

Survival

The Newsletter of
the Refugee Survival Trust

RST

Refugee
Survival
Trust

RST is a small volunteer-led charity that provides grants to asylum seekers and refugees living in Scotland.

These grants either alleviate poverty and destitution, or help refugees and asylum seekers to overcome obstacles in accessing educational and employment opportunities.

RST uses the information and experience gained from providing these grants to lobby for improved conditions for asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland.

Please read this newsletter and pass it on to spread the word about our work.

Keep in touch – sign up for email updates at:
www.rst.org.uk

New Bus Pass Fund

Helping destitute people to attend vital appointments

Many destitute asylum seekers in Glasgow struggle to travel to essential legal or medical appointments as they have no money to pay for a bus fare.

This winter RST will be working with the Glasgow Destitution Network on a pilot project to provide people who need to travel over two miles to a vital meeting with a day bus pass.

The people we will support have no access to any Government or other support apart from charity food parcels and the help that friends can provide. They are people whose asylum claims have been refused but who are

unable to return home for a wide variety of reasons including those who are trying to appeal the negative decision and those who the Government cannot return home because there is no safe route to send them home by.



See pages 4 & 5 for some stories of people in this situation.



<http://beckyxduincanphotography.com/>

AGM Success



AGM: RST Chair Eileen Baxendale and Lord Provost of Glasgow

Our AGM on September 13th was well attended by members and representatives from a range of partner organisations. We were welcomed with a very supportive speech by the Lord Provost of Glasgow **who thanked RST for its vital work in Glasgow.**

Board members Janet Price and Duncan Ross (Company Secretary) both stood down at the AGM and Eileen Baxendale expressed the appreciation of the Board for all of their thorough and dedicated work over the years. Mhoraig Green also stood down and was re-

elected. Susan Martin, Judith Crichton and Angela Gardiner who were co-opted to the Board during the previous year were also appointed.

The organisation's Memorandum and Article were amended to reserve one space on the Board for a refugee.

Following the formal business, the meeting heard from Charlotte Atta of Karibu Scotland on the benefits of Access to Education and Employment Grants and from Charles Atangana of the Scottish Refugee Policy Forum about destitution.

Night Drop in

RST is supporting Glasgow Destitution Network with £2,000 towards the costs of running a night-time drop-in during the winter for destitute asylum seekers. The new project will offer a meal and a safe warm place during the cold winter nights.

Destitution Grants

In the six months from April-September we supported 203 destitute people (196 adults and 7 children) with 196 destitution grants totalling £12,086. 116 of these people were homeless, 2 were pregnant, and 2 were unaccompanied minors.

Access to Education & Employment Grants

Between April and September we approved 48 AtoEE grants totalling £5,500. Six of these grants were to cover course fees, 22 for professional qualifications, and the others were to contribute to study materials, travel costs and vocational training.

Talks Ambassadors Project Launched

Project to raise awareness about asylum destitution

Since July, Alistair Hayes has been working for RST as Communications and Fundraising Intern, **courtesy of the SCVO's Third Sector Internships Program. One of Alistair's** main goals has been to set up an RST Talks program.

He has been building up a team of skilled enthusiastic volunteers willing to deliver a talk to groups wishing to know more about the work we do and the situation for refugees

and asylum seekers in Scotland.

We held two Talks Ambassador training sessions for volunteers in Edinburgh and Glasgow which focused on public speaking, getting to know RST and discovering how to ensure talks are interactive and informative.

The talks program has now been launched. A couple of our volunteers will be speaking to 150 second year pupils at Cumnock

Academy, in Glasgow, on 14th November. We will be organising lots more talks over the coming months.

Book a talk

If want to receive an **RST talk it couldn't be easier to set one up.**

Email Alistair at info@rst.org.uk or call us on 0131 243 2660.

New RST Destitution Animation



The animation company *show them pictures*, has just started work on a new short animation for RST which will highlight the delays and errors in asylum policy and procedure which leave too many refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland hungry and homeless.

