

STATE OF THE SECTOR REPORT – REFUGEE AND MIGRANT COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS IN 2010

Peach Consultancy for the Evelyn Oldfield Unit

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction

“Large numbers of refugees and asylum seekers have been arriving in the UK since the 1980s, and particularly since the mid 1990s. The majority settled in London and the South East before the Government’s dispersal programme in 2000 temporarily settled new arrivals in urban areas around the country. During this period a considerable number of diverse Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs) have become established totalling some 600 in London alone. These mostly small organisations, typically run by volunteers on shoestring budgets, have existed alongside the larger and better funded refugee support agencies with whom they have struggled to compete not only for resources but for wider recognition and influence at higher strategic policy levels in London. Led by refugees, traditionally organised around a particular identity, such as nationality, ethnicity or faith, RCOs are seen to provide invaluable support and culturally sensitive services to new arrivals and yet are characterised by organisational precariousness, fragmentation and a lack of a coordinated and unified voice.”¹

This report discusses broadly the State of the Sector for Refugee and Migrant communities in the United Kingdom, and the potential impacts of recent changes in the political and economic environment on Refugee and Migrant Community Organisations (RMCOs).

1.2 Methodology

Our methodology reflects on the survey report *Refugee and Migrant Community Organisations in 2009*², but also draws on more recent primary and secondary evidence, collated in June/July 2010, as detailed below:

1. Primary data collection:
 - a. *structured interviews with EOU staff, groups and partners*
 - b. *print and online survey, disseminated to all EOU members.*
 - c. *Attendance at the annual EOU State of the Sector Conference*

2. Secondary data collection:
 - a. *Brief systematic review of current literature,*
 - b. *EOU internal data and documentation*

¹ Amas N., Price J, 2008, “Strengthening the Voice of Refugee Community Organisations within London’s Second-tier Voluntary Sector: Barriers and Opportunities”, *Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees*, City University, London

² Valentine R., 2009, *State of the Sector 2009*

Research for this report was conducted in June to August 2010, in tandem with a State of the Sector conference hosted by EOU on 10 June 2010.

Secondary data collection, including desk research, provides a backdrop to this research, and has been illustrated further by feedback collected through primary data collection. Data from interviews, and survey responses was analysed in the context of existing literature and the researchers' prior knowledge of the RMS and wider voluntary sector.

The employment of a paper and online survey allowed access to the experience and knowledge of some 38 RMCOs, who have crucial insight to the Sector. A copy of the survey is provided in Appendix 1. A bibliography of literature sources can also be found in Section 3.

1.3 The Profile and Needs of Refugee and Migrant Communities

A recent Refugee Council/Refugee Action survey found a total of 668 refugee community organisations in England, of which 335 were in London.

This section includes adaptations from a previous report: The State of the Sector Report 2009³.

Research specifically on migrant organisations is scarce, especially those serving new communities including A10 nationals (European accession countries). The EOU has comparatively recently extended its services to both refugee *and* migrant community organisations (RMCOs); having originally focused only with those that defined themselves as refugee community organisations (RCOs). It is noted however that the immigration status of users is not the main concern of community organisations, and many, such as the Latin American organisations, have always served both groups.

The GLA estimated that about 500,000 people in London had applied for UK asylum in the previous 15 years. Of these about half have refugee status, making up about 3-4% of London's resident population.

The nature of RMCOs is determined by the communities they serve. Such communities are diverse, and include migrants: legal or undocumented, with distinctions between migrants and refugees, refugees and asylum seekers, and also between long-established and new communities, and between English-speaking former colonies and those with no previous connection to the UK. Evidence gathered by the Greater London Authority suggests a population of 600,000 refugees who arrived after 1989, or 7% of the city's population, although this may be as high as 900,000 people born outside the UK arriving after 1990. Divergent needs of such communities are demonstrated in the demands made on RMCOs.

Although RMCOs are not automatically homogenous, over time the types of problems refugees and migrants experience tend to change. From early social and political orientation issues, they usually evolve into challenges regarding integration and social cohesion, and can then moderate for example to addressing longer term practical needs such as the needs of grown up children, ageing communities, and financial matters. The Government generally makes a clear distinction between asylum seekers, whom it wishes to deter from coming to the UK, and refugees, whose right to remain is recognized and whose integration is promoted. RMCOs, on the other hand, tend to see only individuals who belong to their community.

³ Valentine R., 2009, State of the Sector 2009

In general, undocumented migrants face considerable barriers in accessing services. Whilst these barriers are not so pronounced amongst those with refugee status, there are still legitimate difficulties in their access to basic services.

Some of the most prominent issues affecting refugees and migrant communities are:

- a. Immigration:** The often prolonged wait for a decision on asylum applications can have serious implications for the health and wellbeing of applicants. Practicalities such as finding a suitable solicitor, providing the right information for evidence and dealing with the consequences of the outcome are all highly demanding processes. Undocumented migrants are likely to be in a state of permanent anxiety that they will be found and deported.
- b. Housing:** new migrants are most likely to be in private rented accommodation, and face issues around high rents, security of tenure, disrepair, overcrowding, fear of eviction and harassment. Research suggests that many refugees are not aware of their rights in relation to housing.
- c. Employment:** despite the ongoing right to work⁴ campaign, people seeking asylum are still not permitted to work. Those with refugee status do have permission to work, but have difficulty in finding any or suitable employment.
- d. Health:** lack of knowledge of the NHS leads to low levels of health care take up. There are also public health concerns around infectious diseases that are more common in lower economic groups, including TB and other diseases that have high prevalence rates in the migrant's country of origin. Asylum seekers and refugees may also require psychosocial care and support following traumatic incidents: persecution, torture or imprisonment.
- e. Language:** Underpinning much of the above is the frustrating and humiliating effect of not being able to communicate in the host country language. Although recent government pronouncements emphasise the need for refugees and migrants to learn English, many are unable to access ESOL courses, with some London colleges having a waiting list of over a thousand people. Clearly, language barriers severely impede the integration process of migrants into mainstream society.

