A National Strategic Framework for Refugee Community Development

Draft

February 2006
National Strategic Framework for Refugee Community Development

This strategic framework is developed by Praxis following an action research commissioned by the NRIF Community Development sub committee, now re-named Communities and Media sub committee. The action research was overseen by a steering group including refugees, representatives from UK community development, the TUC, OPDM and Goldsmith University of London. It involved a literature review, two rounds of regional consultations throughout the UK and a mapping exercise on selected public policy levers and regional refugee community development process.
Introduction

For more than 20 years work has been taking place at local and national level to facilitate the development of refugees and their communities. The organic growth of a considerable amount of practical work has brought us to a point of reflection and a desire for a more coordinated strategic approach. Whilst diversity of approaches is valued there is a perceived absence of a common national perspective mutually understood by a range of actors.

The Community Development Sub-Committee of the National Refugee Integration Forum therefore commissioned Praxis to undertake an action research to inform the sub-committee’s agenda and also to enrich a wider understanding of refugee community development.

Emerging from this study is a national framework designed to provide a strategic and long-term perspective to refugees, community development workers, local, regional and central government departments and indeed all who contribute to the complex process of refugee settlement and integration. This framework draws and builds upon existing practice.

Refugee community development (RCD) is a process which conjoins a diverse range of issues. It aims to transform the experience of settlement and integration of refugees and improve their quality of life, by empowering communities to achieve their aspirations.

The framework understands RCD as a dynamic process directed towards the facilitation of self actualisation, realisation and fulfilment of refugees as a member of a multicultural community. At its heart is a belief that each individual refugee and his or her
community are recognised and enabled as equally valued and active members of the wider UK society.

This framework is presented in the hope that it provides a common understanding of the essence and broader direction of RCD. It also outlines a working model and broad action plans encompassing principal elements which will facilitate planning and evaluation for an effective RCD process.

Recognizing that RCD is community and context specific, the strategic framework is designed to serve as working tool that can be applied flexibly to specific contexts at different levels. This also means it should be revised and updated parallel to changes in the dynamic and contexts of RCD.

The National Refugee Integration Forum has responsibility for the implementation and development of the policy outline din the Home Office document “Integration Matters”.

The framework has been developed with the broad themes and strategic aims of the document firmly in mind.

Fundamental to the RCD strategic framework are four themes:
  • Personal Empowerment
  • Community Initiative
  • Community Cohesion
  • Participation and Voice

There are significant resonances between the framework proposed and core themes of Integration Matters which include achieving potential, contributing to the community and accessing services.
There can be no underestimating the potential and the pain contained within refugee communities. At every level, the issues are complex and challenging. Community Development does not shy away from issues of discrimination and injustice and neither does it lock itself in polemic. This framework arises from a strong tradition of generic UK based and international community development. It is principled and practical and committed to the advancement of peoples displaced by circumstances beyond their control. In this process we hope they will re-gain control and that new alliances and partnerships will emerge for the benefit both of those who experience exclusion and the wider society.
Understanding Refugee Community Development

Broadly, Refugee Community Development (RCD) is a process of fostering opportunities for collective action to address the shared needs and interests of refugee settlement and integration. It is more than increasing the number of refugee community organisations and is intertwined with issues wider than those narrowly specific to individual refugees and/or individual refugee communities: issues of immigration policy, social cohesion, roles and interests of various stakeholders and a recognition and understanding of both Western and non-Western perspectives of community development.

Facilitating refugee settlement and integration is an overarching objective and/or driver of RCD. At the individual level, it is about supporting individual refugees to understand their settlement environment, their rights and entitlements and to realise their potentials and aspirations. At the collective level, it is about coming together and sharing experiences, supporting each other, having shared voice and participation for positive encouragement from the receiving community, its system, institutions and structures.

Thus, RCD is about challenging barriers to settlement and integration and realising the right of refugees to be recognised and to actively participate as equal UK citizens, fostering mutual understanding and building relationships of belonging with all members of the receiving community, giving refugees a voice for the inclusion of their needs in the planning and provision of services and supporting them to play an active role in the wider democratic process.
In this sense, RCD has a specific relationship with the settlement and integration stage of refugees. However, it takes place within a framework of an established tradition of UK civic culture with established structures, standards and processes. This renders an embedded nature to the specificity of RCD and hence, locating it within the broader generic framework of community development is crucial.

In line with this, it is recommended that the national strategic framework for RCD adopt the community development values and commitments of the Community Development Exchange (CDX).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Development Exchange values and commitments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Values</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Justice</strong> – enabling people to claim their human rights, meet their needs and have greater control over the decision-making processes which affect their lives.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Participation</strong> – facilitating democratic involvement by people in the issues which affect their lives based on full citizenship, autonomy and shared power, skills, knowledge and experience.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Equality</strong> – challenging the attitudes of individuals, and the practices of institutions and society, which discriminate against and marginalise people.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Learning</strong> – recognising the skills, knowledge and expertise that people contribute and developing these by taking action to tackle social, economic, political and environmental problems.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Co-operation</strong> – working together to identify and implement action, based on mutual respect of diverse cultures and contributions.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Commitments</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Challenging</strong> discrimination and oppressive practices within organisations, institutions and communities.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Developing</strong> practice and policy that secures a safe, liveable and sustainable environment.</td>
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<td><strong>Encouraging</strong> networking and connections between communities and organisations.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ensuring</strong> access and choice for all groups and individuals within society.</td>
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<td><strong>Influencing</strong> policy and programmes from the perspective of communities.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Prioritising</strong> the issues of concern to people experiencing poverty and social exclusion.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Promoting</strong> social change that is long-term and sustainable.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reversing</strong> inequality and the imbalance of power relationships in society.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Supporting</strong> community-led collective action.</td>
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Vision

The core idea of this framework is to look at RCD as a mechanism for refugee settlement and integration. It is not about assimilation. Neither is it about pluralism or diversity. It is about the flourishing of every individual’s contributions to society at the social, economic, political, cultural and environmental level.

What matters to RCD is that there are enabling mechanisms for refugees, individually and in various forms of collectivism, to be part of the socio-political and economic dynamics of their newfound country and to be able to live side by side with the rest of society.

Scope

1. Our research acknowledges that community development is not susceptible to prior determination of outcomes. A conventional approach to strategic planning is inadequate in reflecting the nuances and levels of development. We are therefore providing a strategic framework and a broad action plan that can guide initiatives of refugees, their supporters and statutory and non-statutory agencies to flexibly engage in RCD based on their specific interests, responsibilities and circumstances.

2. For the purposes of RCD the term refugee is understood in its generic sense and hence, includes all persons who have been forced to flee their country of origin due to fear of a persecution of one kind or another. It includes those with refugee and humanitarian status and asylum seekers. It should also be noted that at the community level this is
blurred by the presence of asylum seekers whose application has been rejected and those who have not been able to access the asylum system.

