



**University of Brighton**

# **Refugees into Higher Education**

A report from the Health & Social Policy Research Centre at the University of Brighton for the Community University Partnership Programme

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December 2003

# Acknowledgements

This report is supported by the University of Brighton's Community University Partnership Programme ([www.cupp.org.uk](http://www.cupp.org.uk)).

We would like to express our appreciation to the community and voluntary organisations that participated in the research team, Brighton Hove & Sussex Sixth Form College, The Friends Centre, the Middle East Community Project, the Sudanese Coptic Association and the Sussex Refugee Association, for their invaluable input and commitment to this piece of work.

Special thanks go to the authors of the report Laura Banks and Dee MacDonald, for their excellent work.

Thanks also go to Cherie Woolmer, Widening Participation Coordinator at the University of Brighton for leading the project. We received useful assistance and information from The Migrant Helpline, Duncan Hunt at the South of England Refugee & Asylum Seeker Consortium, and Adam Lewis at Brighton & Hove City Council and thank them too for their help.

Finally, we thank all the individuals, community groups, education providers and advice centres who have provided the information on which this report is based, particularly those who agreed to take part in the interviews.

Cupp is supported by The Atlantic Philanthropies (<http://www.atlanticphilanthropies.org/>).

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## Glossary of terms and abbreviations used in the report<sup>i</sup>

- **AP(E)L** Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning
- **ASR** Asylum seeker and refugee
- **Asylum Seeker** Refers to those who have applied for, but have not yet been granted asylum.
- **BME** Black and minority ethnic.
- **British citizen** A person with ILR can apply to be 'naturalised' after one year of ILR and five years residence in total in the UK.
- **Community Partners** Representatives from the five local community groups and education providers who assisted with the research.
- **DfES** Department for Education and Skills.
- **DL** Discretionary Leave: Granted for up to three years to an applicant who does not qualify for ILR or HP but cannot be removed, e.g. because of illness or other practical or legal reasons (e.g. in the case of unaccompanied minors). After six years, those on DL would normally be entitled to apply for ILR.
- **ELE** Exceptional Leave to Enter – has the same meaning and status as ELR but is used in some cases for people who apply for asylum at a port.
- **ELR** Extended Leave to Remain - a discretionary status which falls outside the immigration rules, i.e. protection usually granted on the basis of the Human Rights Act, 1998. ELR was usually granted for a total of four years, after which one could apply for ILR but has now (since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003) been replaced by HP and DL.
- **ESOL** English for Speakers of Other Languages.
- **ESP** English for Specific Purposes.
- **FE** Further Education.
- **HE(I)** Higher Education (Institution).
- **HESA** Higher Education Statistics Agency.
- **HP** Humanitarian Protection Status: Differs from ELR in that it is granted for up to three years and is followed by a full review. HP will then be extended, ILR/DL granted, or if the need for protection is no longer found leave will be denied.
- **IELTS** International English Language Testing System
- **ILE** Indefinite Leave to Enter – has the same meaning as ILR but is granted to a person seeking admittance into the UK rather than one who is already in the country.
- **ILR** Indefinite Leave to Remain - protection offered on refugee grounds (according to the 1951 UK convention) giving entitlement to reside permanently in the UK.
- **LSC** Learning and Skills Council.
- **NASS** National Asylum Support Service.
- **Refugee** For the purpose of this report the term refugee includes both those who have been granted permanent refugee status on grounds of the 1951 Convention on Human Rights<sup>ii</sup> (ILR), or more temporary forms of protection (ELR/HP/DL).
- **Research Team** This team included the community partners, researchers and other university staff working in a management / administrative role.

# Executive Summary

## Background

In June 2003 the Community University Partnership Programme (Cupp) of the University of Brighton commissioned research into the needs of refugees in accessing higher education (HE). This research is part of the University's ongoing commitment to 'widening participation' – a central government initiative to attract non-traditional students into HE. A clear objective of the study was to inform appropriate content of an Information Day. The objective of the research was to obtain in-depth information from refugees on their educational background, educational needs and aspirations, information and support services and barriers to accessing and continuing in HE.

The research focused on refugees living in Brighton & Hove but has wider implications for refugees nationally. There was a clear focus on working in collaboration with community partners as part of the project research team, which included 3 local refugee organisations and 2 education providers.

## Research methods

The research involved a mix of both qualitative and quantitative methods, including:

- semi-structured interviews with 3 community groups and 2 education providers working directly with refugees;
- semi-structured interviews with 18 individual refugees;
- three versions of a short questionnaire to stakeholders, refugees and relevant agencies.

## Findings

Analysis of the interviews with individual refugees, which attempted to capture something of their individual experiences and needs, indicated four groupings on the basis of age at entry to this country along with level of education/qualifications acquired before entering the UK. The following key points emerged:

- The younger a person is on entering the English education system, the more confident they are likely to feel about their language skills, raising aspirations.
- Information and guidance offered at school and college tended to be lacking in terms of choices relating to long term education or career goals. Advice and support available through community groups was seen as particularly valuable for those aged over 21 with no family support.
- For those entering directly into Further Education college or 6<sup>th</sup> form, language support, careers advice and course-related financial information needs to be improved to encourage/facilitate application and progress to HE.
- Many of those who were over 18 on entering the UK had experienced difficulties obtaining clear and accurate information regarding recognition of prior qualifications. Perceived lack of options in terms of refreshing or updating previous learning resulting in lowering of aspirations.
- For those aged 19 or over, concerns were raised regarding the cost of further education and IELTS (International English Language Testing System) courses and the limitations on hours of study if in receipt of state benefits.

The data gathered highlights a severe gap between previous education and qualifications gained in home countries and educational/employment achievement in the UK. In addition, this data raises practical and ethical issues related to monitoring of refugee students.

## **Barriers to accessing higher education**

Through the interviews and questionnaires, a number of barriers were identified. It is recognised that whilst some of these are of particular relevance to refugee students (e.g. standard of English, recognition of previous qualifications), others could relate to all non-traditional students wishing to enter HE.

