artist who fled Vietnam on a boat as a child and found sanctuary in France.

The comic depicts the real life story of a young refugee arriving to the UK having clandestinely fled the war in Iraq, and who is now confronted with the many challenges of starting a new life in exile. In this struggle he is supported by a volunteer mentor who befriends him and provides invaluable support through friendship and simple acts of kindness.

MRCF’s Mentoring projects, such as ‘2 Heads are Better than 1’, help refugees and migrants who feel lonely and isolated and who do not yet speak English to spend time with mentors on a one-to-one basis. This support helps them to gain the confidence required to break out of isolation, practice English, and learn about London and opportunities they would normally miss out on. And more importantly, they form relationships of



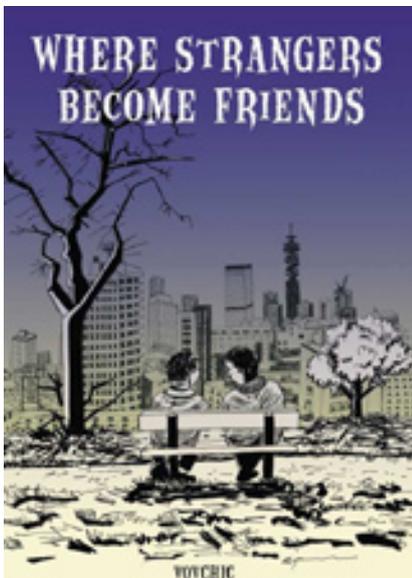
MRCF Mentors and Mentees at the Launch of the Comic

trust that help them feel part of the community. It also helps them to gain new skills and knowledge so that they are better equipped to contribute to society in a meaningful way through employment, volunteering and mentoring of others.

The comic was launched at MRCF’s Refugee Week celebrations, on 16th June 2009, attended by many of our mentors and mentees.

If you are interested in mentoring and volunteering with migrants and refugees or to order copies of the comic please contact Francesca Valerio on 020 89623048 or francesca@mrcf.org.uk

To see Lucie Trinephi’s work please visit her website: www.vovchic.com



Selected pages from Lucie Trinephi’s comic book



Project Update: Advice Work at MRCF

MRCF's Advice Project is up and running, with a growing numbers of users, as well as a higher awareness of the availability of our services amongst migrant and refugee communities.

We work in partnership with the North Kensington Law Centre, who kindly assist our clients with specialist advice in different areas of social welfare law. Links have also been established with other local and cross-borough advice agencies to help refer clients.

The funding for our generalist advice service covers five London boroughs: RBKC, Hammersmith & Fulham, Westminster, Brent and Ealing. Local Citizen's Advice Bureaus and Law Centres in other boroughs are aware of our services and refer those clients who need assistance that is not covered by legal help. For example, many clients need help in writing letters and making telephone calls.

Most of our clients are members of migrant and refugee communities; however, we also assist other local people from BME communities (pensioners, disabled people, single parents and others). Our work varies from simple one-off

telephone advice to referrals to specialist agencies to advocacy and casework. We have assisted clients to complete various application forms, advised on what benefits are available to them, helped illiterate individuals to read their correspondence and prepare replies, and helped with finding a specialist immigration caseworker. In one case we have successfully challenged our client's complaint about the service provided by Carphone Warehouse (delay in processing an on-line order) and received compensation.

Our generalist adviser is available for three days a week at either the MRCF office or outreach sessions in neighbouring boroughs. We are assisting clients without any prejudice to their financial situation (i.e. we do not assess whether they are eligible for public funding) and are still open for referrals. Due to limited availability of appointments, making an appointment is highly recommended.

For further information and to make an appointment, please contact Indre Gimziunaite, General Advice Worker: indre@mrcf.org.uk, 0208 962 3049.

The New Londoners Newspaper

For the 3rd year running, MRCF has supported the publication of the annual newspaper *The New Londoners*, which is planned, written and produced on a voluntary basis by migrants, refugees and asylum seekers who are members of the Migrant and Refugee Media Action Group at the Migrants Resource Centre, with contributions from British journalists and other Londoners.