3. This framework adopts the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (2002) definition of integration. And it depicts integration as a complex and dynamic two way process of mutual adjustment between refugees and the receiving community, its policy and institutional setup. The emphasis is on a strong pro-refugee focus and a positive action for refugee empowerment at several levels.

4. The policy framework is a given, and this framework aims to make a contribution to the implementation and development of polices and programmes coming out of Integration Matters.

5. Any community development initiative with refugees should recognise that RCD takes place not in traditional neighbourhood communities but in dynamic, spatial dimensions that transcend fixed administrative boundaries.

6. The driver to RCD could come from a refugee community striving to meet some shared need, from a service or an initiative of the voluntary and statutory sector, or a combination of these factors. Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs) are significant but not the only driver, and it is crucial to make a distinction between them. Without self-organising there will be no RCD. However, RCD also includes processes that create the mechanism to transform the settlement and integration experiences of refugees and their outcomes.
7. Any model of RCD initiative must employ techniques of facilitation, animation and consultation leading to participation. Participation becomes even more important in view of the need to extend the choice agenda to all communities.

**Principles**

1. RCD is a long-term, complex and facilitated process of change that aims to transform the settlement and integration experiences of refugees. Its challenges and possibilities are situation specific and so are its outcomes. It is important that this complex nature is acknowledged and RCD is not seen as an easy route to successful refugee settlement and integration.

2. While outcomes of RCD processes are definable, its outputs do not defy measuring and evaluation.

3. The whole idea of RCD is that individuals and the community are perceived as actors rather than objects of policy.

4. The core requirements of a community for equality before the law and equality of opportunity in relation to social, economic, cultural and political fulfilment are enshrined within a legislative framework. RCD depends upon a just and equal treatment of refugees. Where these do not exist, a RCD should work to bring them into being.

5. A crucial principle is to process the creative tension between government necessity to ‘deal with’ the arrival of refugees in the best possible way and the refugees desire to be
themselves in their new environment in the best possible way.

6. The refugee, voluntary and community sector and the government have a range of initiatives within which there are good practices that can serve as an essential point of departure for future community developments.

7. There are a wide range of participants within RCD, all of whom have different vantage points and interests. Given the complexity of refugee settlement and integration, any process should be sufficiently open and flexible to engage and take advantage of all players.

8. Refugee needs are for the most part the same as any member of society. Their specific needs overlap with other sectors of society. Therefore, the trajectory of RCD should be from the provision of sensitive services, to ease of access, to appropriately delivered mainstream provision.

9. Any community development process with refugee communities should be integral, rather than parallel, to wider community development.

10. Community development is a constant process requiring both action and reflection. It is not a panacea to resolve complex issues of refugee settlement and integration and social cohesion. However, it brings an additional and essential recourse to the refugees and encourages them in the discovery of solutions.
11. RCD requires resources of its own to equip facilitators and refugee participants with knowledge, skills, information, capacity and infrastructure.

**Strategic Framework Objectives**

1. To equip refugee activists and statutory and non-statutory agencies with methodological and practical tools for engagement in refugee community development.

2. To provide working definitions, articulate core values and to establish a strategic perspective and inform quality standards of refugee community development.

3. To develop a refugee-specific framework that coheres directly with recognised generic community development frameworks.

**Recognition of the RCD Process and its Role**

Refugee community development is a specific community development process undertaken by refugee groups and organisations and their supporters. Refugee groups and organisations should be formed based on refugees’ own wishes and definitions of themselves rather than any imposed structure/association, place, identity or interest. This includes communities based on faith, those with a shared culture or heritage, users of public and other services, those with common interests arising from their work, and people working together to promote the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
In RCD, refugee communities should be approached in terms of their dynamics and fluidity as well as in terms of their social, cultural, regional and political roots in the home country, in the country of settlement and in terms of their transnational practices.

Community organising is fundamental to refugee collective action. It is both the process and outcome of refugee community empowerment. However, community empowerment is not always being formally organised. The institutional structure for refugee community initiative may vary depending upon the size of the community and the specific needs it is aiming to address.

Furthermore, ethnicity/country of origin is an important, but not the only, criterion for refugee community organising. Forms and patterns of refugee community organising are also influenced by other factors including conditions of immigration, categories of refugees, legal status, characteristics of refugee community and conditions of receiving context. These factors should be plotted against the requirements of the specific shared interest/need communities are aiming to address collectively to finally identify the corresponding suitable form of community organising. Strategies and programmes of RCD should recognise that the multifaceted nature of refugee integration, the range and breadth of refugee issues and interests, and the dispersed nature of their settlement mean RCD spans traditional boundaries of organisation and operation. Realising potentials of RCD requires a cross sector, joined-up approach at neighbourhood, local, regional and national level by statutory and non-statutory agencies.

Broadly, the agenda for RCD is transforming the settlement and integration experiences of refugees. However, it is not the ‘magic potion’ for integration and if it is to fulfil its potential as an
important additional mechanism in facilitating the successful integration of refugees, it is crucial that its role is meaningfully valued and recognised by relevant statutory and non-statutory agencies. Hence, as it is the case with wider community development\(^1\), it is important that government and organisations in the voluntary and private sectors:

- Act on the basis of the values and commitments of community development

- Support action by refugee community groups and organisations

- Have clear processes which enable communities to influence their policies, programmes and priorities

- Recognise the right of refugee communities to propose alternative courses of action

- Value and provide access for different types and levels of participation

- Build local, regional and national strategies through dialogue with refugees communities and their organisations

- Recognise the role of refugee community development and allocate resources to it in their strategies

- Recognise the resources, information and support required by refugee community representatives and organisations

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\(^1\) This is another area demonstrating the embedded nature of RCD and the requirements outlined are adopted from CDX’s Community Development Framework.
when working in partnerships

- Ensure working practices and time scales are flexible enough to enable participation by refugee communities and their representatives

In addition, government should take account of the above factors in the development of legislation, regulations, guidance and allocation of resources.

Community Development agencies and practitioners need to recognise the specific and embedded nature of RCD, take a proactive initiative and engage in RCD by reviewing their procedures, training manuals and practice designs.
A Refugee Community Development Model

This section proposes a model of refugee community development that recognises its specific and embedded nature in relation to generic community development. The model also responds to mainstreaming as ideals of the national RCD strategic framework.

Here mainstreaming is understood as a process aiming to:

- Broadening the scope of RCD to include process related to individual refugees, their communities, their relationships with members of the receiving community and participation in public life.

- Situating RCD within the broader UK community development process and engaging all stakeholders of refugee settlement and integration.

- Providing a long-term strategic perspective to RCD.