Chapter 5 outlines the findings under each of the following headings:

- **Finance**
- **Information and guidance**
- **English language**
- **Recognition of qualifications**
- **Childcare / other caring responsibilities**
- **Socio-cultural influences upon attitudes and aspirations towards education**  
aspirations and the influence of a refugee community / perceptions of age / perceptions of gender / perceptions of the rewards of education / racism / anxiety and depression.

All respondents were asked to make suggestions for addressing the barriers they had identified. The information gathered formed the basis of the final recommendations.

## **Summary of Recommendations**

*Note: Please refer to the full report for details of each recommendation.*

*Reference to the University in the recommendations relates specifically to the University of Brighton.*

1. The University should actively continue to build relationships with community groups and service providers with a view to forming networks and partnerships within Brighton & Hove and other areas of interest in Sussex
2. Through partnership work, the University should identify personnel working with refugees in an advisory capacity and ensure they receive appropriate guidance and training to ensure refugee students understand university application and admissions processes
3. Outreach work undertaken by the University should be sensitive to the needs of potential refugee students
4. Through partnership work, the University and other education providers should explore issues of evidencing and accepting prior learning and produce clear guidelines.
5. Through partnership work and linking with existing projects, the University and other education providers should explore possibility of 'testing' for skills/knowledge where documentary proof of prior qualifications is unavailable.

6. The University should ensure that there is a staff member with responsibility for providing guidance from initial enquiry through to on-course support for refugees.
7. The University should ensure internal student support services are adequately trained with regard to issues related to refugee students, particularly around facilitating access to therapeutic support during studies when necessary.
8. Through partnership work and linking with existing projects, the University and other education providers should develop mentoring schemes relating specifically to the academic experience and educational progression
9. Partners to explore level of provision and appropriateness of local support services with specific reference to therapeutic support.
10. Partners to explore with Sussex Learning and Skills Council (LSC) current local provision of English language qualifications and support, to establish if fit for purpose particularly with regards to level of provision.
11. Partners to explore with Sussex LSC the possibility of increasing ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provision and ensure it is timetabled appropriately.
12. Explore in partnership how progression pathways can be eased for students aged 19 plus who wish to access education, paying specific attention to related costs.
13. Partnerships to fully involve those providing careers guidance in order to ensure progression pathways to HE for refugees are fully supported and available to all age groups.
14. The University to explore, and improve where necessary, their recording of information to facilitate monitoring of number of refugee student applications and enrolments.

# Chapter 1 - Introduction

## 1.1 Background to Cupp

The Community University Partnership Programme (Cupp), based at the University of Brighton, was established in March 2003. The main objectives of Cupp are to:

- enhance the community's and the University's capacity for engagement for mutual benefit;
- ensure that the University's resources (intellectual and physical) are fully available to, informed by and exploited by its local and sub-regional communities.

A number of priority areas were identified at the early stages of Cupp, including working with refugee communities, with a particular focus on HE needs and aspirations. This pilot project is closely aligned to the University's widening participation commitment and has been supported by staff involved in this area.

Partners identified the need for an Information Day in the city but felt that a clearer understanding was needed of what the issues and areas of interest are for refugees in the local area. After some preliminary discussions with a number of groups and individuals, the following vision statement was agreed: *"Via collaboration with refugees and their community organisations this project aims to provide improved access to higher education at the University of Brighton (or possibly elsewhere) for refugees. It is recognised that this may entail significant changes at the University in a number of areas"*.

## 1.2 Context

### Current policy issues

The policy framework that deals with nationality, immigration and asylum in the UK receives a high amount of government and media attention. At the time of writing this report, there are several issues that are currently being consulted on and debated by government, which includes the consultation on the new legislative proposals on asylum reform<sup>iii</sup>.

In addition to this, there are a number of issues that have received high profile media attention in recent weeks that should be noted as background to this report:

- The Home Secretary announced on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2003, that permission to remain in the UK will be given to 15,000 families who applied for asylum in the UK before 2nd October 2000<sup>iv</sup>. Whilst it is still unclear when the change in status will come into effect for these families, the research team were mindful of the impact this may have at a national, regional and local level in terms of numbers of refugees who may wish to access further and higher education.
- A recent High Court ruling (August, 2003) stated that the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 applied to unaccompanied asylum seeking children. This means that councils will be required to offer support as 'corporate parents' up to the age of 24<sup>v</sup>. This includes maintenance support (including suitable accommodation), and an onus to develop (and keep under regular review) a pathway plan for each individual concerned<sup>vi</sup>. This therefore should have positive implications on the ability of those concerned to access routes into HE.