In this year's issue you can read about the amazing journeys and work of migrants and refugees in London in their own words. We are particularly proud of our mentors and mentees Mohsen, Patricia, Didier and Merinde, who shared their stories with Londoners to encourage more people to mentor and volunteer. In addition to an interview about the extraordinary journey of our cartoonist Lucie Trinephi, you can see fantastic photos by our own Beth Crosland, as well as by photographer Tom King.

The New Londoners can be downloaded at: <http://www.thenewlondoners.co.uk/>



For hard copies please contact MRC directly: info@migrants.org.uk



'Good Practices for Access & Well-being' A New Community Health Project at MRCF

This new and innovative programme is an 18-month pilot project aimed at addressing the recommendations of the Primary Concern Report by the BME Health Forum, which identified a number of barriers for patients from black and minority ethnic background in accessing health care. The 'Good Practices for Access & Well-being' Programme (GPAW) is commissioned by the BME Health Forum (BME HF), and funded by the NHS Kensington & Chelsea and NHS Westminster (KCW). The Programme is delivered by six community organisations selected through a public tender process and coordinated by MRCF.

The overarching aim of the programme is to develop, record and recommend good practice to primary health care providers, so as to enable them to improve services to diverse communities and reflect that learning in the commissioning of services.

In adopting a cultural brokerage approach, this program aims to enhance the capacity of individuals and community projects to deliver health care information, referrals and advocacy to their communities, as well as educating their communities about the NHS.

As part of this programme, six community organisations were commissioned to work with primary care providers (GPs and Dentists) and BME patients to develop and disseminate good practice for better access to services. Each host project employs a full time Access Facilitator to deliver the work. The six organisations are:

- Al Hasaniya Moroccan Women's Centre
- Chinese National Healthy Living Centre
- Kongolese Centre for Information & Advice
- Midaye Somali Development Network
- Queen's Park Bangladesh Association
- WSPM Agape Community Project

Access facilitators will also help improve the health of their communities by providing input to local health care providers and raising issues on behalf of their users. They will educate their communities on how to make effective use of services, support

users to make complaints or raise challenges and provide support to users in order to overcome any language difficulties.

Despite an improvement in the overall health of UK citizens over the last few decades, health inequalities within and between communities continue to exist, and in many cases they have widened. BME communities are 'more likely than others to live in deprived areas; be poor; be unemployed, compared with white people with similar qualifications; suffer ill-health and live in overcrowded and unpopular housing. They also experience widespread racial harassment and racist crime and are over-represented throughout the criminal justice system, from stop and search to prison' (Social Exclusion Unit, 2003).

Poverty and poor health go hand in hand; they impact upon people from all backgrounds in Britain and are unavoidably linked to other forms of social deprivation. This project is an attempt to put in practice recommendations from research reports and affect change by including communities but also medical professionals.

To learn more about this innovative initiative please contact Isis Amlak (below), Project Coordinator, isis@mrcf.org.uk, 0208 962 3045.





Mayor of London Launches LSE Report on Regularisation

A report commissioned by London Mayor Boris Johnson has found an earned amnesty for “irregular” migrants could be worth almost £850 million per year in additional tax revenue.

Carried out by the London School of Economics, the report follows calls by the London Assembly for the Mayor to join it in lobbying the Government to introduce a time limited regularisation process for irregular migrants.

Around 400,000 ‘irregular’ migrants living in the UK could benefit if a scheme were introduced to regularise their status, a qualification being 5 years of crime-free residence, according to LSE researchers.

The LSE study ‘Economic impact on the London and UK economy of an earned regularisation of irregular migrants to the UK’ was undertaken by Ian Gordon, Kathleen Scanlon, Tony Travers and Christine Whitehead.

It estimates the current numbers of irregular migrants living in the UK – including refused asylum seekers, visa overstayers, irregular entrants and their UK-born children. The report then considers how many of these could be eligible under a regularisation scheme and the potential impacts this could have on GDP, tax receipts and the costs of public services.

The research estimates current numbers of irregular migrants across the UK at between 417,000 and 863,000 – although given the nature of this group firm data is limited. Despite the dispersal programmes in operation since 2000, 70% probably live in London.

