

Sanctuary in Scotland

**Information on refugee issues
for faith groups in Scotland**





“In June 2016 it was estimated that 65.3 million required some kind of humanitarian protection.”

The number of people globally who have been forced to leave their homes because of conflict or human rights abuses has reached alarming levels – according to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in June 2016 it was estimated that 65.3 million people required some kind of humanitarian protection.

Increasing numbers of refugees are now coming to Scotland, and for the first time in a generation, refugee communities are being resettled across the nation, from the central belt to the highlands and islands, in cities, towns and villages. The response of local communities, of local authorities, of the Scottish Government and of Scotland’s faith groups has been positive, but many people want to know more about the situation; why are there refugees coming here now, and what can we do to help people, at home and overseas.

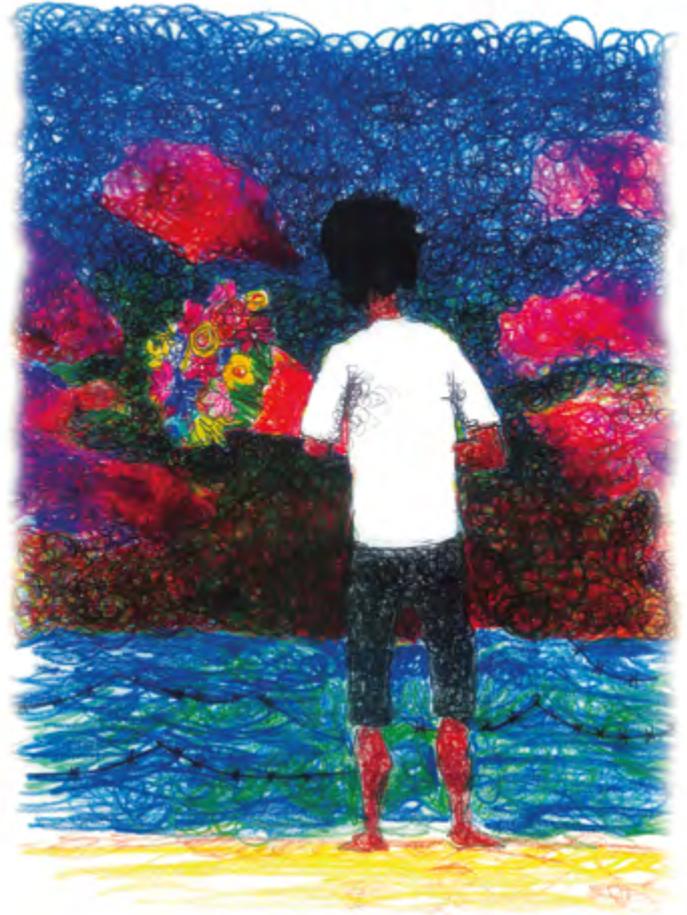
In November 2015 the Church of Scotland established a refugee co-ordination project. From the outset the Church sought advice from Scotland’s churches and religious communities, the result being a project called Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees. We bring together Christian, Muslim, Jewish and Interfaith organisations who share a commitment to working together, across barriers of religion, race, nationality and culture, for the common good.

The decision by the UK to leave the EU in June 2016 has created political and economic uncertainty; during such times often the stranger and the immigrant can suffer or be victimised. The role of diverse faith and cultural groups in working together for positive community cohesion is especially important at this time.

definition

Christians, Muslims, Jews and people of all different religions recognise and respect the importance that every human person is special, that life is precious, and that there is a common duty to uphold and promote human dignity.

And so it is always with caution that we should apply labels or attempt to define people, especially when it is increasingly that often the term 'asylum seeker' or 'migrant' carries a negative or pejorative connotation. The media, politicians and many people will also use terms like 'migrant', 'immigrant' or 'refugee' fairly interchangeably, which can also make it confusing. It is important to set out some of the UK legal definitions involved in working with refugees at the start, as understanding these is necessary to understand the particular circumstances and potential needs of people you might meet or work with.



Asylum seeker

- flees their homeland
- arrives in another country , whichever way they can
- makes themselves known to the authorities
- submits an asylum application
- has a legal right to stay in the country while awaiting a decision

Refugee

- has proven to the authorities that they would be at risk if returned to their home country
- has had their claim for asylum accepted by the government or has been brought over by the government from overseas
- can now stay either long-term or indefinitely

Internally displaced person

- has been forced to leave their home
- remains within their own country (have not crossed an international border)
- can have the same humanitarian needs as refugees who have fled to another country

Refused asylum seeker

- has been unable to prove that they would face persecution back home
- has been denied protection by the authorities
- must now leave the country, unless they wish to appeal the decision or there are legitimate reasons why they cannot yet return home
- In the UK, they have no right to accommodation, welfare or employment; destitution can often mean homelessness and relying on charities for support.

Economic migrant

- has moved to another country to work
- could be legally or illegally resident, depending on how they entered the country
- may or may not have a legal work permit

Find out more

British Red Cross
[redcross.org.uk](https://www.redcross.org.uk)

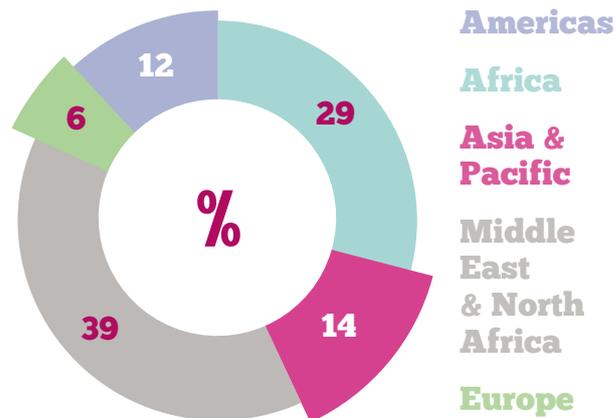
Scottish Refugee Council
[scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk)

statistics



Statistics from [unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html](https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html)

Where the world's displaced people are being hosted



Global migration

In 2013, globally, 232 million people migrated. This figure represents about 3.2 per cent of the world population. According to the BBC: 'Over the past 15 years, the number of people crossing borders in search of a better life has been rising steadily. At the start of the twenty-first century, one in every 35 people is an international migrant.'

