

RCO Women's News

No:2, November 2003

Refugee Council's Strategy for Services to Female Asylum Seekers and Refugees

The Refugee Council is developing a strategy for its work with refugee and asylum seeking women. The aim of this strategy is to inform the development of the Refugee Council's services, making them more accessible and appropriate to refugee and asylum seeking women. It will also help inform policy and advocacy with respect to services for women and issues of particular concern to women.

To make the strategy as relevant and inclusive as possible, information will be gathered in the following ways:

Postal Questionnaires will be sent to RCOs and refugee women's organisations.

Structured interviews will be held with groups working with refugee women.

Client Focus Groups will be held with women asylum seekers in emergency accommodation and those using the services of the One Stop Services in London, the regions and Oakington.

In House Focus Groups will be held to obtain the views of Refugee Council staff.

We are appealing to RCOs and women's organisations to help us develop this strategy by completing and returning questionnaires when they are sent, and by participating in focus groups and interviews.

Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Infrastructure Consultation Document

This is a key document about the development and funding of women's organisations across England. Women need to influence the debate to ensure that adequate funding is allocated for women's groups.

Several key areas related to 'infrastructure' are covered in the report from BME organisations, rural communities, community development initiatives and volunteering.

Please respond directly to the Home Office by 22nd December 2003. The document can be downloaded at:
www.homeoffice.gov.uk/inside/consult/current

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Women Connect

Women Connect is a capacity building project with a mission to enable women's voluntary and community organisations to use and shape the Internet. It will strengthen all women's organisations and help their work with their communities.

For information see:

www.womenconnect.org.uk

CDT Training

How to write better funding applications

CDT recognises the particular difficulties of refugee women's organisations in accessing funding. This training will help participants develop stronger, clearer and more successful funding applications.

3rd December 2003

Developing services for refugee women

This training highlights some of the issues that are of particular concern and relevance to women refugees and asylum seekers. It will provide an opportunity for RCOs to look at the services they provide and assess whether they are appropriate to women users.

14th January 2004

For more information, please contact Elaheh Rambarzini

Women Leaders

Mosaada Centre for single women in London is organising 2 residential courses to encourage, nurture and support women from refugee communities into adopting leadership roles. The courses are free, and include travel, accommodation and all course materials.

27 - 29 November

8 - 10 February 2004

Contact: Brenda Anthony on 020 7247 7111

brenda@mosaada.org.uk

Report highlights mental illness amongst black and minority ethnic (BME) women in London

The report, *Ethnic Diversity and Mental Health in London*, found that refugees and asylum seekers are not receiving adequate care and support, made worse by the fact that staff are insufficiently equipped to assess the specific needs of these groups.

Staff are often not aware of the rights of refugees and asylum seekers to health and social care services, and this influences how they respond to calls for help from these communities.

Ethnic Diversity and Mental Health in London: Recent Developments is available free from the King's Fund on 020 7307 2591 or www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications

Breaking the Silence Monday 24th November

The South London African Women's Organisation is organising a conference with a view to breaking the silence on domestic violence in African communities in the UK. The conference will take place during White Ribbon Week, with keynote speaker Harriet Harman MP.

The conference will focus on issues that are impacting on the way Africans living in the UK are responding to the problem of domestic violence.

For further information, call Geniffer Onjutta on 020 8648 1808 or e-mail: africaslawo@aol.com

Funding News

Association of London Government – ESF Co-financing programme

The capacity building programme aims to support community organisations working in the area of training and employment services. The target group for funding includes RCOs aiming to improve their capacity to offer training and employment services for women refugees.

Deadline for applications: 28th November

For further information, contact:
ALG
59 1/2 Southwark Street
London SE1 0AL, 020 7943 9999
www.alg.gov.uk or
info@alg.gov.uk

Training for Refugee Women

Hillcroft College

Hillcroft College helps women take up opportunities which they may have missed earlier. Residence at the college is an important part of the learning experience. The learning environment and facilities are open 24 hours a day and students have a unique opportunity to learn together, support each other and share experiences.

Tuition is free for students in receipt of any state benefits/pension or who are dependent on anyone in receipt of state benefits/pension.

Accommodation and meals are free if you have been normally resident in the UK for 3 years and have not attended a UK institution for higher education.

Help with childcare and travel costs available

Contact Admissions on: 020 8399 2688

Forthcoming Courses:

4 - 6 November: Carers course

4-6 November and 18-20 November: Introductory certificate in business start-up

24 November - 5 December: Introductory certificate in first line management

17 November – 12December: A Chance To Change

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Age Concern Islington's Vocal Project

Free training is available to RCOs working with older people, their family/ carers and support workers on Rights/Benefits; Health; Making Complaints; Speaking Up; Assertiveness; Building Your Confidence.

Interpreters can be provided.

Please contact Kate on 020 7281 6018

The Community Development Team's work with women

The Community Development Team is committed to empowering refugee women, ensuring that all training, information and support is fully accessible and inclusive. It is your team - please let us know your information, training and support needs by contacting Elaheh Rambarzini on 020 7820 3022, or any other member of CDT. We also welcome your thoughts and input to make this newsletter relevant and useful to your needs.

If you have an event or training course that you want to advertise, or even if you just want to publicise your organisation, contact us and we will include an article in the next issue of RCO Women's News.