The model has been developed based on the Achieving Better Community Development (ABCD) Model\(^2\). The five main principles that guided adopting the ABCD model in the development of the RCD model are:

- Placing integration at the core of refugee community development
- Bringing clarity about RCD aims and objectives, recognising its specific and embedded nature

\(^2\) Developed by the Scottish Community Development Centre, the ABCD model identifies broader aims of community development, the range of inputs for community development activity, the process of community empowerment and the benefits to quality of life in communities. As such, it constitutes a valuable framework for planning, evaluation and learning from community development interventions.
National Strategic Framework for Refugee Community Development

- Bringing flexibility to apply at policy, programme and project level and in different contexts
- Enabling participation and putting communities at the centre
- Locating RCD within a broader framework of community development

Throughout, the perspective is one of understanding refugee community development as a process tuned to facilitate self actualisation, realisation and fulfilment as a member of a multicultural community where each individual refugee and his or her community are recognised as equally valued and active members of the wider UK society.

The model should be perceived as a broad framework that can flexibly be applied to specific contexts at different levels. It is also recommended that it is used alongside the ABCD model and its resource packs.

In broad terms, RCD has two aspects: the process of actual community development concerned with community empowerment and the process of facilitating successful settlement and integration. In the same way, as with all community development, **refugee community empowerment** is fundamental as it is the enabling process that leads to collective initiative of one kind or another. Facilitation and availability and access to resources and support structures are crucial for community empowerment.

**Facilitating successful settlement and integration** is the core purpose of RCD and relates to the process and context in which it engages refugee communities to bring about change in their quality of life. The relationship between these two aspects of RCD is depicted in diagram 1.
Diagram 1: Relationship between aspects of RCD

Refugee integration

Starting with outcomes, the overarching idea of RCD is facilitating successful refugee settlement and integration. To this effect, the three main objectives are:

- overcoming barriers to refugee settlement and integration and realising the right of refugees to be recognised and actively participate as equal UK citizens
- Fostering mutual understanding and building relationships of belonging with all members of UK society
- Enabling refugees to play an active role in the wider democratic process

By their very nature these objectives are not amenable to time frames. What is realistic is the incremental change in the quality of settlement and integration manifested in refugees becoming more
and more equal and active citizens and more and more active and equal communities.

*Equal and active citizens*

A successful integration would mean individual refugees have equal opportunities to be able to achieve their social, political and economic aspirations and become productive UK citizens. The role of RCD is thus to empower individual refugees and their communities to challenge barriers to successful settlement and integration.

*Active and equal communities*

Successful refugee settlement and integration is unthinkable without access to resources and decision-making processes, as well as acceptance of refugees as part of the wider community. Equality of access to resources and decision-making processes is realised by active communities. Hence, RCD should aim to challenge barriers and develop capacities of refugee communities and their members to actively participate in public life and build bridges with members of the receiving society.

**Diagram 2: Overarching objective**

Refugee Integration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equal Active Citizens</th>
<th>Active Equal Communities</th>
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Dr Berhana Kessayie©Praxis 02/02/2006
Processes and Dimensions of Refugee Community Empowerment

As an indispensable means by which refugee communities will endeavour to realise successful settlement integration, refugee community empowerment should target their needs at each level and aspect of the settlement and integration process. Hence, we have personal empowerment, positive action, community relation and participation and involvement. The four community empowerment dimensions are set out below with their respective focus and outcome.

As a matter of principle these four dimensions of refugee community empowerment should be approached in their own right and interconnection in planning and evaluating community development activities. A refugee enabled to realise his or her potential in sporting or cultural activities could lead on to the formation of a refugee sporting or cultural group that may go on and engage other members of the local community to organise and participate tournaments or cultural events. The same refugee and refugee group may also negotiate with local statutory and non-statutory agencies on issues of regeneration and access to facilities.

Refugee Community Empowerment Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal empowerment</td>
<td>Refugees</td>
<td>Individual realisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive action</td>
<td>Refugee communities</td>
<td>Refugee community initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community relation</td>
<td>Community interaction</td>
<td>Cohesive communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation and involvement</td>
<td>Public policy</td>
<td>Voice and representation</td>
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</table>
Personal Empowerment

Here personal empowerment represents the processes through which individuals and groups of refugees gain the knowledge, skill and confidence they need to be able to take action and realize themselves as equal and active members of the wider community. For newer refugees this may coincide with the reception and move-on stage in their settlement and for others it may be that they were not making inroads in their integration due to several barriers. Thus, the challenge to personal empowerment is to overcome the differential disadvantages and exclusion faced by refugees and refugee groups and to enable them to take action themselves. This broad scope of empowerment can be broken down into specific and concrete elements to facilitate RCD planning, action and evaluation focusing on issues of lack of skills, confidence, support structures access to public services and policy and decision making bodies.

Elements

- Overcoming effects of trauma, helplessness and fear of authority
- Knowledge of UK society, systems, institutions, policy and decision-making processes and sources of support services and resources
- Skills in accessing information, organising, leadership, communication and negotiating with relevant agencies
- Access to participate and influence relevant public policy and decision-making processes
Positive Action

At this level, RCE is about enabling refugee communities for collective initiative and engaging them in a range of processes and activities to meet their shared needs, gaining a voice and presence, and to increase access to and influence the socio-cultural, economic and political environment they live in. In this sense, the issues and processes related to collective initiatives are central to the other three dimensions of refugee community empowerment and consequent processes of facilitating refugee settlement and integration.

We have adopted the ABCD model’s term ‘positive action' to represent a whole range of issues around human rights, equal opportunity, social justice, social inclusion and anti-discriminatory practice and their relevance to successful refugee settlement and integration. On the one hand, it is these - and for that matter, their absence - that drives refugee communities into collective action and they face obstacles whilst endeavouring to collectively address them. On the other hand, while addressing these challenges is dependant on the strength and cohesiveness of the respective refugee community group, it is possible that vulnerable members (such as women, the elderly, the disabled and youth) may feel excluded due to lack of adequate representation and accountability. Hence, elements of refugee community empowerment for positive action should focus on addressing challenges external to the community and within itself and at the sub-group level.
Elements

External

- Developing skills and knowledge of community groups to come together to express and address their shared needs
- Support for the development of self-defined groups and structures
- Access to resources and physical space and equipment for community initiatives
- Structures and opportunities for collective voice and representation at local, regional and national level
- Skills and capacity in advocating for members’ interests, and highlight shortfalls and weaknesses in systems, services and institutions
- Tackling barriers that prevent refugees from participation in public life and decision-making
- Encouraging increasing community interaction and integration capacities of communities
- Facilitating community participation in mainstream activities and organisations
- Meaningful recognition and access to collaborative initiatives with statutory and non-statutory bodies
- Building capacity to develop and provide services to members

Within community

- Representative, transparent, accountable and democratic community structure and leadership
- Opportunity and encouragement for vulnerable community members to participate in community groups and their activities
- Community activities and projects recognise and account to the needs and interests of all members
• Meaningful representation in addressing interests and needs of vulnerable individuals and groups

Community Relations

Integration is a two-way process and its success requires building bridges between refugees and members of receiving communities. While it is futile to expect RCD to assume sole responsibility in this direction, it has a valuable role in nurturing social cohesion through increased community interaction. Here the challenge to refugee community empowerment is breaking barriers arising from misconception among both refugees and members of receiving communities, fostering understanding and mutual adjustment, and building relevant structures and capacities.

