

# Issue 31

Winter 2017/18

The Refugee Survival Trust is a small charity that provides grants and integrated support services to asylum seekers and refugees living in Scotland.

These grants and services alleviate poverty and destitution, or help refugees and asylum seekers to access education and employment.

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

## Stay in touch:

 @RefugeeSurvival

 [Refugee Survival Trust](#)

[www.rst.org.uk](http://www.rst.org.uk)

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

## Prefer to receive email updates?

Send us your full name and email address and we'll update your contact preferences.

# RST News

## Glasgow Welcome!



The first cohort of our Glasgow Welcome befriending project began in December. Nineteen refugees, asylum seekers and locals are taking part, in pairs or trios. Once matched with a partner they will meet up fortnightly for the next six months, alongside being able to attend regular group events as well. This will give them the opportunity to both get to know their partner and also develop social connections with others in the group.

**...read more on page 3**

**Join the project!** Interest in the project has been high, and we are currently in the process of beginning the second cohort. If you'd like to find out more about the befriending project get in touch with Katherine:  
[volunteer\\_coordinator@rst.org.uk](mailto:volunteer_coordinator@rst.org.uk) or 0141 353 5602.

## We want to keep in touch!

It's once again been a very busy few months for the Refugee Survival Trust — with Christmas fundraising events, another successful bus pass appeal and the most busy quarter in the history of our Destitution Grants programme (see page 5).

All this would not be possible without our many supporters, so thanks again to all of you who give your time, donate your money, and spread the word about our activities. Without you, we would not be able to have the same impact.

You, **our supporters are very important to us. And that's why it's really important for us that you complete the contact details form** that we've sent to you along with this issue. The General Data Protection Regulation will apply from 25 May 2018 and so we need all of our supporters to actively opt in to receiving updates and newsletters from us. If you don't complete this form, we may not be able to contact you again in the future.

So please do complete our form now so that we can continue to share our news and successes with you in the future!

*The RST Team*

## New board members

Welcome to Mona Vaghefian and Joan McHutchison, who joined the Board of Trustees at the Annual General Meeting!



**Mona** has over ten years of experience in various communications roles across the private and third sector, as well as previous trustee experience with the Edinburgh Iranian Festival. She is excited about joining the team.

**Joan** has an LLB in Scots Law, an LLM in International Law, and received a Diploma in Professional Legal Practice from the University of Glasgow. She is currently a trainee solicitor and previously worked at Govan Law Centre, various Scottish law firms, the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague, and the United Kingdom Joint Delegation to NATO in Brussels. She is diligent and conscientious and enjoys challenges and working hard to achieve results.

## Befriending programme... continued

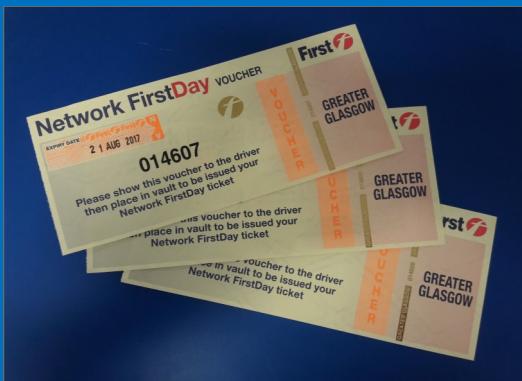
...continued from page 1

Pairs are encouraged to explore cultural sites around Glasgow and to record their visits by taking photos of the things they see. These photos, alongside some short lines of text written by participants about the parks, museums or galleries they visit, will be compiled into a Glasgow Guide which will be printed and distributed in Glasgow's 32 council libraries. You can see the postcard created by Andrew and Biko during the training session, featuring some of the buildings and sights located close to RST's office in Glasgow City Centre.

We secured additional funding from Awards for All to offer a participatory filmmaking project to the volunteers, in partnership with our friends at Media Co Op. Some of the pairs are currently learning how to shoot and edit a film on their mobile phones, recording their befriending journey over the six months. The short films they will create will then be used to promote the benefits of befriending as well as to recruit future participants.



## Christmas bus pass appeal



Refugees and asylum seekers will once again have the chance to travel by public transport this winter, following another successful online appeal.

RST supporters donated £1400 in the run-up to Christmas — enabling us to buy more than 200 daily bus passes for refugees to go to the shops, get to important meetings and community groups and to see their friends.

