

Refugee Council

research report



An Evaluation of the volunteering opportunities provided to refugees and asylum seekers by the Refugee Council using funding from the Lloyds TSB Foundation 2004-2006

September 2007

Report written by Richard Malfait and Nick Scott-Flynn

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About the Refugee Council

The Refugee Council is the largest organisation in the UK working with asylum seekers and refugees. We not only give help and support to asylum seekers and refugees, but also work with them to ensure their needs and concerns are addressed by decision-makers.

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*"I was in a hole. Right down in a hole. Volunteering gave me back my confidence".
A refugee former volunteer for the Refugee Council, now working in the West Midlands*

*"As an asylum-seeker I was not allowed to work. But it is not in my nature to sit at home! I asked the Refugee Council what could I do and became a volunteer".
A refugee former volunteer for the Refugee Council, now working in Leeds*

Introduction

This document presents the findings of the Evaluation of the volunteering opportunities provided for refugees and asylum-seekers by the Refugee Council using funding from the Lloyds TSB Foundation. The Evaluation has been undertaken during the third year of the Project although the period funded by the Lloyds TSB foundation covered a period of two years from December 2004 – December 2006.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to this Evaluation, including Refugee Council staff based in Brixton, Leeds, Birmingham and Ipswich. In particular we would like to thank the refugee and asylum-seeking volunteers who agreed to be interviewed or take part in focus groups as part of the Evaluation. Their perspective was essential to our understanding of the impact of this important piece of work and to help us ascertain lessons for the future in this area of activity.

Context and Aims of the Evaluation

In 2004 the Refugee Council successfully applied for funding from the Lloyds TSB Foundation to enable research and development of more vocational volunteering opportunities within the organisation. Through its work with refugees and asylum-seekers, the Refugee Council had identified a need for longer, more intensive placements with a greater level of training attached. This need was particularly relevant for asylum-seekers, who are legally restricted from working, but are able to take up voluntary placements and thereby develop and maintain their own skills.

Wider research indicated that refugees face significant barriers to gaining employment as a result of their immigration status. A review of the research by the Refugee Council suggested that 45-60% of refugees were out of work after residing in the UK for between two and five years. After five years the rate was between 22-30%. At the time of the Lloyds TSB Project onset, the Refugee Council was hosting 'ASSET UK', a partnership of eight bodies looking at vocational training and employment for refugees and asylum-seekers. The Refugee Council also retained links with RETAS, a project that supports the social and economic development of refugees and asylum-seekers in the UK by facilitating their access to education, employment and training opportunities. This work contributed to the development of the Lloyds TSB Project. A key aim of the Refugee Council's strategy in trying to address this situation has been to develop more vocational opportunities for refugee and asylum-seeking volunteers and increase the development and dissemination of best practice in providing such opportunities.

Prior to the onset of the Lloyds TSB Project, many of the volunteering opportunities that could be offered by the Refugee Council were at a basic level of activity or were roles that were not clearly defined for example providing general support to clients using Refugee Council services. The new opportunities, researched and developed through the Project, have sought to either impart a higher skills set or be more intensive and therefore enable greater and more realistic vocational experience to be gained. The Lloyds TSB Project aims to design roles for and target recruitment of volunteers who are themselves refugees or asylum-seekers. In this way the Project aims to have a double impact of providing much needed skills and experience for the refugees and asylum-seekers who are volunteers and increase the capacity of the organisation as a whole to deliver services for the wider client group.

In February 2007 Nick Scott-Flynn and Richard Malfait were engaged as external Consultants by the Refugee Council to undertake an independent Evaluation of the Lloyds TSB Project. The Evaluation was tasked with making a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the impact and effectiveness of volunteering across the Refugee Council particularly in relation to improving employment prospects for volunteers. Specifically, the Refugee Council required the Evaluation to address the following questions:

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- a) Has the development of new volunteering roles and opportunities led to improved employment skills and employment access?
- b) How has volunteering supported other development in individuals (e.g. confidence, language, cultural knowledge etc)?
- c) Have the volunteering roles offered to refugees and asylum-seekers supported the development of vocational experience, skills and confidence?
- d) What experiences or training were particularly beneficial for volunteers?
- e) Have Refugee Council staff whose role is to support and supervise volunteers had to provide additional support to this group of volunteers, due to levels of English for example?

What follows are the main findings from the Evaluation.

Executive Summary

There are many challenges facing refugees and asylum-seekers coming to the UK as they try and rebuild their lives here after fleeing persecution in their own countries. Although many have fled from horrendous situations, most refugees are highly motivated and energetic, bringing many skills with them to this country. Key to their successful resettlement and integration in the UK is the ability to put these skills to good use, to support themselves and contribute to this society that has given them refuge.

The Refugee Council has long recognised the value of involving volunteers in the delivery of the organisation's services to refugees and asylum-seekers as well as in the other areas of its work. While many volunteers have come from within the UK population, a significant number of refugees and asylum-seekers have sought to offer their skills and time to the organisation. The Refugee Council correctly identified that there was both a unique contribution that refugees and asylum-seekers could make in this context as well as there being a need to provide a volunteering package that was appropriate to the specific needs of these volunteers.

CASE STUDY

E is a refugee from Zimbabwe, where she worked as a photo journalist. She started volunteering for the Refugee Council in the marketing team, providing administrative support to the team in organising events, conferences and seminars. As her relationship grew with her supervisor, they recognised that there were potential opportunities within the team where E would be able to use her photography skills, and developed a volunteer photographer role specifically around her. E took photographs for publications, use on the Refugee Council website, the Impact report and at events. This allowed E to increase her portfolio of work and get more recent experience. E has recently started work in a camera shop, continues to volunteer to take photographs at events and is on the path to returning to her previous career.

With reference to the core questions upon which this Evaluation was founded, the following overall conclusions can be made:

- a) **The development of new volunteering roles and opportunities has led to improved employment skills and employment access**

The experience of asylum-seekers and refugees who have volunteered and those supporting them has emphatically confirmed that undertaking voluntary roles within the Refugee Council greatly assists in the development of skills and experience that enhance and improve individual 'employability'. This has been especially indicated in the Self-Assessment exercise forming part of the individual questionnaire and interview consultations (see 'The Impact on Individual Refugees and Asylum-Seekers who volunteered' below). However, whilst many former volunteers who

participated in this Evaluation had been successful in finding suitable paid employment, other volunteers are frustrated to still be unemployed. In some instances, individuals have been unsuccessful over a period of several years at the application or interview stages of seeking employment. Interviewees described their difficulties and frustrations when attempting to understand and successfully negotiate recruitment processes. For example completing application forms, writing CVs or performing well in job interviews. Those who have been successful in becoming employed firmly attribute their achievement to two key factors:

- The experience they gained through volunteering
- The encouragement, coaching and support they received from their respective supervisors and Volunteer Coordinators at the Refugee Council throughout their time as volunteers. This was especially true of mentoring-type support and coaching received during the completion of job applications and in preparation for employment interviews.

b) Volunteering has supported other developments in individuals, for example a sense of well-being

Volunteers and other stakeholders participating in the Evaluation described a wide range of benefits and positive impacts derived through volunteering that go beyond technical employability. For example, many volunteers reported significant improvements in general confidence, self esteem, mental health and wellbeing, use of language and communication skills. Many volunteers specifically stated that volunteering helped reduce and prevent feelings of isolation, anxiety and depression. They described it giving a structure and sense of achievement that provides a distraction from their own problems and which supports positive mental health. Whilst not articulated or reported by refugees as measures of 'employability', most if not all of the benefits and areas of personal development reported can be clearly identified as having a positive direct or indirect linkage to the individual's prospects for accessing work and education.

c) Volunteering roles offered to refugees and asylum-seekers have supported the development of vocational experience, skills and confidence

Most stakeholders confirmed that the nature and volume of 'vocational volunteering' opportunities across the Refugee Council is continuing to develop appropriately, although there is still a need for continued improvement in several respects. The large numbers of volunteers working within the organisation (approximately 330 per week) and the high proportion coming from asylum-seeking and refugee backgrounds (40%) indicates that volunteering opportunities are accessible and attractive to individuals from a wide range of backgrounds, immigration status and cultures. However many who participated in the Evaluation felt that there should be a greater commitment in practice to identifying and supporting a wider range of vocational volunteering opportunities across the organisation. In particular interest was expressed in the development of more volunteering roles in advice work, specialist projects, campaigning, finance and IT roles.

Volunteer roles based around administrative tasks can often be appropriate and useful for those seeking to become employed in this field and they can also be valuable as an initial experience that helps refugees and asylum-seekers regain confidence in the workplace environment. However several volunteers, coordinators and supervising staff also emphasised the need to provide personal progression and development of volunteering opportunities for those whose confidence, abilities and aspirations evolve. Volunteers should be able to move-on from what can be seen as more mundane roles.

There is also recognition that in the provision of good quality volunteering opportunities that support the aims both of individuals and the organisation there is a requirement for there to be sufficient capacity amongst paid staff to give adequate support to volunteers. It was noted that it

is often difficult to ensure such capacity.

d) Experiences and training that were particularly beneficial for volunteers

The majority of volunteers reported that they feel well managed and supported in general terms. Volunteer Coordinators in each area are evidently committed to ensuring that volunteers receive an appropriate induction for their role. This induction includes information about the team and the context within which the volunteers are working. Importantly the inductions are tailored to individual needs as far as is practicable. Each volunteer confirmed that they receive one-to-one support and guidance from their supervising staff member at sufficiently regular intervals. Volunteer Coordinators in each of the areas covered by the Evaluation showed a commitment to being accessible to volunteers and available for informal support and guidance as much as possible within the constraints of time and role. Volunteers frequently acknowledged the validity and effectiveness of this approach and the quality of support provided by Refugee Council staff.

Volunteers particularly value training and they would like to be able to access as much training as possible. Specific examples cited included: short and extended induction training; working with unaccompanied minors; mental health; using the RIO database; client interview skills; working with interpreters; personal safety; CV writing; first aid; Health and Safety; Child Protection; immigration and the New Asylum Model. Volunteers and staff welcomed the shift in organisational policy to make training, workshops and seminars more available to volunteers and paid staff on an equal priority basis. However several volunteers reported that their not being able to access e-mail and training bulletins on a daily basis made it more difficult to get a place on popular training courses as places are often taken up quickly by those that hear or read of the opportunity first.

There is a specific need reported by volunteers and staff members for more training and workshop opportunities to support the development of skills and increased confidence in completing job applications, understanding recruitment processes and in being interviewed. Whilst many proposed or agreed that this could be addressed by the Refugee Council, there was also some frustration that Job Centre Plus (JCP) are not fulfilling their obligations in this task. Many volunteers and staff talked about the completely inadequate nature of the courses offered by JCP in these topics.

e) The provision of additional support to this group of volunteers from Refugee Council Staff

Staff members and volunteers alike have emphasised the importance of effective and supportive supervision based on individual needs in the context of all volunteering roles (i.e. not just with volunteers from refugee backgrounds). However many asylum-seekers and refugees have additional support needs and challenges to overcome as volunteers and in achieving their vocational, career and educational goals. This is particularly true for those volunteers whose motivation and aims are most concerned with increasing their employability and in taking next steps into employment or education. Volunteer Coordinators and other staff involved in supervision and supporting these volunteers often need to invest extra time and provide additional support, especially in relation to helping them seek paid work, fill in job applications and prepare for interviews. The support needs of refugee and asylum-seeker volunteers are generally higher than for volunteers who have grown up with UK culture and systems. This is in part due to needs around language, self-confidence, emotional wellbeing and uncertainties about immigration status. Again, for those who are actively submitting applications and attending interviews for jobs but experiencing rejection over a sustained period, the issues of failing confidence, frustration and disillusionment frequently call for a higher investment of support and encouragement by those supporting them. This can be a difficult and time-intensive role to undertake.

This Evaluation has also concluded that the impact of this project has been enormously positive in several other respects:

- It has been extremely beneficial to individual refugees and asylum-seekers, helping them in many ways such as gaining confidence, employment, experience, improved language skills and an ending of isolation.
- It has improved the services of the Refugee Council itself both in volume and quality. Many of the refugee volunteers are acutely aware of what the clients who daily access the organisation's services are going through and offer an appropriate response.
- It has helped the organisation develop new services, such as the Talks Team that has refugee volunteers going into schools to tell their stories to children.
- It has challenged the organisation to continually enhance the existing volunteer programmes.
- Several volunteers have gone on to paid employment.
- It promotes social cohesion by giving refugees and asylum-seekers a space to give something back to the society that has given them refuge.

CASE STUDY

A arrived in the UK as a separated child, with no family or friends in the UK. Through his hard work and dedication he progressed through the education system in the UK, and started applying for university courses. A approached the Refugee Council as he was looking for additional voluntary work that would be helpful in his applications to his future studies, as he was already volunteering in a hospital. The Volunteering team approached the Policy Team and developed a summer role that would provide research experience into refugee health. A excelled in this role and is now studying at Aston University.