The company is producing the animation

for free to support RST's work. We are excited about the project which will be a new resource to enable us to raise awareness of the causes of destitution.

The animation will be launched as part of the annual Edinburgh International Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace in February 2012.

Diary Date

29th Feb 2012 6:30-7:30pm
Animation Launch
Iglu, 2b Jamaica Street,
Edinburgh EH3 6HH

Walking the streets

The stories of destitute people getting around Glasgow with no cash

If we were arranging to meet our lawyer, attend classes or visit our doctor, few of us would think twice about how to pay for the bus to get there.

However, this winter many destitute asylum seekers in Glasgow will be faced with choosing between walking for miles in the cold or missing their vital appointments just because **they can't pay for the bus ticket**.

Missing these meetings can **impact on people's asylum claim**. This is the case for Maiba* from Zimbabwe. She has lived for 16 months in Glasgow with no cash. She suffers from severe back pain. The successful outcome of her asylum case depends on her attending solicitors appointments and regularly reporting to the UK Border Agency – so she is forced to walk 10 mile round trips, leaving her flat at 9am for an appointment at 1pm and getting back home at 6pm.

She does this in all weather, in serious pain and often on an empty stomach.

Not being able to travel around the city can also leave vulnerable people lonely and isolated. People like Yusuf from Somalia who has been living with no access to cash support for five months while he waits for his appeal to be considered. He needs to travel to report to UKBA, to visit his solicitors and to get to college to study English. He has to walk everywhere. His college has been unable to help him with travel costs, so he had to stop his classes. Since then he has found himself increasingly isolated, depressed and frustrated:

*“If I could have a bus pass then I could get to ESOL again and understand more of what people here are saying. But now I can do nothing. I just sit and be **hungry**”.*

In response to this kind of need, RST will run a four

month pilot Bus Pass Scheme this winter. Through partner organisations in the Glasgow Destitution Network who distribute food parcels to destitute asylum seekers, we will issue day bus passes on a weekly basis from November 2011 to February 2012.

The passes will be provided to people who have no access to any other form of support and who need to travel over two miles to **attend solicitor's** appointments, medical appointments, classes, or other important meetings, or who need to report to UK Border Agency.

As we cannot provide for all those who need the passes, priority will be given to those with additional vulnerabilities such as mental or physical health problems.

People like Ahmad from Kuwait, who came to the UK in 2000 and is still waiting for his claim to be

resolved. He has severe mental health problems and urgently needs to attend weekly hospital checkups and pharmacy visits to pick up his medication. He has suffered racist assaults in the past and this, in addition to his extremely fragile mental health, makes him terrified of walking in the streets for even short distances. Ahmad lives five miles away from the hospital and pharmacy, but he has no way of paying for travel and relies on friends to help him.

As the days get colder, many people like Daya from East Africa are beginning to dread the winter ahead:

“It is the worst time. It is a bad time. I don’t have the right shoes for walking outside in the cold. And then you can’t wash well, and your clothes can’t get clean or dry because of no heating, and it is so dark outside for walking. I am worried about this winter”.

To trial this scheme we



will be offering 100 day bus passes a month through the winter. We will be reviewing the project in January to assess demand and funding for the scheme.

In the meantime, we hope that it will make the winter months more bearable for people who have been left with almost nothing.

* Names have been changed

➡ Donate a bus pass

To give £4 to our bus pass fund text FARE044 to 70070

Or you can post us a cheque if that’s easier!

➡ Further info

Glasgow destitution network:

destitutionaction.wordpress.com

Prize draw, ceilidh, meal and film



© Felipe Bustos

Thank you for helping us to raise over £1,500 towards our destitution grants fund through our prize draw and our ceilidh, dinner and film event on October 29th.

The night which was organised by the fabulous Ceilidh Collective was a great success. Over 60 people came for a delicious two course organic dinner and film screening of the award-winning documentary *Climate Refugees*. Another 140 people came along to dance the night away to some fabulous tunes with the Cosmic Ceilidh band.