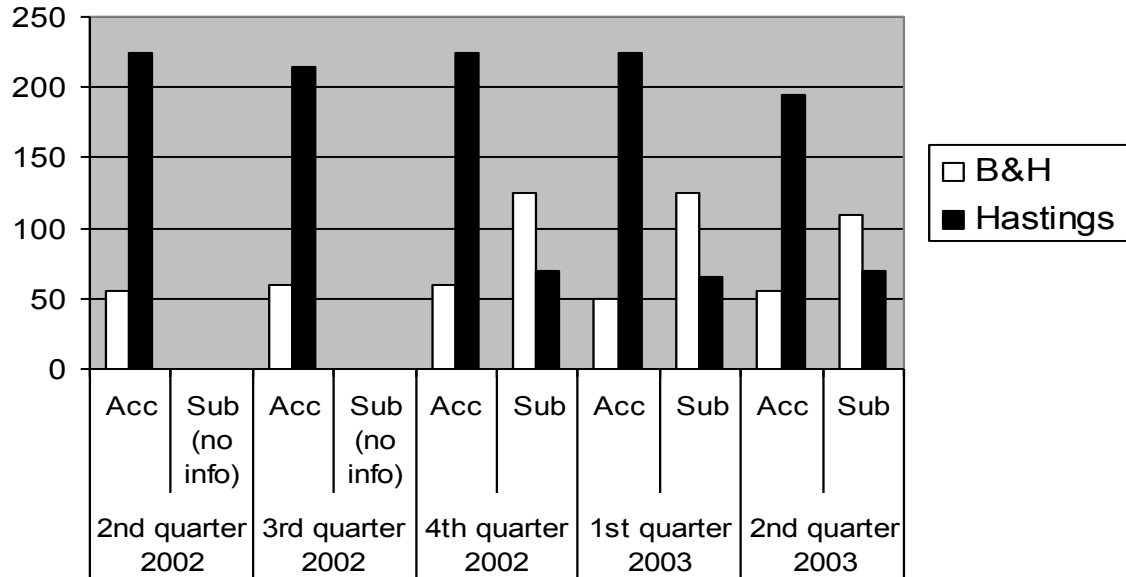
## ASR populations in Brighton and Hove

There is a gross lack of reliable statistical data regarding the numbers of asylum seekers and refugees in Brighton and Hove. However, it is likely that the numbers of ASR's (and ex-refugees who now have British citizenship) in the area have increased since the early 1990's due to the migration of many from the Sudanese Coptic Community<sup>vii</sup>. In addition 1996 saw a national increase in asylum applications nationwide, and due to housing difficulties in the London area, a number of asylum seekers were dispersed to cheaper bed and breakfast accommodation on the South Coast (resulting from the 1996 Immigration and Asylum Act)<sup>viii</sup>.

This housing crisis in London and parts of the South East then led to a Government review of the asylum system. This resulted in a White Paper produced in June 1998: 'Fairer, Faster, Firmer: A Modern Approach to Immigration and Asylum', which was later incorporated into the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act. The focal point of the Act was the removal of benefit entitlement from asylum seekers and the creation of the National Asylum Support Service (NASS). The function of NASS was to implement the dispersal of, and new support arrangements for asylum seekers<sup>ix</sup>.

As Brighton and Hove was designated a dispersal area, it would suggest that numbers of ASR's in the city would have increased since the policy was introduced. However Home Office figures are only available for numbers in NASS support for each quarter and do not give numbers of ceased cases. Therefore it is not possible to calculate how many have been placed (and thus may have stayed) in the area over a period of time. Also information on numbers of those in subsistence only support was not available before the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2002<sup>x</sup>. The information that is available regarding numbers supported by NASS in Brighton and Hove is displayed in the graph below with comparison with Hastings' figures (the only dispersal town listed in East Sussex). As can be seen from the graph below, Hastings (including St. Leonards) houses a greater number of asylum seekers in NASS accommodation, but more subsistence only cases are located in Brighton and Hove. Therefore, this would suggest that although Hastings has a much larger number of those in NASS accommodation, asylum seekers are more likely to *choose* residence in the city, perhaps because of connections with an established refugee community. Please note that disbenefited<sup>xi</sup> cases were only given for the South Central region before the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2002. Since this time Home Office figures show they have amounted to 15 for Brighton and Hove in each quarter and none for Hastings. These have however not been included in the graph.

**Graph 1.1 Asylum seekers supported by NASS since June 2002 in Brighton and Hove and Hastings and St. Leonards**



Acc = In NASS accommodation  
 Sub = In receipt of subsistence only support

It should also be noted that Migrant Helpline records show that there have been no direct dispersals to Brighton and Hove in the last two years (as of November 2003). Therefore, those who are currently supported by NASS in Brighton and Hove were either dispersed before this time, were dispersed indirectly (from other towns and cities in the UK) or have moved there of their own accord (i.e. subsistence only cases). In addition to the information received from the Home Office and Migrant Helpline, some information regarding ASR numbers in the city was obtained from Brighton and Hove City Council and included the following:

- NASS bed spaces in Brighton and Hove = 100<sup>xii</sup>.
- Local Authority supported asylum seekers (i.e. pre-NASS) = 117 adults, 43 accompanied children, 25 unaccompanied children (Nov. 2002).
- People that have left LA support since June 2001 due to decision on case and could be in local area = 80 adults, 10 families, 20 unaccompanied children (Nov. 2002).
- Asylum seekers claiming subsistence only support from NASS and living with friends / relatives = approximately 50 (Feb. 2002).

Due therefore to the differing means of support (as a result of changes in policy) and the patchy recording of statistics, it is clear that there are a number of difficulties associated with obtaining accurate numbers of local refugees and asylum seekers. There are several categories of refugees and asylum seekers where figures are unknown. These include the number of:

- People who have left NASS support due to decision on asylum case and could still be in Brighton and Hove (figures not given by NASS).
- Asylum seekers placed in Brighton and Hove by other LA's - placements for adults, families and unaccompanied minors.
- Refugees claiming benefits (information not provided by Benefits Agency).

- Foster placements in Brighton and Hove made by other LA's<sup>xiii</sup>.
- People refused support under Section 54, 55 & 57 of the Nationality, Immigration & Asylum Act.
- Longer standing communities that came to Brighton and Hove as asylum seekers, some of which are sizeable, e.g. the Sudanese Coptic community estimated at approx 4000<sup>xiv</sup> (although the majority of these now have British citizenship).

It is particularly difficult to gain a picture of the number of individuals with refugee status residing in a particular location. There is no central database of such information and previous research suggests a significant degree of transience amongst members of refugee communities<sup>xv</sup> with a number reportedly having moved from other cities such as London and Birmingham to Brighton and vice versa<sup>xvi</sup>. Also in terms of asylum seekers, some may be allocated accommodation but live elsewhere<sup>6</sup>.

There is also no Census data available regarding immigration status as this is not requested on the form. The Census does request information about ethnicity however, and statistics show that the proportion of non-white residents of Brighton and Hove to have increased from 3.5% to 5.8% of the total population. This equates to an actual increase of 7,640 individuals. Little can be surmised from these figures regarding ASR populations as on the one hand it is likely that many of these will not have been ASR's, whilst on the other it also would not include white refugees, many of whom have migrated to the area from Eastern European countries.

To conclude, despite the lack of reliable, comprehensive information on local statistics it is nevertheless clear that there has been an increase in the black and minority ethnic population and that a large proportion of these are likely to be made up of refugees in a broad sense, due to large growth of the Sudanese Coptic Community (which mostly migrated to the area during the 1990's), as well as the effects of the 1996 and 1999 Immigration and Asylum Acts discussed above. There is therefore in Brighton and Hove an unknown but significant pool of migrants with refugee status who are thus eligible for HE (i.e. in terms of having 'home status' regarding fees, loans etc.). Actual numbers of asylum seekers / refugees currently studying at Level 2/3 in the City were also sought but were found to be unavailable from any particular Body<sup>xvii</sup>. However it should be noted that in line with the growing numbers of ASR's citywide, previous research has indicated this is increasing<sup>xviii</sup>. Numbers were also sought directly from educational providers as part of this research, as discussed in Chapter 4.