Recommendations

- a) Monitoring numbers and profiles of volunteers:** Currently each region maintains a separate list of volunteers that should link with the central list maintained by the Volunteer Development Manager (VDM). As the regional lists evolve (new volunteers joining and others leaving), they should be updated and the adjustments routinely forwarded to the VDM in order to enable the central records to be updated. In practice there does not appear to be consistent practice across regions in this respect (e.g. accuracy and frequency of updates) and consequently it is hard to confidently and routinely maintain an overview or periodically analyse volunteer demographic and profiling information. Complete, accurate and up to date information, for example including reasons for leaving a volunteering role, could provide useful material to demonstrate the impact of volunteering (for example if the move is on to education or employment) as well as highlighting shortfalls or negative reasons leading to departure.

Recommendation: Regional databases and practices of recording up-to-date volunteer profiles and status information (i.e. former or current volunteer) are maintained and linked more effectively for central monitoring and review purposes.

- b) Promoting and prioritising volunteering in the Refugee Council:** This Evaluation has confirmed that developing and supporting volunteers in meaningful, appropriate and well-supported roles can enhance and increase refugee employability and access to employment. As a widely accepted indicator and component of 'integration', organisational initiatives that support and help facilitate refugee access to employment are a particularly important and appropriate. They are a 'high impact' activity for the Refugee Council to be engaged in. There is evidently high commitment to supporting refugees in volunteer roles amongst those that we consulted, often characterised by creativity in role development and determination in providing intensive individual support in job search despite time and capacity issues. However, as the leading and largest refugee support organisation in the UK, it is probable that more that could be achieved across a wider cross section of teams and sections. The potential could be more greatly realised through managers and staff at all levels and in all departments prioritising, encouraging and affecting the creation of

more volunteering opportunities that help individual refugees to realise their employment and integration goals.

Recommendations:

That the Refugee Council builds upon the effective practices, learning and achievements illustrated in this report.

That the creation of volunteering opportunities that support employability coupled with the provision of effective individual support be encouraged and facilitated on a wider and larger scale across the organisation.

That in future all staff job descriptions and person specifications include statements and requirements conveying the organisations expectation that post holders will be committed to the principle and practice of supporting volunteer roles and placements.

That work with volunteers (especially those from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds) be celebrated, reaffirmed and undertaken as a priority and core activity by staff and Senior Managers at the Refugee Council.

- c) **Volunteering and refugee accessibility:** As an organisation, the Refugee Council has increasingly managed to recruit a greater proportion of volunteers who are refugees and asylum-seekers. The ratio as at June 2007 is that approximately 40% of volunteers are refugees or asylum-seekers and 60% from the host community. This compares to a 20/80% proportion before the Lloyds TSB Project.¹ It would be fair to say that the volunteering programme gives an opportunity to refugees and asylum-seekers that to some degree are already quite motivated. This is no bad thing and should continue. There may be a greater challenge in finding ways to encourage those initially less motivated but at least this programme gives a solid base for any developments in this direction.

Recommendations:

The programme of volunteering at the Refugee Council should continue to include both host community volunteers and refugees and asylum-seekers.

Teams and individuals involved in supporting asylum-seeking volunteers should take into account that some asylum-seeking volunteers may need additional advice and support throughout volunteering while their status is uncertain.

- d) **Wider impacts of volunteering (increased well-being):** The Evaluation has highlighted the importance and value of voluntary work in promoting and maintaining individuals' sense of mental 'well-being' and related concepts. We have concluded that volunteering supports the development of employability not just in terms of improved technical or workplace skills and knowledge (e.g. around IT, knowledge of subject matter, Health and Safety etc) but also in other possibly less obvious but equally vital respects. Almost everyone who participated in the Evaluation emphasised the positive impact of volunteering on the individual's confidence, sense of well being and worth, language and communication skills, teamwork and assertiveness. Succeeding through often rigorous recruitment processes requires a combination of motivation, focus, confident and effective communication and not least an understanding of how recruitment processes work in the UK. A job seeker lacking in confidence, struggling with language and with a low self-esteem, lacking UK based work experience to draw upon for application and interview purposes and new to UK recruitment practices is inevitably challenged in a competitive recruitment environment.

¹ Figures from the Refugee Council Leeds office.

Recommendation:

The 'well being' impact of volunteering be acknowledged as a hoped for outcome from the beginning of the volunteering programme and appropriate indicators be devised to measure this.

A useful initiative could be the adoption as standard of a 'before and after' self-assessment form and process similar to that used in this Evaluation for use with future volunteers.

- e) Meeting individual development needs:** Many refugees and asylum-seekers (and those supporting them) are keen that their roles and input can evolve and grow as they grow in confidence and ability. This is especially important for refugee volunteers who are often highly motivated to progress to paid employment as quickly as possible but anticipate and experience particular barriers and challenges (e.g. language, lack of UK experience etc.). In this respect, the needs and aspirations of refugee and asylum-seeker volunteers can be somewhat different from host community volunteers whose reasons for volunteering are often different, who often come with one area of interest and are happy to work in the same area and level on a longer term basis.

Recommendations:

That the needs, aspirations and progress of volunteers be jointly and routinely kept under review and that as far as possible roles and responsibilities are evolved to match developing needs and capabilities. Clearer and more structured progression routes for those who wish to develop their employability would help.

There should be regular appraisals of volunteers to give feedback both ways and to help develop the volunteering programme and personal plan for the individual refugee volunteer.

Volunteers should be given adequate access to facilities such as computers and meeting rooms in the same way as paid staff.

- f) Supporting refugee volunteers:** Refugee and asylum-seeker volunteers face additional challenges (and restrictions) both in regard to accessing employment and education. Asylum-seekers also have, in their daily experience, to cope with little or no NASS support and an uncertain future. The emotional and practical support needs of refugee and asylum-seeker volunteers are often relatively high, especially for those volunteers whose asylum cases are decided and rejected while they are volunteering. The lack of a decision on an asylum claim causes great insecurity for an individual and the volunteering role can provide an anchor of stability in this time. The value of volunteer supervisors providing sensitive and effective advice and support to volunteers cannot be over emphasised particularly for those who are seeking to rebuild their work place confidence in a safe and friendly environment. Undoubtedly and evidently amongst those interviewed there is a huge commitment to, and sense of responsibility for, providing effective and best possible support to volunteers in each of the Refugee Council regions. There was also a view expressed that in a few instances, volunteer supervisors may not have fully anticipated the expectations on them and were unable to effectively respond to the very specific support needs of asylum-seeking volunteers at certain times.

Recommendation:

Prospective volunteer supervisors should be able and willing to commit the time and necessary input to provide effective support for refugee and asylum-seeking volunteers for the duration of the volunteering role.

This role should be supported by the Refugee Council in time, investment in skills and capacity

- g) Sharing good practice:** Given the uniqueness of the Refugee Council role it is important that the experience and learning stemming from its work with refugee volunteers is encapsulated and shared with other teams both within and external to the organisation. For example, many volunteers have experienced what it is like to get 'quick advice' when dropping into the Refugee Council without an appointment. Their experience from this can inform how the service should deal with others dropping in. This approach should enhance the supervision and management of the volunteers and improve the lines of feedback to volunteers about the value of their role.

Recommendations:

Use the learning from this project to inform other volunteering within the organisation. For example, the experience of the refugee and asylum-seeker volunteers could be shared and presented by finding platforms in which they can share their experiences with other staff.

Ask previous and current refugee volunteers to design a training module for induction training for all Refugee Council staff

- h) Volunteer Coordination and support** – Staff time is needed to develop volunteering programmes and support volunteers (although not distracting from the need for other staff to also manage and support volunteers that they are working with). The structure for many volunteers is that they are managed by the managers within the section of the Refugee Council in which they are volunteering with little ongoing input from the specialised volunteer co-ordinators and managers. While this is good for mainstreaming the work of the volunteers into the organisation it may be necessary to also have a more structured support from volunteer co-ordinators. Given the additional needs that many refugees and asylum-seekers have this would seem appropriate.

Recommendation:

Any programme of volunteering should have an appropriate level and ratio of support staff to work with the refugee and asylum-seeking volunteers. This may be a higher level than for 'host' community volunteers.

- i) Exit interviews:** Whilst there are Exit Feedback Questionnaires and guidelines available, they are not used systematically to gather reflective and evaluative information from volunteers. Each region and Volunteer Coordinator is able to locate some completed Feedback Questionnaires though it is understood that there is no practice of periodic collation and review of this material. Aside from the value of gathering and reviewing feedback on a regular basis to help gauge the impact and appropriateness of volunteering, a collation of success stories would also provide very useful material to use when seeking further funding to support the scheme. The feedback gained in this Evaluation should also contribute to both of these functions.

Recommendation:

There should be more structured and routinely implemented follow-up with ex-volunteers to assess and explore the benefits that they got from the volunteering (for example the use of before and after self-assessment interviews or questionnaires such as those used in this evaluation).

- j) Training:** Both volunteer and staff stakeholders emphasised the value of refugee and asylum-seeking volunteers being able to access training in a range of areas. There is a specific need, reported by volunteers and staff members, for more training and workshop opportunities to support the development and practice of skills and confidence in completing job applications, understanding recruitment processes and being interviewed.

Recommendations:

More practical assistance (training) is needed with filling in job applications and going for job interviews. Explore and implement skill development and practice workshops using internal and external facilitators, interview panel members etc.

Training needs should be jointly discussed and identified with the volunteer supervisor at the onset of the volunteer engagement. As far as practicable an individual training plan should be developed and supported by the volunteer supervisor.

Each volunteer should be offered a training programme that deals specifically with the process of finding a job. This should include filling-in application forms and job interviews. It would be appropriate to spread this training over a 2-6 month period with modules for each section.

k) Links with employers and sectors: Several refugee volunteers had got employment within the 'Refugee Sector' but, though appreciative of this, had expressed a desire to get employment in the mainstream arena. It would seem important to develop links with mainstream employers.

Recommendation:

The Refugee Council should develop a specific programme with private employers who would be open to taking on refugee employees. Large well known companies may be open to this, Marks and Spencer's and Northern Foods for example.

CASE STUDY
B is a refugee from Eritrea. She started volunteering with the Refugee Council to help out, improve her confidence in using English and give something back to an organisation that had helped her. After volunteering for a while and improving her English and confidence, B got a part-time job at the Refugee Council as an interpreter. B expressed an interest in developing better advice skills and was a natural fit for the volunteer advisors pilot. B took the advice role in her stride, and developed excellent skills and knowledge under the direction of a professional advisor. After three months as a volunteer advisor, B successfully applied for a paid advisor post and now works in the Leeds One Stop Service.

All of the messages in this Evaluation can be applied to all of the volunteer work with refugees and asylum-seekers, not just the parts funded directly or indirectly through the Lloyds TSB money.

Methodology for the Evaluation

The Evaluation was conducted between March and June 2007 and focussed on the volunteering initiatives and experiences of Refugee Council service bases in Leeds, Birmingham, London and Ipswich.

Stakeholders contributed to the Evaluation in a variety of ways:

- One-to-one interviews
- Focus groups
- Filling-in questionnaires

An interview and questionnaire framework was developed to form the basis of individual and focus group consultation. An example of the questionnaire is given in the appendices below. Documentation relating to the Project, such as the records of volunteer 'Exit Interviews'² was also referred to.

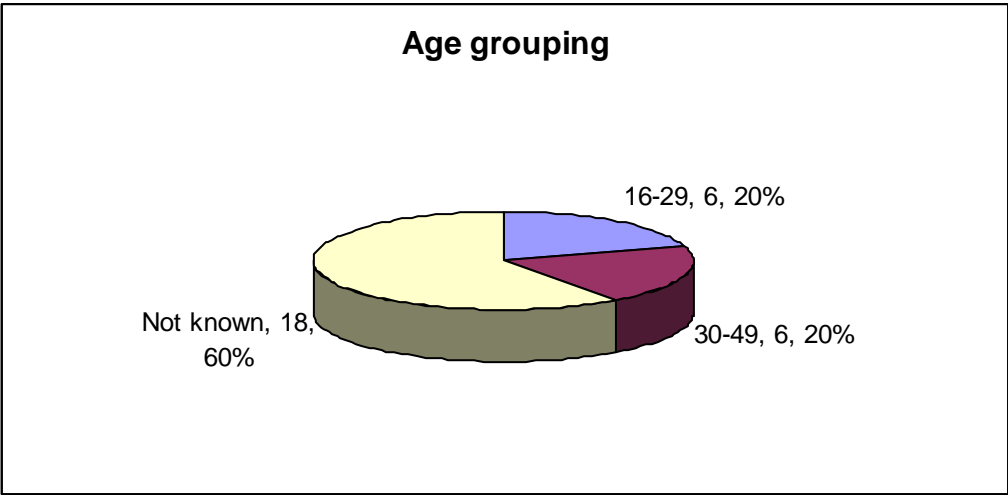
In total, 43 individuals fed into the Evaluation including 30 current and former volunteers and 13 staff members closely involved in coordinating or supporting individual volunteers. Current and former volunteers were either asylum-seekers awaiting final decisions on their asylum claim or people who had been given a form of refugee status³. Volunteer Coordinators in each area issued a general invitation for volunteers to contribute to the Evaluation and from that point participation was on a 'self selection' basis. The internal Refugee Council stakeholder list of suggested staff members to be involved in the Evaluation was provided by the Refugee Council, the main criteria for inclusion being their involvement and experience in coordinating, developing and supporting volunteer work in their respective regions and specialities. Contributions and input was received from Volunteer Coordinators, Deputy Managers and several staff engaged in specific areas of work including community development, communications, information, training and policy.