⁴Refugee Council, <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/campaigning/letthemwork/> (accessed 9/7/2010)

⁶ Valentine R., 2009, State of the Sector 2009

1.4 Refugee and Migrant Community Organisations

RMCOs arise from within their communities as a response to needs that their original trustees almost uniformly themselves experience. They are typically founded by the most highly educated and proactive members of the community, who having survived exile, arrival and settlement have a strong sense of obligation to help others with these processes. There may also be an overt political intention – some RMCOs map precisely onto political movements in the home country. In addition there is a joint focus on the UK and the country of origin. Individuals in the UK, regardless of income level, often financially support extended family at home, which in turn can form a large element of that country's economy. Political and social events in original country of birth can also have an impact on communities here, including through relatives and friends.

The sense of commitment to the community gives rise to one of the great strengths of RMCOs: their resilience. A very high proportion of the work of RMCOs is voluntary. Given the volume and range of demand for their services, RMCOs rely heavily on voluntary labour. Volunteers may provide welfare advice and advocacy and interpreting services, lobby for their community with statutory authorities, teach mother-tongue and supplementary classes, represent the organisation externally and carry out financial and administrative functions. It is not uncommon for RMCOs whose funding is cut to continue offering the same services on a voluntary basis. By the same token, the service-led culture and the lack of paid infrastructure mean that many RMCOs find it hard to meet the requirements of funders, a catch-22 situation from a capacity building perspective, (and this is why the free specialist and unique infrastructure support provided by Evelyn Oldfield is so vital).

In the work they do, however, RMCOs can be highly effective. Their workers, paid or voluntary, develop skills and knowledge in a range of subject areas – immigration, housing, social security, healthcare, and education. They deliver services not only in the mother tongue of their service users – something that statutory services find difficult - but in ways that are culturally accessible: sometimes doing without appointment systems, for example, or subject specialisms that require a 'case' to be handled piecemeal by several services. At their best, RMCOs are subtle and skilled generalists, negotiating between the cultures of the mainstream and the community, interpreting expectations and assumptions, and starting an evolving flow of communication between the individual and the host society.

In addition, some RMCOs have already diversified to meet needs beyond their own community. Latin American groups with Portuguese-speaking staff may extend their services to Angolans; some women's organisations serve people from adjacent countries; employment projects have been opened to all comers, from whatever background; and some single-ethnicity services have simply widened to assist any refugees.

Numerous studies have found that RMCOs face barriers to obtaining funding, including: poor quality applications (due in part to language barriers), perceived duplication of services, and poorly established or lack of financial management and governance structures.

This is unfortunate as in recent years RMCOs have been acknowledged for their work by government bodies, including the Home Office, who in their 2004 paper, cites the 'enormously valuable work of RMCOs' which 'build links between refugees and the wider community'.

1.5 Changes to Economic and Political Context

The United Kingdom is in the midst, and experiencing the effects of a major worldwide economic recession. The impact this is having on all communities across the United Kingdom is significant and ranges from notable increases in unemployment, through to falls in housing prices, and shortages in the availability of private sector and personal borrowing.

Since April there has also been a new UK coalition government committed to tackling the United Kingdom's high budget deficit, primarily through cost reduction measures. This new government also contains a high number of new MPs, some 230, who are fresh to Parliament.

The new coalition is primarily working to an overall policy outline called the "Big Society", which is however still being defined. At its core, the Big Society is a stated attempt to connect civic institutions that lie between the individual and the state. It is born out of a belief that the UK's centralised state has become too big, too bureaucratic and too distant to support many of those most in need of help. In political terms this means passing power to the lowest levels and radical public service reform. Its proponents argue that it does not matter who delivers a public service, only that the best public service is delivered. Central to this belief is 'localism', i.e. that individuals at a local level will be prepared to engage more fully than previously, in return for perceived greater control over local service delivery.

Critics of the BIG Society identify this outline as a partial return to Victorian philanthropy, and highlight that given the high number of existing UK volunteers in many areas including charity, social enterprise, education (governors and PTAs) etc , there is a question mark regarding the volume of additional volunteering capacity that could be generated. Critics also argue that localism removes effective central regulation, adversely affects quality and means the loss of economies of scale from which larger entities benefit.

Whatever its merits or demerits, the "Big Society" will be accompanied by reported UK departmental expenditure cuts of between 20 to 40% (although front line health delivery will be protected). Measures already announced include caps on housing benefit, new financial eligibility barriers for child benefit, reassessments of ability to work, pressure on public sector pay settlements and public sector pay and pensions reviews.

Whilst competitive commissioning structures and some larger VCS funding streams had already increasingly favoured mainstream, larger agencies with higher levels of infrastructure; many local authorities have already been pre-emptively reducing their budgets, with voluntary sector grants programmes being some of the first casualties; and London Councils joint funding seems likely to disaggregate/close, which is likely to make cross borough operations for RMCOs more difficult,

From a positive RMCO perspective however, the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government are currently working on an overall review of the UK's immigration system, and have already announced that children will no longer be detained for immigration purposes⁵. This is a very positive and important step for those in the Refugee and Migrant Sector who have been campaigning tirelessly for policy change on this issue.

⁵ End Child Detention Now, <http://ecdnow.org/> (accessed 9/7/2010)

RMCOs will however also need to take into consideration the impact that the current economic and political climate will have on public perception on issues around migration. According to a report written by the Centre for Migration Policy Research at Swansea University⁶, there is evidence of increasingly negative public attitudes towards asylum and immigration not just in the UK, but also at European level. Evidence suggests that there is a clear correlation between political discourse and negative attitudes towards asylum issues. There also appears to be a relationship between negative media coverage of asylum and immigration issues and an increase in government statements and proclamations on the subject. The manifestation of such attitudes is clearly problematic for asylum seekers and refugees, who may, as a result experience rising levels of hostility.

Finally, October 2010 saw the implementation of the Equalities Act 2010, which provides a new cross-cutting legislative framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all; to update, simplify and strengthen the previous legislation; and to deliver a simple, modern and accessible framework of discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society. RMCOs and support and development agencies will need to consider how they can best make use of this legislation, for example in campaigning work, and in relation to requesting frequent Equality Impact Assessments by statutory agencies.