Forced displacement

The number of people worldwide who have been forcibly displaced due to conflict or persecution is 65.3 million. This figure includes 44.0 million people who were forcibly displaced within their own country (known as internally displaced people, IDPs). (UNHCR, 2016)

Displacement due to climate change

At the 13th Economic Forum in Prague in May 2005, Prof Norman Myers of Oxford University said: 'When global warming takes hold there could be as many as 200 million people [displaced] by disruptions of monsoon systems and other rainfall regimes, by droughts of unprecedented severity and duration, and by sea-level rise and coastal flooding.'

In the UK

- Asylum applications (excluding dependents) rose from 4,256 in 1987 to a peak of 84,132 in 2002. They stood at 32,414 in 2015.
- In 2015, 1,194 Syrians were resettled through the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme.
- Asylum applicants and their dependents comprised an estimated 7% of net migration in 2014, down from 44% in 2002.
- In 2015, 64% of asylum applications were initially refused. A majority of refused applicants lodge appeals. In 2015, 35% of appeals were allowed.
- The UK received 3% of asylum claims made in EU countries (plus Norway and Switzerland) in 2015, making it the tenth highest recipient of asylum claims.
- In 2015 the top ten nationalities for people applying for asylum in the UK are (in order of number of applicants): Eritrea, Iran, Pakistan, Sudan, Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Albania, Nigeria, Sri Lanka.

<http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/migration-to-the-uk-asylum/>

Why do people become refugees?

War

Throughout history, armed conflict has affected civilian populations. After the Second World War the devastation of Europe led to the creation of international aid agencies including Christian Aid and Oxfam. War and terrorism today are two of the main reasons why large numbers of people have to leave their homes.

Find out more

United Nations High Commission for Refugees
unhcr.org

Oxfam
oxfam.org.uk





Why do people become refugees?

Escaping persecution

Another consequence of WWII and the Holocaust was the establishment of the United Nations, the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Refugee Convention. These established the principles that no-one should suffer persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, gender, sexual orientation or disability. In parts of some countries today life is difficult for religious minorities, such as Christians in some places in Pakistan, or Muslims in Burma. Freedom of expression and criticism of the government in countries like Iran and Eritrea can also be dangerous and mean that people have to escape.

Find out more

Amnesty International UK
[amnesty.org.uk](https://www.amnesty.org.uk)

Freedom Declared
[freedomdeclared.org](https://www.freedomdeclared.org)

Why do people become refugees?

Climate change

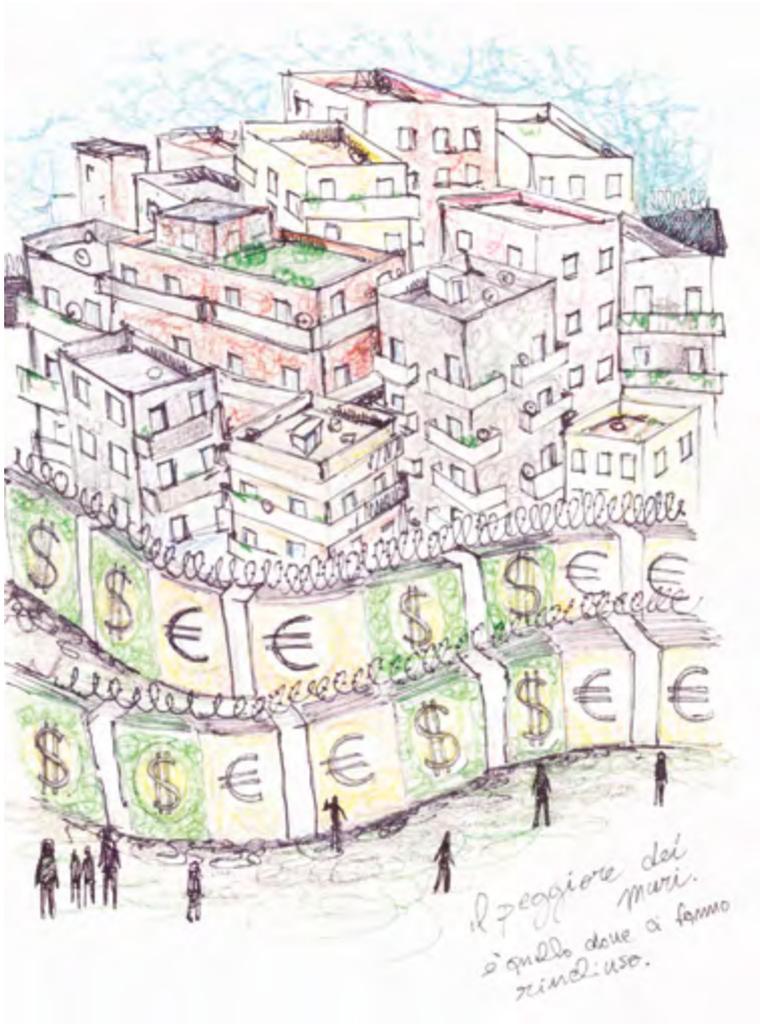
The UN Refugee Convention recognises protection from persecution, but it is becoming clear that climate refugees will increase in numbers over the coming years. Large parts of Bangladesh and a number of low-lying South Pacific island states are at severe risk of rising sea levels; what will happen to these people and cultures when their homes are destroyed? In other places droughts, floods or changing weather patterns might make continued habitation much harder. At the Paris Climate Conference in December 2015 rich nations agreed \$100bn worth of support for adaptation for climate change for poorer countries; helping the people forced to move needs to be part of this conversation.

Find out more

Friends of the Earth
foe.co.uk

Climate Refugees
climateresugees.com





Why do people become refugees?

Poverty

In some countries extreme, chronic poverty of individuals and lack of state resources for infrastructure in education and employment means that there is sometimes no choice between starvation and moving on. Remittances (money earned by people working in higher income counties sent home to families in poorer nations) can sustain families and protect whole villages from disaster. With the resources of the world so unequally distributed, it is not surprising that some people would be willing to risk everything by putting money and their lives in the hands of people traffickers to try to reach Europe or Australia in leaky boats.

Find out more

Christian Aid
christianaid.org.uk

War on Want
waronwant.org

Scotland and refugees?

In Scotland's history, the Clearances in the 19th Century are a useful reminder that we've been here before; but on that occasion it was forced migration from Scotland to many other parts of the world.