Elements

• Knowledge of cultures, traditions and values of local communities
• Skills for positive community interaction
• Skills in negotiating and resolving conflicts
• Structures and mechanisms to foster understanding
• Elevating refugee culture and talents in local activities
• Participation in civil society initiatives and local structures and networks addressing common needs and interests
• Positive action against racism
• Access to balanced media coverage
Diagram 3: Dimension of refugee community empowerment

Refugee Community empowerment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Positive Action</th>
<th>Community Relation</th>
<th>Participation &amp; Influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refugees</td>
<td>Refugee Communities</td>
<td>Community Interaction</td>
<td>Public Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Realisation</td>
<td>Refugee Comm. Initiatives</td>
<td>Community Cohesion</td>
<td>Voice &amp; Representation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>Stakeholders in settlement</td>
<td>RCO, LA, RA, GCD, VCS O</td>
<td>RCO, LA, RA, GCD, VCSO</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Public Policy Forums</td>
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Policy Levers

Structures

**RCO**- Refugee Community Organisations; **LA**- Local Authorities; **RA**- Refugee Agencies; **GCD**- Generic Community development; **VCSO**- Voluntary and Civil Society Organisations.

**Participation and Influence**

Refugee engagement with public agencies (i.e. statutory and non-statutory bodies) is crucial to the overall ideal of RCD. They constitute the institutional structure facilitating RCD and are at same time a focus for challenging barriers to successful refugee settlement and integration. For refugee community empowerment, the task is to build the knowledge and skills of refugees, to maximise on existing opportunities, and to challenge obstacles in influencing relevant political, administrative and service-providing
systems at all levels as well as raising the capacity, knowledge-base and perceptions that shape and influence professional practices.

**Elements**

- Developing strong and democratic refugee organizations
- Knowledge of relevant political perspectives, priorities, policies and decision-making processes and institutional setups
- Skills and capacity to participation in public life and in advocating and negotiating with public agencies
- Structures and mechanisms for networking and united voice at local, regional and national level
- Access to meaningful representation and voice in relevant planning, policy making and service bodies
- Mechanisms to raise awareness and influence attitudes of decision makers and service providers

Access and encouragement to be involved in local processes, bodies and services, for example, schools, leisure centres, area committees, tenant associations, local community networks, etc.

**Facilitating Successful Settlement and Integration**

As indicated earlier, the motivation for refugee community development is bringing about a change in the settlement and integration experience of refugees and improving their social, economic, political, cultural and environmental quality of life. These aspirations of refugees do overlap with aspirations of other members of UK society. However, the focus in RCD is on the differential disadvantages faced by refugees due to the fact that:
refugees themselves are new to UK systems, traditions and processes and may lack necessary skills, such as language
services and provisions are designed not necessarily with refugees in mind
stereotypes and prejudices may lead to differential treatment of refugees

Thus, the challenges are:

- **Inclusion**: whether services and public provisions recognise and cater for refugee-specific needs and whether refugees are enabled to access them
- **Equity**: whether refugees are treated fairly and justly in employment, housing and access to services
- **Living Environment**: whether refugees have safe and secure individual and community life circumstances

These challenges cut across many spheres of refugee settlement and integration and, for the purposes of this model, they are categorised into five broad dimensions: social, cultural, economic, environmental and governance development.

**Dimensions of Facilitating Successful Settlement and Integration Process**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social and service development</td>
<td>Health, education and social care</td>
<td>Healthy and learning community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic development</td>
<td>Employment and enterprise</td>
<td>Economically active and independent community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural development</td>
<td>Community culture</td>
<td>Cultural affirmation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental development</td>
<td>Living environment</td>
<td>Safe and healthy community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance development</td>
<td>Political expression</td>
<td>A citizens' community</td>
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</table>
These dimensions are interconnected and interdependent and there are huge benefits from an integrated approach. However, it is important to note that RCD is an important, but not the sole, mechanism of change in these dimensions. Thus, RCD activities should not look to (or be expected to) address all these five dimensions at one and the same time. What is important is that these activities recognise the knock-on effect and account for this interconnectedness in the planning and implementation of initiatives in specific areas.

Although with varying degrees of impact, there are several initiatives in all these dimensions. It is impossible to define ‘Facilitating Success Settlement and Integration’ in detail as they are refugee community specific and depend on the nature of the local settlement environment. In what follows, the focus is to highlight some of the general elements in broad terms, leaving specific identification within local refugee community development contexts.

**Diagram 4: Dimension of Facilitating refugee settlement and integration**
Facilitating Refugee Settlement and Integration

Social development

- Availability, appropriateness and accessibility of service in health, education and social care
- Accessible and appropriate information and communication support services, including interpretation
- Equality of opportunity and equality of treatment in public, private and voluntary sector services
- Access to sensitive and good quality advice and legal services
- Involvement of refugee community members in planning, delivery and development of these services
- Participation in local campaigns and pressure groups on common issues of social development
- Development and provision of support and services by refugee communities

Economic development

- Professional recognition and access to occupations appropriate to skills and experiences
- Targeted information, career advice and employment training in developing skills and competence within the labour market
• Fair and equal access to jobs
• Quality and nature of public services, such as jobcentres, employment services, economic development agencies
• Community enterprises creating job opportunities, providing services, providing alternatives or encouraging access
• Community business and enterprise support initiatives, including community business associations and co-operatives
• Access to sensitive and good quality financial services (for example, credit, banking and debt advice)

**Environmental development**

• Conducive asylum stage and move-on housing to inter and intra community cohesion and objectives of dispersal
• As individuals and communities, refugees are safe and secure in their living environment and enjoy good relations with others in the community
• Awareness of environmental issues and involvement in action alongside other members of society

**Cultural development**

• Recognition and freedom of cultural and religious expression
• Maintaining connection with community history, tradition and identity
• Provisions and support for refugee communities to express themselves, celebrate and maintain their cultures
• Accessible and responsive facilities to encourage participation in sport, recreation and arts

**Governance development**
- Open, democratic, representative and interactive community organisations
- Skilled and accountable community leaders
- Direct community representation and participation in policy and decision-making processes
- Community engagement with elected representatives
- Refugees participating effectively in mainstream civil society and community organisations.
- Enhanced individual refugee and community capacity to influence change
Diagram 5: A Model of Refugee Community Development

Community organising

As a process of empowering refugee communities for a collective initiative in addressing their shared needs and interests, community organising is fundamental to RCD. It represents both the process and outcome of refugee community empowerment and hence, cuts across all the four dimensions of RCD.