Overview of profile of stakeholders interviewed for Evaluation:

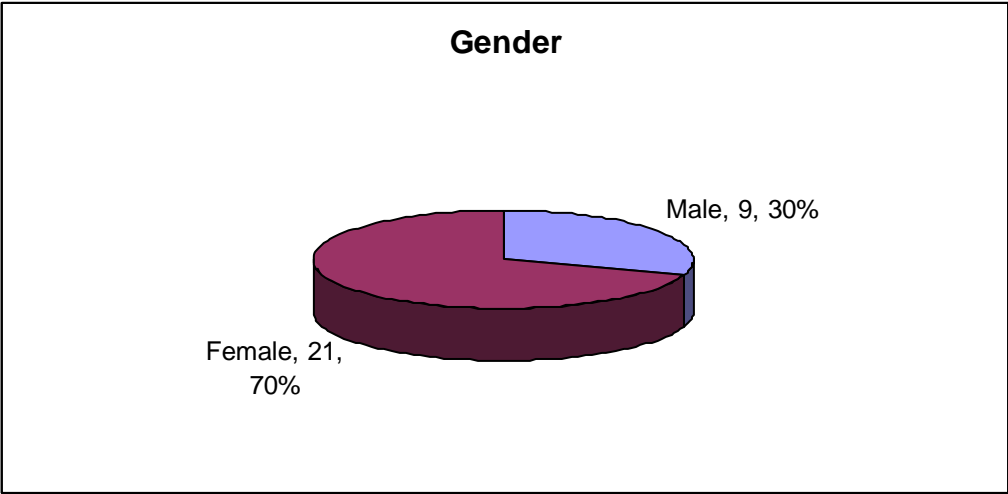
Of the 30 volunteers (current and former) that fed into the Evaluation, 6 were from Leeds, 19 from Birmingham and 5 were from London. Of these, 26 inputted through focus groups, 22 completed consultation questionnaires and 6 were interviewed individually. 2 former volunteers were confirmed as being in full-time employment (there may have been more than this), 6 confirmed they have no right to work, 5 described themselves as unemployed, 1 was a student and those remaining did not indicate their employment status. Many inputted through a mix of some or all of these mechanisms. Other profile information is presented diagrammatically below:

² The practice of the Refugee Council is to interview every volunteer when they end their volunteering with the organisation in an Exit interview.

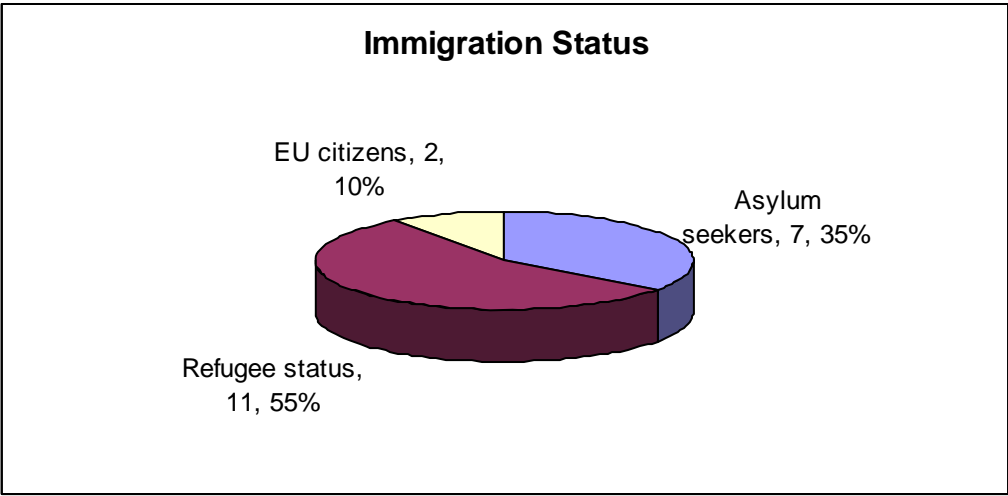
³ Two volunteers interviewed were not in these categories but brought a perspective of someone from abroad who had volunteered for the Refugee Council.



Age range of volunteers interviewed



Gender of volunteers who participated



Status of volunteers who participated

Analysis of Responses to the Evaluation

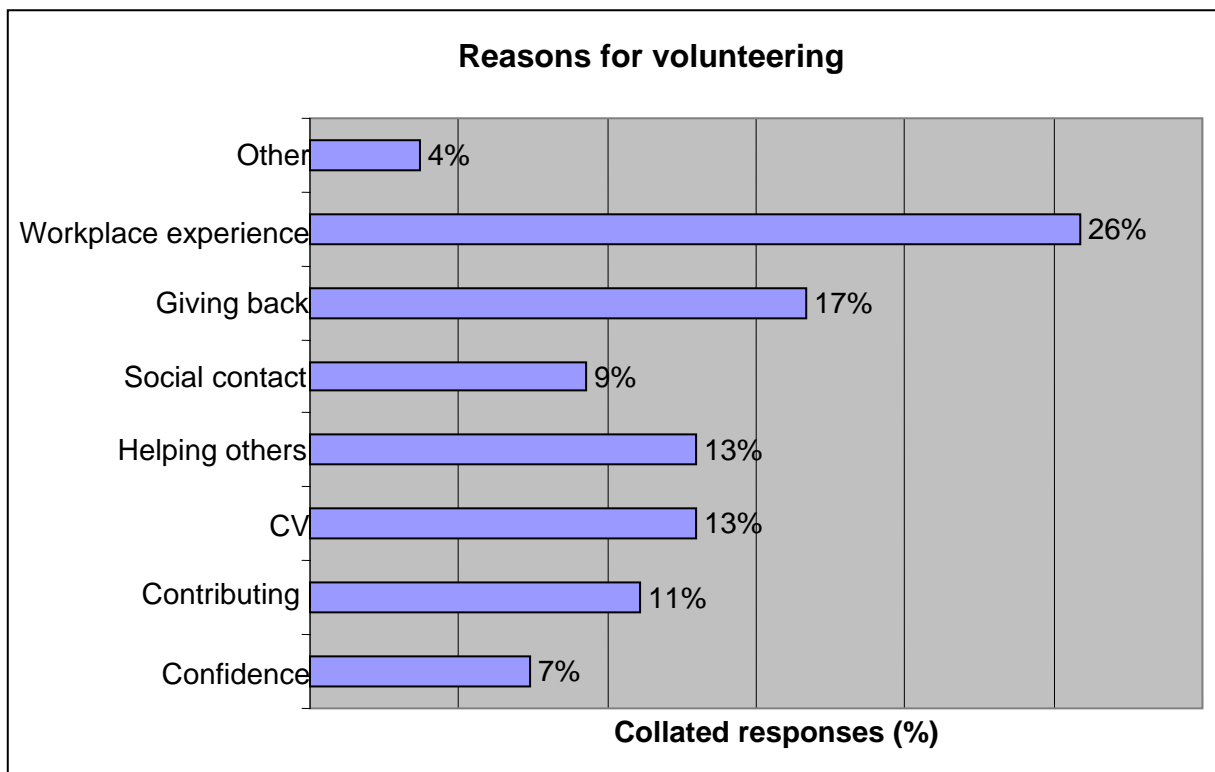
The following provides an overview of the main themes and responses arising from the consultation with stakeholders. Also included below are statements made by stakeholders that illustrate different perspectives and experiences:

a) What do you aim to achieve by volunteering / why are you a volunteer?

Volunteer responses:

“As an asylum-seeker I was not allowed to work. But it is not in my nature to sit at home! I asked RC what could I do and became a volunteer. I worked in many volunteer roles, also with other organisations. I used to enjoy listening to my grandparents - they were old and interesting. So I worked with elderly people here as a volunteer. I also volunteer with the Red Cross. All my days were very occupied and I got to know many people”.

The reasons why refugees and asylum-seekers volunteer with the Refugee Council are mixed. The categorised break down of responses is shown below:



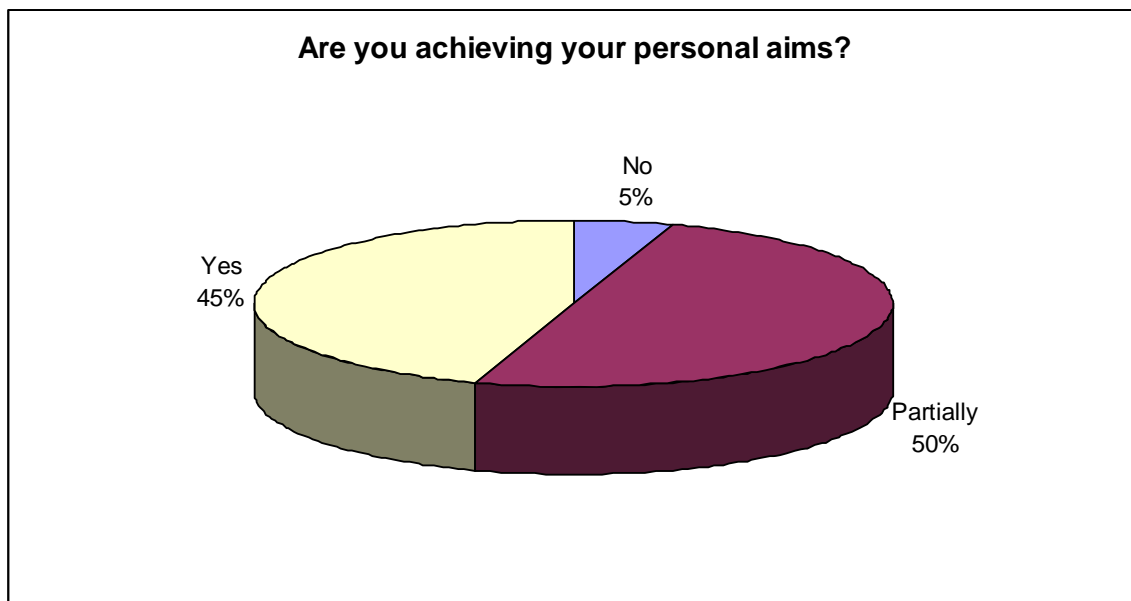
The consultation responses clearly indicated that whilst gaining employment and accessing education were key longer term aims for many of those interviews, there were also other powerful and sometimes equally or more important motivational factors. These included the desire to contribute within their communities, to help other asylum-seekers and refugees and to ‘give back’ to the Refugee Council and colleague agencies having previously been helped by the organisation(s) themselves. Several volunteers also emphasised a personal work ethic and desire to use their free time constructively. As one asylum-seeker put it *“it is not in my nature to idle at home”*. Other statements that illustrate the reasons why they have undertaken voluntary work include:

- *I wanted to give value to my time, contribute what I know and be part of the local community.*

- *I had no idea what I could achieve but I knew that there was something I could offer.*
- *I volunteer because I want to learn more and also that is how my English started to improve. As I have no relatives here it also helps.*
- *I want to gain new skills, confidence, improve my English, make new friends and eventually get a job.*
- *It is important for me to give something back, gain experience and new skills meet people and make new contacts.*
- *I aim to gain experience, learn from the UK system, help my own integration and build confidence.*
- *I want to give something back - like I was helped in the hostel. I want to pass my skills onto others and expand my knowledge through diversity.*
- *I volunteer because I want to get some references and am hoping to achieve confidence and knowledge by learning new skills.*
- *I volunteer because I want to give something to the community, to help others who are in my situation and make friends.*
- *I want to give something back because I was helped by other volunteers when I came. I also hope that it will help me.*
- *I want to help other people as I also received help when I arrived. I hope it will also help me to get a paid job.*
- *I want to give back to the community and be able to achieve more work experience in the office.*
- *My aim is to give back what I got from the Refugee Council, to improve and develop my skills and improve my employability.*

b) Have you (or did you) you achieve your overall aims as a volunteer?