⁶ Crawley H., 2009, *Understanding and Changing Public Attitudes, A Review of existing evidence from public information and communication campaigns*, Centre for Migration Policy Research, Swansea University

1.6 Summary of Survey, Interview and Conference Findings

1.6.1 Funding & Service Delivery Challenges

At the Annual Evelyn Oldfield State of the Sector Conference there was a general impression that under the BIG Society, state funding will more often than not be reserved for those organisations which can deliver services previously delivered by the state.

It was also noted that in an economic recession it is potentially the most vulnerable who may suffer the most: as one attendee cited, “when two elephants fight, it’s the grass that suffers”.

From the survey, of RMCO organisations, 71% of organisations stated that they had seen an increase in service users over the previous 12 months. A majority who answered the question in relation to organisational income, also recorded an increase in income. There seems to be a correlation between increase in income and increase in the number of service users, and this was the explicit reason given by most respondents when asked why numbers of service users they had supported had increased.

Similarly, for the 29% of organisations who reported a reduction in service users year on year, the key reasons given were reductions in funding, and also that some users were in hiding due to fear of deportation due to uncertainty regarding immigration policy.

With a growing emphasis within voluntary sector funding streams on promoting social cohesion and encouraging service users to integrate, and a broad policy agenda that is partially revisiting the division between specialised and generalist services, it may be the case that RMCOs will have to both specialise and diversify: i.e. specialise in relation to delivering those services which are they genuinely best placed and skilled to deliver, whilst signposting other needs to other better placed agencies and/or partners; and diversify in terms of developing broader ranges of income streams that are not so reliant on the public sector.

In comparison to other voluntary sector service providers, RMCOs are under funded and reliant on Local Authority and charitable trust grant aid. This is partly due to the paucity of specific RMC funding streams, and partly due to insufficient infrastructure and skills within RMCOs to enable them to access broader funding streams, which is why the Evelyn Oldfield Unit’s support is so vital in this area. The lack of funding however continues to mean that there are considerable unmet needs within RMCO communities, and that much more could be achieved with increased funding for both RMCOs and for those infrastructure agencies which support RMCO organisational development.

Competition for grant funds is however increasing every year, and the availability of suitable funding sources has according to the groups diminished. Certainly the coalition government has already announced that certain VCS funding streams such as the Grassroots Programme will not be renewed, and it seems likely that other VCS funding streams will be adversely affected by the imminent Government Spending Review.

In addition there is a growing expectation that any funding provided will also need to be more professionally managed to avoid a repeat of the recent events which led to the legal organisation *Refugee and Migrant Justice* going into administration.⁷

What is however also clear from analysing the responses from our survey, is that there is a genuine fear amongst RMCOs that new government agendas will bring funding instability to the sector. When asked about the perceived effects the change in government may have on RMCOs, most respondents cited that they anticipate a reduction in funds in the next period.

It is also likely that some key local authority posts in relation to social cohesion, race equality and community development will face deletion under local spending reductions, placing further pressure on RMCOs to fill the service gaps.

1.6.2 Other Capacity Challenges

Apart from funding, the two other most frequent challenges cited by survey and interview respondents were around staffing and premises.

Some 22% of survey respondents operate with volunteers only, and 26% with over 5 full time members of staff. Nearly half of respondents (48%) report having between 1 to 5 members of full time staff. Clearly RMCOs tend to be small organisations mainly volunteer led with a small number of staff. From a capacity building perspective, their small size means that they have limited infrastructure and require support in a wide range of capacity building areas (governance, finance, fundraising, IT, human resources, management etc) and also that the support needed is likely to be ongoing rather than time limited.

The most common training need identified by RMCOs is, (rather unsurprisingly given the current economic climate) fundraising. The next two most common needs are advocacy support, and research/evaluation and dissemination. It may be that these three areas are interlinked, for example, RMCOs may be well aware that effective evaluation and outcomes measurement are becoming ever more key to securing funding.

Other challenges cited by RMCOs included:

1. Exclusion from the broader voluntary sector
2. Difficulty in Identifying appropriate organisations for partnership working
3. “Burn out” of dedicated staff in the face of new challenges, and/or ageing
4. Public perception of issues around migration and asylum

1.6.3 Public Policy Changes

It is clear that there will be significant changes in public policy, particularly in relation to health, social care and education under the coalition government.

⁷ RMJ website, *Refugee and Migrant Justice Goes into Administration*, <http://refugee-migrant-justice.org.uk/downloads/15-06-10%20administration%20FINAL.pdf> (accessed 13/7/2010)

Our survey took the pre-existing policy example of Personalisation as an indicator of RMCO respondents approach to major policy change. Some 19% of survey respondents recorded that the introduction of personalisation has already had an effect on their work with refugees. 35% of respondents reported that it had had no effect, whilst the largest majority, 46% skipped this question in the survey, possibly because they are not aware of or not yet affected by this major agenda.

The potential paradigm shift particularly in the way that health and social care services are commissioned and budgeted, not just under Personalisation, but soon also under GP Commissioning, will have a major effect on existing funding streams for all voluntary sector service providers, including RMCOs. Infrastructure support agencies will therefore need to position themselves to be able to provide support to RMCOs in addressing these agenda.

However a wider challenge in relation to RMCO capacity building, is for infrastructure agencies to consider how to provide support to groups in addressing any and many new policies agendas and strategies that will shortly be being implemented by the coalition government.

1.6.4 Partnership and Joint Campaigning

RMCO survey respondents were often able to name organisations that they actively signposted and referred people to, and were also able to classify them according to their service provision. This evidence suggests that RMCOs are maintaining valuable levels of partnership working, and keeping the interests of their client group at the core of what they do.

However the State of the Sector Conference held in June 2010, highlighted that in the opinion of small organisations they are amongst the most vulnerable in terms of VCS infrastructure and in an economic downturn are therefore likely to suffer the most, and many may face closure. One speaker stated “there will be a fight, we need to be united”, noting an increasingly urgent need for more partnership working, and implying an imminent political battle.

