

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

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

Prefer to receive email updates?

We also send this newsletter as an email bulletin so if you'd prefer to receive an electronic copy get in touch!

New flat for the DASS project!

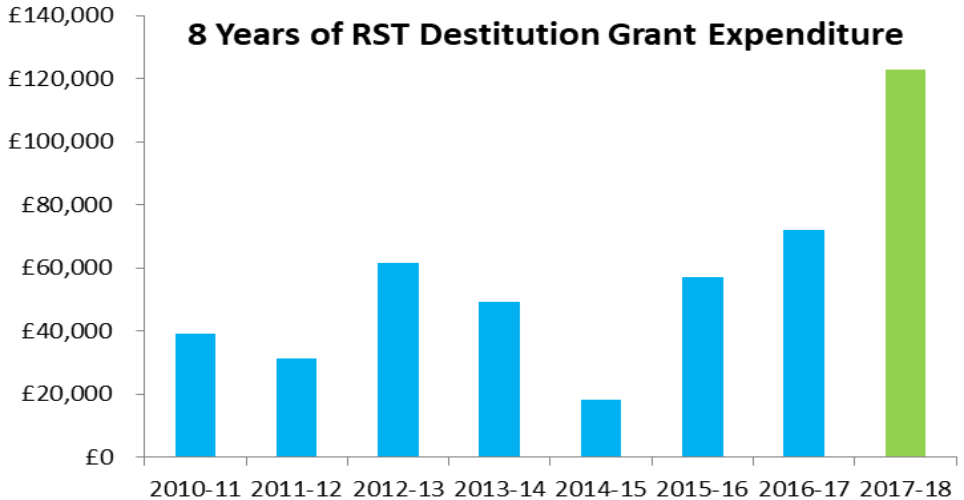


Two of our very generous supporters have purchased a two bedroomed flat in Glasgow and have donated it to the DASS project, which is amazing! The flat is not in 'walk in' condition so over the next few months we will be giving it a good clean and doing some refurbishment work to have it ready by the end of the summer. The flat will provide a further 2 places for people working with Strathclyde Law Clinic to prepare a fresh asylum claim.

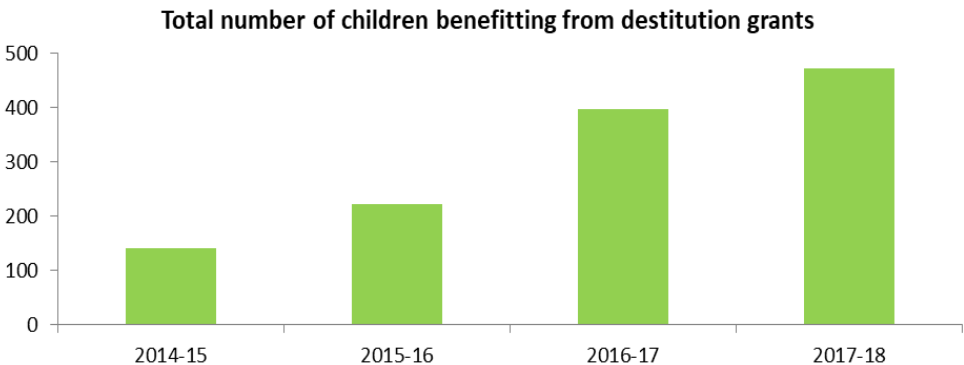
The DASS project has also received funding from the Guardian and Observer Charity Winter appeal. The appeal focused on homelessness and raised over £1.5m, with £500,000 awarded to the No Accommodation Network (NACCOM) to support services that prevent homelessness amongst people with no recourse public funds. The grant we received will go towards covering the costs of refurbishing and running the new flat.

Destitution Grants update

2017-18 saw the Refugee Survival Trust distribute a record-breaking number of destitution grants – more than 1400 grants, to a total of more than £120,000.



Of the total 2070 people who benefitted from destitution grants in 2017-18, 472 (or 22.8%) were children. As a proportion this is lower than in 2016-17, but the total number of child beneficiaries has increased. These statistics clearly show that there is a long way to go before Scotland meets its national approach of 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC). There are still hundreds of asylum seeker and refugee children in Scotland who are finding themselves in a situation where they and their parents do not have a room over their head or know where their next meal is coming from.