### **Access to higher education for refugees and asylum seekers**

It should be noted that this research has concentrated on refugees and not asylum seekers<sup>xix</sup>. This decision was based on the current guidance from the DfES which states that asylum seekers do not qualify for 'home' fees as they are not considered 'settled'. The guidance states however that those with ELE/ELR should be entitled to a 'home' fee classification even if they do not meet the three year residency requirements (within the meaning of the Immigration Act 1971) and are thus ineligible for mandatory awards or loans<sup>xx</sup>. Therefore, after discussions with community groups and services it was agreed that the research should focus on those with either indefinite or exceptional leave to remain in the first instance, as the research team was conscious of not raising expectations of individual asylum seekers without being able to negotiate financial support.

As part of the broader remit of the project, the University is investigating issues related to funding of asylum seekers in HE<sup>xxi</sup>. In common with most universities, the University of Brighton’s approach to asylum seeker applicants offers limited flexibility. For example, a student might apply and be accepted to the University on the basis of being an asylum seeker (and therefore be treated as an overseas student for fee purposes). However, they may be expecting their status to alter (i.e. to ILR or ELR) within the foreseeable future. If the University is aware of this situation, it is possible for fees to be recalculated if the change in status happens within a reasonable period (one month) of starting the course. Or, if the change in status takes longer than expected, the University would review the fee situation at the next ‘billing point’ which is usually the beginning of the academic year.

Table 1 below outlines the current range of entitlements to HE for refugees and asylum seekers. This only provides a summary of entitlements and is subject to change. In particular it should be noted that at the time of writing formal guidance was unavailable from the DfES regarding HP and DL and has thus not been included<sup>xxii</sup>. However, UKCOSA<sup>xxiii</sup> and RETAS<sup>xxv</sup> guidance on legal status and educational entitlements both state that any information relating to educational entitlements of those with ELR/E status should be read as also applying to those with HP/DL.

Another omission is any reference to Further Education (FE) entitlements. This has not been included as is not directly relevant to the focus of the research. However, it is recognised that these have obvious implications on access into HE. On investigation of ASR entitlements to FE it was found that, as with HE, FE colleges do have some discretionary powers regarding tuition fees and internal support funds and that these are used in ways which are not always straightforward or consistent. However, tuition fees are usually waived for refugees and asylum seekers on benefit<sup>xxiv</sup> and many students are eligible for the recently introduced statutory Learner Support Fund<sup>xxv</sup>. Perhaps the major obstacle remaining though for most people claiming benefits, is that they are prohibited from doing so if studying full-time<sup>xxvi</sup> (whilst those claiming Job Seekers Allowance whilst studying part-time are obliged to demonstrate they are actively seeking work and willing to give up the course if a suitable job offer is made)<sup>xxvii</sup>. The table below is provided at the time of writing. For further up-to date information regarding entitlements to higher or further education please refer to an appropriate source<sup>xxviii</sup> or seek professional advice.

**Table 1**

***Eligibility for higher education according to immigration status***

<b>Status</b>	<b>Fees</b>	<b>Student Loans</b>	<b>Access Funds and Hardship Loans<sup>xxix</sup></b>	<b>Benefits</b>
Asylum Seeker	Overseas student fees. Home fees at the discretion of colleges.	Ineligible.	Ineligible.	NASS unaffected.
ELR	Home student fees. After three years residency fees can be reduced or waived according to LEA entitlement if the student applies for a student loan.	Eligible after fulfilling three years residency requirement before the start of the course.	Eligible if ‘in need’ and in receipt of a full student loan <sup>xxx</sup> .	Eligible if studying up to 16 hours <sup>xxxi</sup> or if a single parent or registered disabled.
Refugee	Home student fees. Fees can be reduced or waived according to LEA entitlement if the student applies for a student loan.	Eligible from the date of being granted refugee status.	Eligible if ‘in need’ and in receipt of a full student loan <sup>xxx</sup> .	Eligible if studying up to 16 hours <sup>xxx</sup> or if a single parent or registered disabled.

### 1.3 Aims and objectives of the research

This piece of research was commissioned as phase 1 of the project, with a clear focus on working in collaboration with community partners as part of the project Research Team. It was recognised early on, that this kind of collaboration was, and continues to be, an integral part of the project and in keeping with the overall aims of Cupp. The objectives of the research were to obtain in depth information in the following areas:

- educational background
- educational needs and aspirations
- information and support services and how these are accessed
- barriers to accessing and or continuing in higher education both directly experienced and perceived
- to inform appropriate content of the Information Day

The report comments on the specific considerations given to working with refugees, not least the fact that individuals felt they are constantly being researched without any obvious “outcomes” for them. Partners were mindful of this and were keen to ensure that participants in the research were aware of the planned Information Day.

### 1.4 Structure of the Report

Having considered the aims and objectives of, and the background to, the research the report is organised as follows:

**Chapter 2** sets out the methodology used in the research.

**Chapter 3** consists of an analysis of the key findings from the interviews with refugees. The interviewees are grouped according to similarities in educational background in order to provide a sense of the various types of needs, aspirations and different issues faced in relation to accessing HE. The second part of the chapter also presents data from the questionnaires regarding the characteristics of participants, their educational background, and education / employment aspirations.

**Chapter 4** presents data gathered from stakeholder groups through the community group and education provider interviews and questionnaires. This section includes information about the local services provided and quantitative data about the refugee clients / students that access them.

**Chapter 5** discusses the barriers to refugees accessing or continuing in HE as identified through the interviews presented in chapter 3, as well as other data gathered through the other interviews (with community partners) and the questionnaires.

**Chapter 6** is entitled ‘Suggestions for change’ and consists of suggestions included in the questionnaires and interviews as to how education providers and community groups might be able to address the barriers to HE.

**Chapter 7** provides a conclusion of the main findings discussed in chapters 3 to 6 and presents the resulting recommendations reached by the research team.

## **Chapter 2 - Methodology**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The approach to this research involved a mix of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Two instruments were developed.