In recent years Scotland has welcomed small numbers of refugees, including from Vietnam in the 1980s and the Balkans in the 1990s. As a result of UK Government decisions, in 2000 people seeking asylum in the UK were sent to stay in different cities and towns in a policy known as 'dispersal'. In Scotland, the City of Glasgow has been the main local authority area to take part in this policy (though at the beginning of 2017 other local authorities were considering taking part). This has meant that since 2000 Glasgow has been home to significant numbers of people seeking asylum, who have come from many different countries for many different reasons. It also means that the faith groups, charities and citizens of Glasgow now have considerable experience of working with and alongside people in this situation. At the end of September 2016 there were 3,210 people seeking asylum living in Glasgow

In the last 10 years there have been an increasing number of new arrivals coming to other parts of Scotland, including:

- In 2007 80 people from the Democratic Republic of Congo to Motherwell in South Lanarkshire.
- Since 2013 five Scottish Local Authorities have agreed to participate in a scheme to resettle Afghan staff and their families who worked with the British armed forces in Afghanistan during the military action from 2001-2014.
- From 2015 onwards, Syrian refugees have been arriving in many different local authorities across the country. By September 2016 1,147 Syrians had arrived, as part of a target of 20,000 Syrian people who would be offered resettlement across the whole of the UK between 2015 and 2020.

As issues like housing, education, health, communities and culture are devolved to the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Government has established a strategy called New Scots to help host communities, as well as refugees and asylum seekers, with issues around cohesion and integration into life in Scotland.

Find out more

Scottish Government - New Scots

beta.gov.scot/policies/refugees-and-asylum-seekers

COSLA - migrationscotland.org.uk



The UK and refugees

The UK has a long history of being a place of refuge, from the French Huguenots in the 18th Century to European Jews in the 1930s. It was British lawyers and diplomats who helped frame the language of Human Rights and established the United Nations in the 20th Century.

Some of the major asylum and refugee policy areas are matters reserved to Westminster.

The UK Government is responsible for how much international aid money is spent to help humanitarian relief work overseas.

It sets targets for how many refugees will be resettled from conflict zones.

It decides on the level of support refugees receive when they are in the UK and how the asylum process is implemented, including how decisions are made, what rights people seeking asylum have, the level of their humanitarian support.

The Government is also responsible for the process by which refugees in the UK can be reunited with their family members, and for helping children who have been separated from their parents or carers to be offered a place of safety and hopefully help to be brought back together.

Find out more

UK Home Office

[gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office)

UK Department for International Development

[gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-development](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-development)



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The world and refugees

Rather than thinking about a single 'refugee crisis', the world is actually experiencing an increasing trend towards the mass forced displacement of millions of people. Some of these are driven by long-term factors, such as climate change and inequality, others by specific emergencies in individual countries or regions. There are often refugee hotspots at border crossings as people seek sanctuary and come up against bureaucratic challenges or political hostility. Here you can find links to more information about specific emergencies, and how groups are responding.

USA-Mexico Border

- **Interfaith Immigration Coalition**
interfaithimmigration.org

Colombia

- **Norwegian Refugee Council**
nrc.no/countries/south-america/colombia

Calais

- **Secours Catholique**
pasdecalais.secours-catholique.org/Our-involvement-next-to-refugees

Lampedusa

- **Mediterranean Hope**
www.mediterraneanhope.com/

Somalia

- **UNHCR Horn of Africa**
data.unhcr.org/horn-of-africa/regional.php

Greece

- **International Orthodox Christian Charities**
www.iocc.org/where-we-work/greece

Syria

- **UNHCR Syria**
unhcr.org/syria-emergency.html

Iraq

- **UNHCR Iraq**
unhcr.org/iraq-emergency.html

Central African Republic

- **UNHCR CAR**
unhcr.org/car-emergency.html

South Sudan

- **UNHCR South Sudan**
unhcr.org/south-sudan-emergency.html

Afghanistan

- **UNHCR Afghanistan**
reporting.unhcr.org/node/4505

Australia – Nauru and PNG offshore detention centres

- **Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce**
acr.t.com.au





issues for refugees and society

Food and Shelter

For refugees the lack of security and stability can make it difficult to access basic needs for bread and a bed. Sharing food, especially preparing and eating together, can be an important action of bringing people together, one which underlines our common humanity.

In Scotland, you can support refugees through helping local community food projects such as community kitchens or foodbanks. Be aware that different religious groups have different rules and restrictions on certain foods, and so check first what is needed or appropriate.

There is a significant population of refugees and asylum seekers in Glasgow. A list of projects working to meet basic needs including food projects, a night shelter for homeless asylum seekers and refugee charity Positive Action in Housing are listed by GLADAN – Glasgow Asylum Destitution Action Network.

- **GLADAN**
destitutionaction.wordpress.com

The situation in Calais has been high profile since the summer of 2015; UK charity Care4Calais supports work with refugees in the camps including providing food and distributing other aid.

- **Care4Calais**
care4calais.org

Health

In Scotland, everyone is still offered universal healthcare provision regardless of their asylum or refugee status. This is not the same for other parts of the UK because health care is a matter devolved to the Scottish Parliament. For example, in England access to some NHS services is not available to people seeking asylum that have had their claim refused.

Information for Scottish healthcare professionals is available at:

- nhsinform.co.uk/rights/usingnhs/access/overseas-visitors/asylum-seekers/

Waverley Care is Scotland's HIV and Hepatitis C charity; this includes working with asylum seekers and refugees.

- **Waverley Care**
waverleycare.org/about-our-services/support-topics-2/immigration/

International charities are working in refugee camps and other situations to provide medical care and support.

- **Médecins sans Frontières**
msf.org.uk
- **International Rescue Committee**
rescue.org



Gender

Side by Side is a growing global movement of people of faith who want to see gender justice become a reality across the world. They draw together faith communities in many different countries, and in each country they work together wherever possible to meet local challenges in bringing about justice and equality for all people, irrespective of gender.

