

REFUGEE & MIGRANT FORUM MANCHESTER  
OPEN FORUM MEETING

**Education and Training Courses and Pathways into Employment**

THURSDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2007

**Present:** Mansoor Hassan, Aquila Hassan, Elinah Mugwagwa, Fazil Mustafa, Fatin Kamesy, Nibras Kamesy, Belay Kahsay, Mustafa Osman, Yan Nin Cockayne, Angela Shereni, Ghada Fakih, Semere Yohannes, Asli Tedros, Ivor Whitfield, Sophie King

**1. Update from working groups and steering group**

See update sheet – responses from attendees:

**Basic Rights Group:**

Semere to be added as a member of this working group.

Semere and Asli raised a number of points for group's meetings with Dallas Court staff – Section 4 vouchers can't be used in other shops only ASDA, Tesco. Housing providers are treating people badly, no travel tickets for destitute people to get to the reporting centre.

Discussions with staff at Dallas Court have to deal with issues that the Enforcement and Compliance Team have some control over so unfortunately, while we can raise the issue of vouchers they will not be able to do anything about this national policy.

Travel tickets for destitute asylum seekers is an issue we have raised and continue to raise with them. They have said that people on Section 4 who have had to miss a reporting date should now be able to have a ticket posted out to them in advance of their reporting event – we need to monitor this to check it is happening.

Mansoor volunteered to translate the reporting diary forum members had produced into Urdu – to get in touch if we decide to give out further copies.

**Skills Audit:**

Mansoor, Aquila, Angela, Ivor, Ghada and Asli would all like to take part in the MMU community audit training and help carry out the skills audit of forum members.

### **Greater Manchester Police Advisory Group:**

Fazil and Mansoor are both members of this strategic group which advises the police on their policies. There is a race group as disabled group and a lesbian, gay, bisexual group. Fazil represents the Forum on this group.

Fazil also attends an advisory group for Salford police. This is more practical than the Manchester group, you can go out with them and act as a mediator in the community. Manchester group is more policy focused.

Sophie, Fazil and Mansoor to speak about running a session with Forum on police policy issues.

### **2. New ESOL project for women – Yan Nin Cockayne, Manchester City Council**

Yan Nin explained that there is a new project that will provide free ESOL classes for women who are not eligible for mainstream classes but who desperately want to learn and who have very basic or no English. The course will run from January to July 2008. Please see enclosed flyer for details and contact Yan Nin if you know people who would like to attend.

### **3. Pathways into Employment**

**Two forum members attended the meeting to describe their pathways into their chosen employment.**

Fazil Mustafa – Case Worker, Manchester Asylum Team

Fazil has been in the UK since 2001. His employment pathway began by volunteering at Salford Council for Voluntary Services where he was able to build up his skills and get support from the people he worked with. Following on from this he was able to get two part-time jobs, one was giving general information, advice and guidance. Then he started a course at Salford University.

He started in community work by volunteering in the Kurdish community in Salford doing informal interpreting. He then studied to be a qualified interpreter.

Fazil recommended getting qualified and registered on the National Register of Public Service Interpreters. You can study for a one year diploma at Salford University or MANCAT, the course is 400 hours which you can do one evening a week or one Saturday every three weeks.

It takes two years to register as an interpreter with the Home Office, the course is 600 and it is 400 for the exam. You have to have a level 1 or level 2 interpreting qualification.

Fazil is now a Case Worker for Manchester City Council Asylum Team part-time and studying part-time.

### **Belay Kahsay – Community Development Worker, MRSN**

Belay works with refugee community organisations providing advice, information and training in how to manage and develop an organisation, also produces the MRSN newsletter. To do this job you need experience of working with community groups.

Belay also has a BA degree and an MA in Conflict Resolution.

In 2002 Belay was working as a cleaner and then in a factory for one or two years. He then started doing interpretation and translation work and volunteering with the Eritrean community. He had sub contracts with translation agencies and worked as an interpreter.

Belay then got a paid job as a support worker with the Eritrean community which meant earning less money than working as an interpreter but you have to be prepared to earn less money to do a job that you are interested in sometimes. It is the same working for MRSN – Belay said he could earn more money as an interpreter but the work is more interesting.