Firstly semi structured interviews were conducted with stakeholder groups represented on the Research Team as well as individual refugees. This qualitative approach was considered appropriate by the Research Team as it would enable researchers to fully explore and provide detailed information about the needs, aspirations and barriers to education, both experienced and perceived.

The second, more quantitative instrument involved the development of three short questionnaires aimed at broadening and verifying the information base. The Community Partners assisted with the design of the questionnaires through piloting them (for their own organisations) and suggesting amendments. Two of the questionnaires were based on interviews with Community Partners and have provided supplementary information in a quantifiable form from organisations closely involved with refugees. The third, based on an original questionnaire developed by one of the Community Partners, was distributed via the support groups to other refugees that the researchers were unable to interview in depth.

A copy of each of the three questionnaires, the topic guide for Community Partners and the Interview Schedule for refugees is provided in Appendixes 1-5.

### **2.2 The Interviews**

The initial interviews conducted were with the five Community Partners that were represented on the Research Team. The Community Partners then introduced the researchers to individual refugees who were in contact with their organisation or group and were willing to be interviewed.

The question / topic content and flexible structure of the interviews were also discussed with the Community Partners. The interviews with the Community Partners were particularly loosely structured using a Topic Guide. This enabled identification of key issues for further exploration through the interviews with the refugees themselves. The Interview Schedule for the interviews with refugees was also used flexibly, i.e. as a prompt sheet rather than a prescriptive set of questions. It focused on the key issues identified by the Community Partners whilst at the same time allowed flexibility for the participant to raise other matters during the 'conversation' where desired. In each case, permission was obtained to tape record the interview with the assurance that the participant's comments would be treated confidentially and with anonymity, should they be referred to in the report. The taped interviews were then transcribed for analysis.

Interviews were conducted with 5 Community Partners who offer support, advice and / or educational provision to refugees. In addition 18 refugees were interviewed. It should be noted however that there was some overlap in that some of the Community Partners were themselves refugees (or from refugee backgrounds) and that some of the refugees interviewed worked (either paid or voluntarily) with community organisations. This is reflected in the varying contexts in which some of the comments are included in the report.

## Community Partners

As shown in Table 1.1 below, the 5 Community Partners who were included in the Research Team included those working with a variety of refugee groups and providing different types of support / levels of educational provision. The Community Partners were interviewed either at the University of Brighton Health and Social Policy Research Centre or at their own premises. These interviews lasted approximately 1 hour. The names of and description given by the Community Partners regarding their respective organisations are presented in Table 1.1 below.

**Table 1.1 Names and descriptions of the Community Partner Organisations**

Name of organisation	Summary of organisation and services provided to ASR's
BHASVIC (Brighton, Hove and Sussex Sixth Form College)	BHASVIC aims to provide opportunities for students to achieve their educational ambitions. It is a sixth form college providing intermediate and advanced level courses for the 16-19 yr old sector. However basic English and IT courses are open for post 19 yr olds
Friends Centre	Friends Centre is an adult education centre and registered charity which has recently become a company limited by guarantee. Basic Skills, ESOL, general adult education and some teacher training courses to learners of 16 onwards, are provided
Middle East Community Project	The project assists refugees and non-refugees from the Middle East to access welfare and other support in the UK
Sudanese Coptic Association	The Sudanese Coptic Association was first started by meetings in 1991 to support the Sudanese who fled Sudan to apply for asylum in the UK. The SCA maintains the Sudanese culture by forming the family gathering every other week for all the community. The Association also represents the community in all different aspects and with all different agencies
Sussex Refugee Association	Sussex Refugee Association is a voluntary organisation formed in 1997 to promote the welfare and well being of all asylum seekers and refugees in the area

## Refugees

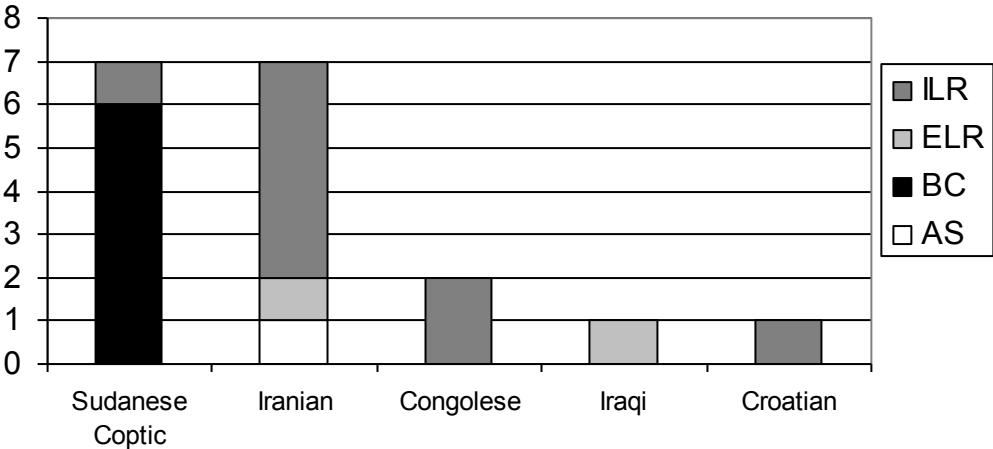
The 18 interviews with refugees were arranged through the Community Partners and were carried out either at the premises of the particular community group or at the interviewee's home, depending on the preferences and options available. For the majority of interviews, the researcher was accompanied by a Community Partner whose role was to explain the aims of the research to the interviewees and assist with language clarification where needed. Other individuals were also present during several of the interviews (such as members of family / friends). In one case where a brother and sister were interviewed together, the father also made some contribution and in another a daughter was present and helped with some language clarification. These two have not been included as interviewees. Due to difficulties in identifying

those with the appropriate status there was also an occasion where an interview, conducted as a focus group (with several members of the same class), included two students who were not (nor had been) asylum seekers in the UK. Information from these two has however not been included in the findings. Most of the interviewees had at least an Intermediate Level of English and therefore all, except two, were conducted in English (for these two questions and answers were translated by the Community Partner present). The length of the interviews varied greatly (depending on the amount the interviewee had to say regarding the various issues) from about half an hour to an hour and a half.