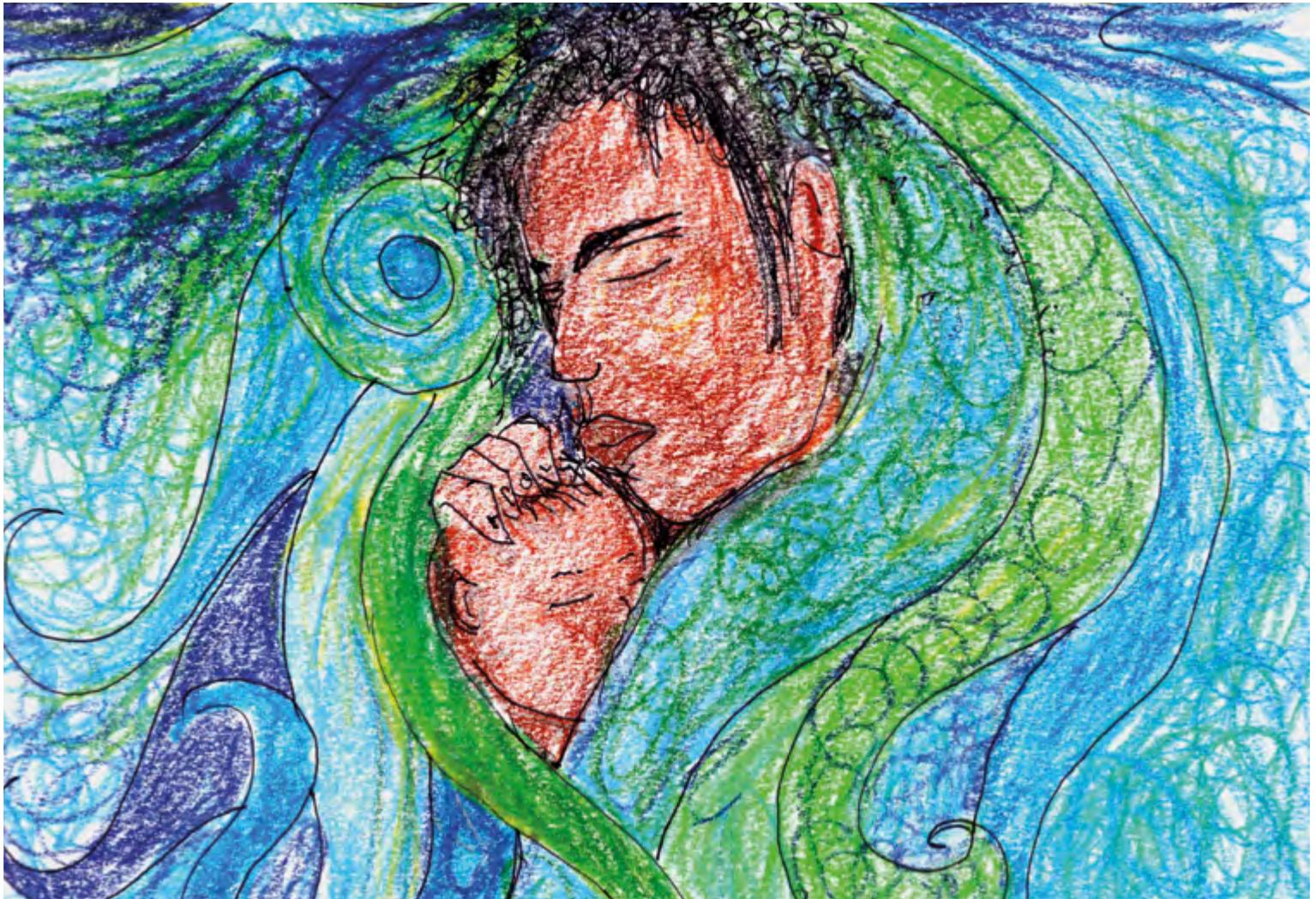
Side by Side

sidebysidegender.org

In Scotland, the Refugee Women's Strategy Group (RWSG) is a group of refugee and asylum seeking women, supported by Scottish Refugee Council and funded by Comic Relief, whose aim is to ensure that the voices of refugee women in Scotland are heard. RWSG works together to represent the views of refugee and asylum seeking women to key decision makers and service providers, in order to influence the policy and practices that affect their lives. Their group is an integral part of Scottish Refugee Policy Forum, which is a federation of Refugee Community Organisations.

Refugee Women's Strategy Group

scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/rwsg



Children

The distress and disruption to life for refugee children can have a lasting impact on the rest of their lives. For children living for many months or years in refugee situations, access to continued opportunities for education and development are important. Global charity A World At School campaigns on this issue.

- **A World At School**
aworldatschool.org

Save the Children has a particular focus on the needs of refugee children, including the welfare of unaccompanied asylum seeking children who may be seeking to come to the UK to be with friends and family.

- **Save the Children**
savethechildren.org.uk

In the UK, the British Red Cross supports people who have been granted refugee status to be reunited with their families, as family reunification is one of the rights which refugees are granted.

- **British Red Cross**
redcross.org.uk/

In Scotland, the Scottish Guardianship Service and Aberlour work to support child refugees especially where they have been separated from their parents.

- **Scottish Guardianship Service**
gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/protecting/lac/guardianship
- **Aberlour**
www.aberlour.org.uk

Language

Language is one of the most important factors in someone feeling able to contribute to and participate in wider society, from finding out information like reading a bus timetable to being able to express your opinion or ask questions.

In Budapest (Hungary), Valetta (Malta) and Rome (Italy), Church of Scotland congregations are supporting projects that work with refugees and migrants to help them with language so they have the skills to play a fuller part in society.

Kalunba – a project in Budapest

kalunba.org

Out of Africa into Malta – a project in Valetta

standrewsmalta.com/out-of-africa-into-malta

In Scotland a number of services are provided to help refugees and asylum seekers to learn English. A range of projects is listed by ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Scotland.

ESOL Scotland

esolscotland.com

Glasgow ESOL Forum

glasgowesol.org

Informal learning and voluntary run ESOL classes take place in communities and are supported by faith groups across Scotland. If you think you'd like to set up or support a project locally please contact Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees for more ideas (our details are online and on the back page of this booklet).

Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees

sfar.org.uk

Culture

The sharing of stories, food, music and art through intercultural dialogue and encounter can be one of the most rewarding experiences for refugees (sharing what is important and precious to them), as well as for people belonging to the host community (as an opportunity to learn new things and have new experiences).