Befriending update

Our befriending volunteers have been keeping busy over the last few months—in February, they took part in a workshop led by our partners at the Media Coop, where they learnt how to shoot films and take selfies. They are now using their knowledge to produce short films that will be shown at the Refugee Festival in June.



In April, we went on a tour of the BBC where we saw the news going out live and checked out the radio studios, and most recently, in May we did a tour of the National Library Moving Image Archive where we watched short films of Glasgow through the ages!



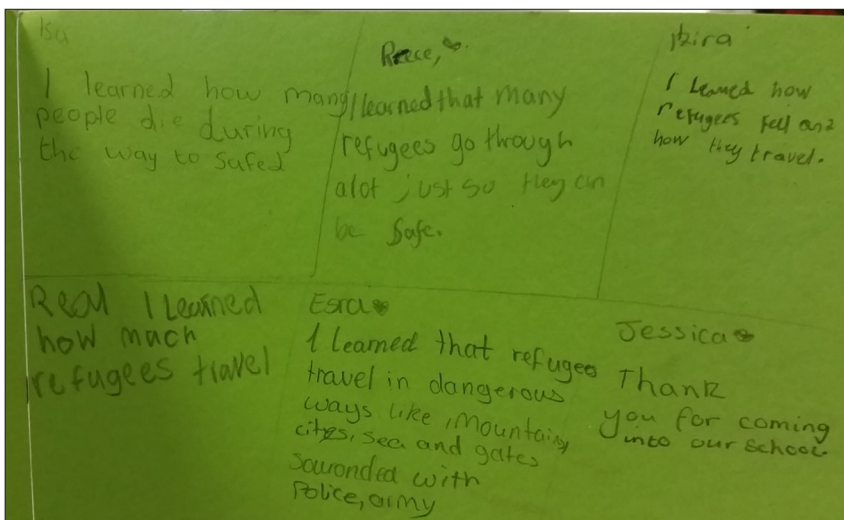
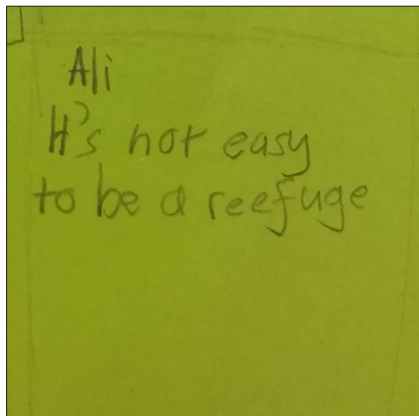
Teacher training with WOSDEC and Refuweegee

We're delighted to have been working together with WOSDEC Global Learning Centre and Refuweegee this year to develop a short, hands-on training course exploring how teachers can explore migration, asylum and refugee issues in the classroom.

The first sessions had teachers explore ways to introduce themes of seeking asylum to pupils, and how to facilitate meaningful discussions around reasons people have to flee their homes and some of the challenges they face once arrived in a new country.

After two initial sessions the teachers went away to try out some of the techniques and activities learned in the classroom, reconvening several months down the line to share their experiences and discuss the issues in more depth.