We also held our raffle with fantastic prizes from Iglu restaurant, Stationmasters Hostel, Filmhouse, Scotmid, Indaba, Ceilidh Collective & PressureDrop massage.

Thank you very much to all of the organisations and Individuals who donated prizes and to all of our supporters who made the prize draw successful by buying and selling raffle tickets.

Huge thanks also to Ceilidh Collective and Take One Action who screened the film for us.

A list of the prize winners is available at: rst.org.uk/news/events

Thanks!



Thank you to all our supporters who have raised money for us over the summer through a variety of creative means including a school cake sale, a donation of profits from a wedding bar, a brave barefoot ceilidh in the mud and rain in the Edinburgh Meadows and sponsored runs in the Great Scottish Run.

Thanks to Grace and Warren Canham, Iain Dean, Rachel Farrier, Sam Howarth, John Lowe, Lyn Lowe, Matt Lowe, Gin Lowe, Michelle Lowe, and Robin Naumann.

If you have an idea to raise funds for RST **don't hesitate to get in touch** and we will do what we can to help.

Three easy ways to support RST

1 jewelleryrecycling.org

Do you have any old jewellery that you don't want any more? If so, please have a clear out and stick it in the envelope enclosed with this newsletter.

Odd earrings, broken chains and watches, costume jewellery and gold and silver can all be recycled RST will receive a donation.

2 Give as you Live™

If you are buying Christmas presents online at thousands of stores including John Lewis and Marks and Spencer's, you can support RST at no extra cost to yourself.

Just go to www.giveasyoulive.com, pick RST as your charity and they will make a donation to us for every item you buy.

3 Organise an RST Talk

Help us spread the word about RST's work. Would your workplace, place of study, church, community group, or any other club or group you are part of, be interested in hearing more about us?

If so, contact us to arrange for one of our Talks Ambassadors to come and tell people about the issues affecting refugees and asylum seekers and the work RST does to help them. Just email info@rst.org.uk

Membership: The ideal Christmas present?



To keep up our vital work we need to increase our membership.

Enclosed with this newsletter you should find a membership leaflet.

Please help us by:

Joining us: If you are not already a member, please consider joining RST.

Getting a friend join us: Why not buy them membership for Christmas?

Getting lots of friends to join us: If you could distribute some of our leaflets then please drop us an email and we will post you as many as you can use.



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Charity no: SCO24328

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Email: info@rst.org.uk

Visit our website:
www.rst.org.uk

The Refugee Survival Trust only exists thanks to the generosity, help and support given by people in Scotland—individuals, churches, clubs, companies and schools. It is thanks to you that we are able to prevent hundreds of vulnerable people from being destitute on the streets of Scotland. However, as harsh legislation and an often ineffective asylum system forces more people to rely on RST funding to survive, we need your help more than ever.

Please pass on this newsletter to friends, family and colleagues, and encourage them to support us—ask them to show their support by making a donation online or by joining us. You can also donate online: www.rst.org.uk

Please make a donation

Last year, RST made grants of over £39,000 to prevent the destitution of asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland. RST only has limited funds, and desperately needs to raise more if it is to continue. Without RST, asylum seekers, refugees and their children would be left with no money for food, and often no accommodation. Please make a donation now to help us continue this essential work. Thank you!

Title: **Mr / Mrs / Ms / Other**

Full Name:

Full address:

..... **Postcode:**

Email: (Please give us your email address if you would like to receive occasional updates about our work by email)

- I would like to make a donation of £ and enclose a cheque/postal order payable to the Refugee Survival Trust for this amount.
- I am a UK Taxpayer and would like the Refugee Survival Trust to reclaim tax on this and all donations hereafter (*please tick*)

NB This only applies if you currently pay tax on income or any savings you have. You must pay an amount of income tax or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax we reclaim on your donations in the tax year.

Please return to: The Refugee Survival Trust, The Melting Pot, 5 Rose Street, Edinburgh EH2 2PR