The collaborative sentiment was reflected by survey respondents who articulated that if small organisations are to survive in the new political arena, they will have to be “successful in working in partnership”.

There was clear recognition amongst conference attendees that there exists some duplication in RMCO services across the UK. Consequently it was agreed at the Conference that RMCOs need specialist support, help and training with partnerships and collaborative working, and that infrastructure agencies can help groups to identify their Unique Selling/Service Points for partnership purposes.

On a broader level however it was also noted that there is a need for a wider sectoral campaign in relation to the ‘right to work’ for refugees and migrants, wherein the economic arguments and benefits for promoting and facilitating employment in terms of for example tax revenue, and social cohesion were likely to be more successful with Government than a purely moral case based on protecting benefits and the importance of human rights.

Many small organisations, both RMCO and generic VCS, struggle to engage in influencing for change activity. In addition to the 'right to work' campaign, we suggest that there is also great potential benefit from more collaborative working and campaigning to influence and translate many other existing and emerging policy agendas, including Equality Impact Assessments under the Equalities Act 2010; the Refugee and Migrant Sector could operate more effectively with unified voices to campaign actively for policy change around asylum and other issues relating to migration, as well as enhanced, or at least sustained funding levels.

1.7 Priorities for the Refugee and Migrant Sector and for Infrastructure Agencies

There is clear overlap in the issues discussed above, and those highlighted in *Refugee and Migrant Community Organisations in 2009*, indicating that the broad and specific support needs for refugees and migrant communities has not changed greatly in the last 12 months. It is possible however to argue that the rate of policy change under a new Government is likely to be greatest at the beginning of its tenure, and takes in tandem with budget reduction strategy, means that over the next 12-18 months we will be living in 'interesting times', which may result in a smaller network of RMCOs than at present..

From the economic and political background, and from the Annual State of the Sector Conference and from our surveys and interviews with RMCOs we can identify a number of priorities for Refugee and Migrant Sector organisations, and for those agencies which support them:

Diversifying funding/specialising services: RMCOs will need to diversify their funding base if they are to remain serious competitors for funding, including wider use of unrestricted funding sources such as social enterprise. They may also need to specialise their services to focus on those core activities in which they are most effective. This also applies to RMCO support and development agencies: the fact that RMCOs are predominantly small means that they have elemental and ongoing support needs, and specialist infrastructure support agencies may need to signpost more to generic infrastructure agencies such as CVSS for generic and standardised support packages.

Increasing partnership working: In tandem with diversifying funding and specialising services, RMCOs will need to think more strategically about collaborative and partnership working, in order to maximise their resources in an environment with diminishing availability of funds. This may include increased use of 'federations' or collaborative working with larger organisations, for example such as the Refugee Council considering taking the lead on joint bidding efforts; but also greater partnership with generic VCS organisations. The use of tools for collaborative working, such as those published by national infrastructure agencies such as NCVO's Collaborative Working Unit could be useful in this endeavour.

Undertaking research: RMCOs need to be able to identify their Unique Selling/Service Points, and evidence them thorough research. Internal research and development projects could therefore be vital in the strategic planning of RMCOs. Identifying needs, reviewing current development work, and using research to inform business and strategic planning will be crucial in clarifying and championing demand for services, and securing funds.

Improving advocacy capacity: The Sector ideally needs, when appropriate, to speak with a unified voice to be taken seriously by key policy and decision makers, and ultimately to effect policy change. The recent policy change regarding detention of children is a momentous success story for campaigners who worked tirelessly to this end. Important areas for future lobbying include the Right to Work campaign, and continuing to think creatively in regard to social cohesion and integration. RMCOs need to engage in writing and executing advocacy plans, in collaboration with other RMCOs, if they are to make large and sustainable changes for refugees and asylum seekers in the UK.

2. Survey Responses and Analysis

This section reports and analyses responses received from a paper and online survey conducted in June 2010. The State of the Sector survey asked questions which can broadly be grouped into three sub- sections:

- i. Changes in Service Levels and Client Needs
- ii. Organisational capacity, including funding and human resources
- iii. Impact of the current political and economic environment on the future of RMCOs

2.1 Changes in Service Levels and Client Needs

This section of analysis draws on responses from the following questions in the survey:

Q2: Are you providing services to either more or less people than last year?

Q3: Can you briefly explain the main reasons for the increase or decrease in service users?

Q4: Who most uses your services?

Q5: What services do you provide?

Q6: What are the main issues that people seek help for from your organisation?

In total, 71% of respondents stated that they have had an increase in service users, as compared to 2009, illustrated in Figure 1 overleaf.

However notably 29% have reported a decrease in service users. Last year's report: *Refugee and Migrant Community Organisations in 2009*⁸ reported that 0% of RMCOs saw less people than 2008.

The reasons for this decrease were sought in question 3 of the survey, and responses include a reduction in capacity due to human and financial resources. Interestingly, some organisations reported an increase in voluntary returns to A10 countries, thus reducing the actual number of potential users. More concerning than this, is the reporting of certain groups of asylum seekers who have gone into hiding due to fear of deportation as a result of changes in political statuses in their countries of origin.

Conversely, the 71% of respondents who reported an increase in service users cited an increase in funding, and thus organisational capacity to increase service user base. In addition, the diversification of type of service provision, increased outreach work, higher organisational profile and reputation, and increased partnership working have all been listed as potential reasons for the observed increase of service users.

