



# RCD Women's News

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## Migrant Women's Network (MWN) – based in Dagenham, East London

*By Marion Warugush – Coordinator of MWN*

Migrant Women's Network was established in 2001 to promote: health; advance education; reduce poverty and to encourage community cohesion among women who may be refugees, asylum seekers, migrant workers and students. We are a very active refugee community organisation, which continuously strives to meet the needs of our women service users as effectively as possible. We offer a range of activities which include:

1. Our Women's Resource Centre, which is a friendly, welcoming women only space to encourage all women to access educational, health, career and developmental services. Our centre sees an average of 20 women a week and offers a drop-in facility four times a week; job search support which includes CV writing and job interview practice; free internet access, and a space to socialise. We receive a lot of positive feedback about the centre. For example, Mabel who is a mother of four said, "Staff and volunteers at the Resource Centre have been very helpful in assisting me with writing my CV as well as helping me get a school for my children. I now work part-time and the children are making good progress at school"
2. Healthy living activities that focus on providing sexual health information, organising bi-weekly cooking sessions and health seminars for adults and young people.
3. Drumming and dance workshops for young people aged between 9 and 17. This is a very popular activity with our younger members. Charlene, a 15 year old girl attends this club and said, "When my friend asked me to come to the dance and drumming club, I thought it would be boring but was surprised at how much I enjoyed it. I look forward to my Saturdays now."
4. Volunteer training and development opportunities.
5. English speaking practice groups, to improve confidence and skills.

As for the future, our key goals are:

- To build the capacity of women's groups to engage in policy debates.
- To help establish a role for women that will enable them to make a positive contribution which is both significant and valued.
- To empower women through dissemination of information and training to enable them to break the long standing barriers to women's participation in activities outside the home.
- To build effective communication and working relationships across social, professional, ethnic and institutional boundaries.

Our work has been made possible through the support of our trustees, volunteers, staff, charitable trusts, funding organisations, our local authority and many other partners. We remain focused in ensuring that our work continues to raise awareness of the need to support women to enable them to participate fully in political, socio-economic, educational and community development activities.

If you would like more information about our services, please contact us on **0203 2440110** or email **migrantwomenuk@yahoo.co.uk**.

## Funding news

### Big Lottery Fund: Family Learning

**Family Learning** is a programme that helps parents to understand more about how their children learn and encourages adults and children to learn as a family. At least one parent or adult carer and at least one child under the age of 16 are required to be considered a "family". They will only fund projects (local or national) that involve adults and children learning together and deliver all three of the following changes:

1. family members participate in and enjoy educational activity more,
2. family members have more skills and knowledge (these may include confidence and effective communication); and
3. parents and carers are better able to interact positively with their children and support them in learning.

Minimum grant: £10,000,

Maximum grant: £500,000

Closing date: **29 August 2008**. For more information call **0845 4 10 20 30** or go to

**[www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog\\_family\\_learning?regioncode=uk&progStatus=open&country=%20UK&status=theProg&chan=funding&title=Family%20Learning](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_family_learning?regioncode=uk&progStatus=open&country=%20UK&status=theProg&chan=funding&title=Family%20Learning)**

## Training

**Rights of Women** are offering a series of training sessions:

### **Asylum and Immigration Law: protecting women from violence and securing their position in the UK.**

**23 April at 9.30am – 4.30pm**

This course gives a practical overview of asylum and immigration law with an emphasis on the needs of women experiencing gender based violence

### **Just Married? The law of marriage, divorce and forced marriage**

**7 May at 9.30am – 4.30pm**

The course will update participants on the latest changes to the law of forced marriage.

Each course costs **£100** for small voluntary organisations with a **10% discount** for Rights of Women members.

For more information call **020 7251 6575** or email **[info@row.org.uk](mailto:info@row.org.uk)** or go to **[rightsofwomen.org.uk](http://rightsofwomen.org.uk)**

Both training sessions will take place at: **NCVO, Regents Wharf, 8 All Saints Street, London, N1 9RL.**

## Publication

### *UNHCR Handbook for the Protection of Women and Girls'*

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have published this handbook as a replacement to the *1991 UNHCR Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women*. The handbook refers to all women and girls who are: asylum seekers; refugees; internally displaced; stateless or have integrated into new communities. The handbook outlines legal principles, current challenges and the responsibilities of governments and agencies working in the field of protecting women and girls.

The handbook looks at: the effects of forced displacement on women and girls; the promotion of community and rights based approaches; how to identify, prevent and respond to risks and international and regional legal frameworks. This handbook provides practical guidance for people and agencies working with women and girls. You can download this publication at

**[www.unhcr.org/protect/PROTECTION/47cfae612.html](http://www.unhcr.org/protect/PROTECTION/47cfae612.html)**

## Call for case studies

**Asylum Aid** is collecting case studies to help with research on **gender-related persecution**.

They would like to be contacted by women asylum seekers and refugees that have based their claim on gender persecution. Please contact **Claire Bennett** on **020 7354 9631** if you would like to help with this research.