Available evidence suggests that only half of adult irregular migrants are in work at any time. It also suggests that – as has been documented in the US – those in jobs are likely to earn only 80 per cent, or less, of otherwise comparable migrants. If regularisation eliminated these differentials it could add some £3billion to the national GDP.

Regularisation would entitle migrants to some additional services. However they would not be eligible for social housing provision or benefits and welfare entitlements unless and until they are free of migration controls. Under current paths to citizenship plans, this could take a long time.

Allowing for the increased take up following on from regularisation, the likely additional public service costs could be in the order of £410 million

per annum, rising to £1 billion as and when migrants receive indefinite leave to remain.

These would be balanced by additions to tax/ social security payments. With a full take-up of regularisation and greater access to the job market, revenues might rise by some £850 million per annum.

The scale of these effects is less than might be supposed, because a proportion of formally irregular migrants are already operating on a quite ‘regular’ basis in relation to both tax payments and service use. The authors emphasise that all of their estimates are subject to substantial margins of uncertainty, both because of data gaps, and because outcomes would depend greatly on how a scheme was designed and implemented.

In a statement issued for the launch on 16th June 2009, the Mayor said the report “has introduced some long overdue facts, hard evidence and academic rigour into a debate which has far too often been dominated by myth, anecdote and hearsay.”

“So far from a financial burden, as some suggest, this new research has found an amnesty could be worth up to £3 billion a year to the economy.”

“The study also demolishes the argument that an amnesty would inevitably lead to increased migration to the UK and identifies effective border controls as the vital factor in controlling and deterring illegal immigration.”

Full report and executive summary can be downloaded at: www.london.gov.uk/mayor/business-economy/publications/irregular-migrants.jsp



March for ‘Strangers into Citizens’ in Trafalgar Square



'Help People to Help Themselves': Sudanese Mothers for Peace

In 2001, I was invited to a meeting with Ambassador Patty, the then newly appointed UK Ambassador to Sudan. About eight organisations were represented at the meeting. One of the Ambassador's questions was: 'What is the best thing that I can do for the people of Sudan?'

I answered that nothing is better than to help people to help themselves; and I added, it is not the fate of hosting countries to host refugees for ever. I suggested that the approach of all hosting countries should be an honest and sincere effort to help refugees solve their problems back home, so that they can return to rebuild their own countries using the experience and professions they have gained in their countries of refuge.

My idea was to induce refugees to go back home. I suggested providing those who had gained citizenship with a lump sum of three year's expenses to go back home and start a new life. None of my Sudanese colleagues supported my idea but I continue to believe in and work for it.

In January 2008 the organisation of which I am the Chair, Sudanese Mothers for Peace, carried out a community-based action research project funded by the International Small grants programme of the Big Lottery Fund. Ongoing wars and environmental disasters in the west, east and south of Sudan have led to many internally displaced people (IDPs) fleeing to the relative safety of Khartoum. This unplanned migration has led to a lot of hostility from local people and had a great strain on local health and social care providers. Language and other barriers have led to real exclusion for the IDPs and have had a particularly serious impact on mothers and their children.



SMP managed to undertake community-based action research to ensure that internally displaced Sudanese women and children of diverse ethnicities were able to access appropriate and affordable paediatric and reproductive healthcare. Our primary intention was to improve early intervention i.e. antenatal health, postnatal, and paediatric services for this target group. The delivery of this project took place in Khartoum, within both mainstream agencies and also in the slums and camps of displaced women and children.

We found during the research that some of the IDPs had been invited by the authorities to return back to their original areas. The same idea had crossed my mind but my question was, 'Would they find their needs fully provided for if they returned home?'