Refugee Festival Scotland takes place every year in late June / early July and is an opportunity for mutual sharing and learning. The Scottish Refugee Council also have an arts programme.

scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/news_and_events/refugee_festival_scotland

scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/what_we_do/arts_and_cultural_activities

Music, photography and drama projects can also be a way to raise awareness, understanding and empathy of refugee issues. Ice and Fire is a drama group that has written and produced performances on human rights based issues, including The Asylum Monologues.

iceandfire.co.uk

Interfaith Glasgow's Weekend Club project works with asylum seekers, refugees and new migrants to share something of Scotland's history and culture, as well as providing the chance to learn English in a relaxed and fun environment.

interfaithglasgow.org/current-projects/

Legal Issues

The legal issues in the UK around refugee protection and the asylum process are complicated and change frequently, often because of policy decisions by the UK Government. Understanding how all the legal issues interact (such as the 1951 Refugee Convention, EU rules, rights to family reunion, legal aid funding etc.) in detail is not easy, but if you are or know someone who is seeking asylum or would like to know more, UK charity Right to Remain have produced a Toolkit – a guide to

the UK immigration and asylum system. It gives an overview of the legal system and procedures, with detailed information on rights and options at key stages, and actions you can take in support of your claim, or to help someone else.

The development of the Toolkit was made possible thanks to the financial support of members of the Iona Community.

Right to Remain – Toolkit

righttoremain.org.uk/toolkit

For wider issues relating to migration in general (covering asylum and refugee as well as economic-social migration), the charities Migrants Rights Network (which seeks to promote policy analysis, partnership and debate for the rights of all migrants) and the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (which campaigns for justice in immigration, nationality and asylum law and policy) are useful sources of information.

Migrants Rights Network

migrantsrights.org.uk

Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants

jcwi.org.uk

Religion

Freedom of religion is an important part of life in Scotland today; you don't have to look far back in Scotland's history to see what impact sectarianism and the wars of religion had on the peace and prosperity of society. Religious hate crime is still a factor, however, and asylum seekers and refugees can be targeted for their religion (or perceived religion) or race. For new arrivals in Scotland, finding a place of worship can also be important.

Some people seek asylum in the UK because their religion makes it impossible to live in their country of origin. For others, it might be a case of seeking asylum for non-religious reasons but when in the UK they convert to a different religion, which could make it much harder for them to return to their country of origin. Such cases are often treated with scepticism or labelled 'conversions of convenience' in order to support an asylum claim. From time to time ministers of religion are called on to provide expert advice on the truthfulness of someone's religious experiences. If you are in this situation, please contact Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees for further information (contact details on the back page).

Freedom Declared
freedomdeclared.org

Torture

Freedom from Torture is a UK based charity which work with survivors of torture. The majority of Freedom from Torture clients report having been targeted due to their race, ethnic origin, gender, religious, cultural or political beliefs. Political activists and journalists are often selected by the authorities for exercising their freedom of expression and vocalising their opposition to government policies. Many people are tortured during conflicts, where torture is used to instil a climate of fear and to force people to flee. Family members are sometimes targeted simply by association in an effort to get to someone else.

Freedom from Torture also helps the children of torture survivors who have been through great trauma. They may have witnessed violence and abuse or been forced to interpret the stories of their parents to the authorities in the UK, causing them to digest and repeat information which can have a traumatising effect.

They have a centre in Glasgow which offers assessment, counselling and psychotherapy, medico-legal report writing service (for presenting evidence to support an asylum claim) and training and supervision for local agencies working with survivors.

Freedom from Torture
freedomfromtorture.org

Human Trafficking - modern day slavery

Human trafficking and modern day slavery are global issues; it is now estimated there are more people living in slavery today than at the height of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. In the UK rescued victims of human trafficking can be in a vulnerable position as returning to their country of origin could risk sending them back to the people traffickers. Some will find their only option is to seek sanctuary in the UK.

TARA – Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance – offers support services to rescued victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation in Scotland. Migrant Help provides services to victims rescued from domestic servitude. Action of Churches Together in Scotland have an Anti-Trafficking Group which seeks to raise awareness and provide more information about Trafficking issues in Scotland.

TARA

communitysafetyglasgow.org/what-we-do/supporting-victims-of-gender-based-violence

Migrant Help

www.migranthehelpuk.org

ACTS Anti-Trafficking Group

acts-scotland.org/activities/anti-human-trafficking

Detention

People can be held in immigration detention centres either during the asylum application process or if they have applied and been refused. Some will be sent back to their country of origin, but many cannot return – even if they want to. Some are stateless, because their country won't accept them back (many asylum seekers do not have a valid passport); others have lived in the UK for many years and can no longer prove their original nationality. Many stateless people find themselves detained indefinitely. Others are detained because their countries are too dangerous for deportations to take place. More than 200 people have been held in detention for more than a year. 90% of bail applications are refused.

In Scotland the Immigration Removal Centre at Dungavel has been earmarked for closure by the end of 2017, with a new short-term holding facility planned for close to Glasgow Airport. This has raised concerns that people who have Scottish friends and social connections will be held long-term in centres in other parts of the UK, making access to support and legal advice much harder.

Scottish Detainee Visitors

sdv.org.uk

Detention Action

detentionaction.org.uk

Bail for Immigration Detainees

biduk.org

Destitution

People seeking asylum can experience destitution – when they are left with no accommodation and no financial support. This could be because their asylum claim has been refused, and are no longer entitled to support from the state. Or if their claim is successful, they have 28 days to vacate their accommodation; not much time to find an alternative, and can be impossible to provide a deposit if they have no income.

The Refugee Survival Trust is a Scotland-based charity which supports people in this situation, including by offering small grants to help people buy food and other essentials and bus passes. They lead a partnership with the Scottish Refugee Council, British Red Cross, University of Strathclyde and Glasgow Night Shelter, they provide the Destitution Asylum Seeker Service (DASS). DASS offers advice, legal support and help with finding temporary accommodation.

Refugee Survival Trust

rst.org.uk

DASS

rst.org.uk/what-we-do/destitute-asylum-seeker-service-dass

Glasgow Destitute Asylum Network (GLADAN) brings together charities, church and community groups and individuals who are actively concerned for people who have been made destitute and in many cases homeless following the refusal of their application for asylum, and other vulnerable migrants with no recourse to public funds

GLADAN

destitutionaction.wordpress.com

Glasgow Night Shelter arranges for homeless destitute asylum seekers to sleep in a church hall and volunteers help to provide food. Positive Action in Housing work with volunteers willing to offer a bed and some hospitality to destitute people.