⁸ Valentine R., 2009, State of the Sector 2009

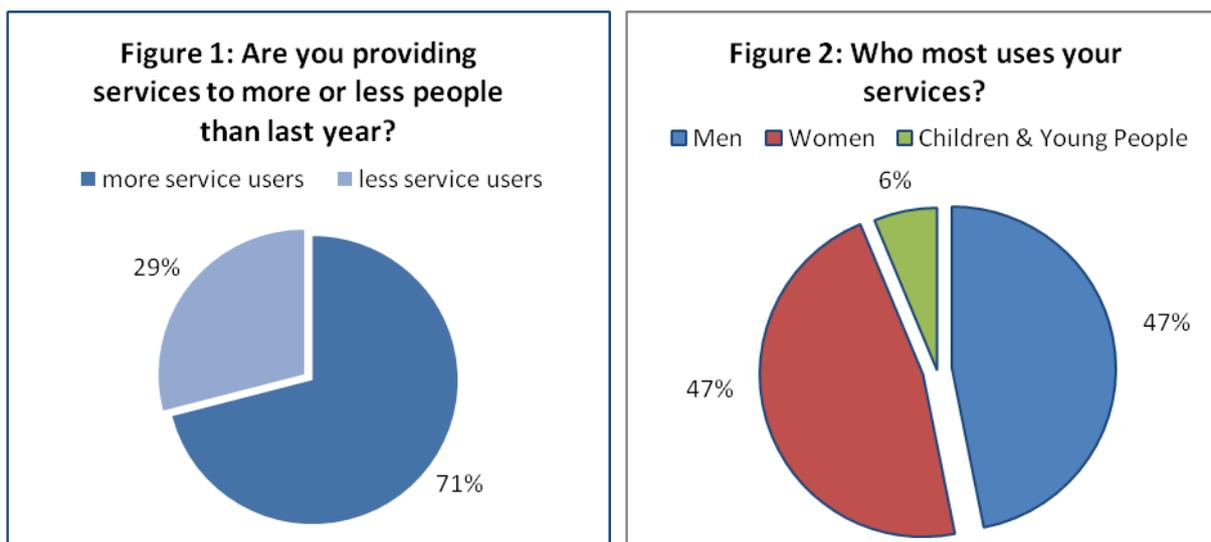
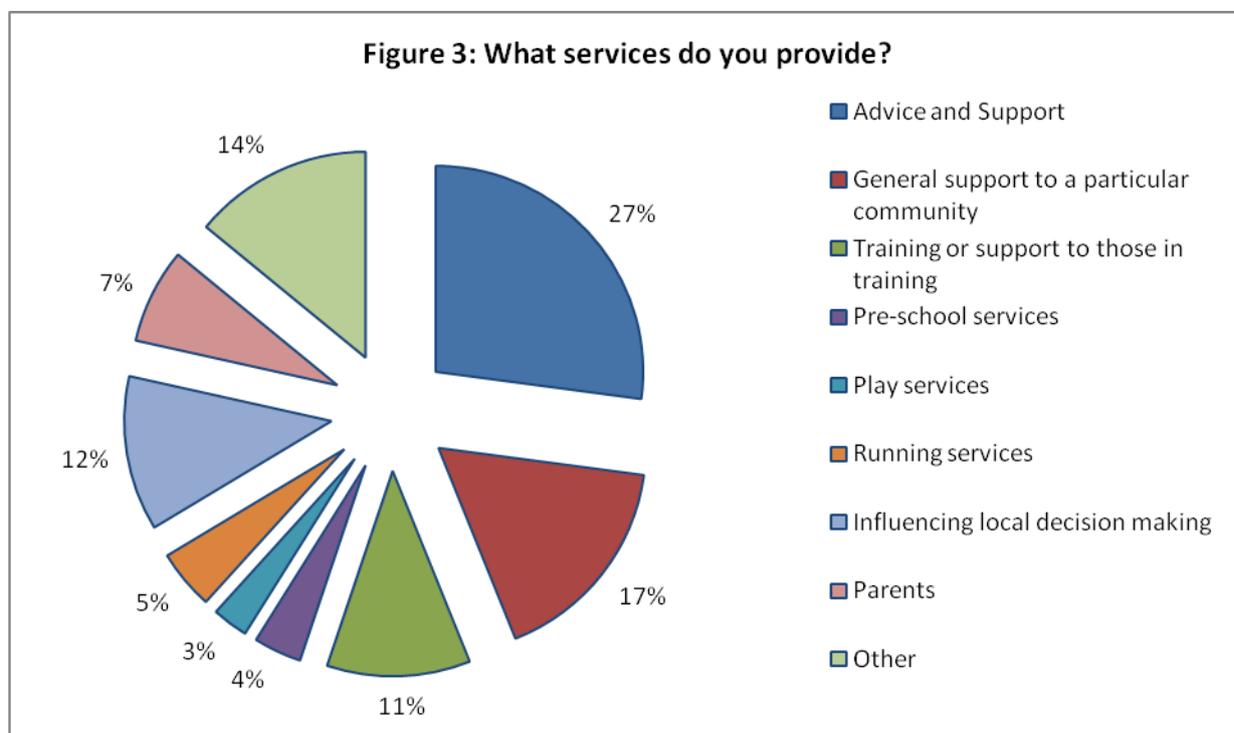


Figure 2 above indicates that the service users of RMCOs are evenly split between men and women, with 47% of organisations reporting that mostly men use their services and the same for women. Only 6%, however, report that children and young people are the main service users.

In looking at Figure 3, however, it is interesting to note that the combination of services delivered by RMCO respondents, that are children-centred (play services, pre-school services, parents) numbers some 14%. Clearly a significant amount of the services provided focus on advice and support to users, but it is also significant to note that 17% of RMCOs reported the provision of support to one particular community.



With a growing emphasis within voluntary sector funding streams on promoting social cohesion and encouraging service users to integrate, and a broad policy agenda that is moving from specialised to generalist services, it may be the case that RMCOs who deliver highly specialised services to single communities will be forced to diversify and generalise or see their income significantly reduced.

A significant number of RMCO respondents have also recorded that people still seek help with basic and very practical issues such as form filling for state benefit purposes and employment, as well as navigation of the education, health and housing systems in the UK.

There is clear overlap in the issues discussed above, and those highlighted in *Refugee and Migrant Community Organisations in 2009*, indicating that the broad and specific support needs for refugees and migrant communities has not changed significantly in the last 12 months.

2.2 Organisational capacity, including funding and human resources

This section of analysis draws on responses from the following questions in the survey:

Q8: What is the total income of your organisation this year (2010), and what was it last year?

Q9: How many paid staff and volunteers does your organisation have?