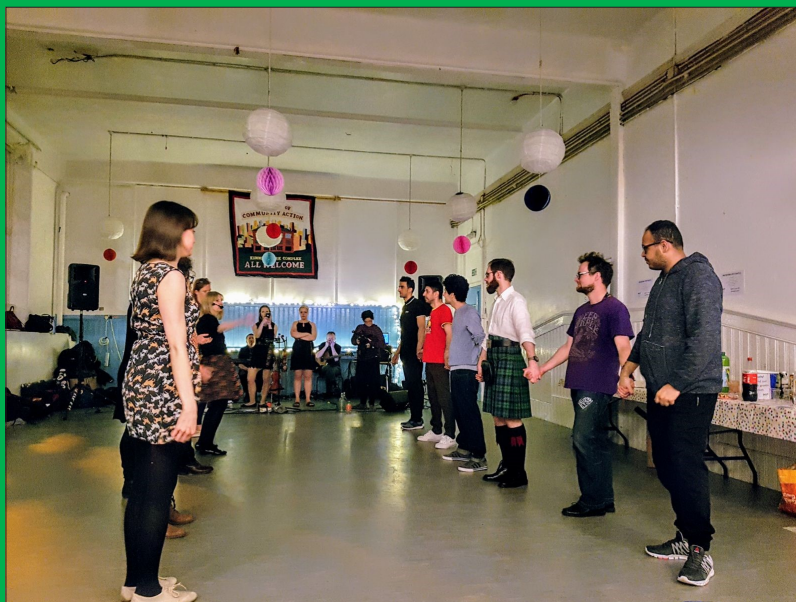
RST offer an community engagement programme and can send a representative out to visit your school, community or faith group to run an interactive workshop on asylum and migration issues and our work with destitute refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland.



We recently visited Highpark Primary and spoke to Miss Wujec's P7 class – you can see from the beautiful card the pupils sent us that they had some very thoughtful discussions around what life might be like as a refugee.

Please contact Katherine on volunteer_coordinator@rst.org.uk if you're interested in finding out more about our outreach and community engagement activities.

Dancing shoes firmly on!



On the 15th May we held a fundraising ceilidh in the Kinning Park Complex where staff, volunteers and supporters of RST had the chance to strut their stuff to the fantastic sounds of Point Five Ceilidh band. Delicious Syrian food was provided by excellent local social enterprise Küche, and we had our friends from Media Co-Op along

helping us to make a film showcasing RST's integration and befriending programmes. The majority of people attending had never been to a ceilidh before but despite this showed off some seriously impressive dancing skills! The talented Afshin Karimi, currently volunteering in the RST office and

whose photos can be seen elsewhere in this newsletter, treated us to a beautiful rendition of a traditional Iranian folk song which was a beautiful addition to our evening's entertainment. A huge thanks to everyone who came along – we raised a respectable £242.71 from donations and raffle ticket sales which will go directly to our destitution grant funds.



My Glasgow—Afshin

Afshin has been doing an internship in our office—and taking amazing photos in his spare time!



"I always really liked photography, since I was a child - photography and music. Everything I see around me, my eyes tell me "Oh, very nice picture!". And everything my eyes tell me - I listen. "Here's a good photo"? I take it.

"My favourite thing about Glasgow... It's too difficult! I like many things, the people, the buildings, the parks. I'd recommend someone new to the city to take a walk round and have a look at all the buildings, and enjoy the buskers playing music in the street."



Youth Philanthropy Initiative —with Mearns Castle High School

The Youth and Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) is an active citizenship programme that raises awareness amongst young people about philanthropy and their local community. Each participating school, each year is responsible for directing a £3000 YPI Grant to a local charity through a unique programme of team work, research and competition.



We were delighted to be chosen by a group of S2 students from Mearns Castle High School as their charity to research and represent in the programme, and we visited in May to discuss RST's work and the impact winning would have on the people we support.

Volunteer Coordinator Katherine headed out to visit the students, who really impressed

by having done a great deal of research beforehand. It's really inspiring to see young people engaging with refugee and migration issues in such a compassionate and engaged way, and it was a real pleasure to have the chance to meet and speak to these students about our work.

Our champions will first present their research on RST to their class, alongside other charities, and the winners of a class vote will go through to an expert panel of judges who will assess the presentations and award the prize to the most well-researched and persuasive group. Fingers crossed for team RST!

All fundraising from events as well as direct donations and applications to relevant trusts and funds goes directly to fund our destitution grants – staff time and project work is funded through separate income streams. A £3000 YPI donation would cover the cost of 35 emergency destitution grants for refugees and asylum seekers, covering essential costs like travel to Home Office appointments and basic necessities like food and clothes.

RST goes international!

Morocco



Katherine was honoured to represent RST in Rabat, Morocco as part of 'Arts for Advocacy', an interdisciplinary research project seeking to facilitate critical engagement and advocacy relating to forced displacement. The project was part of a collaboration between the universities of Edinburgh and Keele alongside local partners in the UK and Morocco. Katherine gave a conference presentation on RST's community engagement work with a particular focus on our befriending project Glasgow Welcome. The trip was an incredible opportunity to connect with people involved in arts-based practice including anti-racist organisations, theatres, dancers, musicians, filmmakers and researchers.