Night Shelter

glasgownightshelter.org

Positive Action in Housing

paih.org

Belonging and Community

When people from different nationalities, races, religions, cultures and languages come together it can often be difficult to overcome barriers and differences. For good community cohesion and integration of new arrivals it takes effort from both sides – but the results will be good for everybody.

All across Scotland there are new voluntary groups set up to welcome refugees or to encourage people to take action to support refugees at home or abroad. Find out what is happening in your area on the Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees website.

The Scottish Community Development Centre provide training and consultancy support in all aspects of community development. They provide support to all organisations and partnerships that work in and with communities to support community engagement and community capacity building in any context and at strategic and practice level.

Scottish Community Development Centre

scdc.org.uk

Scottish charity the Refugee Survival Trust offers grants to refugees to help access education and employment opportunities – both can be important things to help refugees feel able to belong to and contribute to society.

Refugee Survival Trust

rst.org.uk

Interfaith Glasgow's Weekend Club project brings together volunteers who have lived in Glasgow for many years with asylum seekers, refugees and new migrants, to provide opportunities for social interaction, speaking and listening to English and learning about Scottish culture, history and society.

Interfaith Glasgow Weekend Club

interfaithglasgow.org/current-projects





Empowerment

Developing the bonds between refugees can help new approaches and ideas to develop. A number of Refugee Community Organisations around the UK now organise and are able to speak on issues which matter to them. This can also help to develop links with decision-makers and influence shapers in public policy and wider society, meaning that the views of the people most affected are taken into consideration, following the model of the Poverty Truth Commission:

Nothing About Us Without Us Is For Us.

Finding things which interest individual refugees can also be both a provider of an occupation as well as a chance to make friends, with other refugees and with members of the host community. Just two examples are: Bikes for Refugees is an Edinburgh-based project which uses refugee volunteers to help repair old bikes and provide them to those which need them (information on Facebook); Naomi is a garment making and repair workshop run by refugees in Thessaloniki in Greece. Code Your Future is a training programme which offers refugees in Scotland the chance to study and gain qualifications in computer coding, which is designed and delivered by other refugees.

Code Your Future

codeyourfuture.co

Naomi

naomi-thessaloniki.net

Bikes for refugees - Scotland

www.facebook.com/BikesforRefugeesScotland/

Politics

Following the UK vote to leave the European Union in June 2016 there has been a reported increase in anti-immigrant hate crime. With political attention now focussed on the process by which the UK leaves the EU, questions about how the UK lives up to its obligations to offer refugee protection are in danger of being overlooked.

The Joint Public Issues Team (Church of Scotland, Methodist Church, United Reformed Church and Baptist Union of Great Britain) contribute to public policy development on refugees and support campaigns and lobbying initiatives. In July 2016 they published a briefing paper Made for goodness – A faithful response to the refugee crisis.

Joint Public Issues Team

jointpublicissues.org.uk

At Westminster an All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees brings together politicians from all different parties to explore issues and make recommendations. This APPG on Refugees is supported by the Refugee Council in England.

Refugee Council (England)

www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

Media

The media – broadcast, print, online and social networks – have an important role both in raising awareness as well as shaping public attitudes and opinion about migration in general and refugee issues in particular. We have a role in being alert to the political bias of different newspapers, and of promoting positive stories and news on our own social media platforms.

Christian Aid are inviting supporters to contact their newspapers on refugee issues in a programme called Change the Story.

Christian Aid Change the Story

christianaid.org.uk/change-the-story

Stop Funding Hate is a new campaign which seeks to change the advertising decisions of big businesses to change their marketing to avoid paying money to newspapers which stir up racial and religious tension.

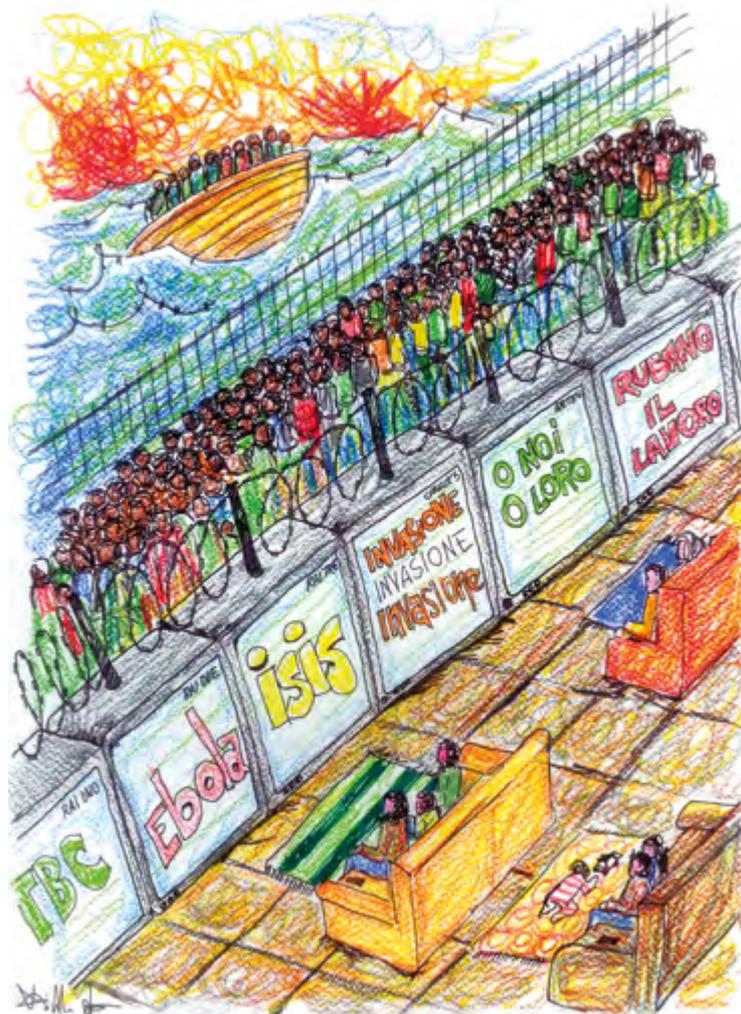
Stop Funding Hate

stopfundinghate.org

SubScribe is a blog which looks at a wide range of UK journalism and reporting, and which regularly discuss migration and refugee coverage

SubScribe

sub-scribe.co.uk







stories

Stories

Berthe Patricia Nganga fled war-torn Congo Brazzaville in 2003.