Community empowerment encompasses capacity building and community organising. The latter is not always about being formally
organised and the institutional structure for refugee community initiative may vary depending upon the size of the community, the specific needs it is aiming to address and the settlement context of the respective refugee community.

By and large current practice identifies refugees by origin and hence encourages the establishment of RCO based on ethnicity or country of origin. While differences within the communities themselves are widely recognised, there is less account to these differences in real practice. Refugees come fleeing persecution but have different individual reasons and aspirations in exile. Examples are a Malaysian transsexual for whom a community organisation based on country of origin may have little significance or Zimbabweans who may intend to return and those who are looking to settle in the UK.

Furthermore, the pattern of who the new communities are and their settlement pattern changes parallel to changes in the global framework that generates immigration. For small communities, which may be as small as one family, the important thing may be to be part of geographical communities rather than ethnic/ country of origin communities. Examples are the multi-national, multi-lingual, multi-ethnic choirs that are brought together around the Christian faith in several locations.

At the collective level, the notion of community also requires clearer understanding. As indicated in Integration Matters, refugees are not ‘... a homogeneous group. Refugees are, above all, individuals, with complex and diverse backgrounds, skills and qualities.’ Thus a refugee community needs to be approached in terms of its dynamics and fluidity as well as in terms of its social, cultural, regional and political roots in the home country, in the country of settlement as well as in terms of its transnational practices.
The following five contexts may help in identifying specific characteristics and contexts of refugees to subsequently identify suitable forms of community organising.

**Conditions of immigration:** the specific forms of power relationship and repression (political, ethnic, religious, etc.) as well as the political, socio-economic and cultural dynamics leading to immigration, etc.

**Categories of refugees:** instant or long-term refugee, age, gender, place of origin, nationality, ethnicity, religion, English proficiency, educational background, occupation and skill levels, immigration experiences, etc. whether there is an intention to settle or is there a desire to eventually go back?, etc.

**Legal status:** citizenship, residence status, right to work, entitlement to social housing, health care, welfare and social services, etc.

**Characteristics of refugee community:** presence of family or keen, size of the refugee community, its diversity, geographic distribution, concentration in specific areas, religion, community associations, leadership, social divisions, political divisions, etc.

**Conditions of receiving context:** nature of local receptivity for refugees, type and extent of local policies and support systems (such as availability of advice service, English language training, induction packages, etc.), available housing stock, degree of physical concentration, nature of local labour
market, school provision, presence and history of same or other ethnic group, characteristics and experiences of the receiving community, public opinion surrounding stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination and racist violence versus patterns of tolerance, cooperative activity and group interchange, etc.

Variations in these characteristics and contexts shape the settlement and community organising patterns within and in-between refugee communities. Many of the forms of social organisation may have become more important during the experience of coming into exile. Families rely on each other for survival and people from the same village or town leave together in adversity. Members of the same political party learn to live clandestine secretive lives and are totally dependent upon their capacity to trust comrades. Religious belief becomes somewhat an important paradigm for interpreting past-experience and therefore is strengthened for some and for others it is shattered.

Clearly a country-of-origin based community organising is unlikely to cater for the multiplicity of refugee groups that may emerge based on the multiplicity of possible combinations of characteristics and contexts.

Furthermore, refugees may also plot these characteristics and contexts against the requirements of the specific shared interest/need they are aiming to address collectively and therefore, identifying the corresponding form of community organising. The latter may fall under any of the following categories: basic settlement, economic, social, cultural, political and environmental.

Table-2: Matrix of Refugee Community Organising
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest Context</th>
<th>Basic Settlement</th>
<th>Economic</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Cultural</th>
<th>Political</th>
<th>Environmental</th>
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<tr>
<td>Conditions of immigration</td>
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<td>Categories of refugees</td>
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<td>Legal status</td>
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<tr>
<td>Characteristics of the refugee community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conditions of receiving context</td>
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Thus, a refugee with an interest in cultural activities may form a group with individuals belonging to his or her country of origin and share the same cultural heritage. For interests related to professional and carrier aspiration, the same refugee may look to engage in a collective initiative that brings together refugees of diverse country of origin and also includes members of the receiving community.

Combining the check-lists with category of shared areas of refugees’ interest would lead to a kind of Matrix, which might help in identifying forms of community organising corresponding to specific refugee groups. This *matrix of community organising* is depicted in the Table 2. The matrix provides broader contexts and areas of refugee interests. Hence, it should be seen as a tool that can flexibly be employed by concretising and expanding on the contexts and areas of interest to accommodate the specific local contexts of refugees.

**Action Plan**
Following a recommendation from the regional consultations, an informed decision is made to develop a strategic framework supported by an action plan. The rational behind this action plan is to provide a simple but broad outline that is flexible enough to be used by all parties in RCD. The focus is intentionally on the local level. However, it is envisaged that the outline could be useful in developing regional and national action plans.

**Aims and objectives**

**Personal Empowerment**

To ensure individual refugees have access and support to articulate their needs and assert their rights individually or collectively.

**Community Initiative**

To create the space and capacity for collective initiatives arising from within refugee communities.

**Community Cohesion**

To develop the mechanisms and tools by which individuals and communities can share a common space for a common good.

**Participation and Voice**

To ensure refugee communities are able to fulfil their role as equal and active citizens.
# National Strategic Framework for Refugee Community Development

## Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Agents</th>
<th>Local Targets</th>
<th>Performance indicators</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To ensure individual refugees have access and support to articulate their needs and assert their rights individually or collectively</td>
<td>Appropriate and accessible advice, guidance, counselling</td>
<td>RCOs, Voluntary sector advice agencies, Support Groups, Community Safety organizations, Mental Health and Primary Care Trusts, Mental Health Voluntary Organisations, Social Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orientation courses, Welcome Packs, Citizenship Courses</td>
<td>ESOL providers, RCOs, Local Authorities, Trade Unions, Race Equality Councils, Adult Education and FE institutions, Voluntary Organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training in negotiation and assertiveness, leadership development training, English language courses</td>
<td>FE colleges, RCOs, Voluntary Organisations and local authorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consultation events, Voter registration, full participation in civil society structures, membership of relevant community organizations, trade unions and political parties</td>
<td>Public Sector Boards, Community Empowerment Networks, Neighbourhood Watches and Councils, Trade Unions, civil society bodies, Political Parties</td>
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<td>Objectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>To create the space and capacity for collective initiatives arising from within refugee communities</td>
<td>Facilitation, animation, consultation, orientation and training in community organising</td>
<td>RCOs, Voluntary sector specialist and Generic CD agencies, Local Authority community work</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Facilitation, CD and leadership training, capacity building</td>
<td>RCOs, Voluntary sector specialist and Generic CD agencies, Local Authority community work</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Secure funding, offices, IT and communication facilities, activity centres</td>
<td>Local Authorities, regional and national government bodies and initiatives, funders, charitable trusts, Voluntary sector agencies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sensitive facilitation, animation, encouragement of vulnerable groups</td>
<td>RCOs, Voluntary sector specialist and Generic CD agencies, Local Authority community work</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Training, quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation</td>
<td>Voluntary sector specialist and Generic CD agencies, Local Authorities, funders, RCOs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Establishment of, and support to, local, regional and national refugee community networks, forums and conventions</td>
<td>RCOs, Voluntary sector specialist and generic CD agencies, Local Authorities, regional and national government bodies</td>
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<td>Objectives</td>
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<td>Knowledge and access to representation in relevant statutory and non-</td>
<td>Knowledge and access to representation in relevant statutory and non-statutory decision-making bodies and processes</td>
<td>Public Sector Boards and consultative bodies, area strategic partnerships, Community Plan action groups, interagency partnerships, neighbourhood renewal and regeneration forums, local, regional and national policy forums civil society bodies, Political Parties</td>
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<td>statutory decision-making bodies and processes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Membership and participation in relevant cross-community initiatives,</td>
<td>Membership and participation in relevant cross-community initiatives, common interest forums, networks, organizations, cultural and sporting activities</td>
<td>Neighbourhood forums, Community networks, Neighbourhood Watches and Councils, Tenant Associations, service user networks, Public Sector Boards, BME networks, Health and safety and environmental initiatives, community culture and art festivals, and sporting activities</td>
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<td>common interest forums, networks, organizations, cultural and sporting</td>
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<td>activities</td>
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### National Strategic Framework for Refugee Community Development

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<th>Performance indicators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continued</td>
<td>Consultation events, Voter registration, membership of relevant community organizations, forums and networks, participation in civil society structures, trade unions and political parties</td>
<td>RCOs, Local Authorities, political party offices, trade unions, civil society bodies, community forums and networks, Neighbourhood Watches and councils, regional and national government bodies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding, sub-contracting and collaborative projects</td>
<td>Voluntary sector agencies and Local Authorities</td>
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<td>Training in service and project development and management</td>
<td>Voluntary sector agencies, Local Authorities, training providers, funders</td>
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<tr>
<td>To develop the mechanisms and tools by which individuals and communities can share a common space for a common good.</td>
<td>Appropriate and accessible information leaflets, orientation workshops, taster events on cultures, traditions and values of local communities, Welcome Packs</td>
<td>Local Authorities, Voluntary sector agencies, civic centres, ESOL providers, Race Equality Councils, public libraries, RCOs</td>
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<td>Orientation in positive community interaction</td>
<td>Local Authorities, Voluntary sector agencies, civic centres, ESOL providers, Race Equality Councils, RCOs,</td>
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<th>Performance indicators</th>
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<tr>
<td>Continued</td>
<td>Training in negotiation and conflict resolution</td>
<td>Local Authorities, Voluntary sector agencies, civic centres, ESOL providers, Race Equality Councils, training providers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awareness raising, community events, festivals,</td>
<td>community events, festivals, workshops, forums, networks, cultural, sporting and volunteering mentoring and befriending schemes</td>
<td>Local Authorities, Voluntary sector agencies, RCOs, culture and art councils, sports clubs, Race Equality Councils, faith organisations, community and leisure centres</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encouragement, mentoring and coaching refugee</td>
<td>RCOs, culture and art councils, sports clubs, Local Authorities, Voluntary sector agencies</td>
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<td>cultural and sporting talents</td>
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<td>Awareness raising and access to relevant civil</td>
<td>RCOs, civil society bodies, Race Equality Councils, Neighbourhood Watches, councils, forums and networks, area community networks</td>
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<td>society initiatives and local structures and</td>
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<td>networks addressing common needs and interests</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continued</td>
<td>Orientation on anti-racist legislation, reporting mechanisms, participation in anti-racist initiatives, forums and networks</td>
<td>RCOs, Race Equality Councils, the Police, civil society bodies, Voluntary sector agencies</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training and toolkits on accessing and working with the media, documenting and reporting refugee stories and contribution</td>
<td>RCOs, Voluntary sector agencies, media groups and networks</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>To ensure refugee communities are able to fulfil their role as equal and active citizens.</td>
<td>Training in democratic, accountable and representative community practice</td>
<td>Specialist and generic CD agencies, civil society bodies, Local authorities, RCOs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information, orientation workshops and guides on relevant public policy, decision-making processes and institutional setups</td>
<td>Local authorities, civil society bodies, voluntary sector agencies, RCOs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Training, orientation in participation in public life, advocating and negotiating with public agencies</td>
<td>Civil society bodies, voluntary sector agencies, RCOs</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continued</td>
<td>Establishment of, and support to, local, regional and national refugee community networks, forums and conventions</td>
<td>RCOs, Local, regional and national authorities, Specialist and generic CD agencies,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access for meaningful representation and voice in relevant planning, policy making and service providing bodies</td>
<td>Public Sector Boards and consultative bodies, area strategic partnerships, Community Plan action groups, interagency partnerships, neighbourhood renewal and regeneration forums, service users consultative groups, local, regional and national policy forums, Voluntary sector agencies, civil society bodies, Political Parties</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Awareness raising initiatives for decision makers and service providers</td>
<td>Local, regional and national authorities, voluntary sector agencies, civil society bodies, funders</td>
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<td>Objectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continued</td>
<td>Access and encouragement to be involved in local processes, bodies and services</td>
<td>RCOs, schools, leisure centres, area committees, Neighbourhood Watches and councils, Tenant Associations, local community networks, Community Plan, Community Chest and community safety panels, etc</td>
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Working with the Model and Action Plan

The main intention of the RCD model is to provide a broad framework for RCD and it is important to note the following points while employing it in real practice:

- Each of the four dimensions of refugee community empowerment is critical, but it is the combination of all four that constitutes RCD. For example, establishing an RCO may be meaningless if it is not a result of community members’ conscious desire to establish one and if it does not lead to participation in relevant policy and decision-making process and increased interaction with wider society.

- The elements listed under each dimension are composed of both crucial (e.g. ‘Meaningful recognition and access to collaborative initiatives with statutory and non-statutory bodies’) and important but not essential (e.g. ‘Building capacity to develop and provide services to members’) aspects that should be developed by each RCD initiative. Hence, they should be looked at as lists from which individual initiatives should select and develop relevant items. Furthermore, the list of elements is by no means complete and it is recommended that each initiative develop its own list depending upon its specific environment and objectives.