I decided to put my suggestion into practise and consulted the Department for International Development (DfID) in Khartoum and suggested that we extend the research to include one of the areas where IDPs had returned to, in order to assess living conditions. DfID funded the fact-finding mission and it was also supported by a Sudanese organisation working with those affected by the war. Everywhere we visited we found women and children in desperate conditions. There was a lack of clean water, education and health care. Poverty was widespread. The women in the area were also unable to raise let alone have their voices heard. In response to these findings we supported the women to establish a legal body to represent them. As a next step we requested a permanent venue where they could carry out activities so as to promote and support a self help approach to fighting poverty, lack of representation, human rights and peace advocacy. I am proud to say that things have turned out even





better than I expected. The women's organisation was awarded a plot of land (three thousand square meters) in the middle of the town to build the first community development centre for and owned by women. The organisation is currently running a project for skills promotion and poverty elimination funded by the Dutch Embassy in Sudan but we are still looking for funds to build the centre.

SMP is organising a round table discussion about this

with potential donors which will take place soon at Chatham House (The Royal Institute for International Affairs). We firmly believe that nothing is better than helping people to help themselves. I will continue to inform you about the progress of this project and let us together follow the passage of this experiment.

Khadiga Hussein, Chairperson, Sudanese Mothers for Peace

mothersforpeacelondon@hotmail.com

Access to Training is All that's Needed by Migrant and Refugee Dentists

For the past seven years, MRCF has been helping overseas qualified health professionals to prepare for the verification exams that they are required to pass in order to begin working in the UK.

At present we have nearly 2,500 overseas qualified dentists from 73 countries registered with the project. They all have regular immigration status, and many are already British citizens.

Since there is no similar support for dentists anywhere else in the UK, MRCF has set up e-mail group to enable migrant and refugee dentists to share information and support. Those in London can access clinical training at MRCF, attend weekly lectures and use a specialist library.

Although in the past we worked with professional bodies such as the Department of Health and the National Health Service, our attempts to enlist their support to help migrant dentists into employment were met with a lack of understanding, and as of 1st of April 2009 MRCF has no more funding to deliver this work.

In the past year MRCF contributed nearly £30,000 of our own limited resources to help dentists on a path into economic integration. This is in addition to time, skills and knowledge contributed by trainers, most of whom donate their professional fees to help their future colleagues.

For our clients, not to be able to work as dentists in the UK is not only a personal waste of time and skills, but a huge loss for the NHS and all patients who are desperately in need of a dentist.

Even without funding MRCF is committed to continuing to provide support for migrant and refugee dentists, albeit in a reduced capacity.

Dr Anwar Tappuni, who has been an invaluable source of support for dentists and MRCF from the start of the project, is also working hard to recruit more volunteer lecturers for the next round of lectures, and MRCF is looking for volunteers to help administer the project. While we are seeking further funding, the clinical training will be reduced to 3 days a week (Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays) until we secure more resources, but we are hoping we will be able to continue with weekly lectures. MRCF will also administer the yahoo group for networking and has also set up a Facebook group to help dentists exchange their experiences and support each other. The library hours will also be reduced to 3 days a week (Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays).

MRCF is still looking for funding to continue providing support for overseas health professionals. We also welcome your donations. Please send your contributions to MRCF (for OHP), 2 Thorpe Close, London W10 5XL.

International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

For those who are 'documented or in a regular situation', article 43 states:

'(1) Migrant workers shall enjoy equality of treatment with nationals of the State of employment in relation to:

1. access to educational institutions and services subject to the admission requirements and other regulations of the institutions and services concerned;
2. access to vocational training and retraining facilities and institutions....
3. States Parties shall promote conditions to ensure effective equality of treatment to enable migrant workers to enjoy the right mentioned....'



Introducing Elisa, MRCF's new intern

My name is Elisa and I came to MRCF for the first time last Summer for a Question Time Meeting. I was literally amazed to see the organisation provide a space where migrant and refugee communities could listen to an expert, but also compare and share their experiences, learning from each other.

In November, I became involved in the Transforming Lives project as a mentor, and I am still enjoying meeting every week with my mentee. Recently, I joined the Capacity Building Program as an intern. I am specifically working on MRCF's Action Research Project with Carnegie UK Trust. It aims to rethink the meaning of power and how it can be used by groups in a positive manner through innovative tools such as the internet. Soon, I will start meeting new migrant and refugee communities, understanding their strengths and needs, and explaining what kind of opportunities MRCF can provide for them.