Most volunteers feel that they have achieved or are in the process of achieving their personal aims for volunteering. Individuals that responded 'Partially' were usually those who are still aiming to achieve employment or 'next step' education but have not yet succeeded in reaching this goal. Whilst most people in this category remained optimistic and determined that they would eventually achieve their aims (and that this would be helped by volunteering) there were several interviewees, including the small minority who responded 'No', who described high levels of frustration and diminishing confidence as a result of job applications not being short listed and repeated rejection in the job search process.



Volunteer responses:

- *Definitely. I got a lot of experience and it helped me to forget my problems. I got a lot of work experience. It was fun and I met a lot of other people. I realise now that it was the best thing I could have done and I would prescribe volunteering for all refugees.*
- *I am still volunteering and as soon as I have achieved my (refugee) status I will say that I have achieved my aims.*
- *I did not yet get a job but I can say I achieved some of my aims because I have improved my English, language, reading and writing, understanding and speaking.*
- *I haven't achieved anything since I started to volunteer.*
- *I visited the hostel where I used to live. Now I am going back there into the hostel as a volunteer - it makes me proud! I say to the women - "come on, let's go out and do something!" I never imagined that one day I would be back there as a volunteer.*
- *I will achieve my aims! But I still have not got a job yet.*
- *Not fully - I am giving back to the community and helping with fundraising but haven't developed my career yet.*
- *Not yet but I am in the process of achieving them.*
- *I still have not got a job!*
- *Yes but not as much as I wanted.*
- *Yes I am achieving my aims and looking forward to achieving it all in future.*
- *Yes, I have gained confidence, self esteem and made a career with the help of contacts I have made through the volunteering role.*

Staff responses:

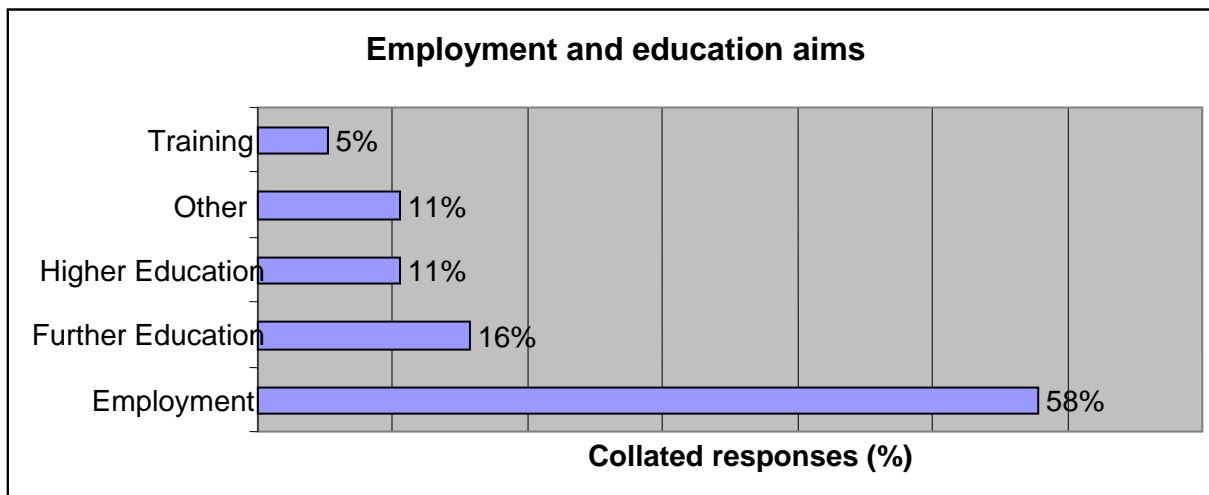
- *Definitely in my view and experience – I have seen how people can move on and progress. They often use us as referees in job applications. Employers are often impressed by the work they have done with RC.*
- *I have seen very shy people blossom as volunteers. Volunteering is very important in helping people achieve their work and training goals.*
- *Very important in helping people achieve their aims.*
- *Lots of people in this area have got a job as a result (I think and they say) of their voluntary work with the Refugee Council.*
- *Definitely helps improve employability – people develop communications and team working skills, computer skills, telephone and inter personal skills, confidence, dealing with people skills. But they struggle with the recruitment processes.*
- *Most volunteers who have left have left either because they have got a job or because they are starting a Masters.*
- *It helps improve employability but not necessarily getting a job.*
- *Many people say about feeling valued and listened to. When I was a volunteer I really blossomed.*
- *It often helps give people a direction (life and work).*
- *A volunteer I am supporting just got an interview – I'm sure that volunteering here helped them achieve this. I'm also working with another volunteer who really wants to work. They may not be ready yet – they are lacking confidence. But we are supporting her and giving practical help and soon she will start applying for jobs.*
- *There was a volunteer working here for 6 months. She was really shy but she became much more confident while she was volunteering. The difference was amazing. She got a job in a big clothes shop dealing with the public.*
- *Volunteering gives experience of working in a team, of stress management (they often put themselves under pressure), and office based skills.*
- *There is no problem when they bring in course based work to do (e.g.)*
- *6 months and then onto a job is often not realistic or possible.*
- *When aims aren't met it may be that the volunteer role was not right. But sometimes it is also that it*

is too soon for the volunteer (coping and adjusting to the UK, confidence, trauma etc). We can't help people improve their employability if too many other things are going on.

- *When volunteers are achieving their aims it is because they are in the right roles and supported by a member of staff and also that they re working hard and highly motivated.*

c) What job, training or education would you like to achieve next?

The long term aims of both asylum-seekers and refugees who we interviewed usually included accessing employment, career development and further or higher education. We asked volunteers what 'next step' goals they were aiming to achieve in this respect.



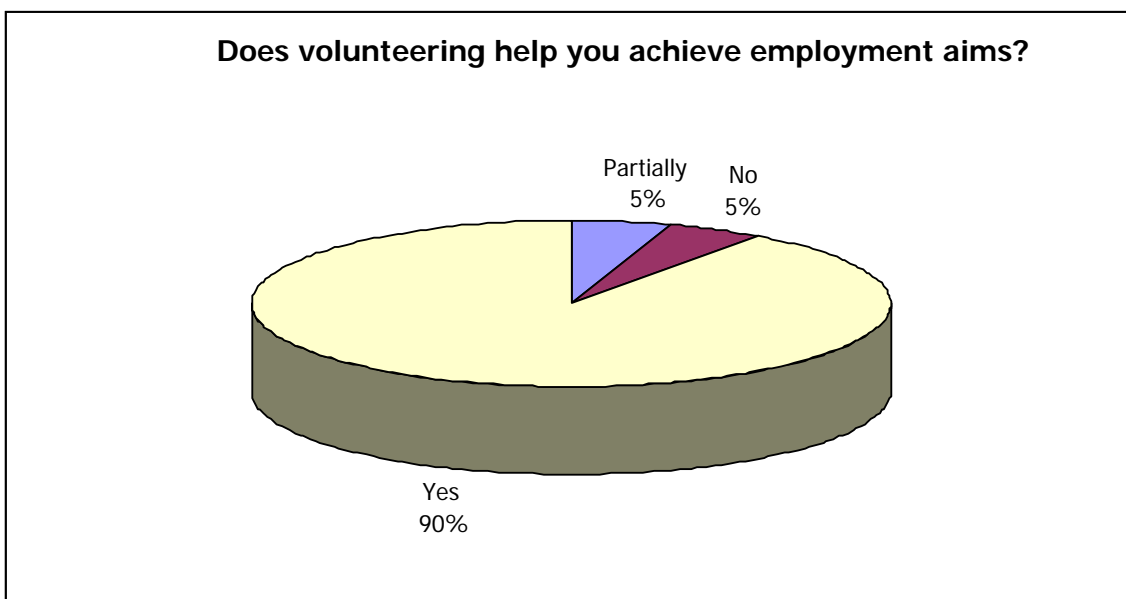
Volunteers described a range of ambitions with regard to accessing training, education or employment. Fields included social work, refugee advice and support, nursing, business and administration, studying for Masters and the Arts.

- *Any sort of training that could help me. I would like to be doing front line help as well as doing office admin. Any sort of IT training.*
- *I just want to work – I don't care where.*
- *I don't have any plans now. I could be deported at any time. That would simply mean sending me back to be tortured and death.*
- *I have already got a paid job and secured a place at University to start a 3 year course starting in September 2007.*
- *I have to complete first my Business Studies and Administration course before I try to find a job in administration sector.*
- *I love doing something new everyday as far as education goes. I'd love to collect as many certificates as I can which makes you more employable.*
- *I want to keep improving my workplace experience, attend all relevant training connected to working with refugees and go on to complete a degree in Social Care.*
- *I want to be a solicitor, immigration officer or housing officer.*
- *I want to continue helping women to have a brighter future and understand the situation better but still move on.*
- *I want to do nursing and an advanced computer course.*
- *I want to work in social work activities or doing charity work, working with homeless people or asylum-seekers and helping people to get integrated.*
- *I would like to advise people or work as a receptionist.*
- *I would like to be an adviser for refugees or asylum-seekers.*
- *I would like to do a masters in International Law with Human Rights.*
- *I would like to work as a social worker with refugees and asylum-seekers.*

- *I'm now employed full time by the Employability Forum and we help people become employed. I would like to continue my education and then go on to work for a charity or in counselling. I found I like this type of work.*
- *To develop my career and reach the highest level. To study in University doing an MSC in Nutrition.*
- *To be self employed.*
- *To work in policy development and specifically with gender issues.*

d) Do you feel that doing voluntary work will help (or has helped) you achieve your next steps in relation to employment or education?

When volunteers were asked if they felt that voluntary work had or was helping them to achieve employment and education goals, the large majority (90%) felt that it did. Several of those interviewed had moved into employment having previously worked as volunteers and the volunteer co-ordinators were able to provide other examples of similar successes.



Volunteer responses:

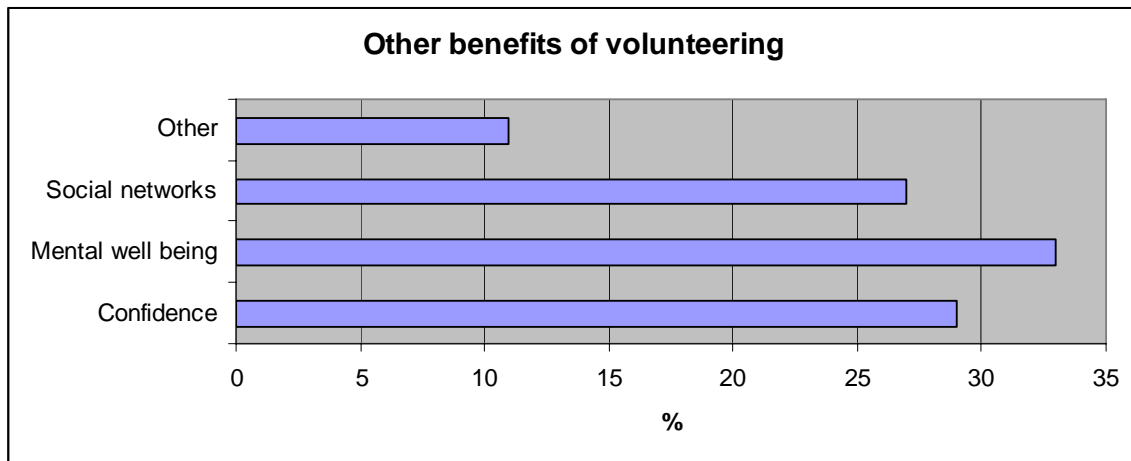
- *Volunteering has given me confidence and experience to use in job interviews.*
- *Definitely. It really helped me to get this job. I learnt a lot about the system in the UK and about the workplace. My knowledge and experience is now passed onto others.*
- *I've done lots of volunteering but I'm still not getting interviews or jobs - so it is not helping so far.*
- *It should be helpful in the future as long as we keep a focal point and goal in mind.*
- *Volunteering with the Refugee Council played a big role in helping me get my job. It improved my CV and I got experience of working with other refugees and asylum-seekers. My English improved very much and so did my work with computers (e.g. word processing etc.). I also got support from people with job applications.*
- *It helps a lot. Before I didn't understand anything. If you don't understand the rules and regulations it's hard.*
- *Doing voluntary work is very good. It gives the chance to work in organisations and with other people from different backgrounds. This makes it much easier to integrate. I tried to get jobs through agencies but kept getting told I was not suitable.*
- *I am also going to college and doing a BTEC National Certificate in Social Care plus studying counselling.*

- *You learn every day, meet new people and develop networks. Before I didn't have UK based work experience. Now I have. In Eritrea it is very different - work environment. The boss has their own office.*

Staff responses:

- *Volunteering helps people 'pitch' themselves right in relation to what to expect and aim for.*
- *It can also help people find a new direction and make decisions about their life.*
- *Yes – it improves employability in lots of ways. But if they are not successful at the application or interview stage it can badly demoralise them.*
- *Absolutely yes. It doesn't guarantee success in getting a job but it helps get more appropriate jobs eventually e.g. not working in the chicken factory or mushroom farm.*
- *Volunteering helps develop understanding of the work place, recruitment processes system and self confidence.*

e) Does doing voluntary work have any other benefits you have noticed?



