

# ACTIVE VOICE

## Lewisham Refugee Network e-bulletin



Summer Issue

July 2010

Welcome to our first e-bulletin. The e-bulletin will be sent out quarterly. In it you will find contact details for LRN and our projects. And we will tell you about our current activities, and bring you news of any exciting new developments, both within the organisation and

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### NEW TRUSTEES

LRN would like to recruit new trustees onto the management committee. Applications are welcome from all sectors of the community, and particularly those who have a special skill to offer such as health or legal expertise. Meetings take place in the evenings once a month.

If you are interested, contact reception on 0208 6940323.

### NEW DEVELOPMENTS AT LRN

We have some exciting new changes at LRN. Firstly we say welcome to Rosario Mincher, our new Director. Rosario has extensive experience of community development, and most recently was Partnership Manager at the Royal London Society for the Blind. Rosario is looking forward to the challenges, as well as the great opportunities that the new post will bring.

We also welcome Sayid Abdulahi who is currently doing immigration and welfare advice. Sayid has many years experience working with refugees in East London. And Sian who has recently joined us as a volunteer at reception. He comes to us from the Bethany Christian Trust in Edinburgh. The success of our work relies heavily on the input of volunteers, and the work done by our volunteers, Pamela, Natalie, Matilda, Shakirat and Sian is very much appreciated.



We'd like to particularly thank Janet Smith who has been working voluntarily on Wednesday mornings running a brilliant

English language session for women refugees, focusing on conversational English, and education around health and self-esteem issues.



Margot Lawrence has moved from the Health Access Project to become Health and Well-being Co-ordinator for 'Listen to Your Heart', a project funded by the Henry Smith Charity. She will still be doing one day a week in health access.

Emma Brech continues in her current role as Vulnerable Women's Project Co-ordinator funded by Comic Relief, and Ahmed Hassan continues in his role as Advisor.

We say goodbye to Carol Ifill, our social work student who has been doing a placement at LRN, working with the Vulnerable Women's Project, and supervised by Emma Brech. Thank you to Emma for all the extra work she did for this, over and above her existing workload. We'd like to thank Carol for her invaluable contribution during her time here. The staff and cli-

ents are very sad to see her go. Hopefully she'll come back and visit us.

We are currently recruiting for an Advice Services Co-ordinator. Among other things this is to enable us to offer immigration advice to Level 2.

Our food donation service is thriving thanks to the support through donations from LEWCAS. Many thanks for their support. Also, a big thank you to Josephine Kwhali from Perry Rise Baptist Church for organizing for LRN staff to go and talk to the congregation about our work and tell them how much their support means to us. We thank them for all their help and contributions.

We'd like to thank the management committee for their continued help and support, and for stepping in when we are short-staffed. It's all hands to the deck at LRN, — which is the best way for voluntary organisations to survive and thrive in this present climate.

Most of our work at LRN could not be done without working in partnership. We value our work with other voluntary organisations, refugee and community organisations, faith organisations, funding bodies and the statutory sector. Long may it continue!

**'LET'S TALK ABOUT HEALTH' - A SEMINAR FOR MIGRANT, REFUGEE AND ASYLUM-SEEKER WOMEN IN LEWISHAM.**

What a fantastic day! Many congratulations to the Vulnerable Women's Project for organizing a very successful Health Seminar for refugee and asylum seeking women in Lewisham. This took place at Lewisham College on the 14th June in celebration of Refugee Week. It was well-attended with around 70 individuals and health and social welfare organisations



**Delegates learning how to loosen up and get rid of tension**

recipes for natural home remedies.

The morning was followed by a lovely lunch, provided by Jade's in New Cross and members of the community who brought dishes from their own countries. We were treated to delights such as jerk chicken, goat curry, samosas, aromatic rice and spicy cous-cous. There were also some mouth-watering, homemade cakes on offer, made by the women attending the Vulnerable Women's Project.

After lunch everyone moved outside for some African dancing, henna hand-painting, Indian head massage and foot massage.

