



**Strategic
Directions**
2009 – 2012

asylum is a human right

Introduction These Strategic Directions have been drawn up after extensive discussions with all those who have a stake in what we do. The aim is to chart the clearest possible course for our work over the next three years, both as an independent charity and as a membership body that plays a leading role on behalf of the refugee sector.

We trust that the Strategic Directions speak for themselves. However, we think that we should give some added explanation of our use of one very important word – **refugee**.

Throughout the document, **refugee** is used to describe all people who have fled from their homes in search of protection, not just those with official refugee status. The term, therefore, includes people who, in the language of the UK's complex and divisive asylum process, are labelled as 'asylum seekers' or 'refused or failed asylum seekers'.

We believe that the right to claim asylum is a human right and that all those who come here looking for protection should be treated equally with others in our society, even if, in the end, they are not allowed to stay in the UK.

Donna Covey
Chief Executive

Douglas Board
Chair of the Board of Trustees

The Refugee Council's vision

We want to see a world in which men, women and children who are forced to flee from their homes can find the protection they need, rebuild their lives in safety and dignity, and achieve their full potential.

The Refugee Council's mission

As a human rights charity, independent of government, we work to ensure that refugees are given the protection they need, that they are treated with respect and understanding, and that they have the same rights, opportunities and responsibilities as other members of our society.

We achieve this mission by:

- supporting refugees and working with them as they build a new life
- speaking up for refugees and ensuring that refugees themselves have a strong voice in all areas of UK life
- building links with people from across our society to increase mutual understanding of refugees
- making the case for a fair and just asylum system
- taking a leading role in helping to build up a vibrant, sustainable and successful refugee sector in the UK and internationally

**Our Key
Directions in
2009-2012**

To strengthen the commitment of the UK government and society to providing the safety refugees need and to recognising the contribution they make

- Through constructively engaging with the public, civic society, opinion formers, policy makers and legislators on the need for a fair and just asylum system that provides protection to those who need it
- Through adopting innovative ways of increasing understanding in all areas of UK life about the reasons why people flee from their homes, the needs and rights of refugees, and their aspirations and achievements
- Through influencing all areas of public policy that impact on the daily lives of refugees, including fair access to public services and the opportunity to play a full part in UK society

To ensure that there is a stronger and more influential UK voice speaking up for refugees in all the debates that affect them

- Through strengthening our ability to speak up with authority in defence of the rights of refugees and through supporting refugees themselves so that their voices are listened to where decisions are made
- Through developing trusted and transparent ways of consulting with and listening to others in the refugee world, particularly refugees themselves, so that what we say reflects their priorities
- Through ensuring that the distinctive needs and contributions of refugees are high on the agenda in the wider UK, European and international debates on issues such as border security, migration, citizenship and community relations

To provide strong, supportive and accountable leadership to the refugee sector so that it can achieve more for refugees

- Through playing a leading role in bringing together agencies in the refugee field with influential bodies in all sectors whose decisions and activities impact on the lives of refugees
- Through strengthening the accountability of the Refugee Council, by building up membership and developing other partnerships and collaborative ways of working
- Through taking a lead in the exchange of information, training, mentoring and other support, in order to maximise the impact, responsiveness and sustainability of the refugee sector

**Our Key
Directions in
2009-2012**
continued

To provide high quality advice, support and services to refugees and their families, where we are best placed to do so

- Through designing and delivering creative, innovative services and activities that meet the needs of refugees and are seen as models of good practice
- Through working with other agencies, particularly refugee community organisations, so that they can provide appropriate services, and supporting them to achieve this through sharing experience, expertise, training and information
- Through ensuring that high quality services to refugees are widely available and sustainable, so that refugees are not disadvantaged in our society and are able to reach their full potential

To strengthen our position as an independent and effective charity

- Through putting refugees at the heart of everything we do and being fearless and tenacious in our defence of refugee rights
- Through using imaginative and innovative ways to widen our supporter base and to increase our ability to generate voluntary income, secure grants and, when consistent with the best interests of refugees, win contracts in pursuit of our charitable aims
- Through strengthening the Refugee Council as a high profile, high quality charity with professional standards, a passion for doing the best we possibly can, and a cutting edge approach to our work



www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

British Refugee Council, (commonly called the Refugee Council), is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales, [No 2727514], with its registered office at 240-250 Ferndale Road, London SW9 8BB, United Kingdom. British Refugee Council is also a registered charity, [No 1014576].