Volunteer responses:

- *I can talk more openly now to people (e.g. staff) as I have a bit of self esteem. Since I work every day I have become a bit more open to the outside world.*
- *It gives me incredible mental well being. It is priceless to see a smile on a face. You can feel relieved if at the end of the day you've helped somebody in real need.*
- *It gives you a lot of personal stimulation, patience and understanding.*
- *Volunteering reduces depression because of socialisation, interacting with others, talking and sharing.*
- *I've made intimate friends out of the voluntary role as well as getting experience of dealing with the system in the UK.*
- *Not getting a job can knock confidence down again.*
- *Self esteem; working in an open plan office area.*
- *It is invaluable in terms of boosting self confidence and self esteem.*
- *Volunteering helped me regain my focus and sense of self. It helped me to look at my life and know that this is where I want to go next. Before in Cameroon I was training to be a chemist but now I have found a new direction.*
- *Volunteering keeps you busy and keeps your mind off the migration stress.*
- *When I came I didn't know anything about what volunteering is. I was an a/s and hadn't heard of it. My friends are very impressed now. I am giving something back. I was bored and thinking a lot about my situation. Now when I go to RC I forget about my problems.*
- *It is invaluable in terms of boosting self confidence and self esteem.*

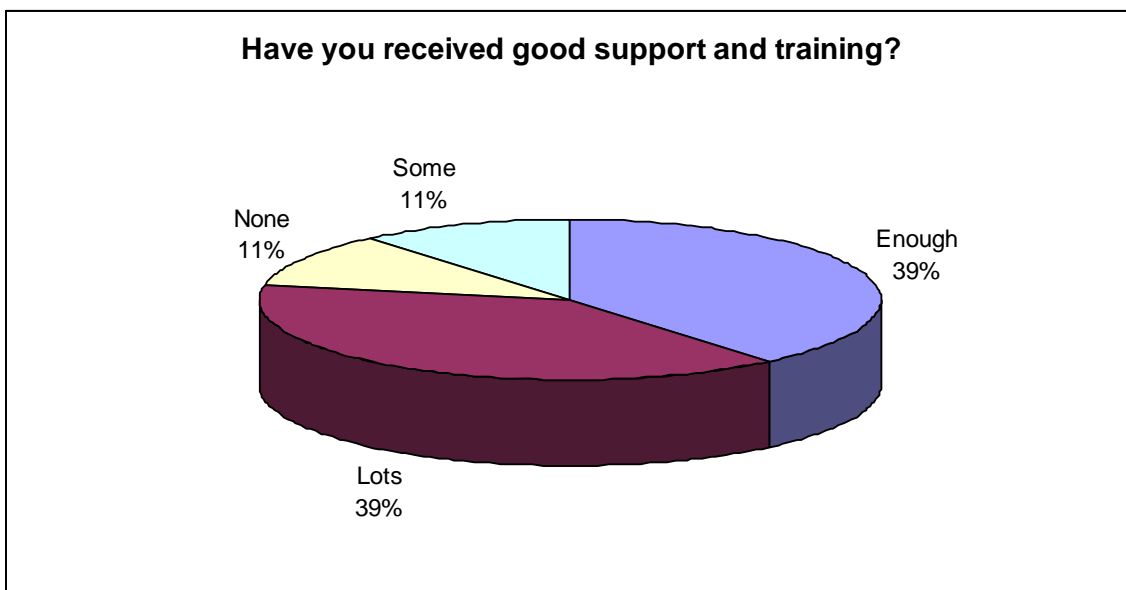
- *It's much easier for me now. I know much more by working with many asylum-seekers.*
- *Yes - I have much more confidence now. It has also helped me with stress and depression.*
- *Yes especially in mental health. I don't have to think too much or to feel isolated. Doing volunteering has helped me a lot.*
- *Yes, it makes me really active and stops me from being stressed.*
- *It gives you a lot of personal stimulation, patience and understanding.*

Staff responses:

- *We don't ask people about their mental health when they volunteer with us but there are a lot of people suffering from anxiety and depression. We just give everyone support. Volunteering helps them in making social networks, developing confidence and other ways.*
- *It makes a massive difference – confidence increases, general demeanour improves. There has been a massive and fast change in the volunteer I have worked with.*
- *There are lots of benefits e.g. if a volunteer is destitute and they volunteer for an afternoon then they know that we can refund the cost of a one day travel card, which they can use when their volunteering finishes. Also they are getting out of the house, it helps combat depression, gives a focus (helps them stop dwelling on own problems), gives satisfaction (helping other people) and volunteers often make several new friends.*
- *In our office everyone is different – nationalities and cultures etc. It helps integration because everyone is learning about everyone else's cultures.*
- *It enhances confidence.*
- *I've seen volunteering improve mental well being especially for example for young volunteers (about 20yrs). It gives a structure to their day when they are often on their own for the first time in their lives (in a new country, without their parents and family). Improves self esteem – i.e. people saying 'thank-you'.*
- *Sometimes the Refugee Council is the only organisation to take on refugees and asylum-seekers as volunteers – others are scared to.*
- *Absolutely – it is a diversion from negative thinking. It gives status and validation to their existence.*

f) How are volunteers supported in achieving their aims?

"Volunteering helped me use my time and provided a distraction from my problems and stress. The Refugee Council supported me so much – including emotionally. They helped me to carry on".



Volunteer responses:

- *I have been on a volunteer induction day. Also on training on 'working with UA Minors' and 'refugee mental wellbeing'.*
- *I attended the volunteer induction session.*
- *I have been given Induction before and after the role and always had on the job training and supervision.*
- *Induction, RIO, Interview skills with clients, How to Work with Interpreters, Personal Safety.*
- *Interview training and CV writing etc.*
- *Not all staff want to give support to vols. I often don't receive (or see) information about training opportunities that others have seen.*
- *Nothing so far.*
- *I have received RIO and First Aid training.*
- *I get supervision and support from my Volunteer Coordinator and had initial training.*
- *There is lots of support. I speak with the Volunteer Coordinator a lot. Even about our own problems. The Volunteer Coordinator really motivates people even when you are low. She says "never give up".*
- *Training on Mental Health, H&S, Child Protection, Immigration, NAM, Immigration, Telephone advice, workshops seminars and conferences.*
- *Training was very good for the Info Line. So was the Induction training. Later on I came and helped new volunteers. I also had supervision with the Volunteer Coordinator.*
- *Volunteer induction, opportunities to access all in house training at the Refugee Council.*

Staff responses: Volunteer coordinators and other supervising staff expressed a commitment to the principles and practice of providing effective support for volunteers.

- *Morning briefing sessions are held with Day Centre volunteers.*
- *I have 1:1 session after a month and then whenever needed (depends on person and hours per week and role).*
- *Interacting with stakeholders.*
- *I (supervisor) make the volunteer I work with aware of any training opportunities that are coming up. She has been on some courses and really enjoyed the 'plain English' course.*
- *Being receptive and valuing the contribution of the volunteer is very important.*
- *Volunteer coordinators provide a lot of emotional support to volunteers and the team.*
- *We have increased training and induction from half to four and a half days. All areas have got different training arrangements.*
- *I try to provide supervision and one to one time when it's important. There is lots of informal support provided. I haven't been able to do group supervision (time).*
- *Exit interviews have been done (records not centralised – needs checking?).*
- *All new volunteers shadow regular team members or more experienced volunteers.*
- *We run an Induction Day.*
- *I provide supervision, initial induction and training opportunities.*
- *Induction and supervision and training are provided through our structured programme.*
- *New staff and volunteers are sharing inductions now – this is better than before.*
- *Also volunteers are going on team away days more – this is a positive improvement.*
- *Refugee volunteers have quite high support needs. Supervisors' roles are vitally important.*
- *We have Volunteer Co-ordinators meetings every 3 months – these are very useful.*
- *We also have inter-agency meetings with VCs from other orgs – also useful.*
- *RC provides opportunities to tap into management and volunteer support courses (I haven't arranged one for myself yet).*
- *Nothing yet – but volunteer supervision training would be good (interviewee thinks it has only just become available).*

- *I'm not aware of any guidelines – it would be useful to have them as a reminder (RC and best practice).*
- *Volunteer Coordinators can be an important and regular source of support for some vulnerable asylum-seeker volunteers. Possibly counselling training would be useful though it may not be appropriate - it's not what we're supposed to be doing.*
- *I start getting supervision today.*
- *I think we have really robust volunteering policies.*
- *We recommend that new volunteer supervisors take the volunteers out to lunch on their first day and every now and then. It's really important to make time to talk with and support them.*
- *Some staff supervising volunteers are great – others struggle to find the time or have patience to provide the level of support needed by some volunteers. Maybe they haven't thought about it enough before getting involved?*
- *There is a generic Volunteer Welcome Pack which we use and is good.*
- *We encourage regular one to one meetings (frequency varies based on role, time input and individual needs).*

g) Stakeholder messages and suggestions for improvement

"Many thanks for what you have done. What you are doing is really changing things for people. It has given me my life back". (Volunteer, West Midlands).

"There are a huge number of volunteers with the Refugee Council. The organisation is giving a chance to a lot of people to get experience and this is great". (Volunteer, West Midlands).

Re: Recruiting, role matching and supporting volunteers:

- *There can be improvements both for volunteers and the RC if they allow volunteers to rotate between different departments e.g. in new arrivals section, and then in areas where newly recognised refugees are supported and in finance departments (Volunteer).*
- *I want the Refugee Council to recruit volunteers from mixed cultures (Volunteer).*
- *Provide training as well as holding meetings with volunteers to ask how things are going and could be better (Volunteer).*
- *Give volunteers more training please (Volunteer).*
- *If you are a volunteer they should help you get status (Volunteer).*
- *The Refugee Council needs to work with volunteers on a long term basis and give them some incentives. We could help women to do self help skills leading to employment (Volunteer).*
- *Increase access to more courses for volunteers (Volunteer).*
- *Provide more training for volunteers and training staff in how to work with volunteers (Volunteer).*
- *Improve the way that volunteers are given information - it's hard to keep up with e mails if you are only in one or two days a week (Volunteer).*
- *Volunteering is a great thing but expectations of volunteers need to be realistic. E.g. There can be an expectation that "if I volunteer I'll get work" – but there are volunteers that are still here after 2 years.*
- *We need to be transparent about the roles – if its admin say its admin.*
- *The current volunteering questions are not clear enough about checking what people want to do and achieve. It doesn't map skills and aptitudes – it needs to be more specific.*
- *We are increasingly trying to identify roles and volunteers that offer specialisms and match to the Refugee Council needs (e.g. massage project).*
- *Policies and guidelines? I've not read them but Chris is very accessible.*
- *We need to get better at keeping volunteers and their supervisors updated about new opportunities and developments e.g. in relation to expenses entitlements, training opportunities and new volunteering opportunities (for personal progression).*
- *Encourage and support informal networking between volunteers.*

- *Increase the profile of volunteering policies and guidelines (back up support for supervisors).*
- *Refugee Council can demonstrate added value by increasing commitment to working with vols.*
- *We need better integration of services between volunteers and staff. It can be hard to get staff to work with volunteers (time and commitment). Some staff just want to get the job done (i.e. there is not a shared ethos re promoting and facilitating volunteering as an aid to integration).*
- *We start people in manageable roles (we assess) and then develop and increase their role and responsibility as appropriate and as confidence and ability increases.*
- *Working with refugee volunteers brings an ethic to our team and department that is very important.*

Re: Volunteering ethos and creating opportunities in the Refugee Council

- *Establish more volunteer projects like are in place now (Volunteer).*
- *We have limited opportunities in other departments – we have one person who used to be an accountant but there are few opportunities to work in finance. There is another volunteer who is trained and experienced in IT but we are not offering a volunteer role or placement.*
- *Why not use more volunteers in campaigning?*
- *We need to find more suitable opportunities to match the needs and ambitions of refugees and asylum-seekers.*
- *Most roles seem to be admin based – it would be good to develop the scope and also to weight/tailor roles to ensure that volunteer development aims and needs can be met.*
- *We need to liaise with section heads about increasing and improving volunteering opportunities across the organisation.*
- *We need to be more proactive in promoting / selling volunteering in the Refugee Council to our colleagues.*
- *We shouldn't just have volunteers 'stuffing envelopes'.*
- *There is a lack of opportunities in parts of the Refugee Council for different reasons – partly capacity (time of staff to support), partly motivation and commitment to volunteering, partly because volunteers need experience at a level or in a role that RC can't offer.*
- *There is often interest and demand for roles in IT and finance. We've had some placements in finance but none in IT so far.*
- *It's important that we get quality volunteering opportunities not just quantity.*
- *Opportunities are also needed outside of the NGO sector.*
- *We could (in our section) provide better value and benefit for volunteers and ourselves if we developed internships. This would need the commitment from the individual for the agreed internship duration and regular attendance. At the moment when volunteers get a job they're gone – even if we have invested a lot of time to develop skills and ability we have to start again. This can be a problem. An intern programme would give better stability.*

