



RCO Women's News

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Women's RCO campaigns for all women to be protected from domestic violence

Support services for women who have been victims of domestic violence are failing hundreds of women. Not because the services are not available or suitable, but because some women are turned away. Some women who live in the UK legally, perhaps through a spousal or partner visa - but who are not residents, do not have recourse to public funds i.e. they are not entitled to financial support (income support or housing benefit for example) from the Government. This forces some women to endure abusive and dangerous relationships, as they are not able to seek help from social services or a women's refuge and face the impossible decision of suffering either violence or destitution.

Because refuges and other emergency accommodation in the UK require residents to cover the cost of their living, women who have no recourse and have so far depended on their husband or partner – the very person they are at risk from – for accommodation and financial assistance, are simply turned away. Support services and charities may know women who are at risk and may desperately want to provide support and protection, but because of the no recourse requirement their hands are tied. Women who have found the courage to seek help and are then refused may feel they have no option but to return to the dangerous situation they were trying to escape, with potentially terrible consequences.

This appalling situation has not gone un-noticed. Thanks to the Amnesty International *No Recourse, No Safety* campaign the Sojourner Project was launched last November. This Home Office funded pilot project provides accommodation, subsistence and support for women who have suffered domestic violence and have no recourse. The project supports women to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain under the Domestic Violence Rule and has recently been extended until August 2010, which is again a great success for the campaign.

Unfortunately, the project is only a pilot and, more disappointingly, only funds women for up to a maximum of 40 days. London based RCO **Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organisation (KMEWO)**, who contributed to the *No Recourse, No Safety* mass lobby of parliament last November, feel that 40 days is just not enough – particularly when, in practice, cases can be unresolved for 6 months or even 2 years. Encouraged through the Refugee Council's Refugee Empowerment Project, KMEWO are campaigning for "a long-term, sustainable, funded and enforceable guarantee that all women, including no recourse women, will be equally able to access safety and justice when fleeing violence."

In order to promote their campaign, KMEWO are holding an event in July this year, which they hope will enrich and strengthen the *No Recourse, No Safety* campaign and keep it top of the new government's agenda. The event will hopefully facilitate contact and communication between policy makers (particularly those involved in the Sojourner Project), individuals who have suffered as a result of the no recourse rule, and other organisations that provide support to no recourse women. As an RCO, KMEWO works directly with women from refugee communities, some of whom are at risk but have no recourse. Many of their clients have experienced destitution because no support is available to them - despite being vulnerable to domestic abuse. In the words of a KMEWO client: "The no recourse to public fund rule is simply a means of allowing men to torture and abuse women." It is this that KMEWO are determined to change.

For more information on the event, other KMEWO activities, or the *No Recourse, No Safety* campaign, contact **Jess** on **020 7263 1027** or **jess@kmewo.org**.

Training

Making your services more effective

Charities Evaluation Services (CES) is offering a programme of **free**, two-day training courses on monitoring and evaluation for London based RCOs. Courses are taking place on **11 and 12 May 2010** or **5 and 6 October 2010**. Refreshments and a hot halal meal will be provided on each day.

CES uses group work to help participants to learn in an interesting way. They also provide opportunities for you to share your experiences with others. Each participant will receive a copy of: *Becoming more effective: an introduction to monitoring and evaluation for refugee community organisations*.

If you want to gain essential knowledge that will help you to make your services more effective and to show your achievements to others, including your funders, then book now!

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

Using psychological evidence to support traumatised women refugees – Manchester

On **7 June 2010**, the **Centre for the Study of Emotion and Law (CSEL)** and **Women Asylum Seekers Together** in Manchester are running a **free** training seminar in Manchester on how to use psychological evidence to support traumatised women asylum seekers.

The training introduces and explains CSEL's research into the psychological effects of trauma, and what impact this has on people going through the UK asylum system.

Participants will learn how these impacts make it difficult for traumatised women refugees applying for asylum, and how to use the evidence to provide better support to these women.

The seminar is free and runs from 1.30pm to 4pm. Book now by emailing **Clare** at c.cochrane@tsel.org.uk (deadline for bookings is Wednesday 28 May 2010). For more information on CSEL research go to www.csel.org.uk.

Funding news

Community Spaces is a £50m open grants programme funded through the Big Lottery Fund's Changing Spaces initiative. The programme empowers community groups to improve public spaces in their neighbourhood.

Deadline for Community Spaces small and medium grants is **28 January 2011**.

For more information, please visit: www.community-spaces.org.uk

The Youth of Today Scaling Up Fund is inviting applications from small third sector organisations to help more young people take on leadership roles in their community and to create more opportunities for young people to influence the decision affecting them. The Fund's final round is expected to make investments of between £5,000 and £10,000.

Deadline for round four (final round) **23rd June 2010**.

For more information, please visit www.theyouthoftoday.org/scaling

New research report

Safer, Healthier and Integrated Faster is a new report detailing the crucial role that child care can play in affecting positive outcomes for refugee families and their new communities. The report was commissioned by the Northern Refugee Centre with funding from the Tudor Trust. See summary report here www.nrcentre.org.uk/downloads/women/Summary%20for%20refugee%20parents.pdf

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.