- The dimension ‘Facilitating Successful Integration’ is constituted with a rather brief and indicative outline of elements. This is primarily because the issues involved are, by their very nature, refugee community and local settlement environment-specific and or overlap with those of
the wider society. Hence, it is recommended that local RCD initiatives extend and develop their own elements. In this regard, it is important to recognise and take into account the links between the five categories and their relationship with the process of refugee community empowerment.

- The aspects, dimensions and elements of RCD constituting this model can also serve in the development of indicators for evaluation purposes. In developing indicators (and for that matter, in developing RCD programmes and projects using this model), it is strongly recommended that initiatives build on existing experience both in specialist and generic community development.

- The same principles apply to the 'Action Plans’. Community development is a community and context specific process. What is provided is an indicative outline of possible actions and agencies under broad objectives paralleling with each dimension of refugee community empowerment. The intention is to provide a basic frame on the basis of which actual RCD planning and evaluation framework can be developed by each stakeholder and at each level.

**For Refugee Community Organisations**, the model and action plans offer a tool to broaden their approach with regard to their individual initiatives and work streams and maximise the benefits to their members.

For example, a RCO looking to develop or already running an after school project for refugee children may also be able to think of possibilities for refugee children groups. Through this it can engage the children in some form of exciting activities that will help their
upbringing and development. In addition to this, it may also explore opportunities for the children’s group to make links and engage in purposeful initiatives with other refugee children groups or after school initiatives, play scheme groups and projects in the surrounding community. The RCO can also look in to how experience and information gathered from the project be used to inform initiatives and decisions by the local education authority. As illustrated in the example, the model and action plans can be used to identify possible dimensions and knock-on effects of each community initiative, possible agencies to engage with, and structure the planning, fundraising and actual implementation of their initiatives.

*For community development practitioners* the value of the model and action plans is to broaden and sharpen their approach to RCD recognising its specific characteristics and incorporating the four dimensions of refugee community empowerment in developing their training and support initiatives.

*For non-statutory agencies*, the model and action plans would help broaden their understanding of RCD, strengthen their integrated approach to working with refugee communities by exploring both primary and secondary outcomes and thereby maximise the benefits to their user community.

*For statutory agencies* what the model and action plans provide is a tool that can be used as part of their procedures for developing and monitoring their service and thereby ensure that their initiatives do not disadvantage refugees and enhance opportunities for successful settlement and integration.
**For funders** the RCD model and action plans would provide a basis for understanding the different dimensions of RCD in deciding the scope and priorities of funding streams targeting single-issue or holistic service for refugees and RCD purposes. For example a funding for a volunteering project could target outcomes in terms of individual empowerment, potentials in harnessing collective initiative that engage refugee volunteers in some purposeful activity to address their shared needs and interests, volunteer refugees’ knowledge about and interaction with members of the receiving community as well as their participation in the local public life. Furthermore, funded projects are assessed in terms of practice and quality assurance frameworks and the model and action plans can complement this process.

**Resources**

It is widely recognised that the valuable work of RCOs is poorly resourced and dependent on volunteers and slender resources. *Integration Matters* introduces an encouraging initiative with a commitment to a ‘... carefully targeted use of the government funding available for refugee integration work.’ (p. 36)

As with all community development, RCD requires human, physical infrastructural, financial and information resources.

**Human resources**

The need for sustained and accessible training for refugee activist and supporting community development practitioners is evident in view of the complexity, dynamics and range of initiatives involved within the four dimensions of RCD.
By and large, people come into RCD with compassion and knowledge of refugee communities and with little or no developed understanding of community development theory and practice. There is a need for the development of a rounded workforce equipped with adequate knowledge of the specifics of refugee communities and community development theory and practice and the skills to work with them. It is thus important that training design recognises the wealth of skills within refugee communities and incorporates and builds upon accumulated experience in both specialist refugee-specific and mainstream community development theory and practice. Leadership and participation training for refugee activists can be enhanced by creative use of placements, mentoring and encouraging members from the receiving community to become trustees of refugee organisations.

**Physical Infrastructural**

This includes space for community activity, office space, ICT facilities, stationery and equipment. Not all RCD initiatives may need all these resources. Current shared provisions throughout community centres, religious premises and facilities of refugee and other voluntary and civil society organisation should be encouraged, and local authorities would need to closely oversee and monitor provision to make sure that no refugee community initiative is hindered due to lack of space and that scarcity does not lead to conflict in between communities.

**Information**

A wide range of published and internet based information is made available for refugee communities, some of which is specifically focused on refugee community development. Much of it is by
refugee agencies and support organisations and increasingly local authorities are developing welcome packs through their asylum teams. These efforts can be coordinated at local, regional and national level and be extended to provide accessible and appropriately delivered information on local society, systems, institutions, policy and decision-making processes and sources of support services and resources.

Another set of valuable information is that on RCOs themselves, and there are several databases across the country, all held by individual agencies. A central database would go a long way in facilitating networking and exchange between RCOs and planning and coordinating community development support by specialist and other voluntary and civil society organisations, statutory agencies and potential funders. The Communities and Media sub-group of the NRIF should consider commissioning and establishing arrangements for developing and maintaining a central database of RCOs.

**Funding**

Refugee community development requires several types of funding for refugee community initiatives, for refugee community organisations and for community development support work.

Funding for refugee community initiatives require smaller sums of money for specific one-off or periodic projects such as organising cultural events, festivals and health awareness workshops. There are many programmes providing project funds for such specific initiatives, including sources such as Local Authority Community Chest, sectoral statutory agencies, voluntary organisations and foundations, charitable trusts and the voluntary sector. Ease of
application procedures and accessible, coordinated and up-to-date local sources of information is crucial. Local authorities can play a key role as a hub for compiling and providing information through, for example, area community networks.

For refugee community organisations, the issues are: access to start up funding, sustainable core funding and cumbersome application procedures and requirements, including project match funding and information. RCOs should be encouraged to explore alternatives to enhance fundability amongst each other, by strengthening their accountability and democratic credentials and developing partnerships in between themselves.

Government funding, provided through the Home Office’s fund for refugee integration work as well as those related to Active Communities, Community Cohesion and Community Plan, can be ring-fenced, incorporated into Local Area Agreements and channelled through Local Authorities.

In the same way as in specific group initiative grants, information on funding sources, including charitable trusts, foundations and the voluntary sector, can be compiled and made accessible to RCOs through Local Authorities.

In addition to sustained support and training on funding for RCOs, all funders can consider simplifying procedures and requirements for funding.

Funding for specialist refugee and generic community development support work should be long-term and from mainstream sources. Balance must also be struck between funding community development support work and actual RCD processes.
It is important that the Compact Plus requirements for core funding are extended to RCD.

Reviews and monitoring of funding distribution as well as initiatives of introducing specific funding programmes in the above three areas of RCD funding should consult the respective beneficiaries to reflect their needs.

