

Harrow Refugee & Minorities Forum



Annual Report 2009/2010



Transforming Adversity into Shared Opportunities

Once again I have stepped in to present the Chair's Report for the Forum's activities during 2008-9. I sincerely hope that as our resilient attitude towards difficulties starts to pay dividends, the Forum would be able to attract two most important people to drive our Agenda ahead: a new Chair and a new Treasurer. The first is to provide strategic leadership and vision, and the second to look after the financial activities throughout the next three years.

The economic downturn is still biting hard. Perhaps, it is much harder in the Voluntary and Community Sectors than in any other sector. While we cannot foresee the future and what will happen tomorrow or next year or even the year after, we could always learn how to transform such adverse economic situation into opportunities for success.

Last year our main task was to consolidate and extend the boundaries of recovery. We anticipated that our effort would facilitate the growth of the Forum and lead to the strengthening of Black, Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BAMER) community organisations. And this to some extent did actually materialise. As a Forum, our existence, at least, constitutionally, is owed to our member organisations. Therefore it is of paramount importance that this membership is strengthened for sustainability and better organisational performance. This we hope would enable them, and us, to continue the delivery of the invaluable and indispensable support to communities. The essence of the Forum is to become, in the near future, a

mere network of the organisations so that the development of the wider community can be rapidly achieved.

I am extremely grateful and proud of our staff and volunteers for their initiative of designing and implementing a training programme for our empowerment. This will soon be evident to all in the West and Northwest London areas. However, we are not alone in this. We are counting on the continued support of our partners from other forums in West and Northwest London. Together we are drawing up a Capacity Building and Infra-structure support for the sector in a different format as part of a pilot-project. Training courses will be delivered in Harrow, Brent and Barnet with possible extensions to Ealing and Hillingdon.

As in the past, our partnership with the London Borough of Harrow has been a mutually beneficial one and we sincerely hope that this trend will continue, not only in the next year or the year after, but for many years to come.

The lack of resources, although causing many difficulties, has nevertheless taught us a valuable lesson, a lesson to be more cooperative, thinking of complementing each other and avoiding duplication of services. It has taught us to work in more harmony and establish more joint working initiatives rather than duplicating each other. This way we will be minimising the waste of the scarce resources available to us.

So our motto for the years to come will be cooperation, hard work and joint-working. We aim to think and act together for a future that belongs to all of us and not to those who only think and care for themselves alone.

I would like to use this opportunity once again to extend our thanks to the following:

All our staff, volunteers, members and Trustees for their hard work;

Harrow Council, our partners and other voluntary and statutory stakeholders who have made this year an exciting and successful one;

Those members whose dedication, effort and commitment have ensured the continued existence of the Forum;

Our funders: The Harrow Council, Home Office, Capacity Builders, London Councils and The Lottery Funds.

Thank you all.

Pari Nouroozi -Vice-Chair

Introduction



The Harrow Refugee Forum, (HaRF), (“The Harrow Refugee and Minorities Forum”), (the Forum) is a company limited by guarantee and in process of becoming a registered Charity.

The Forum is a Membership-led organisation and its governing document is its Memorandum and

Articles of Association. Organisations become members by applying for membership within the rules set by the Board and the AGM. At present there is no membership subscription charged but discussion is underway to introduce a subscription fee.

The Board of Trustees (also the Board of Directors) consists of up to twenty members:

- Three are Councillors, nominated from the London Borough of Harrow
- One or two are elected from the Associated Members; pending on the size of the Associated membership
- One is expected from Harrow Primary Care Trust (Harrow PCT) – Awaiting Reply
- The remaining thirteen drawn from the Refugee and Migrant Community

Organisations

The Board meets no less than six times a year and also has adopted an Away-Day and a Review meeting during the year. There are three established Committees. Ad-hoc sub-committees are established anytime through need. All the Committees and Ad-hoc sub-

committees meet throughout the year and when necessary; and function according to size of the Board. The main three Committees are as follows:

- The Finances and General Purposes Committee of the Board is chaired by the Treasurer
- The Governance or Standing Committee, normally chaired by the Chair
- The Events and Festivities Committee

The Committees and sub-committees operate under specific terms of reference, which delegate certain functions from the

Board of Trustees and its membership is made up by Trustees with particular expertise and interest in those areas. The Board ratifies all decisions made by the Committees, and of any ad-hoc subcommittees.



There Governance or Standing

Committee of the Board of Trustees, reviews issues of governance, membership and board composition. This committee has also taken on responsibility for the recruitment and appointment of a new Chair who, it is expected, will drive the review of governance forward and the strategic direction of the organisation.

The Forum has provisions for all Trustees to have a full induction programme and regular training to ensure Trustees are kept up to date with legal and statutory requirements.

Day-to day management is the responsibility of the Senior Management Team led by the Executive Director.