As shown in the graphs below, the interviewees encompassed a broad spectrum of age groups, countries of origin, and included several female as well as male refugees<sup>xxxii</sup>. The interviewees also included married interviewees although most were single. Five had dependent children, of which four were married (all Sudanese: 2 male, 2 female) and one divorced (Iranian female).

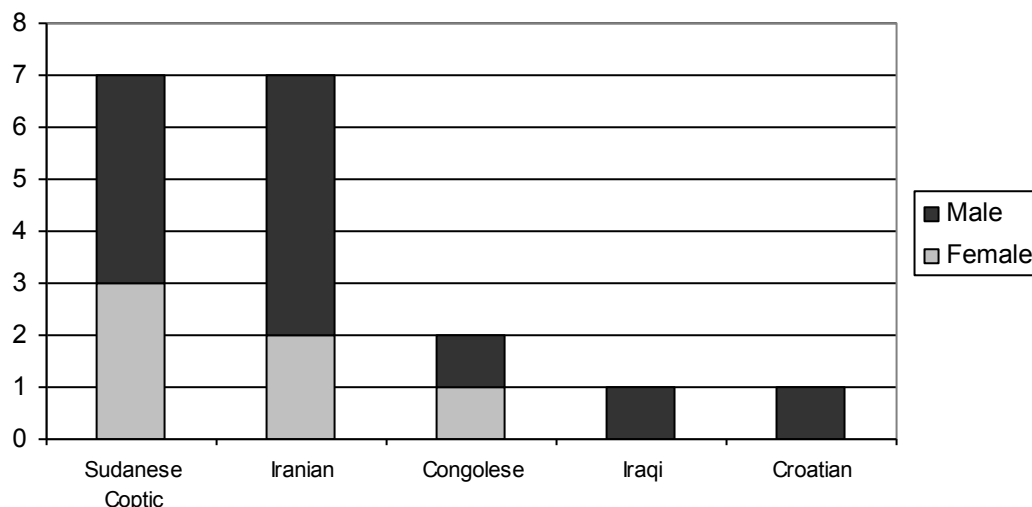
Chart 2.1 also shows that although the research targeted those with refugee status (i.e. ILR/ELR), one asylum seeker and six members of the Sudanese community who had acquired British citizenship were included. On reflection it was felt inappropriate to adhere strictly to the boundaries of status as in reality the experiences of ‘the refugee’ cannot be isolated from the previous experiences of ‘the asylum seeker’ nor the progression into British citizenship. Indeed, it was clear from the research that many of the issues relevant to those with refugee status overlap with, and relate to, those relevant at an earlier or later stage of the immigration process. It was also felt necessary to adequately represent the Sudanese community in Brighton and Hove which has become substantial, and is now largely made up of those who have acquired citizenship. The graphs below reflect to some extent how the more established nature of the Sudanese Coptic community compares with some of the more recent migrant groups.

**Chart 2.1 Country of origin and status of interviewees**

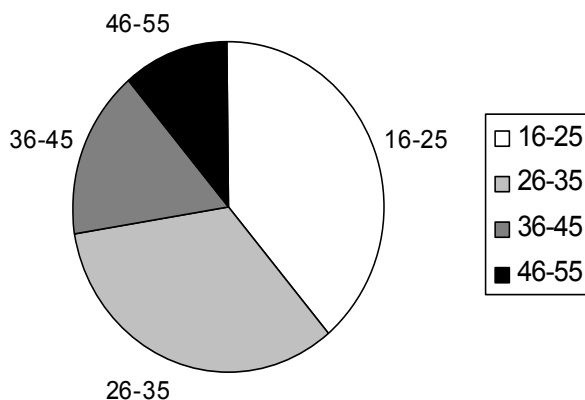




**Chart 2.2 Country of origin and gender of interviewees**



**Chart 2.3 Age of interviewees**



## 2.3 The Questionnaires

Questionnaires were completed by 55 refugees in contact with the Community Partners through their respective organisations. The participants were randomly selected by the Community Partners (although aimed at those with refugee status) and given a questionnaire to be filled in whilst s/he was present. The Community Partner would therefore help with language where necessary and collect the questionnaires to be returned to the researcher. As shown in Table 2.2 below, most of the questionnaires were completed by members of the Sudanese community which is the largest refugee community in Brighton and Hove (although as stated above, many settled in the early 1990's and thus a large proportion now has British citizenship). The Table also shows that the majority (58%) were female. The age of respondents was fairly representative of adults of working age, ranging from 16 to 59, with the average at 34. Although the sample could in no way ensure representation of the refugee population at large, this nevertheless suggests the importance of considering the needs of refugees beyond the typical young, male stereotype.

In addition, a questionnaire (Appendix 3) was sent to 23 community groups which were identified as providing advice / support to refugees. A separate questionnaire (Appendix 2) was sent to 10 education providers in Brighton and Hove plus two others outside the area. These two were included for potential comparative reasons. It was also recognised that there may be relevance in involving other colleges as in some cases Brighton and Hove refugees may travel outside the area. However, only one of these was returned and was not included in the main part of the analysis. Although this distinction was made between community groups and education providers in order to be able to ask appropriate questions, it should be noted that there was some overlap between the two groups, i.e. where some of those considered community groups provided educational support and some education providers provided more general support in addition to educational provision. Over half, i.e. 12 of the community groups and 7 of the education provider questionnaires, were returned (plus one from an East Sussex college). These organisations were identified through various sources such as the Community & Voluntary Sector Forum Members' Directory, the Refugee Forum, the 'ESOLNet' website as well as information obtained directly from members of the Research Team. The questionnaires were distributed mostly by e-mail, although several were sent by fax or post where this was not possible. Questionnaires were then returned either by fax, e-mail or post directly to the researchers. The names of these organisations have not been presented in the report as assurance was given of anonymity.

**Table 2.2 Country of origin, status and gender**

Country	Male				Female				Total
	BC	ILR	ELR	AS	BC	ILR	ELR	AS	
<b>Sudan</b>	12	4	0	0	12	6	0	0	34
<b>Iran</b>	0	2	1	0	1	4	0	2	10
<b>Egypt</b>	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
<b>Syria</b>	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
<b>Congo (Dem Republic)</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
<b>Angola</b>	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Colombia</b>	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Palestine</b>	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Somalia</b>	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Iraq</b>	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Unspecified</b>	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	12	9	2	0	17	12	1	2	55

## Chapter 3 - The Refugees

This chapter analyses the research findings, firstly from the interviews (3.1) and secondly from the questionnaires (3.2).