Her family were targeted and killed for their political beliefs. She was granted leave to remain in the UK in August 2011. She is a member of the Refugee Women's Strategy Group, which is supported by Scottish Refugee Council.

"You know, being an asylum seeker is not an easy life. I was a paediatric nurse in Congo Brazzaville, working in the local hospital and in my mother's chemist. She was killed by the government because she didn't support them. Then in 1998, my husband fled the country, because he was part of the opposition party too.

"In 2003 I fled. People were after me because of my husband, so I had to get away. But the Home Office didn't believe me. It's so frustrating; as an asylum seeker you're not allowed to work, you're not allowed to do full-time courses... it can make you crazy.

"After spending my first few years in the UK in and out of detention, I came to Glasgow. I came here to the Scottish Refugee Council and they did everything to give me support, and two and a half years ago I became part of the Refugee Women's Strategy Group.

"The group helps women get information and advice about everything to do with asylum. It gives you strength".

"We have changed things, too. Now women seeking asylum in Scotland can ask for childcare when they are interviewed at the Home Office; that's because we wrote a letter asking for that change.

Wencai Qu arrived in Scotland in January 2000.

"I fled China with three other people, and it took me six months to get to the UK through Russia. It was a tough journey".

I knew Britain was a country that protects human rights, because I knew that Hong Kong had been handed over to China in a very peaceful way. That gave me a good impression of the country.

"When I first arrived here I knew nobody. Scottish Refugee Council helped me to get a letter to enrol me in Anniesland College to learn English, and I've been going there for nearly eight years – the teachers have been great. Case workers at Scottish Refugee Council also helped me to get accommodation, and when the asylum support system changed, they helped me again to get another flat.

The asylum process is scary for young people, says Shah

"I arrived when I was 18. It's too young to be coming to a new country, but if you have a problem and you can't stay alive at home, that's the way it must be. I came here on the 18th September 2008, to Liverpool, in the lorry. There were two other guys in the lorry, we were three altogether. We got off the lorry and then we didn't know what to do, where to go. What country was this?"

"The asylum process is very difficult when you're young. It's very scary, very frightening".

"When I was small, I just wanted to be a good man, a big man. I wanted to grow UP, make myself big you know? Like famous. That was when I was a child. This is now. Let's see what happens. In the future I just want to help people, I just want to help everyone. I want to make myself like - for everybody, I can do something. Because I saw in my country that nobody cared about anything. That time as well I thought a lot of people just think about themselves.

Read more from Wencai, Patricia and Shah and stories from other refugees in Scotland at: scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/what_we_do/refugee_stories





23 mila morfi.

Mora Mori Tzozzo neo
Anno 2014 *Pol. K...*

I was hungry

and you formed a working group
and discussed my hunger

I was imprisoned

and you crept off quietly to your chapel
and prayed for my release

I was naked

and in your mind you debated the morality of my appearance

I was sick

and you knelt and thanked God for your health

I was homeless

and you preached to me of the spiritual shelter of the love of God

I was lonely

and you left me alone to pray for me

You seem so holy, so close to God

but I'm still very hungry and lonely and cold.

From A Guide: Refugees, Asylum Seekers & Migrants Welcoming the Stranger,
published by Churches Together Merseyside Region



Photo courtesy of Emily Macinnes www.emilymacinnes.com

take action

what can I do? / what can my community do?

Call for change

Contact your elected representatives and ask them to outline what they are doing to help refugees. Don't just write to your MP or MSPs, contact your local councillors as well. Local authorities have a critical decision to make about whether they are involved in resettlement programmes. The best thing you can do is to contact or meet all your representatives – your Westminster MP, your Holyrood MSPs and your local councillors.

Make sure you get a reply. If you don't then follow up your contact. As your representatives they work for you and are accountable to you.

If you can why not invite them along to a community event or a meeting so they can meet other members of your group?

Write to your Westminster MP on issues relating to Home Office policy and International Development policy:

- The right to work for asylum seekers and the level of support they receive
- The quality of accommodation and access to services
- Policies of dawn raids and detention
- Destitution
- Decision-making in asylum cases and legal processes
- The numbers of refugees resettled directly from conflict zones

- The administration of family reunification and to offer resettlement in the UK to unaccompanied asylum seeking children
- Commitment to the 0.7% target for aid spending
- Ensuring that money is spent well and on humanitarian relief and protection

Write to your Holyrood MSPs about:

- Promoting support for refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland as it relates to their wellbeing and integration
- Tackling racial and religious hatred
- Promoting respect for diversity in the education system and in public life

Write to your local councillors to:

- Ensure that your local authority is doing everything it can to participate in UK wide programmes to offer a home to asylum seekers and refugees. This might include participating in asylum dispersal, receiving more people under the Syrian VPR scheme or the Gateway programme, and / or offering help to unaccompanied asylum seeking children, transferred from other parts of the UK or resettled from places such as Calais or camps around Syria.
- Ask that they are committed to making your local area one which is safe for everyone.



Tips

- ▶ Visit sfar.org.uk for specific things you can say in your letters to each of the three tiers of government.
- ▶ Meet Your MSP materials have been produced by the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office – scpo.scot
- ▶ Do you have someone who has direct experience whose story you could share?
- ▶ If you have a sympathetic representative, why not ask if they'd like to share a story on their website or ask them to sign a Motion (Holyrood) or Early Day Motion (Westminster) to show their support?

Give money

If you are able to give money, please consider donating to a charity that works with refugees. The scale of the situation, at home as well as internationally, is getting larger, and a changing focus by mainstream media and 'donor fatigue' means that projects are continually struggling to meet demand as the extent of humanitarian need continues to grow.

You may wish to support small charities or large ones. You might want to help work overseas or here at home. You might want to contribute something which relates to your own faith tradition or interests; you and your faith community will know (or will be able to decide) what is best.

You might also want to fund-raise for a specific cause or charity, perhaps as a sponsored event. This can be a fun way of doing something with other people and you also get the chance to raise awareness of the issue and your support for refugees at the same time.

Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees encourage fund-raising and financial giving to charities that have a longstanding track record and excellent reputation for their work with refugees, at home and abroad. If you would like to support our work financially, please get in touch to find out about our latest projects.