Sweden



Zoe attended a two day workshop in Stockholm which gave an opportunity to learn about their fast track programmes to get refugees into employment. It was also a great chance to meet representatives of other charities from all over Europe.

We hope there will be opportunities for future collaboration on European projects!

A visit from Alison Thewliss MP



We were delighted in February when our local MP Alison Thewliss visited our Glasgow office. She has a keen interest in asylum and refugee issues and met with our Volunteer Coordinator Katherine and DASS Project Manager Cath to talk about the work of the Refugee Survival Trust. We thank Alison for her ongoing support

DASS research nearing completion

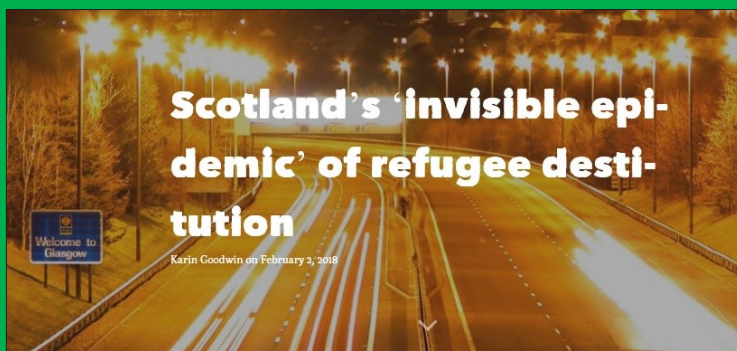
The 18 month DASS research project is nearing completion and the final report will be launched at an event during this years' Refugee Festival. We will announce the date as soon as it's finalised.

The research examines the extent to which asylum seekers living in destitution can access support in Scotland and the extent to which destitution impacts on service providers' capacity to work with people who are destitute.

Copies of the full report will be available digitally along with a printed summary of the research findings and recommendations. We'd like to thank our researcher, Ruth McKenna and the two peer researchers, Billy Kahari and Saadatu Adam for all their hard work.

RST in the News!

Our destitution grants have had a lot of publicity recently, with two articles about destitute refugees featuring in the Ferret in January and February, one in the The National in March, and Cath and a few of our beneficiaries were interviewed for an interview broadcast on BBC World Service in April.



A small charity described as “an absolute lifeline” has raised concerns about its ability to respond to a growing “invisible epidemic” of refugee destitution.

Refugee Survival Trust – which provides emergency grants to asylum seekers and refugees when their support has been stopped – is raising the alarm after distributing more than £100,000 of destitution payments in 2017.

THE NATIONAL
THE NEWSPAPER THAT SUPPORTS AN INDEPENDENT SCOTLAND

NEWS POLITICS SPORT BUSINESS CULTURE WORLD COMMENT

1st March
Refugee Survival Trust says refugees are being 'left out in cold'

Kirsteen Paterson @kapaterson
Journalist

Raising awareness of the issues facing refugees and people claiming asylum is one of the main aims of the Refugee Survival Trust so we are very grateful to all of the journalists who use their platform to help to spread the word about the plight of destitute refugees in Scotland, and the work of the Refugee Survival Trust. We hope that some of them will be recognised in the Refugee Festival Media awards this year.

Dates for your diary...

16

JUNE

New Scots on screen—short film premiere from our befriending volunteers
Kelvinhall, Glasgow, 2pm

23

JUNE

Journeys to Edinburgh:
Walking and Poetry
Arthur's Seat, Edinburgh, 2pm

5

OCTOBER

Glasgow Welcome photography exhibition and Annual General Meeting
Townhead Village Hall, Glasgow, 5.30pm

20

OCTOBER

Harvest Ceilidh with Hud Yer Wheesht
Edinburgh Ceilidh Band and friends
Greyfriars Kirk, Edinburgh 7pm
ceilidhcollective.org

RST

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!

Refugee Survival Trust

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