### 3.1 The Interviewees

The participants of this research do not form one cohesive group fitting neatly under the 'refugee' umbrella. Rather, they are from different cultures, age groups and family situations. They also span a diversity of educational and employment backgrounds (see Table 3.1). In addition, as referred to in the introduction, a number of interviewees were included who were not 'refugees' in the strict sense of the word (i.e. with ILR) but had British citizenship, ELR or as in one case, were still seeking asylum. Therefore, the needs, aspirations and barriers faced by this 'group' need to be put into the context of these differing backgrounds and experiences.

In order to clarify the findings from the interviews, interviewees have been divided into four groups on the basis of level of education / qualifications acquired before entering the UK. Names have been changed to letters in order to ensure anonymity on behalf of the participants involved. The numbers in brackets included with quotations refers to the age of the interviewee.

#### Group one

Group one consists of those who were under 16 years of age when they arrived in the UK and came straight into the school system. These three were currently either studying towards, or had completed courses at Level 3 (i.e. at A-Level / GNVQ).

Two of these participants were from Sudan and one from Iran. All three were female and at the time of interview were aged 17, 18 and 26. They shared the common aspiration to go on to University, and one had already applied to do so. However, C who was the oldest (and also married with children) envisaged more difficulties with reaching this goal than the others. She was less sure of the possible pathways into HE and about how she might access the relevant information. All of these interviewees were considering courses that they hoped would lead on to a specific line of work. These were Accountancy and Finance (or Business), Photo Media, and either Teaching or Social Work.

In terms of language needs, one of the three had the advantage of having arrived in the UK at the age of six, whereas the others were both aged 14 and therefore although fairly fluent, still felt they might need extra support with English in order to succeed at university. C particularly identified this as a problem:

*"my grammar is not very good [...] because I haven't learned enough, and when I came here I was 14 years old, which, when you start learning another language at that age, it's very hard to get the right grammar, vocabulary, you know, you will just get enough to get you moving" (C, 26).*

This interviewee went on to describe how on entering the UK her limited English language led to discouragement, the effect of which was a lowering of aspirations:

*“I wanted to be a doctor and I was very successful in my life in Sudan, I had very good grades so I didn’t have any problems, that was another problem when I came here. I had very high grades back home and when I came here I can’t even reach the lowest grades, especially the first year, so you have this opposite feeling in your heart”. (C, 26).*

Despite some negative experiences of school, the level of language support received was on the whole reported to have been high. One interviewee however felt that this had dwindled on progression to FE:

*“When I was in school the teacher used to like make me stay after the class and explain to me what happens because I didn’t know any English, but in college it wasn’t like that, they didn’t help me at all” (B, 18).*

Parents were also described as supportive of their children’s educational needs, of having high expectations and of being keen for them to go on to university. C spoke of how this supportive attitude was typical of parents in her refugee community as many had themselves come from educated backgrounds:

*“They encourage the children, they are very positive about, they are very keen for them to do their best, because most of our community back home were Doctors, Engineers, Accountants, have their own business, very successful people. That’s why first when came here they want their children to be the same” (C, 26).*

Although in the case of these three, there was therefore a general sense that parents tried to be supportive, it was evident that there may also be some cultural restraints placed upon young women wanting to pursue their education. For example, there was a cultural expectation they would remain in the family home until marriage, thus emphasising the vital need for courses to be provided in local institutions, even for those without childcare responsibilities:

*“If my preferred subject is not provided locally I can’t really do it can I?” (A, 17).*

The financial side of studying at university was also a concern for individuals and their families, and it was clear that there was a great need for financial help and the availability of adequate information on financial assistance:

*“I think they’ve stopped the special grants from, so if you have a family and you think about, if you’re not working, you think about I mean ‘How can I...’ you know ‘go to education which means more expenses and taking money off from my Income Support or something.” (C, 26).*

*“I heard that they don’t provide grants. I’m not sure about loans. It could be very difficult for me to pay off, but then I could pay it off when I work, but I dunno if my wages are gonna be that good or not to take back.” (A, 17).*

This group largely accessed information through the education system, i.e. school and college. Although information was communicated at school about FE, participants felt there had been no real guidance in terms of choices relating to long term education or career goals. Participants were thus left unsure whether they had made the right choices when faced with subsequent consequences over options regarding HE. Perhaps the most pressing need highlighted by the participants in this ‘group’ therefore, was for earlier and improved communication of information in terms of constructive careers advice and information about courses at (e.g. entry requirements at

university). Interviewees also perceived there to have been a lack of clear, timely and accurate information available at college about HE:

*“I wanted to do Photography or Art and they said you have to do a Foundation course at [name of HEI], it’s just for two years, and I didn’t want to do that ‘cause they didn’t told me at first when I started the course and I just found out like two months after finishing my A-Levels, they told me ‘Oh, you’ve gotta do a Foundation course it’s for two years’. I mean all the students have to do it apparently, but I applied for university anyway, I thought if they accept me they accept me, if not I’m gonna do, I have to do a Foundation course. And then when I went to [name of HEI] which is the best one, they said ‘No, it’s not necessary, you don’t need to have a Foundation course to apply here’, yeah and my tutor used to say ‘Oh, no they don’t accept you, bla bla bla’, yeah, giving out false information about the course.” (B, 18).*

This young refugee whose family had no experience of the British HE system described how she had not been offered any help with her UCAS form. Subsequently having been refused her 1<sup>st</sup> choice, she was denied an interview at one of the local universities. This refusal was based on the fact that the University had not been selected as first choice on the application form. However, B stated that she had not been advised of this prior to completing the form. She was therefore limited to accepting her only offer. Thus being required to take a long train journey each day, B regretted not putting the more local university as first choice, as on reflection she felt that she would have much preferred to have been able to study nearby.