Re: Developing job search, application and interview skills:

- *Provide more on the job training, shadowing and coaching for application forms and interviews (Volunteer).*
- *Provide more training and help with how to get jobs and how to apply for jobs (Volunteer).*
- *We need a more proactive approach to help people get into jobs as a progression from volunteering (for those that want to).*
- *1:1 'drop in' support for job search skills (applications and interviews especially).*
- *Volunteers struggle a lot with the recruitment processes. They should be getting more help from JCP but they are not. People need a lot of support. Volunteer Coordinators and supervisors are doing lots but this isn't and shouldn't be our role (lack of time). Workshops, mentoring, coaching, training around job applications and interview skills are essential to help refugees succeed through recruitment processes. I have people who could definitely work in lots of places and roles but they can't get through the process. Maybe we should get an Employment Worker or set up an Employment Mentoring Scheme?*

- *If there is a large enough group, set up workshops on getting employment e.g. covering workplace culture, interviewing skills, completing applications, anticipating interview questions. Also offer individual support for volunteers who are completing real applications and preparing for interviews.*
- *Provide more support and training (helping them to get jobs).*
- *We need to provide on-going training and support in job search, application and job search skills etc.*
- *More individual assessment of training needs and more accessible provision of training opportunities as much as possible.*
- *We should try hard to support 'move on' or progression for volunteers more.*
- *I encourage volunteers when they apply for jobs and offer assistance with reviewing application forms and making improvements. It would be good to be able to provide more structured support – practice interviews are very valuable.*
- *There should be more job application and interview sessions and workshops. Also meetings to check with volunteers 'how it is going'.*

Re: Roles of Volunteer Coordinators

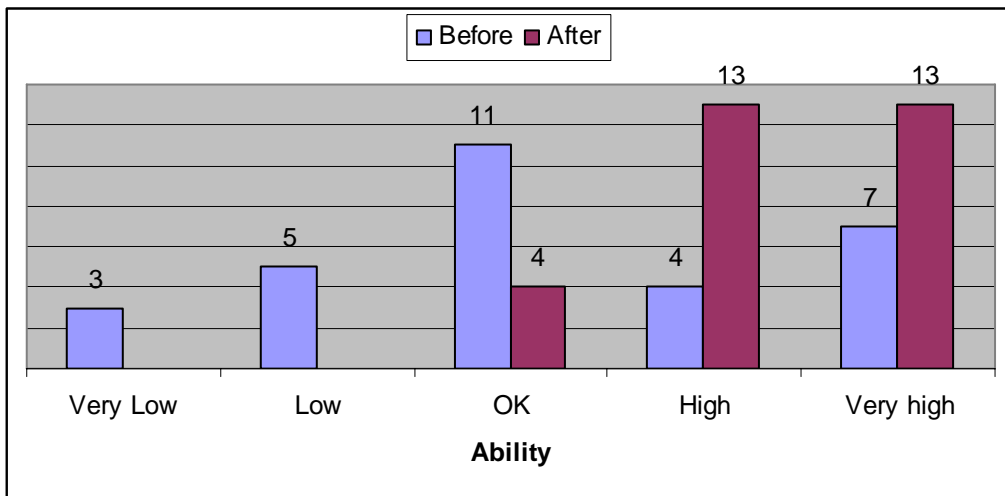
- *Volunteer Coordinators shouldn't need to manage all the projects – other team members can and should share this aspect*
- *Volunteer coordinators often become mentors in lots of ways (but there isn't enough capacity).*
- *Volunteer Coordinators have limited time for mentoring.*
- *The progress of a volunteer depends a lot on the relationship between them and their supervisor.*

The Impact of the Project on the Refugees and Asylum-Seekers that Volunteered

While the Lloyds TSB Project has a range of beneficiaries, including the Refugee Council, its clients, employers and the host society, the most direct beneficiaries are the refugees and asylum-seekers that volunteer. Accordingly, we felt it was important that we learn from the individuals who had volunteered what effects they felt that volunteering had had on their lives. Although there was much observation from supervisors and colleagues of positive changes, we were keen to see how individuals themselves felt. 20 volunteers completed self-assessment questionnaires thereby providing some very individualised and first hand perspectives regarding the impact of the experience. Additionally, a further 10 staff members who work closely with volunteers completed the same questionnaire, drawing upon their own experience to provide a third party perspective linked and relating to those they had personally supported. The collated results of the exercise give a graphic representation of how effective the Lloyds TSB Project has been in bringing about positive changes in the lives of individual refugees and asylum-seekers. There have been several positive outcomes for this group of people not least of which has been that their employability and confidence has been considerably enhanced. The analysis of the self-assessments below is grouped under headings of the questions used in form.

“Please think back to before you started volunteering and compare how you felt then to how you feel now. How would you describe yourself in the following areas?”

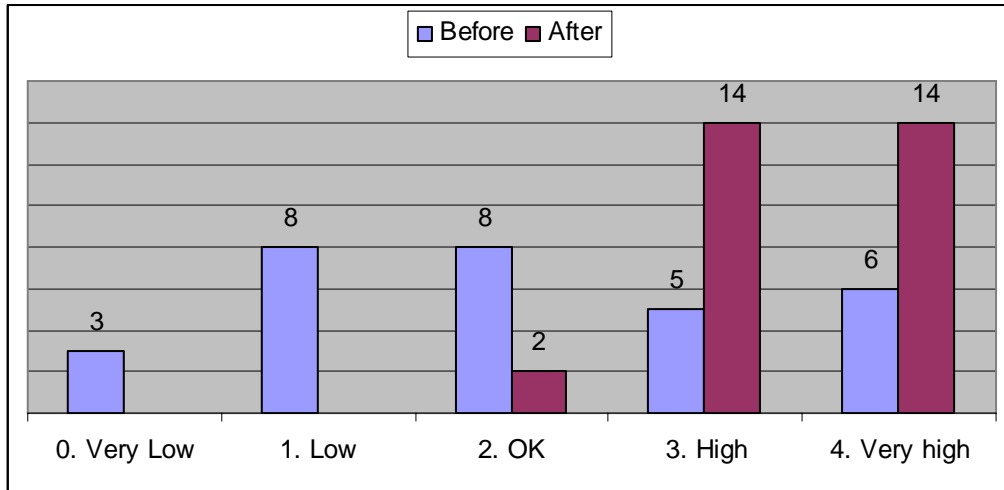
a) Your ability to speak and understand English?



Stakeholder notes:

- *But I learnt different jargon and accents*
- *Couldn't speak English on arrival*
- *I become so confident that I can express how I feel and I have gained interview skills and job application skills. Also I am participating in different meetings and conferences.*
- *I took TELTs and scored 7 points.*
- *Improved - I learnt some new words.*
- *Main change is in confidence i.e. gone from mono syllabic to chatting, asking, clarifying and elaborating etc.*

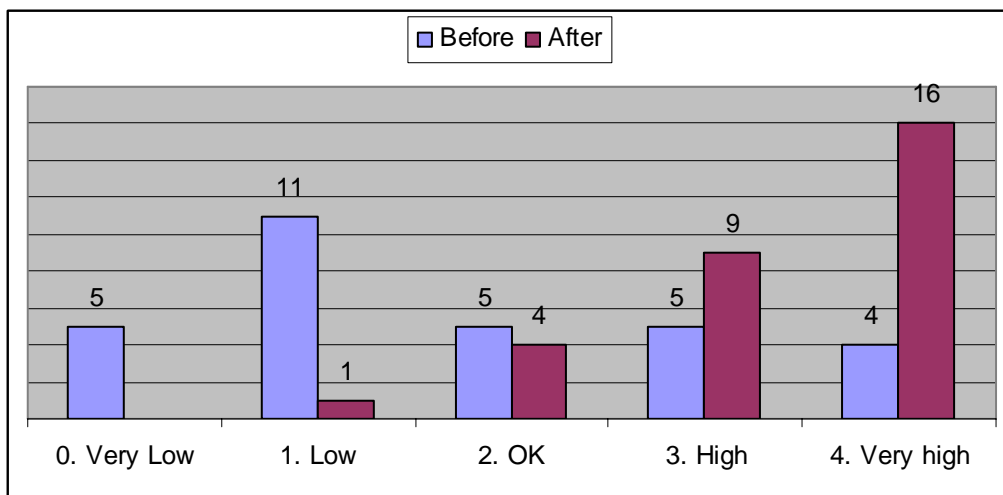
b) Your ability to read and write English for work purposes?



Stakeholder notes:

- *Accuracy and sometimes grammar improves.*
- *I couldn't speak or write English on arrival. It's improved a lot now.*

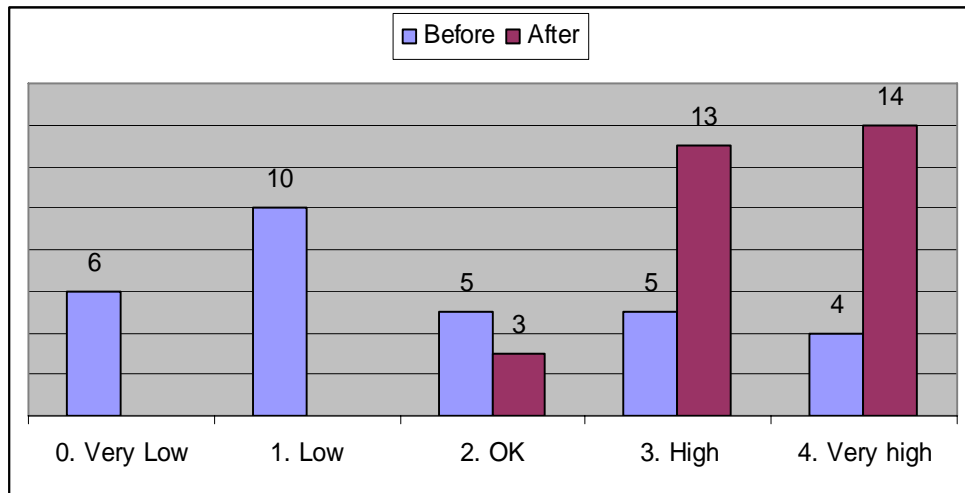
c) Your confidence in general?



Stakeholder notes:

- *Actually my volunteer has just been rejected for an RC job - her confidence has been knocked down.*
- *Especially improves when someone recognises you and appreciates what you have done. Also encouragement and valuing volunteer work helps.*
- *I know a volunteer who made a lot of progress but when they couldn't get a job their confidence was destroyed. All the progress was lost. I see him walking with shoulders and head down, unshaven.*
- *I was in a hole (confidence). Right down in a hole. Volunteering gave me back my confidence.*
- *It went down because I have had lots of rejections - am I employable? Confidence in relation to finding a paid job is different to the confidence you get from volunteering!*

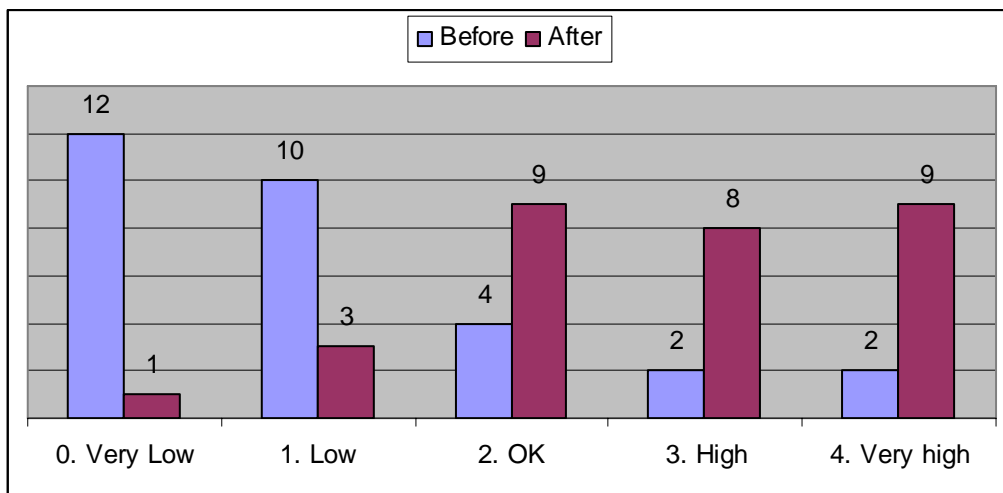
d) Your confidence in work place skills? (E.g. using IT, answering the phone, speaking in meetings, asking questions, taking initiatives and responsibility)?