Belay said that attending regular training courses at Salford Council for Voluntary Services and building up contacts through partnership working e.g. with Refugee Action helped him to find out about work opportunities and develop the skills he needed.

## **4. Education and Training Courses**

### **‘The Role of a Community Worker’ / Community Work Diploma, Manchester University**

Fatin spoke about this free course and the diploma. There is another free course starting on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2008 – see enclosed information.

The course teaches you about building bridges between different communities and different organisations, the differences between communities and problems they face. Fatin found it a very positive experience and has gone on to do a Diploma which is 250 – you have to do workshops with different community organisations, there is an oral assessment and written work to complete.

### **‘Church-related Community Work Pathway’, Luther King House**

Angela spoke about this degree course which teaches about community work for people interested in working with communities and the church.

**'Train the Trainer' Manchester Metropolitan University**

Elinah explained that this is a short course run by MMU that counts as 10 credits of their Youth and Community Work degree course. It teaches you about facilitation and how to plan and deliver a training course. While you are on the course you are actively doing the teaching. The next course is going to be run in Preston starting in January but MMU have offered to pay forum members travel expenses

**Community Leadership Training, Refugee & Migrant Forum / Volunteering**

Mustafa spoke about the confidence, skills and knowledge he gained from participating in the Forum's community leadership training this year. He also spoke about volunteering with the Forum and in the MRSN office and how this has provided him with experience and confidence that will help him to get a paid job. The Forum Steering Group are awaiting the outcome of various funding applications but hope that there will be another community leadership programme in 2008.

**5. Next meeting**

The next open forum meeting will take place from **6 – 8pm on Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> January** and will be a feedback and consultation session with community members about the **Basic Rights Group's ongoing dialogue with the Enforcement & Compliance Team at Dallas Court reporting centre.**

# REFUGEE & MIGRANT FORUM MANCHESTER

## FORUM UPDATE – DECEMBER 2007

### 1. Access to Primary Care Campaign

- Joint review of rules for access to the NHS for 'foreign nationals' – Home Office and Department of Health
- Home Office want to make health professionals check patients immigration status and charge refused asylum seekers for primary care
- Outcome of the review in January
- Forum members working with migrant charities and health professionals to campaign against these changes – spoke at House of Commons on 11<sup>th</sup> December
- **\*\*WE NEED GREATER MANCHESTER MPs to SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN\*\*** – see separate campaign flyer for information on how you can ask your MP to do this.

### 2. Broad-based Organisation – CHANGEMAKERS

- Forum members working with Church Action on Poverty and Faith Network for Manchester to encourage a variety of community organisations to join CHANGEMAKERS
- CHANGEMAKERS is a people's campaigning organisation which will enable people from many different areas of Manchester and interest groups to work together to bring about change and improve people's quality of life
- More information in the training brochure.

### 3. Basic Rights Working Group

- We will soon be reaching the end of our first year of meetings with the Enforcement and Compliance Team at Dallas Court and we are now meeting with them on a quarterly basis
- We have had an initial discussion of the issues we raised through our 2006 consultation and are now reviewing the action they have agreed to take and the issues which we need to raise with them again
- We have three new members of the group but new members are still welcome
- In January we will be planning a meeting with refugee communities to enable communities to raise new issues with us and for us to feedback on progress
- Some community members are filling in 'reporting diaries' when they report at Dallas Court , recording any problems they have in their journey

or with staff at the centre, we will be using this evidence to feed into our meetings with the BIA.

- In January we will also be planning how we can focus on the Asylum end of the process as well as enforcement activities
- We have commitment from the following BIA staff to come to Forum meetings to speak to communities:
  - Eddy Montgomery, Deputy Director in the North West for the Case Resolution Directorate
  - Nigel Hills, Regional Director North West, Asylum
  - Lorraine Auld, Assistant Director North West, Asylum

#### **4. Steering Group – Strategic Direction & Audit of membership**

- We are in the process of producing our Strategic Direction document which will be put on our website
- Key priorities from the membership during our consultation in October were continued work on asylum policy issues, the right to work and training with non-refugee groups to promote integration
- There are new opportunities for forum members from January to March:
  - Children's working group
  - Awareness raising/media working group
  - Skills audit working group – this group will be involved in accredited training from MMU in how to conduct a community audit and will then gain experience through participating in research with members of the Refugee & Migrant Forum about their skills, experience and aspirations.