Objects and Activities

The aims and objects of the company are:

- Advise on ways of improving the accessibility and appropriateness and of existing mainstream or social welfare provisions for the refugee, migrant and other minority ethnic communities.
- Create alliances and partnerships between migrant, refugee and other minority ethnic community organisations to identify the common needs of their communities and develop shared services in response to them.
- Strengthen the development of refugee, migrant and other minority ethnic community organisations and assist them to provide effective services to their own and other communities and to take part in productive partnership with statutory, private and voluntary agencies.
- Advance the education of refugees and their dependants in need thereof so as to advance them in life and assist in their resettlement within a new community;
- Monitor both the provision and use of mainstream services for the local refugee, migrant and other minority ethnic communities and evaluate its acceptability.
- Promote research into the quality of life of refugees in Harrow, West and Northwest London and throughout the world, and ways of providing charitable relief for them and to publish the result of all such research; and
- Advance public education about the position of refugees and the situations that give rise to refugee movements
- Relieve poverty amongst the refugee and asylum seeking, migrant and other minority ethnic population and empower these communities to take control of their lives.
- Facilitate cross-cultural understanding and integration on the basis of cultural diversity.
- Create a stable resource base for refugee, migrant and other minority ethnic communities' activities through the provision and management of a community resource centre with office facilities for the local community organisations

- Build partnership with statutory, private and voluntary sector agencies to ensure access by migrant and refugee communities to basic services and to provide supplementary services where needed.

Activities include:

- Provision of Capacity Building Initiatives and Infra-structure support to migrant and BAMER organisations
- Support the provision of specialist advice to refugees and asylum seekers
- Provide training and training advice to refugees and asylum seekers, RCOs, MCOs and MECOs
- Influence legislation and policies aimed at he refugees and asylum seekers, migrants and BAMER as a whole;
- Undertake and participate in research, situation and needs analysis into issues affecting refugees and asylum seekers

Achievements and Performance

Details of the services provided by the charity, and the impact of those services, can be summarised as follows:

- Held 8 Board Meeting during the year ending March 2008;
- Over 60 organisations in Harrow, North and West London benefited from 1-2-1 support, Training and Funding and Policy Information
- 7 organisations were established, constituted and incorporated
- 4 organisations were set-up and due to be reconstituted and incorporated next in 2009
- 5 organisations were helped in securing small funding for supplementary school activities, elderly clubs, and development
- A Successful Refugee Event took place with more 500 participants representing all the diverse communities in Harrow. For the first time children and young people presence by-passed that of adults and parents
- Twelve training initiatives were held in Health and Safety, Financial Management, Governance, Leadership, Quality Assurances and Project Management.
- Over 600 voluntary and Community organisations and statutory bodies benefited from our Funding Information on bi-monthly basis

Financial Review of the year

Income

The total income of £80,333 was up by 34.8% on last year £52,393. There were a number of other grant applications made jointly with our member organisations that are awaiting decision and others that were not successful. However, it is the Forum's strategy for the forthcoming years to increase the joint venture between the Forum and its wider membership to facilitate and improve the sustainability rates of these organisations. The aims will always be to reach a stage whereby the Forum becomes a network of the networks while giving more emphasis to its Migrant and BAMER organisations' growth and stead development.

In a continuing difficult environment in which income generation is getting more and more competitive, the Forum has adopted a new strategic outlook in ways to raise funds by combining in-house and external expertise. It is anticipated that this approach is bearing results, looking by the initial successes. But caution and vigilance are always required as the global financial outlook doesn't look so good and its consequences could well be felt in the sector.

Expenditure

Total expenditure was £51,393 up by 8.5% on last year.

The resulting net increase in funds of £46324 and it is almost entirely due to the existing reserves and deferred payments and creditors due in one year.

Balance Sheet

There was roughly a balance of £47,699 under Cash at bank and in hand at the year-end, almost as it was last year.

This was due largely to the un-cashed salary costs, creditors falling in one year and other liabilities arising with partnerships, training commissioning, venues and management costs.

Current Project Reports

Health and Safety Training was organised in collaboration with Harrow Voluntary Services (HAVS) two training sessions were organised in November 2009 and March 2010.

The Governance course was for Management Committee members, staff and volunteers. The course was over four days and covered the Roles and Responsibilities of the Management Committee, Board Strategic Plans, Human Resource Management; and Policy, Advice and Regulatory Environment.

The Project Management Course



Was also over four days and targeted Management Committee members and senior staff of our partner organisations. The course covered Practical Project Management, Strategic Planning and Drawing Up a Business Plan. Overall, participants' evaluations indicate that these courses

were strategically timely courses to equip members with the skills to efficiently and effectively run their organisations.



Community Engagement: This project is aimed at complementing our work with our member organisations. The project will conduct the situational needs analysis of member organisations and organise consultation forums. The consultation forums enable clients of our member organisations the opportunity to highlight their issues.

Legal and administrative information

Trustees of the company

The Trustees of the Forum serve as the Directors of the company and members of the Board of Trustees.

The following were members of the Board of Trustees during the year.

Pari Nouroozi	Harrow Iranian Community Association (HICA)
Asha Mohamed Kalib	Harrow Somali Women's Action Group (HaSWAG)
Mary Kanu	Development Support Agency (DSA)
Alex da Costa	Angolan Civic Communities Alliance (ACCA)
Guna Vellupillai	Harrow Tamil Community Association (HTCA)
Dr Maria Elisa Santana	N'KANDA African Women and Family Academy
Kanti Nagda	Sangat Advice Centre (SANGAT)
Kanaganayagam Jananaygam	Middlesex Tamil Academy
Nasser Eid	Harrow Kuwaiti Community Association (HKCA)
Mohamed Ali	IWANAAJI – Harrow & Hillingdon Somali Disabled Association
Cllr Golam Chowdhury	Harrow Council Representative
Cllr Rekha Shah	Harrow Council Representative
Cllr Paul Scott	Harrow Council Representative

Director

Maria Kzlowski

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Bankers

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