## Jedburgh Three Peaks Ultra Marathon

We were absolutely delighted when the organisers of the Jedburgh Three Peaks Ultra Marathon contacted us to let us know that RST had been selected as the charity partner for the event. We decided that it would be rude not to take part, but 38 miles was a little bit beyond even the fittest of our staff members, and so we entered a relay team. Comprised of Volunteer Coordinator Katherine, Coordinator Zoe and two pals Giulia and Andy, Team Cape Cod, dressed in fish hats, capes and tutus took on the 38 mile course, which included some fairly serious trail running, as well as some surprises like a section through a play park and an oversized bat and squirrel jumping out at runners!



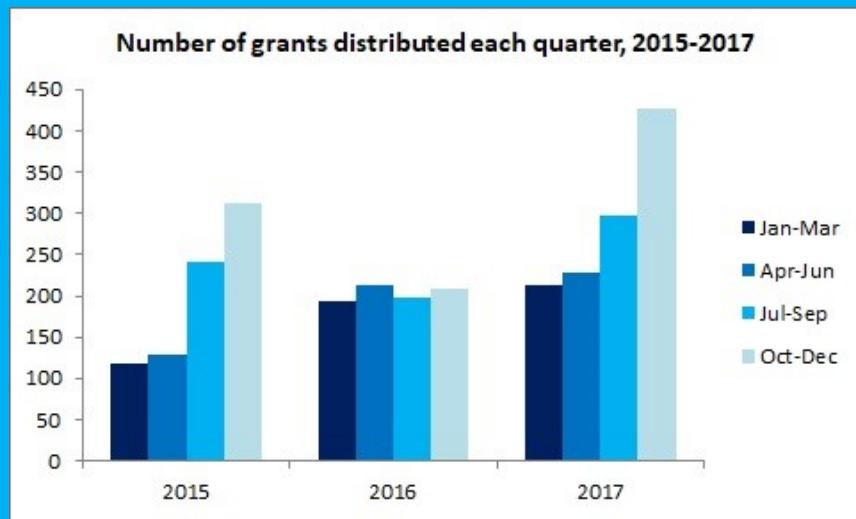
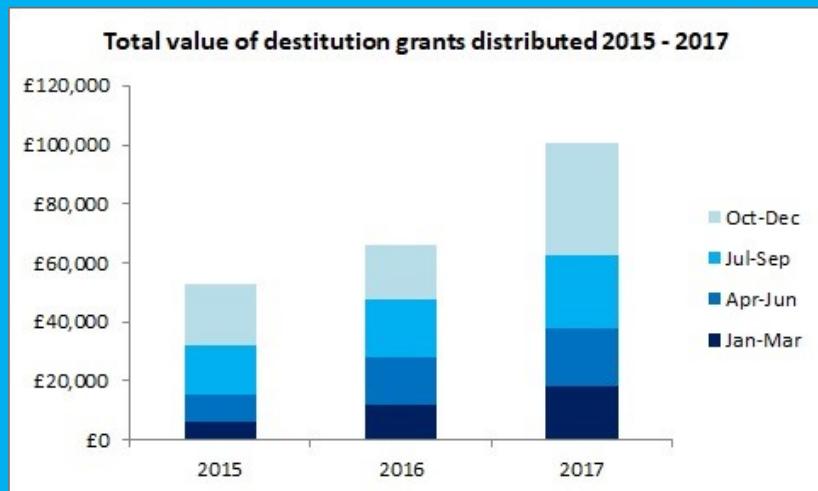
We had a brilliant day out, thanks to Andy and Giulia for joining the team and to Angela and Noanie for organising an incredible event, which raised a massive £2500 for RST.



## Record-breaking year for RST's Destitution Grants

For the first time in the history of the Refugee Survival Trust, we distributed more than £100,000 through our destitution grants programme in 2017. This compared to around £66,000

in 2016 and £52,000 in 2015.



2017 was also the first ever year in which we distributed more than 1000 grants — we gave 1167 grants in 2017, compared to 813 in 2016 and 800 in 2015.

October to

December 2017 was our busiest quarter ever, with a total of 428 grants distributed during these 3 months. Nobody in Scotland should be facing destitution, and RST are continuing to monitor increasing demand for our grants with concern.

