

**Minutes of RAPAR (Refugee and Asylum Seeker
Participatory Action Research) Meeting held on Tuesday,
18th February 2003 at Cathedral House, 250 Chapel Street
Salford M3 5LL**

Present: Donna Hewitt (RAPAR Salford Project Manager), Beverley Hopper (Clearsprings Management), Mike Scantlebury (Salford Community Network), Ali Namegoshaye Fard (Salford RAPAR, Iranian Community), Francis Kaikumba (Salford Community Network), Gary Carr (Salford Volunteer Bureau), Martin Smith (WHBC – World Harvest Bible Church), Abby Prince (Multicultural Education Officer), Clair Sacks (Linda Taylor – Minutes Taker).

1. **Apologies:** Nilofer Shaikh (RAPAR Chair), Rhetta Moran (Revens Institute, University of Salford), Cath Mafia (Health Visitor Salford PCT Asylum Seeker Health Team), Zeinab Mohammed (Somali Community), Dr Temple (University of Salford), Steve Thompson (Modernisation Manager, Crompton House, Swinton).
2. **Minutes of Information Sharing Meeting:** The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.
3. **Salford City Council Scrutiny Commission Meeting:** There was no agenda for today's meeting, but Donna Hewitt handed out notes from the Salford City Council Scrutiny Commission Meeting she had been invited to attend with Rhetta Moran. A general discussion ensued around the brief of this Commission which is to investigate the needs of asylum seekers and to try and identify gaps in services and aid and to coordinate the various agencies. It was felt that people were being left stranded and homeless when the NASS support finished and they moved from asylum seeker to refugee status.

Francis Kaikumba thought that there should be some sort of grant available for people who were moving on to refugee status to enable them to set up homes. Many of them were going into homeless accommodation because they had no assets whatsoever.

Martin Smith said that his organisation was trying to obtain funding to employ an interpreter and advocate to advise asylum seekers how they could get help. The inability to speak English was a great problem. Donna Hewitt said she would look into this and discuss it with Steve Conway.

Donna Hewitt suggested that ideas should be put together by all the people working with asylum seekers and these should then be put to the Scrutiny Commission for them to push forward.

ACTION: Donna Hewitt, Francis Kaikumba

Donna Hewitt said there had been a large number of requests for the video shown at the RAPAR launch which was made up of asylum seekers'

experiences. It had been decided to put together an awareness pack and send this and the video out to various agencies.

Mike Scantlebury requested some feedback from the Media Group. Francis Kaikumba said it had not taken place because there had been some problem with the venue. Martin Smith said they could hold the meeting at WHBC. Francis Kaikumba suggested Thursday, 13th March at 7 pm at WHBC (World Harvest Bible Church, Glenn House, corner of Montford Road and South Langworthy Road, Salford).

Francis Kaikumba said he would invite Ruby Kureshi of GMTV to attend this meeting. Ali Namegoshaye Fard said that when he was in Calais he met a woman called Janet Harris who was making a series for the BBC about asylum seekers. She had given him her phone number and asked him to contact her. Francis took the numbers and said he would get in touch and invite her to attend the Media Group meeting. The telephone numbers are 07801 741 575 or 0208 752 6896. It is very important to get an effective media group to promote the plight of the asylum seekers and combat the bad press they are getting. Donna said that the problem is to make people aware of the desperation of asylum seekers who are willing to risk their lives and leave everything behind to get away from their own country. It is not because of the benefits and handouts they receive in the UK. When they leave their homes, after paying an agent, they do not know where they will end up.

Beverley Hopper said that she thought an effective way of publicising the facts would be to obtain the aid of sympathetic personalities or celebrities in the same way as the latest blood donor appeal has been produced.

4. **BNP Youth Leader:** Martin Smith asked if anything had happened regarding the BNP Youth Leader, Tony Wentworth. The Vice Chancellor had said that he can't expel someone because of their political views. The multi-ethnic groups on the campus have been advised to attempt to combat his actions.
5. **Date of Next Meetings:** Dates were arranged for the next two meetings.
Thursday, 18th March at 4pm at the Cathedral House
Thursday, 15th April at 10.am at the Cathedral House