Visit the website sfar.org.uk for a list of charities and faith-based projects working with refugees

Some organisations also collect donated goods and arrange for them to be transported and distributed. This might be for refugees in Scotland (and can include food banks), or for people overseas.

Our advice is that money can often be spent better locally rather than incur costs for storage, transport and distribution – but we know that for many people it can be a case of giving both money and donated items. And so we recommend if you are thinking about donating items:

- ▶ You should give in response to clear list of requested items – so you know that the thing you are collecting will be needed.

- ▶ The organisation doing the collection is a registered charity (do they have a charity number that you can check) – so you know that there is a process or ensuring that the donations are used for the purpose intended

- ▶ Consider if you can give money as well or instead – to by pass the costs of storage, transport, sorting and distribution



Meet refugees

Personal encounter and building friendships is often much more effective at teaching us new understanding than learning knowledge. As refugee numbers are increasing in Scotland, and people are being settled all across the country, many people who are supportive of refugees would like the chance to offer their own support by volunteering or making friends to new neighbours. There are also opportunities for people to help with humanitarian relief and support in refugee camps in places such as the Greek islands, Italy or Calais.

If you would like to meet refugees, find out about projects including:

- ▶ **Support for learning English – Amnesty Scotland**
amnesty.org.uk/issues/Amnesty-in-Scotland
- ▶ **Cup of tea with a refugee – Scottish Refugee Council**
cupofteawitharefugee.com
- ▶ **Visit detainees in Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre – Scottish Detainee Visitors**
sdv.org.uk
- ▶ **Room for Refugees hosting scheme – Positive Action in Housing**
paih.org.uk

You can also find out about friendship, welcome and support initiatives in your local authority area on the website at sfar.org.uk/actions-with-my-neighbourhood

Community Sponsorship

In 2016 the UK Home Office launched a new programme whereby community groups can be involved in the ‘sponsorship’ of refugees from Syria – helping to cover some of the costs of their resettlement as well as being involved in their welcome and integration.

In Scotland all local authorities are receiving refugees directly and so it is recommended that faith groups consider first how they can work with all newly arrive refugees. If your group is already working with refugees and would like to find out more about community sponsorship, please contact Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees for more information (contact details are on the back page of this booklet)

Find out more

- **Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees**
sfar.org.uk
- **Home Office**
gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-full-community-sponsorship

Promote sanctuary

Building a culture of empathy and understanding towards people who have been forced to flee from their homes is a common goal of many people, regardless of their religion or belief. The concept of 'sanctuary' however has its roots in Jewish and Christian tradition and practice as a place where strangers and fugitives are offered safety and protection. The word 'sanctuary' has its origins in the Latin sanctus: holy. And so by working to promote sanctuary we are all contributing to a holiness – of a community and a society which prioritises the common good.

The City of Sanctuary movement is a UK-wide charity which seeks to promote a culture of sanctuary – either as a city wide project, or as a local authority, or a village, town, school or place of worship.

▶ **City of Sanctuary**

cityofsanctuary.org

Join (or start) an Interfaith group

▶ **Interfaith Scotland**

interfaithscotland.org

Participate in or hold an event during Refugee Festival Scotland (usually late June and early July), or other events including the Just Festival, Solas, Take One Action film festival, GRAMNet events, Interfaith Week, One World Week and so on

▶ **Refugee Festival Scotland**

scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/news_and_events/refugee_festival_scotland

▶ **Just Festival**

just-festival.org

▶ **Solas Festival**

solasfestival.co.uk

▶ **Take One Action**

takeoneaction.org.uk

▶ **GRAMNet**

gla.ac.uk/research/az/gramnet/events

▶ **Interfaith Week**

interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week/

▶ **One World Week**

oneworldweek.org

Think about your place of worship; What are you doing to remember refugees? What are you doing to build bridges with neighbours from different national, racial and religious backgrounds?

▶ **Mitzvah Day**

mitzvahday.org.uk

Are you involved in work in schools or community settings? How could you use these opportunities to promote a culture of sanctuary with young people or in wider society.

▶ **Scottish Community Development Centre**

scdc.org.uk

▶ **Scottish Development Education Centres**

www.ideas-forum.org.uk/about-us/decs



THANK YOU LAMPEDUSA.

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Find out more

SCOTLAND

Scotland Welcomes Refugees

scotlandwelcomesrefugees.scot

Glasgow Refugee and Asylum Network – GRAMNet

gramnet.wordpress.com

Refugee Survival Trust

rst.org.uk

UNITED KINGDOM

Right to Remain Toolkit

righttoremain.org.uk

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

focusonrefugees.org

Still Human Still Here

stillhumanstillhere.wordpress.com

INTERNATIONAL

Migrants Rights Network

migrantsrights.org.uk

Migrant Voice

migrantvoice.org

Citizens UK - Refugees Welcome

refugees-welcome.org.uk

Dates for your diary

- **January**
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- **February**
Racial Justice Sunday
- **June**
20th – International Refugee Day
Refugee Festival Scotland
- **July**
Solas Festival
- **August**
Just Festival
- **September**
21st International Day of Peace
- **October**
One World Week
Edinburgh World Justice Festival
- **November**
Interfaith Week
- **Mitzvah Day**
25th – start of 16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women
- **December**
1st - World AIDS Day
10th - International Human Rights Day

Books

Asylum in Britain a Question of Conscience

by Anthony Harvey

Available for free from ctbi.org.uk

Refugee Stories

by Dave Smith

Available from bookshops and online RRP £9.99

The drawings used in this publication are by Francesco Piobbichi who works with Mediterranean Hope, a project of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy, with activities in Lampedusa and Sicily. To find out more and to support this work see www.mediterraneanhope.com





The Church of Scotland



Action of Churches
Together in Scotland



Interfaith
Scotland



Justice & Peace
Scotland (Scottish
Catholic Church)



The Methodist
Church in Scotland



Muslim Council
of Scotland



Quakers
in Scotland



Scottish Ahlul Bayt
Society



The Scottish Council of
Jewish Communities



The Scottish
Episcopal Church



The Salvation Army
Scotland Office



The United Free
Church of Scotland



The United
Reformed Church
National Synod of Scotland

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www.twitter.com/WithRefugees

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www.churchofscotland.org.uk