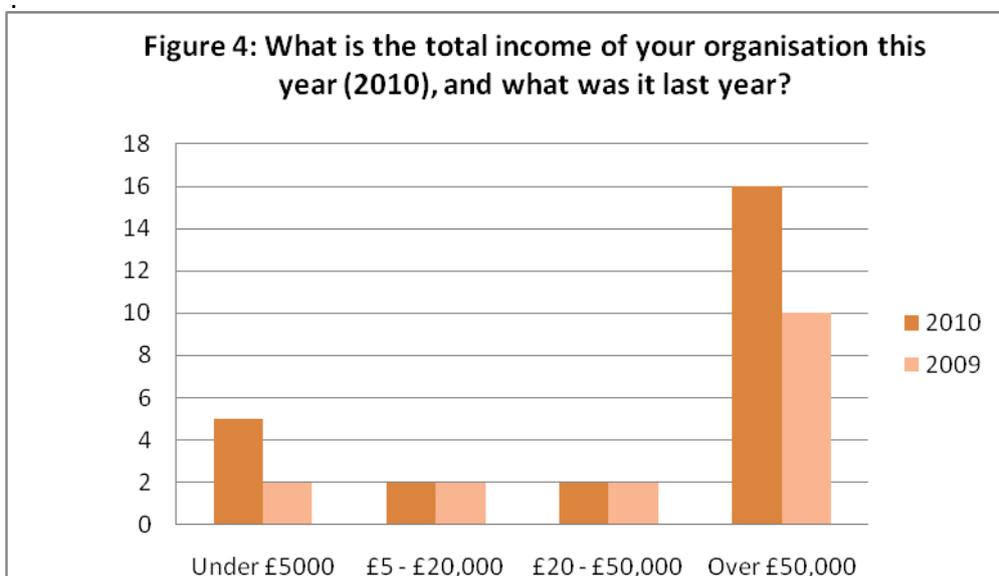
Q10: Is this either more or less than last year?

Q11: What specific training could your organisation receive to provide better services for the people you support?

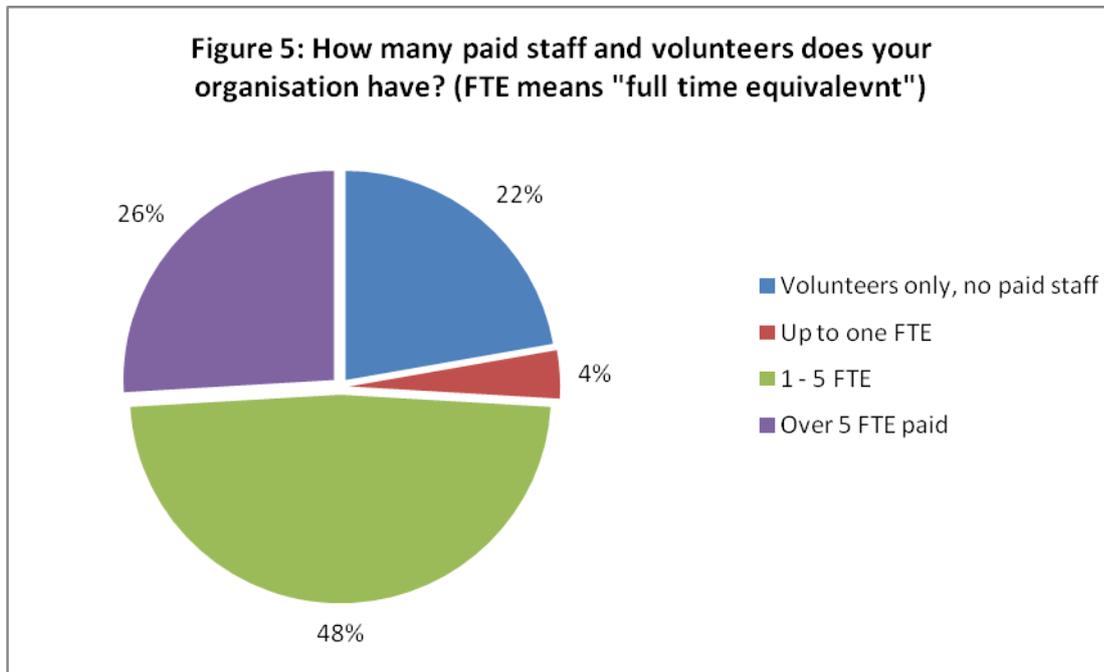
Q12: Which other organisations does your organisation refer or signpost people to, and for what specific services?

In comparison to other voluntary sector service providers, RMCOs are under funded. This is partly due to the paucity of specific funding streams and partly due to insufficient infrastructure and skills within RMCOs to enable them to access broader funding streams, which is why the Evelyn Oldfield Unit's support is so vital in this area. The lack of funding however continues to mean that there are considerable unmet needs within RMCO communities, and that much more could be achieved with increased funding.

In our survey, we therefore asked respondents to report whether their funding had increased or decreased since 2009. Figure 4 below illustrates the total income of RMCOs in 2010, compared to 2009. The data suggests that RMCOs funding has actually increased since last year, with 6 more organisations earning over £50,000, as compared to last year, (although we fully acknowledge the limited sample size).



Competition for funds has however also increased, and the availability of suitable funding sources has according to the groups diminished. Certainly the coalition government has already announced that certain VCS funding streams such as the Grassroots Programme will not be renewed, and it seems likely that other VCS funding streams will be adversely affected by the imminent Government Spending Review.



In terms of human resource capacity, we asked RMCOs to report on how many paid staff and volunteers they had, and also if this capacity had changed since 2009. In total, 72% of respondents reported an increase in staff, whilst 28% reported a reduction. (This is evidently related to the previous figures showing increase and decreases in year on year income above).