What I really like about this organisation is that, not only does it offer practical support and physical space for activities, but groups are given the chance to meet with others and to have a voice at a policy level. They can be the protagonists of social change, contributing to a more equal society. This new role will give me the



opportunity to meet with a variety of groups and people, who can become part of a challenging and exciting project.

I am also a foreigner, and in my country I worked as a Social Worker and as a Community Development Worker. I came here because London is the most multicultural city in the world, where migrant communities began settling a long time ago. I thought that this would be the right place to improve professionally, particularly to learn how to create a truly empowering environment for minorities.

MRCF has a wealth of experience in this field and it is a real pleasure working with the team: there is a warm and friendly atmosphere, where noone feels like a stranger!

New Volunteers at MRCF

MRCF is very happy to welcome three new volunteers who bring with them many different experiences and skills that will be invaluable to our clients: Ljiljana, Madalena and Jeff.



Ljiljana Subotinovic, originally from Croatia, and currently completing an accountancy qualification, is a new volunteer at MRCF. "I wanted to gain some experience in a work place and I heard about MRCF from a friend. I am glad that I came here because I have an opportunity to gain some experience in accountancy and also to practice my English."



'Hello my name is Madalina. I am thrilled to be given the opportunity to join the MRCF team and hope I will contribute to its future successes. I am fortunate enough to be working with Francesca on mentoring projects and am having a fun and challenging time.'



Jeff Samuelson joined MRCF as a volunteer to work on plans to increase use of the Resource Centre, and is also providing support to staff and members in various other projects. Jeff came to MRCF from the development charity Book Aid International.



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Tish Kester, Project Support Worker
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Volunteering at MRCF

If you are interested in volunteering at MRCF, we are currently looking for bilingual mentors to support individual refugees and migrants, but we also need volunteers with experience and knowledge of Marketing, Design, IT, Administration and Project Management.

For more information, and to apply, please contact Francesca Valerio, Mentoring and Volunteering Coordinator:

Tel. 020 8964 4815 or on 020 8962 3048 (direct)

Email: Francesca@mrcf.org.uk



Need a Space for Training, Meetings and Events? Book a room at MRCF!

The Migrant and Refugee Communities Forum is a very welcoming organisation, just three minutes walk from Ladbroke Grove tube station on the Hammersmith & City line. Stops for buses 7, 23, 52, 70, 228, and 452 are also near at hand.

Tucked under the Westway, MRCF enjoys quiet premises with a view over Portobello Green. Portobello Road is less than two minutes' walk away.

The rooms

MRCF has two rooms for hire – a hall with an adjoining kitchen, and a training room. They are available seven days a week from 9.30 in the morning to 10.0 o'clock at night. Both rooms, and other facilities are accessible to wheelchair users.

The following equipment is available: data projector, television, white board, and flip chart.

Food may be brought into the premises as there is a fully-equipped kitchen.

Hall

The hall on the ground floor is ideal for meetings and functions as it can hold up to 50 people.

Training room

The upstairs training room which overlooks the garden can hold 25 people and is well suited to smaller meetings.

MRCF is very keen to welcome new migrant and refugee community groups to use the rooms, and to attract voluntary and statutory organisations.



MRCF Training Room

Room use

Migrant and refugee community groups are the main users of the rooms. Activities include Arabic and English classes, poetry meetings, study groups, theatre workshops, lunch club meetings, homework classes and many other activities.

Room costs and related charges

The charges for both rooms are the same, however different rates apply for different types of organisations, and they are as follows (per hour):

Migrant & Refugee Community Orgs.	£5.50
Voluntary Organisations	£16.50
Statutory Organisations	£33.00

In addition, there is a £10 charge for the use of any or all of the equipment.

Booking the rooms

Bookings are necessary and because the rooms are well used, please book well in advance. For more information or to make a booking, please call 020 8964 4815, or email Sofia.Aman@mrcf.org.uk

In order to support new and unfunded migrant and refugee groups, MRCF will donate up to five free bookings for community meetings and events for these groups. MRCF regrets that it cannot take bookings for private parties.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Forum!



MRCF Hall