Stakeholder notes:

- *I was made "Volunteer of the Year" in the UK and in the West Midlands (for "inspiration").*
- *Now I am Secretary of the Eritrean Community in Leeds.*

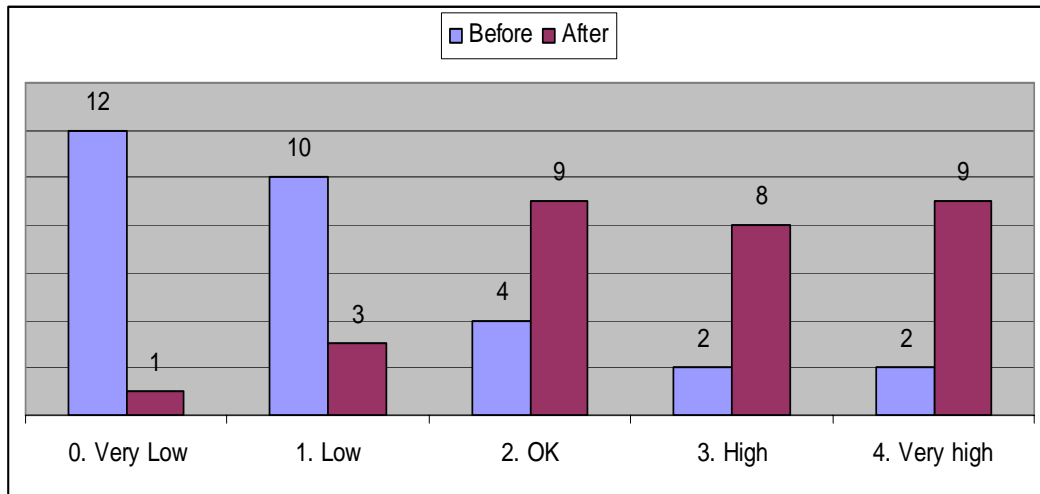
e) Your understanding of how people behave and work together in Britain (i.e. workplace culture, hierarchy, humour, communication)?



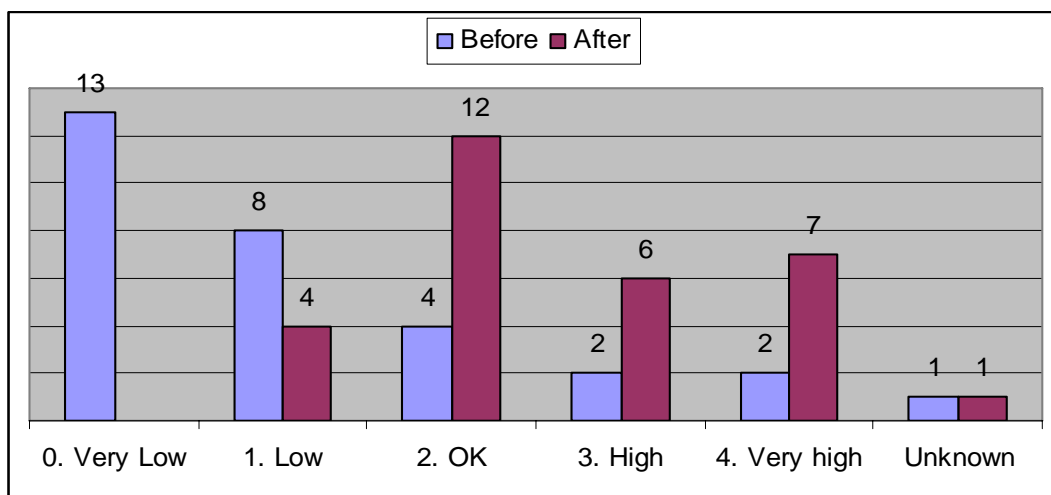
Stakeholder notes:

- *I am getting a lot of experience and knowledge.*
- *I understand better that in the UK the goal posts keep moving. At the Job centre the rules and laws keep changing about working. One person tells you one thing and another says another thing. It's worse than in Eritrea.*
- *People often don't fully understand rights and responsibilities etc. until they are getting paid!*

f) Your knowledge of your employment rights (e.g. minimum wage, non discriminatory practices, breaks etc.)



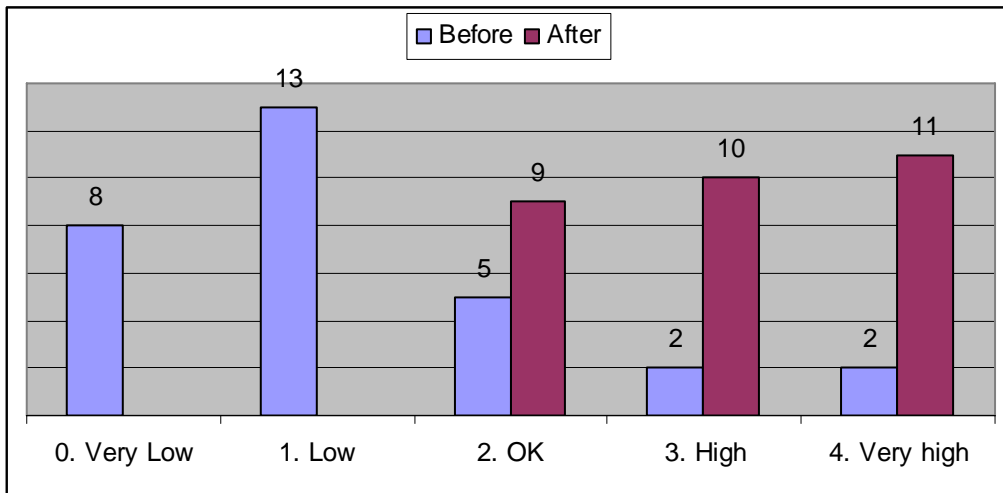
g) Understanding of UK health and safety regulations?



Stakeholder notes:

- *Everywhere they tell you about health and safety!*
- *They are always strong on H&S at RC.*

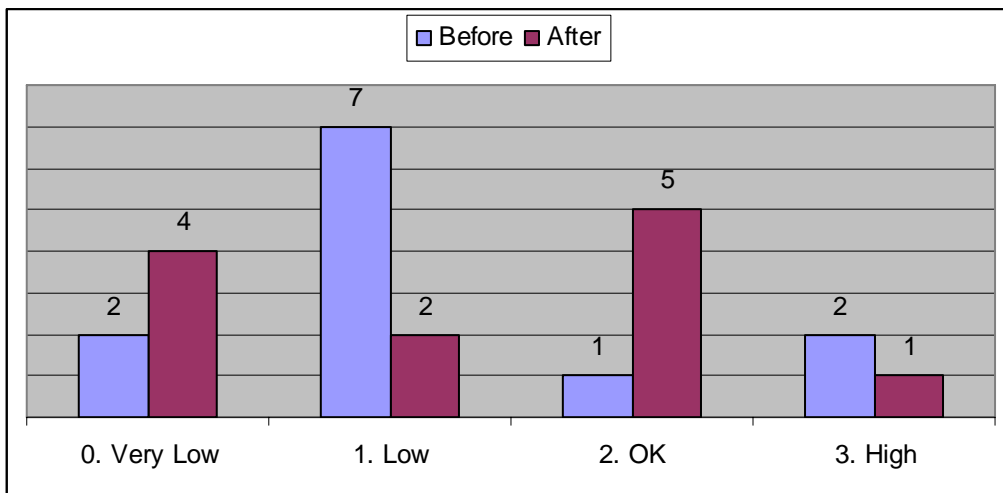
h) Your knowledge of how to find and get the job or training you'd like?



Stakeholder notes:

- *Because they are working here they can ask for help with job searches*
- *Before I only knew about JCP. Everything that I learnt came from other asylum-seekers and refugees*
- *E.g. looks in newspapers, going through agencies etc. not one source or contact.*

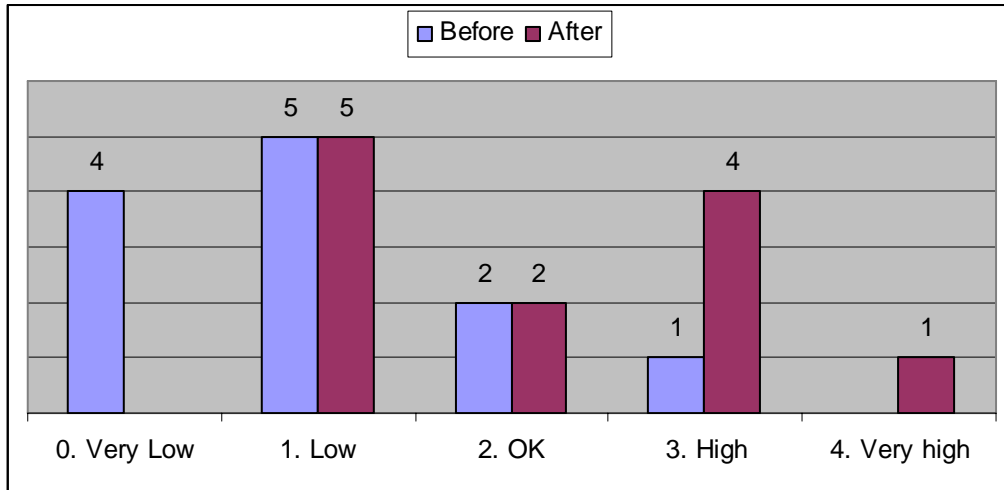
i) Your knowledge and ability (confidence) in completing job application forms?



Stakeholder notes:

- *After input from VC.*
- *I didn't know if what I was doing was OK or how to proceed. In my country we are not used to talking about ourselves like in the UK when asking for a job. I learnt how to this and how to answer everything in the person specification.*
- *Not being successful in getting jobs leads to being disillusioned.*

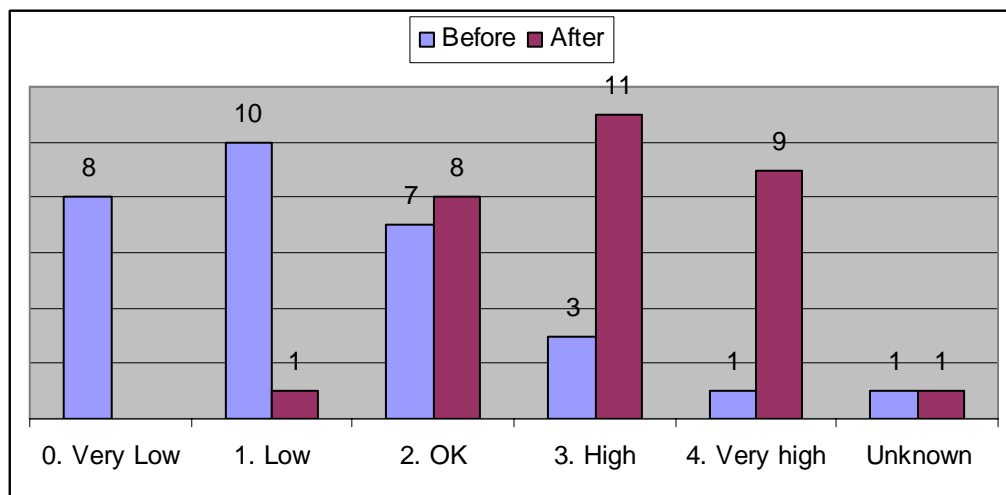
j) Your knowledge and ability (confidence) in being interviewed for a job?



Stakeholder notes:

- *After input of VC.*
- *I was in the dark. Here I learnt that you have to take the job specification and address it all!*

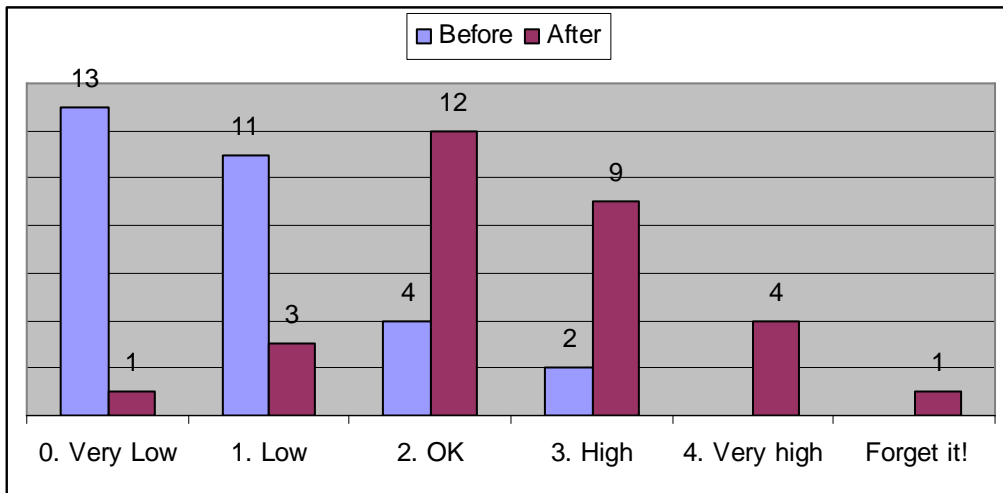
k) Your chances of getting any job?