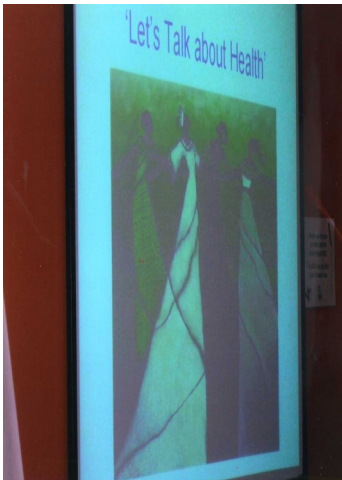
Tesco provided some wonderful prizes for the raffle. Many of the students and staff from Lewisham College joined the event in the afternoon. Matilda

and Shakirat, volunteers at LRN, have recently attended a film-making course. They put their new skills to good use, filming the participants and conducting some very impressive interviews.



**Women from the sewing class dancing in the traditional African dresses they made.**

Everyone enjoyed themselves enormously and came away with valuable information, both for service users and service providers.



working in the borough of Lewisham.

The morning session took place inside and the debate was on health issues faced by refugee women and how these can be effectively addressed by the relevant services. Also how women can access the services they need which is very important for asylum seekers and refugees, who often have problems due to cultural and language difficulties among other things.

Miriam Micah from SLAM talked about how women who have been traumatized through violence can be helped by the mental health services. One of the women attending LRN's Vulnerable Women's Project gave a moving talk on her own experience of mental ill-health, and how she was helped by the mental health services available in the borough, like the Community Mental Health Team. Andreia Negron showed us how effective massage can be when relieving pain. And Amina from LRN talked about home remedies for ailments, like drinking tea for joint pains, and garlic to develop immunity against disease. She also produced a fact sheet of



**'Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity.'** World Health Organisation 1948

**Healthy Walks**

**Get up! Get out! Get walking!**

Walking is a great way to be more active. You can do it almost any time and any place. There are FREE walking groups every week all around the borough of Lewisham.

**Why not come along?**

Contact the Healthy Walks Co-ordinator, Jenny Budd, on 0203049 3485

## Health inequalities—what does this mean?

There are certain wards in Lewisham such as Deptford and New Cross where the residents suffer from health inequalities. This affects people in the following way:

- inequality in access to health care ( for example, refugees often have difficulty in accessing primary health care services )
- inequalities in health/health outcomes such as different rates of life expectancy at birth between wards in Lewisham
- inequalities in the lifestyle factors that determine the outcomes of health (for example, in education, employment or housing)

At Lewisham Refugee Network, we are working in partnership with other agencies such as the Lewisham Primary Care Trust and the Healthy Communities Collaborative to reduce health inequalities for refugees, asylum seekers and other people in the community at risk.

### ‘Listen to Your Heart’



*We have been given funding from the Henry Smith Charity to run a health project for refugees and asylum seekers. The aim of the project is to reduce health inequalities suffered by refugees, migrants and asylum seekers, by offering advice, advocacy, activities and practical support. The project activities include:*

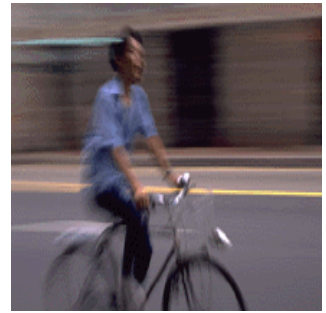
- A weekly exercise and relaxation class
- A weekly health session where clients will be offered health checks, health advice and signposting to further health services.
- A weekly drop in and sewing class
- Outreach work in community centres
- Regular health checks in the street and shopping centres to identify people at risk from ill-health

### REFUGEE AND MIGRANT JUSTICE IN ADMINISTRATION

Refugee and Migrant Justice (RMJ), formerly the Refugee Legal Centre has helped more than 110,000 people since starting work in 1992. Until recently they provided high quality legal services to those who do not have the means to pay, and they have been an invaluable resource for refugees, migrants and asylum seekers.

Unfortunately RMJ is now in Administration and is unable to take on any new clients. Most of their offices have closed, and the final 3 will close on the 6th August. Their closure has been brought about by bureaucratic rules that have resulted in late payment from the Legal Service Commission. It is a travesty that an reputable organisation that serves some of the most vulnerable members in society should be forced to close. More than 10,000 asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants will be left without legal assistance. That includes almost 900 children as well as victims of trafficking, torture and armed conflict.