# New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy: 2018-2022

Following a series of consultation events in 2017, the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy for 2018 – 2022 was launched in Glasgow on 10th January.

The purpose of the Strategy, led by the Scottish Government, Scottish Refugee Council and COSLA, is to address the immediate and long-term needs of asylum seekers and refugees by coordinating the support of organisations and community groups across Scotland. It sees integration as a two-way process, recognising the importance of active involvement of asylum seekers and refugees in shaping policy. While asylum law is reserved to Westminster and outwith the control of the Scottish Government, some devolved matters, such as education and healthcare, have a direct effect on the lives of asylum seekers and refugees. The Strategy outlines proposals for improvements in these areas and others, including availability of housing, employability & welfare rights, education, language, health & wellbeing, communities, culture & social connections.

The New Scots approach outlined in the Strategy is based on five principles:

- Integration from Day One
- A Rights Based Approach
- Refugee Involvement
- Inclusive Communities
- Partnership & Collaboration

There is a strong focus on partnership working among organisations to achieve these outcomes.

[http://www.gov.scot/  
Publications/2018/01/7281](http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/01/7281)



## Thank you Mohamed!

We were delighted to have Mohamed in the office for an internship between October and December. During his time at RST he wrote for our blog, did research on cultural attractions in Glasgow, shared links on social media and wrote to supporters. The office internship scheme provides refugees and asylum seekers with an opportunity to gain practical experience in a third sector organisation, learn and practice new skills, and experience Scottish office culture. Constant hot drinks and biscuits are integral to the behind the scenes work of RST, and Mohamed's enthusiasm and sense of humour were a valuable addition to our tea breaks.

Happily we don't need to say goodbye just yet, as he's gone on to join our befriending project and will continue exploring the city of Glasgow with Jamie and Marie. Mohamed is also moving on to take part in the excellent coding school for refugees Code Your Future, where he will learn the technical skills necessary to become a web developer. We know he'll be a success!

## Annual General Meeting



The Lord Provost of Edinburgh opened the AGM

RST's AGM was held on 3 October in the Edinburgh City Chambers. The meeting was opened by the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, who gave an overview of RST's work and highlights of 2016-17. Co-chair Ben White presented the annual report and Treasurer Gabriel Kaifala presented the accounts. Trustee elections were held, in which Rasha Tindal was appointed Chair, Jacqueline Farmer Treasurer, Liz Quinn Secretary and two new trustees were appointed — Joan McHutchison and Mona Vaghefian. Finally, Jon Busby of the Welcoming Association and Pamela Couper of Saheliya presented the work that these organisations do to support refugees and migrants in Edinburgh.



Mohamed writing Christmas cards to our supporters



Refugee  
Survival  
Trust

We rely on help and support given by people in Scotland. Thanks to you we are able to help hundreds of vulnerable and destitute people each year.

**But it's getting harder** - harsh legislation and an often ineffective asylum system force more people to rely on RST funding to survive, we need your help more than ever.

**Encourage friends or family to join us:** pass on this newsletter and ask them to make a donation, become a member or volunteer their time.

**New ideas?** Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you'd like to organise an event, collect sponsorship or volunteer with us!

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Glasgow, G2 4TB

**Charity no:** SC024328

## Please make a donation to help us to continue our essential work.

Please contact [info@rst.org.uk](mailto:info@rst.org.uk) if you would like to set up a regular donation.

You can also donate online: [www.rst.org.uk](http://www.rst.org.uk).

Title: ..... Full Name: .....

Full address: .....

..... Postcode: .....

Telephone: ..... Email: .....

- I would like to make a donation of £ ..... and enclose a cheque/postal order payable to the Refugee Survival Trust for this amount.
- Gift Aid Declaration (please tick):** *I want all the donation I've made since 6th April 2010 and all donation in the future to qualify for Gift Aid until I notify you otherwise. I understand that the charity will reclaim 25p tax for every £1 that I donate. I confirm that I have paid or will pay an amount of income tax or capital gains tax at least equal the amount of tax that RST, all charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs I donate to, will reclaim in the tax year.*

I would like to receive updates  via email  via post

I would like to become a member of RST

Please return to: Refugee Survival Trust, Robertson House, 152 Bath Street, Glasgow, G2 4TB