Figure 5 shows that 22% of respondents operate with volunteers only, 4% with 1 full time member of staff, and 26% with over 5 full time members of staff. Nearly half of respondents (48%) report having between 1 to 5 members of full time staff. Clearly RMCOs tend to be small organisations mainly volunteer led with a small number of staff. From a capacity building perspective, their small size means that they have limited infrastructure and require support in a wide range of capacity building areas (governance, finance, fundraising, IT, human resources, management etc) and also that the support needed is likely to be ongoing rather than time limited.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the capacity of RMCOs, we were keen to ascertain which specific areas RMCOs themselves felt they had organisational skills or knowledge gaps. Figure 6 illustrates the training needs of RMCOs, which are fairly equally distributed across a range of needs including: fundraising, finance, governance and management, strategic and business planning, partnership development and networking, advocacy support, immigration advice, and research, evaluation and dissemination. The most common training need identified by RMCOs is, rather unsurprisingly given the current climate, fundraising.. The next two most common needs are advocacy support, and research/evaluation and dissemination. It may be that these three areas are interlinked, for example, RMCOs may be well aware that effective evaluation and outcomes measurement are becoming ever more key to securing funding.

Although not a segmented survey question, we are aware from discussions with some of the groups that support with advocacy incorporates not just providing individual advocacy for client but also broader issue advocacy and the ability to campaign on and influence policy agendas. We note that in the current economic climate, the Refugee and Migrant Sector would do well to work with unified voices to campaign actively for policy change around asylum and other issues relating to migration, as well as enhanced, or at least sustained funding levels.



In terms of service capacity, clearly organisations that cannot provide a client with the service required or lack the capacity to do so, need to have the ability to refer and signpost appropriately⁹. However undertaking this effectively also requires a modicum organisational infrastructure/capacity, in addition to soft skills such as sensitivity, ability to listen and understanding. When asked about this capacity in our online survey, RMCO respondents were often able to name organisations that they actively signposted and referred people to, but were also able to classify them according to their service provision.

⁹ OISC, *Guidance Notes on Referring and Signposting*, March 2006

The organisations identified as referral partners in the survey are diverse, and include:

Statutory organisations: local authorities, Primary Care Trusts, Job Centres, local drug action teams

RMCO infrastructure organisations: Evelyn Oldfield Unit, Refugee Council, Asylum Aid, Praxis

Population specific organisations: Tamil Welfare Newham, East European Advice Centre, as well as a range of country consulates and embassies

Other mainstream organisations: Age Concern, Red Cross, Women's Aid

This list captures only a fraction of the organisations identified by RMCOs in the survey, but gives an idea of the scope of networking. This evidence strongly suggests that RMCOs are maintaining valuable levels of partnership working, and keeping the interests of their client group at the core of what they do.

2.3 Impact of the Current Political and Economic Environment on the future of RMCOs

This section of analysis draws on responses from the following questions in the survey:

Q13: What effect do you think the recent change in government may have on your organisation or the Refugee and Migrant Sector as a whole?

Q14: Has the introduction of “personalised individual budgets” affected your funding and work with refugees?

Q15: What are the three biggest current challenges for your organisation?

2.3.1 Sectoral Changes

Respondents cited a number of possible changes here including that the new government would restrict the possibilities of funding for Central and Eastern European nationals. This respondent also reported that their Local authority “are starting to issue removal notices (administrative removal) to rough sleepers from A10 countries and we anticipate this will increase.”

Another perceived that there was a hypersensitivity in political spheres towards appearing to support minorities instead of other 'ignored majorities', which has affected RCOs with reduced funding and other support..

Changes in funding were top of the agenda, and several respondents noted loss of the Migrant Impacts Fund grants, and how the national UK deficit is going to be tackled.

Comments were also made in relation to RMJ going into administration as a result of Legal Aid problems and the perceived decision by the new government not to assist it, and perceptions that obtaining Legal aid will become harder.

2.3.2 Personalised individual budgets

Personalisation is marketed as being the future “cornerstone of public services...every person who receives support will have choice and control over the shape of that support in all care settings”.¹⁰ At the core of personalisation is the direct payment and individual budgets for each client.

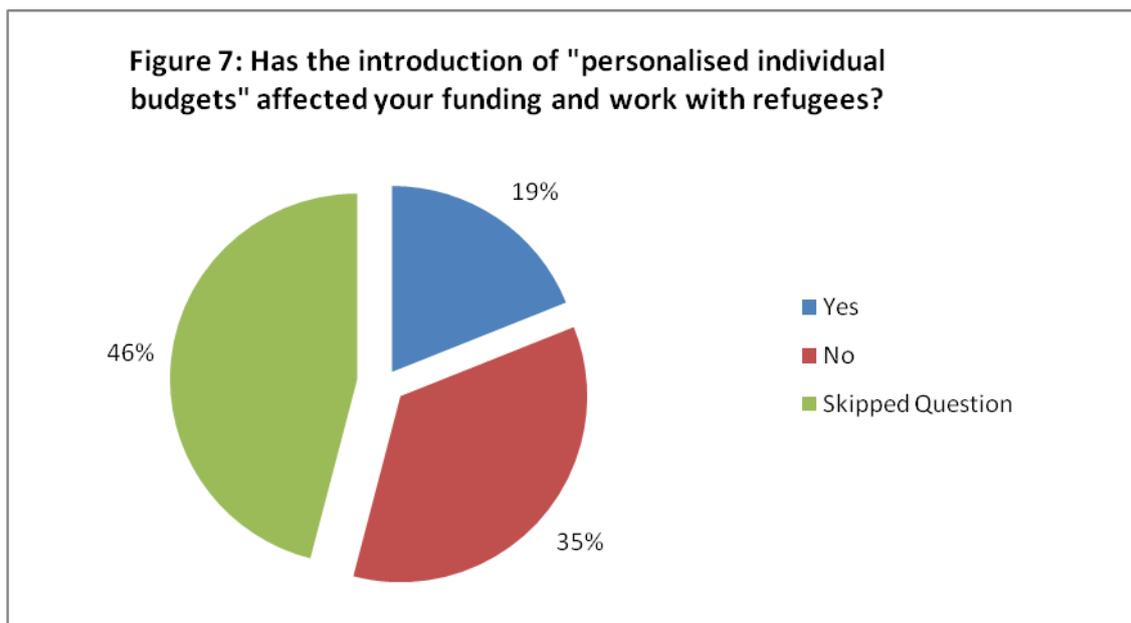
Under section 47 of the National Health Service and Community Care Act (1990) refugees are able to request a community care assessment by the social services department of their local authority.¹¹