**If clients require assistance securing a representative,** they can either call the Community Legal Advice helpline on 0845 345 4345 or access their website at [www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk](http://www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk) in order to obtain a list of providers.



*Cycling is a great way to relieve stress and is excellent for the health of the heart and lungs.*

## SEWING CLUB



**LRN is running a Sewing Club for anyone who is interested. Our tutors, Phaty Dao and Amina Ghulam are skilled seamstresses with lots of ideas and expertise. Beginners are welcome or anyone who just wants to come for a chat and use one of the sewing machines.**

**Classes are every Wednesday between 12-2pm. There is a FREE CRECHE available.**

### Refugee Council Training - Key Issues in asylum

*This course allows delegates to understand the frequent changes in asylum legislation, by providing an introduction to the key structures in the asylum system:*

- The distinctions between refugees, asylum seekers and other migrant groups
- The current international context of asylum and the causes of flight of refugees
- The current legislative structure including the New Asylum Model
- Where asylum applications are logged (at port and in-country)
- The role and structure of the UK Border Agency Asylum Teams
- The asylum determination process including the appeal process
- The Case Resolution programme
- Possible implications of future legislative changes

**Date and time : 23/09/2010 between 9.30 and 16.45  
Venue: Refugee Council, 240-250 Ferndale Rd, London SW9  
TEL: 0207346 6733**



## Lewisham Refugee Network



**Parker House  
1st Floor  
144, Evelyn St  
Deptford  
London SE8 5DD**

**Phone: 02086940323  
Fax: 0208 694 6621**

Lewisham Refugee Network (LRN) was established in 1991, and is a longstanding provider of advice, advocacy and support services to asylum seekers and refugees in south east London.

LRN provides advice on immigration, health and social welfare issues, as well as specialist services such as the Vulnerable Women's

Project. We also have services such as English classes and food distribution.

In addition we play a key role in supporting refugee community organisations, as well as providing support and assistance to those interested in working with asylum

seekers and refugees locally.

**OPENING HOURS:  
MONDAY TO FRIDAY  
9.30am – 4.30pm**

**[www.lrn.org.uk](http://www.lrn.org.uk)**

## SERVICES OFFERED AT LEWISHAM REFUGEE NETWORK



We are registered with the OISC (Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner) to provide at advice at Level 1. That means we can provide advice on some immigration matters such as:

- Notification of the United Kingdom Borders Agency (UKBA) of a change of address
- Application for an extension of Temporary Admission
- Applications for permission to work
- Travel document applications for someone granted indefinite leave to remain.



For cases that need to be taken further, we can provide clients with information on qualified solicitors that offer legal aid or give their services free.

We are recruiting for an Advice Worker to enable us to give advice at Level 2.

### ADVISORY SERVICE

Our advisors give advice and information through one-to-one appointments. If we can't help clients, we signpost them to specialist agencies.

**Immigration  
Welfare benefits  
Housing  
Social care**

**To book an appointment  
WITH Sayid Abdullahi or  
Ahmed Hassan please ring  
0208 694 0323**

**ENGLISH AS A SECOND  
LANGUAGE (ESOL) CLASSES-**  
Classes take place every Monday and Wednesday between 10 and 12pm. FREE CRECHE AVAILABLE. **To book a place contact the office on 0208 6940323**

### HEALTH ACCESS PROJECT

For information and advice about accessing NHS treatment, signposting to relevant health services and help with health-related benefits.

Appointments on Monday and Tuesday between 10 and 3pm.  
**To book and appointment with Margot Lawrence, ring 0208 6940323**

### WOMEN'S SUPPORT SERVICES

We offer a one-to-one counselling service for refugee and asylum-seeking women who are suffering the effects of gender-based violence or domestic violence and other traumas.

Appointments on Mondays and Wednesdays between 10 and 1pm, and 2 and 4pm.

**For an appointment with Emma Brech ring 0208 6919843**

### OTHER SERVICES INCLUDE:

#### Food Parcel Service

We provide a weekly food parcel service every Wednesday between 10 and 12pm for clients that are destitute and have no other means of income.

#### 'Time to Talk' - Lewisham Refugee Network Nurture/Health Group for Women

It includes Conversational English, and support and education around health and self-esteem. Every Wednesday from 10-12PM.

**Sewing Club** every Wednesday between 12 and 2pm. Free crèche provided.