



RCD Women's News

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Working in Partnership to help Albanian speaking women in the UK

By Esme Madill and Evis Bodlli – Shpresa Programme

Shpresa Programme is a refugee community organisation that was founded in 2002 by women who fled the Balkans conflicts. When these conflicts led to human rights violations, Albanian speakers sought asylum in the UK. However they experienced very real difficulties integrating and establishing a new life living in exile. There was no significant Albanian community presence before this in the UK and community resources were sparse. Shpresa Programme was founded to develop user led, family focused services by working in partnership with others.

The needs of isolated and traumatised women, including survivors of sexual violence had always been high on Shpresa's agenda. In 2007 the Project Director, Luljeta Nuzi described how:

'We were working with women on really hard issues and we did not have the capacity to tackle them.'

Project Director, Shpresa Programme



Let's Talk Conference – June 2010

The 'hard issues' included depression, isolation and domestic violence, loss of identity and cultural conflicts between children and their parents.

Shpresa Programme approached the Women's Therapy Centre which has been providing psychoanalytic psychotherapy to women for more than 30 years. Since 2003 when the centre secured funding to broaden access to psychotherapy for women from refugee and asylum seeking communities, the centre has developed a strong track record of providing culturally sensitive psychotherapy services to vulnerable women. When Shpresa Programme approached the centre, their Chief Executive described how they were aware that women from refugee communities faced specific barriers to accessing therapy so they were ready to leave the therapy room and take therapy into the community.

The project delivered in the community by both agencies develops accessible services for refugee women addressing complex issues of violence, sexual assault and ethnic identity by providing:

- **Information sessions** covering mental health and psychotherapy services. These sessions seek to challenge some of the misconceptions – the idea that to ask for help is to be 'mad' or 'crazy'.
- **Therapy taster sessions** provide women with a taste of the therapeutic process and encourage women to express opinions and feelings and begin to look at how they have been affected by exile, violence and trauma.
- **The six week psycho-educational groups** offer women a sense of belonging and support in a therapeutic setting. The structure of the group enables women to talk safely about their feelings, often for the very first time.

For more information:

See Shpresa Programme at www.shpresaprogramme.com/

See Women's Therapy Centre at www.womenstherapycentre.co.uk/

Training

Making your services more effective

Charities Evaluation Services (CES) is offering a **free**, two-day training course on monitoring and evaluation for London based RCOs. The course takes place on **5 and 6 October 2010**. Refreshments and a hot halal meal will be provided on each day.

Each participant will receive a copy of: *Becoming more effective: an introduction to monitoring and evaluation for refugee community organisations*.

To book a place email training@ces-vol.org.uk or call **020 7713 5722**. Also see www.ces-vol.org.uk/

No recourse? EEA national? Overcoming the barriers

This one day course will give you the skills and knowledge you need to support women who have experienced domestic violence and who have an insecure immigration status with confidence. Each participant will receive a copy of *Pathways to Justice: BMER women, violence and the law*.

London - 28 July 2010 - NCVO
Darlington - 22 July 2010 - The Dolphin Centre
Doncaster - 27 October 2010 - CVS

See www.rightsofwomen.org.uk/training.php#

Vacancies

The Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development (FORWARD) is looking for passionate people to join their board of trustees. They are looking for applicants from a variety of backgrounds particularly those with marketing, media, fundraising and advocacy skills. They particularly welcome applicants from ethnic minority men who are currently underrepresented on the board. For more information call **0208 960 4000** or visit www.forwarduk.org.uk/news/news/577

Funding news

City Parochial Foundation is now called Trust for London, following the amalgamation of City Parochial Foundation and Trust for London in July 2010. These two funders were sister organisations, based at the same office with the same staff and Trustees. Visit their new website at www.trustforlondon.org.uk

Communitybuilders offers loans, grants and business support. They invest in the sustainability of multi-purpose, inclusive, community-led organisations.

They recognise that all organisations are at different stages of development and address this by having three different elements to the Fund. To find out more visit

www.communitybuildersfund.org.

New report

To mark the 2nd anniversary of the Charter, Asylum Aid has published a report entitled *Charter of Rights of Women Seeking Asylum 2 years on: impacts and actions*. The report showcases the range of activities undertaken by Charter endorsers around the UK and demonstrates the progress made so far towards a gender-sensitive asylum system. You can read the report at www.asylumaid.org.uk/data/files/publications/133/WomensAsylumCharter2Yearson.pdf

New resource

Initial Electronic Advice from LawWorks is a free automated online system, which allows not for profit organisations and advice agencies to submit a short legal query and have this answered by a lawyer via email. Visit www.lawworkstraining.org.uk/lawworksiea.org.uk/

If you would like to submit an article to *RCO Women's News* about your RCO's work, or would like to write about a topical issue, please email: development@refugeecouncil.org.uk.