¹⁰ Department of Health website, *An Introduction to Personalisation*
http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/SocialCare/Socialcarereform/Personalisation/DH_080573

Under the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act, asylum seekers are not entitled to welfare benefits. If, however, a person who is seeking asylum can demonstrate that they require services for something that is caused other than the lack of accommodation and financial support, they may request a community care assessment from their local authority. If found to be destitute, it can be seen as the local authority's responsibility to accommodate and support the person seeking asylum. If a person is in need for care and attention to the extent that they require a carer, this falls under the responsibility of the UKBA. This is, however, a point of contention, within which local authorities and UKBA often dispute whose responsibility specific cases fall. Local authorities have until 2012 to fully implement the personalisation agenda.

The ramifications of personalisation on RMCOs are still somewhat unclear. Having said that, 19% of respondents reported that the introduction of personalisation has already had an effect on their work with refugees. 35% of respondents have not recorded any effect, whilst the large majority, 46% skipped this question in the survey, possibly because they are not aware of this as a major agenda.

However the potential paradigm shift in the way that health and social care services are commissioned and budgeted will have a major effect on existing funding streams for all voluntary sector service providers including RMCOs, and so infrastructure support agencies will need to position themselves to be able to provide support in addressing this agenda.



¹¹ Refugee Support website, *Supporting disabled refugees and asylum seekers: opportunities for new approaches* http://www.refugeesupport.org.uk/documents/MST_RCU_DisabilityFullReport_1108.pdf

2.3.3 Organisational Challenges

In terms of the main organisation challenges, these fell into a number of major themes.

Firstly, there was a focus on the challenge of meeting the needs of service users, including those with no recourse to public funds.

Again funding, and sustainability was a key issue, including the question of how to meet service demand with limited capacity, and a perceived lack of funding available for core activities, so that all work is project funded.

Internal capacity was a key theme, which included reference to challenges with premises and lack of office space, and a lack of staffing and the inability to pay adequate salaries. Challenges here also included the difficulties in sustaining volunteer motivation in the long term.

The importance of addressing partnership working was also an important topic, although one respondent noted a feeling of exclusion from the mainstream voluntary sector, and another rather poignantly noted a “lack of friends”.

Several respondents noted the difficulties in meeting funders new targets, and anticipated further difficulties in re-designing services to support new Government policies, strategies and agendas across particularly health and social care. Linked to this was a comment that there was a lack of funding available for research work not carried out by a university or other academic institutions.

Several respondents also identified gender challenges, including the difficulties in gaining funder understanding of the need (and funding) for women -specific /only services.

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APPENDIX 1

Evelyn Oldfield Unit online and print questionnaire

1. Essential contact details
 - a. Organisation Name
 - b. Contact Name
 - c. Position
 - d. Postcode
 - e. Email

2. Are you providing services to either more or less people than last year?
 - a. More service users than last year
 - b. Less service users than last year

3. Can you briefly explain the main reasons for the increase or decrease in service users?

4. Who most uses your services?
 - a. Men
 - b. Women
 - c. Children and Young People

5. What services do you provide?
 - a. Advice and Support
 - b. General support to a particular community
 - c. Training or support to those in training
 - d. Pre – school services
 - e. Play services
 - f. Running services
 - g. Influencing local decision making
 - h. Parents
 - i. Other

6. What are the main issues that people seek help for from your organisation?

7. How have these issues changed from last year?

8. What is the total income of your organisation this year (2010) and what was it last year (2009)?

9. How many paid staff and volunteers does your organisation have? (FTE means “full time equivalent”)

10. Is this either more or less than last year?
11. What specific training could your organisation receive to provide better services for the people you support?
 - a. Fundraising
 - b. Finance
 - c. Governance and Management
 - d. Strategic and Business Planning
 - e. Partnership Development and networking
 - f. Advocacy support (campaigning/lobbying/policy work)
 - g. Immigration advice
 - h. Research, evaluation and information dissemination
 - i. Other
12. Which other organisations does your organisation refer or signpost people to, and for what specific services?
13. What effect do you think the recent change in Government may have on your organisation or the Refugee and Migrant Sector as a whole?
14. Has the introduction of “personalised individual budgets” affected your funding and work with refugees?
15. What are the three biggest current challenges for your organisation?
16. Please feel free to make any comments below regarding this survey.

APPENDIX 2

About Peach Consultancy

Peach Consultancy's work has two closely-linked strands:

We provide strategic management support, business planning, organisational development, capacity building, fundraising, training, programme development, partnership building, contracting and research & evaluation services directly for Voluntary and Community Organisations. We work in almost every area of the voluntary sector including areas such as children's services, adult services, health and social care, regeneration, trading and enterprise, community safety and cohesion.

We work in partnership with statutory and representative bodies including Local and Health Authorities, Primary Care Trusts, CVAs and national umbrella groups to establish, support, develop, monitor and evaluate voluntary and community programmes and partnerships. We focus on issues such as service planning and commissioning, capacity and organisational development, community and voluntary and community sector engagement, and effective governance and performance monitoring.

Peach Consultancy is quality assured under the **ISO 9001** international quality assurance mark.

Peach Consultancy has extensive experience of delivering multi-faceted, complex research and evaluation projects to tight deadlines. Peach Consultancy is a member of **ARVAC**, the voluntary sector research association, and **LARIA**, the local authority research association.

In addition Peach Consultancy currently deliver prescribed capacity building and organisational development support for voluntary and community sector organisations through approved consultancy work for organisations such as the Adventure Capital Fund, ACEVO, Community Development Foundation, NAVCA, Rape Crisis England, and the Evelyn Oldfield Unit; including extensive experience of brokering, establishing and supporting collaborative working within the voluntary and community sectors; and previous approved investment and healthcheck consultancy work with Futurebuilders and the Charities Aid Foundation.