**Support Structure**

There is already a significant body of community development support work with refugee communities. It has developed over the past 15-20 years, beginning in London and now extending into the dispersal regions. This work is undertaken by initiatives by and large from within the refugee communities and refugee agencies. There are other providers including local authority community workers, generic community development and other voluntary sector agencies, BME networks, faith groups, non-governmental agencies and civil society bodies.

There is a need for a permanent support base that can localise, coordinate and mainstream RCD support work and ensure sustainable and long-term commitment. To this effect, it is recommended that Area Strategic Partnerships take a lead role at local level.

In their capacity as a lead agency for RCD, Area Strategic Partnerships should harness the specific knowledge and expertise of RCOs, refugee agencies, generic community development, BME and other voluntary and civil society bodies.
Actual community development support is better provided by the non-statutory sector including refugee and generic community agencies, civil society and voluntary bodies. The role of the Local Strategic Partnerships is to facilitate the development of a joined-up work and coordination, in close partnership with these agencies, and provide a strategic steer to RCD process and support structure.

Both as members of Area Strategic Partnership and through a clear statutory duty, Local Government has a responsibility and refugee community development should be included within Community Plans, implemented by Local Strategic Partnerships and recognised within Local Area Agreements. Central Government also has a defining role in establishing robust floor targets and funding mechanisms for Local Authorities to ensure that their responsibilities are clear and are met.

As bodies with responsibility for Area Strategic Partnerships, cross sector remit and direct link with Central Government, Government Offices for the regions can take the strategic lead role at regional level and institute similar multi-agency arrangements for RCD.

In view of London’s unique structures and tradition in RCD, it is recommended that the Government Office for London and Greater London Authority come up with a suitable multiagency arrangement, including representatives of refugee communities and all other stakeholders, to provide a strategic lead to RCD in London.

The NRIF’s Communities and Media subcommittee is the national strategic lead and it is recommended that representation is extended to ensure participation by all stakeholders of RCD.
Quality Assurance

Recognition and commitment to RCD can bring about desired change in refugee settlement and integration experiences if they are backed by effective and competent organisations. The CDX has developed a broad list of responsibilities which are equally valid to RCD.

Stakeholder Responsibilities in Community Development

- Have clear policies in place for community development
- Recognise that community development is a long-term process which requires a long-term commitment
- Provide information to the public and staff about the organisation’s commitment to community development and what this means
- Undertake community development and allocate resources in ways that promote equity within and between communities
- Be transparent about the deployment of staff, finance and other resources
- Recruit staff and volunteers fairly and give attention to their training and long-term development
- Be committed to promoting the health and safety of volunteers and employees, giving consideration to the specific risks inherent in community development
- Have in place recording systems which ensure accountability
- Have clear and well-publicised processes that enable stakeholders to provide feedback. This includes processes to monitor progress and to raise and consider any complaints or concerns of stakeholders
- Dedicate time and resources to evaluation and commit themselves to share experience with others

For the specific needs of refugee community development, the following should be added to the above list of responsibilities:

- Ensuring the use of quality standards in RCD processes by all stakeholders
• Encouraging refugee community organisations to receive training and meet quality standards in their practice

• Encourage Central, Regional and Local Government to have specific and clear commitment to RCD within their wider commitment to community development, community cohesion, active citizenship and race relations

Commitments to these responsibilities should be contained with governmental and non-governmental organisational policies and procedures. Incorporating RCD within Best Value and Beacon Status reviews in community development, community cohesion, and race relations will ensure that these responsibilities are consistently carried forward by all authorities and that efficiency is continuously improved. Past rounds of Beacon Status schemes include: community cohesion, promoting racial equality and getting closer to communities, indicating how the scheme could be an important driver for learning and good practise in refugee community development. It is recommended that the Government considers introducing a theme on refugee integration with a framework of assessment developed around a broad community development model of refugee settlement and integration.

**Evaluation and Dissemination**

No community development would work without a systematic evaluation and dissemination of the resulting good practice. The principles outlined in CDX’s *Framework for Community Development* provide valuable insights into designing evaluation and dissemination procedures for RCD projects and initiatives. There is a need to further explore dissemination processes and mechanisms to improve their accessibility and reach, especially for
refugee community organisations.

Evaluation and dissemination of RCD should be part of planning programmes, projects and initiatives. The RCD model developed as part of this strategic framework provides valuable insights to this effect and should used alongside the Scottish Community Development Centre’s ABCD framework for evaluating community development. It is recommended that all parties to RCD make full use of well-developed frameworks, including QASRO, PCASO, etc.

**Networking and Strategic Support**

The value of networking in community development is universal. There are several initiatives of networking, involving refugee community organisations, refugee agencies and statutory and other voluntary sector agencies, at different levels of development and with varying impact. Building on these initiatives is essential.

Networking among refugee community groups and organisations is a fundamental means of exchanging information, good practice, sharing resources, developing a united voice for engagement and maximum influence with strategic and decision-making agencies, and harnessing cross community partnerships and coalitions to develop trust and understanding. This aspect of RCD needs greater recognition and a consorted effort and encouragement, including funding, space and supportive facilitation. It is important that refugee community networking develops at local, regional and national level using flexible formats including formalised umbrella structures, forums and conventions. Recent national RCO action learning exchange programmes provide valuable insights and can be extended to develop programmes for national and regional cross community exchange that span RCOs, geography and identity to
bring new perspectives and challenges.

At the support agency level, the issue regarding networking is extending it on all levels and involving all relevant bodies including specialist refugee, local authority, mainstream community development, BME and civil society organisations, as well as researchers and policy makers. It is necessary that time and resources are allocated to enable this to happen.

There is also a need to create links between networks of refugee communities and support agencies to facilitate a broader understanding, dialogue and exchange of good practice between all parties in refugee community development.

**Conclusion**

The intention of this framework is to provide a national strategic steer to RCD in the UK. Empowering refugees as actors in their settlement and integration is at the centre of this strategic framework. It endeavours to achieve this by providing:

- Clarity on what constitutes RCD and contributing towards the development of a common understanding among all stakeholders.

- Building on existing practise and mainstreaming RCD by mainstreaming RCD by broadening its scope, situating it within the broader UK community development process, engaging all stakeholders of refugee settlement and integration and thus, ensuring a long-term strategic perspective to RCD.
• Establishing a working framework through a RCD model and a broad outline of action plans and thereby facilitate processes of planning, implementation and evaluation of RCD initiatives.

• Establishing a clear responsibility for strategic steer and actual community development support for RCD at all levels.

• Encouraging specialist and generic community development agencies and other stakeholders to broaden and coordinate their role in RCD.

The framework should not be seen as a prescriptive all time document. It is strategic framework that should be periodically reviewed and updated inline with the dynamics of RCD and changes in its broader context. Its vitality in delivering expected outcomes depends on a cross cutting, joined-up and multi-agency commitment at local regional and national level.