Stakeholder notes:

- *I am indifferent about this question. I think my chances should be high for getting a job but the fact is I haven't been successful.*
- *Improved theoretically but in reality she still can't get a job. Volunteering helps with personal development but there are still technical and structural barriers. These can be exaggerated for refugees.*

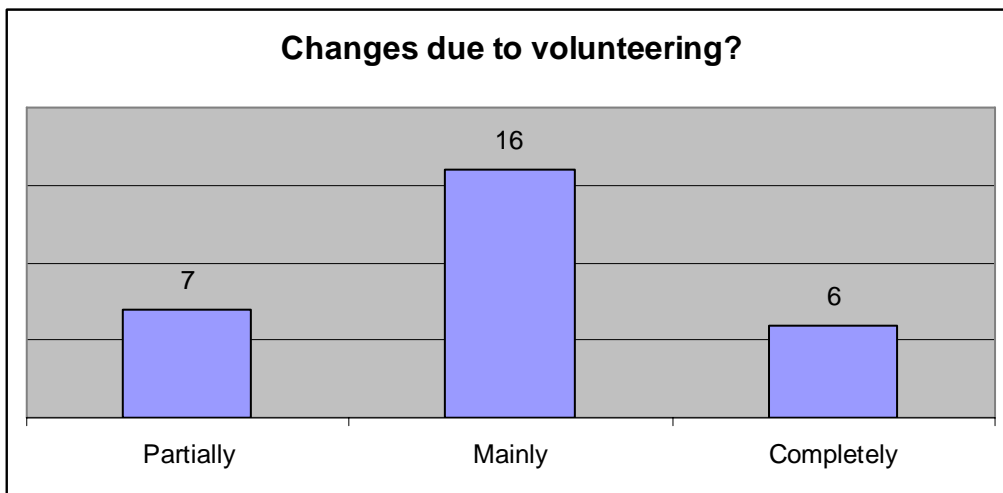
I) Your chances of getting your preferred job, training or career?



Stakeholder notes:

- *Before I had no previous experience of social work. Now I have.*
- *This is very hard! We need to do more with organisations like Chambers of Trade (interview practice etc.)*

m) Overall, how much are any changes in the above a result of doing voluntary work?



n) What else (apart from volunteering) has contributed to positive (or negative) changes in the above?

- *Encouragement from people e.g. NW. Everyone there (RC) was very encouraging and nice.*
- *Enthusiasm, Drive and motivation and how they present themselves.*
- *Getting status also has a great effect in the whole process.*
- *Going to classes and meeting people from all over the world.*
- *Going to college and meeting people from different backgrounds helps.*
- *I am also going to college and doing a BTEC National Certificate in Social Care plus studying counselling.*

- *It depends on the individual - it could be mainly or mixed. Other volunteers, attending other centres, college courses and using the library also help.*
- *Length of time in UK, other volunteering and developing understanding of the UK.*
- *Making friends!*
- *Mentoring helps, getting a PT paid job helps.*
- *My commitment to education, training and self development.*
- *Other volunteering roles, mentoring programmes (1:1 support), friendships and networks developed through volunteering etc.*
- *Personal relationship with supervisors.*
- *Previous experience.*
- *Studying my MA (Development and Conflict) and exploring other fields like counselling, trying to find a more balanced work ethic when deciding what work to take home and much capacity I have realistically to make a change.*
- *Studying, background education.*
- *The staff has contributed to my positive thinking.*
- *Time and companionship.*
- *Time in the UK and growing confidence.*
- *Understanding the work system in the UK.*

Do you have any feedback or messages for Volunteer Coordinators and Managers in the Refugee Council?

- *All past Talk Team volunteers have found work.*
- *General experience and treatment in the UK speed of progress through the asylum system.*
- *I am also going to college and doing a BTEC National Certificate in Social Care plus studying counselling.*
- *I think we need to review the volunteering policy in the organisation.*
- *Many thanks for what you have done. What you are doing is really changing things for people. It has given me my life back.*
- *More training please.*
- *Rejection can be a big knock back. Personal issues for refugees can be an issue in the workplace. People are at different stages and go at different speeds.*
- *There are a huge number of volunteers with the Refugee Council. Giving a chance to a lot of people to get experience is great. Congratulations.*
- *We need more diverse and challenging volunteer roles including opportunities over different time durations and not exclusively suited to UK educated people. The whole organisation from top to bottom needs to embrace volunteering.*
- *We need to continue developing interesting and well supported volunteering roles. We also need to encourage and support staff to act in a mentoring way and explain the importance of this role (also for volunteers). RC should keep doing this work and increase it.*
- *You learn every day, meet new people and develop networks. Before I didn't have UK based work experience. Now I have. In Eritrea it is very different - work environment. The boss has their own office.*

Contact information:

For more information or to discuss any aspect of this Evaluation please contact either party below:

Chris Badman: Volunteer Development Manager, Refugee Council

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Email: chris.badman@refugeecouncil.org.uk

Richard Malfait: Consultant in Refugee, Humanitarian and Management Issues

07808 297 859Tel: 07808 297 859

Email: richardmalfait@aol.com

Nick Scott Flynn: Consultant in Refugee, Humanitarian and Management Issues

Tel: 01273 559360

Email: nicksf@mac.com

Appendix 1: Lloyds TSB Evaluation - Stakeholder List

Volunteer identities have been made anonymous in this Appendix.

'M' or 'F' denotes male or female volunteers.

Name	Region / Team	Stakeholder category
Vanessa Hill	Human Resources	Volunteer Development Assistant
Lesley Dean	Leeds (One Stop Service)	Volunteer Co-ordinator
Sharon Witton	Leeds (Talks Team)	Volunteer Co-ordinator
Hussein Mohamed	Sheffield (Resettlement)	Volunteer Co-ordinator
Eleanor Harrison	Birmingham	Volunteer Co-ordinator
Yetty Shofola	SAS (London)	Volunteer Co-ordinator
Dagmar Grafton	Ipswich	Volunteer Co-ordinator
Chris Badman	Human Resources	Volunteer Development Manager
F1	Birmingham	Volunteer
M1	Birmingham	Volunteer
M2	Birmingham	Volunteer
F2	Birmingham	Volunteer
F3	Birmingham	Volunteer
M3	Birmingham	Volunteer
M4	Birmingham	Volunteer
F4	Birmingham	Volunteer
M5	Birmingham	Volunteer
F5	Birmingham	Volunteer
M6	Birmingham	Volunteer
F6	Birmingham	Volunteer
F7	Birmingham	Volunteer
F8	Birmingham	Volunteer
M7	Birmingham	Volunteer
F9	Birmingham	Volunteer
F10	Birmingham	Volunteer
M8	Birmingham	Volunteer
F11	Birmingham	Volunteer
F12	Leeds	Volunteer
F13	Leeds	Volunteer
M9	Leeds	Volunteer
F14	Leeds	Volunteer
M10	London	Volunteer
F15	London	Volunteer
M11	London	Volunteer
F16	London	Volunteer
F17	London	Volunteer
F18	Leeds	Volunteer
F19	Leeds	Volunteer
Iona Lyons	Leeds (Sunrise)	Volunteer Coordinator
Nazar Hadi	Leeds	Deputy Team Manager
Jonathan Cox	Campaigns and Public Affairs	Parliamentary Officer
Bob Defee	Campaigns and Public Affairs	Manager

Name	Region / Team	Stakeholder category
John Young	Information and Marketing	Manager
Penny McLean	CDT	Information and Training Worker
Girma Afley	CDT	Finance Development Worker

Appendix 2

Lloyds TSB Volunteering Evaluation: Volunteer Questions

Interviewee name (optional):

City:

Gender:

Please note:

- *Thank you for your interest in being interviewed and (or) completing this questionnaire as part of the Evaluation.*
- *Your participation is requested on a voluntary basis. If you cannot or do not wish to answer any questions you do not have to.*
- *Your name and identify will not be included in written evaluation reports.*
- *If you are completing the questionnaire on a computer and can use the internet, please return it by e mail to either Nick or Richard (e mail below) by May 1th 2007.*

Please do not hesitate to ask any questions or raise concerns with either Chris, Nick or Richard using the following contact information:

Chris Badman (Volunteer Development Manager, Refugee Council): **020 7346 1272**

Richard Malfait (Independent Evaluator): **07808 297859** richardmalfait@aol.com

Nick Scott Flynn (Independent Evaluator): **07980 858636** nick@zogland.demon.co.uk

1. What country are you from originally?

2. Did you work there – if so, what as?

3. How long have you been in the UK?

4. Do you have 'refugee status' or are you an asylum seeker?

5. What volunteer roles have you been involved in and for how long?

6. Why did you volunteer and what were you hoping to achieve?

7. Did you achieve your aims?

8. How many hours or days a week do (or did) you volunteer?

9. What did the work involve doing (more detail on tasks etc.)?

10. What support, supervision or induction or training have you received from the RC?

11. What job, training or education would you ideally like to do next?

12. Do you feel that doing voluntary work will help (or has helped) you achieve your next step (e.g. job, training or employment)? If so how?

13. Does doing voluntary work have any other benefits you can think of e.g. in terms of self esteem, physical or mental well being etc? (explore)?

14. Since becoming a volunteer how many jobs have you applied for?
15. RM / NSF If they haven't applied for jobs explore why?

16. How many interviews have you been offered?

17. If you didn't get an interview why do think this was?

18. If you had an interview but didn't get the job why do you think this was?

19. How could volunteering in the Refugee Council be improved?

PERSONAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Please think back to before you started volunteering and compare how you felt then to how you feel now. How would you describe yourself in the following areas?

o) Your ability to speak and understand English?

Before	0. Very low	1. Low	2. OK	3. High	4. Very high
Now	0. Very low	1. Low	2. OK	3. High	4. Very high

Note:

p) Your ability to read and write English for work purposes?

Before	0. Very low	1. Low	2. OK	3. High	4. Very high
Now	0. Very low	1. Low	2. OK	3. High	4. Very high

Note:

q) Your confidence in general?

Before	0. Very low	1. Low	2. OK	3. High	4. Very high
Now	0. Very low	1. Low	2. OK	3. High	4. Very high

Note:

r) Your confidence in work place skills? (e.g. using IT, answering the phone, speaking in meetings, asking questions, taking initiatives and responsibility)?

Before	0. Very low	1. Low	2. OK	3. High	4. Very high
Now	0. Very low	1. Low	2. OK	3. High	4. Very high

Note:

s) Your specific job skills or knowledge (e.g. research skills, IT skills linked to role etc.)?

Before	0. Very low	1. Low	2. OK	3. High	4. Very high
Now	0. Very low	1. Low	2. OK	3. High	4. Very high

Note:

t) Your understanding of how people behave and work together in Britain (i.e. workplace culture, hierarchy, humour, communication)?

Before	0. Very low	1. Low	2. OK	3. High	4. Very high
Now	0. Very low	1. Low	2. OK	3. High	4. Very high

Note:

u) Your knowledge of your employment rights (e.g. minimum wage, non discriminatory practices, breaks etc.)

Before	0. Very low	1. Low	2. OK	3. High	4. Very high
Now	0. Very low	1. Low	2. OK	3. High	4. Very high

Note:

v) Your understanding of UK health and safety regulations?

Before	0. Very low	1. Low	2. OK	3. High	4. Very high
Now	0. Very low	1. Low	2. OK	3. High	4. Very high

Note:

w) Your knowledge of how to look for job, training or education opportunities?

Before	0. Very low	1. Low	2. OK	3. High	4. Very high
Now	0. Very low	1. Low	2. OK	3. High	4. Very high

Note:

x) Your knowledge and ability (confidence) in completing job application forms?

Before	0. Very low	1. Low	2. OK	3. High	4. Very high
Now	0. Very low	1. Low	2. OK	3. High	4. Very high

Note:

y) Your knowledge and ability (confidence) in being interviewed for a job?

Before	0. Very low	1. Low	2. OK	3. High	4. Very high
Now	0. Very low	1. Low	2. OK	3. High	4. Very high

Note:

z) Your chances of getting any job?

Before	0. Very low	1. Low	2. OK	3. High	4. Very high
Now	0. Very low	1. Low	2. OK	3. High	4. Very high

Note:

aa) Your chances of getting your preferred job, training or career?

Before	0. Very low	1. Low	2. OK	3. High	4. Very high
Now	0. Very low	1. Low	2. OK	3. High	4. Very high

Note:

bb) Overall, how much are any changes in the above a result of doing voluntary work?

0. Not at all	1. Partially	2. Mixed	3. Mainly	4. Completely
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Note:

cc) What else (apart from volunteering) has contributed to positive (or negative) changes in the above?

Do you have any feedback or messages for Volunteer Coordinators and Managers in the Refugee Council?