*“I had no idea they only interview like first choice people because I only had like three choice, and I would have put like my first choice [name of University] easily but I didn’t know” (B, 18).*

## **Group two**

This group includes those who, prior to coming here at age 16 or 17, were studying at college in their home countries or had just finished the equivalent to GCSE’s at school. Five interviewees fell into this category. Two of these had been doing ESOL at an FE college, and another one had progressed from ESOL to A-Levels. The two other participants had entered straight into 6<sup>th</sup> form college to do GCSE’s or A-Levels. Both of these then went on to HE, but one left without completing the course.

As members of this group were too old to enter compulsory education, school was not a direct source of information about FE. Most in this group however had not had any real difficulties in accessing ESOL and FE courses, having received this information through family / community networks or (for the unaccompanied) through a Social Worker. One interviewee, who had arrived in the UK with his mother and brother, did experience some difficulty with this, but fortunately received helpful information about a local college through a neighbour.

In terms of information about HE this group also highlighted the need for an improved and more co-ordinated level of support at FE. If refugees entering FE college or 6<sup>th</sup> form at this time were to succeed through further, higher education and beyond it was clear that language support, careers advice and course / related financial information needs to progress from the hit and miss provision often available. It should be noted though that the level of support described did vary between colleges and one interviewee was at pains to point out the high level of support he had received from particular tutors. In addition to information about continuing in education, this interviewee particularly valued the understanding and help received in regard to the difficulties of struggling through GCSE’s and A-Levels whilst being faced with the stresses of an immigration

case. Now that he had gained a positive decision and had applied to go to university however, one of the main difficulties he anticipated was the effect the worry about his brother's case might have upon his studies:

*"I mean I am still a bit concerned about my brother, he hasn't received his refugee status yet so that could maybe affect me a bit, not a bit, a lot! It just depends how I manage to cope" (F, 22).*

Issues about support and information services are discussed in more detail in the Chapter 5.

Three members of this 'group' planned to go on to university and to progress on to related lines of work, i.e. in Medicine (D, 16), Nursing (E, 18), and Business and Marketing (F, 22). The other two had both studied locally at Level 4. One of these (G, 29) had completed a degree in Electronics, and the other (H, 29) had dropped out of a HNC course in Mechanical Engineering.

In terms of the aspirations of these five, these ranged from extremely high to almost non-existent. The two oldest now had drastically lowered aspirations. For G (who was now unemployed) this was a result of difficulties she had experienced with pursuing a post graduate course that would lead to her preferred profession (Maths Teacher). She felt this was mainly due to a lack of appropriate information and guidance at 6<sup>th</sup> form, which on completion of a degree left her still unqualified to enrol for the PGCE (as she was without GCSE English). When G had started at the 6<sup>th</sup> form, she was advised at this point to go straight into A-Levels without any language support. Only after completing her degree was she informed that she needed to pass an English exam which she subsequently sat and failed three times. Interviewee G therefore reflects that she ought to have been advised to do the course whilst at 6th form college:

*"To be honest I do think if they would have advised me at that time it would have been a good thing because I, after I finished university, I wanted to do another course and they told me 'You don't have GCSE Language" (G, 29).*

In H's case the main problem was the de-motivating influence of the perceived lack of financial rewards ascribed to higher qualifications. Having dropped his course, he was now focused on the day to day necessity of making money, rather than looking to the future:

*"I saw some friends they're doing, doing taxi business yeah, it was very good money so I have done taxi exam and the Mechanical Engineering, so I failed both of them because I was doing two at the same time, so I dropped the course and started with the taxi business yeah, I passed and since then I am working" (H, 29).*

See 5.7 for a more detailed discussion of the issue of aspirations amongst refugee communities and individuals.

### **Group three**

Group three includes five participants who were all aged 21 or over when they came to England and had been educated to 18+ in their home countries but had not completed a course at university (although one studied at degree level for 1 ½ years). Only one of these was currently studying (ESOL), but all had previously studied English at some level and several had taken other courses. Just one however, had gained a qualification (NVQ) other than ESOL (or other type of English language certificate).

These five participants were all Iranian, and except one, single and male. The exception was a woman who was divorced and had two children (one adult) in the UK. Most of these five left education with a Diploma in subjects including Maths, Science and Business, and they all had very vocational aims (see Table 3.1).

As, unlike groups 1 and 2, this group did not have parents or older siblings to turn to (or the support of social services applicable to unaccompanied minors), the advice and support available through community groups was seen as particularly valuable:

*“I think Community base is quite similar to family – we always got a problem, we come here” (L, 28).*

One interviewee also mentioned his solicitor to be a helpful source of information on access to education (i.e. ESOL courses). Through such help therefore, information regarding Basic Skills, ESOL and most FE courses was generally located without too much difficulty (with the exception of some vocational and specialised English courses). Once on ESOL or other courses at college, interviewees often turned to their tutors for advice and help about continuing in education. In regard to HE in particular however, this information and guidance was not always easy to come by, either through FE colleges or community / voluntary groups. K (25), who was also a community worker, described this difficulty:

*“There’s so many things for colleges, if you want to study for ESOL courses in Brighton there’s so many ways, you have Friend’s Centre, you have BHASVIC, you have City College, you have all these college. If you want to enrol for any time, you know I can, I enrolled 10, 12 students in all these colleges. Not for uni, no I haven’t seen anything helpful for refugees. This [Cupp] is the first thing I’ve heard about” (K, 25).*

The most pressing need for this group was for clear information about the recognition of qualifications, as this was often an area of great confusion and frustration. One area which appeared unclear for example was how the Iranian Diploma equates to British qualifications. L (28) had been advised:

*“[name of college] they translate my Diploma to English and they said I don’t need A-Level - you can enter university because of it. You don’t need the GCSE and A-Levels you have just to improve your English” (L, 28).*

J (25) on the other hand explained that:

*“The last qualification I have in Iran at the moment is Diploma, between A’ Level and GCSE - something between - if I want to basically convert here with the UK system, probably GCSE.” (J, 25).*

Despite this however, he went on to describe how another Iranian student with lower qualifications than himself had been accepted at a university where he had been refused:

*“I asked them and they said they are not allowed to tell me the circumstances. I say ‘No, this is not right because my friend, we got the same situation and even I finish my, basically my Diploma in Iran, but when he move here he couldn’t finish it, because, we both are mature students, they accepted my friend with no qualification.” (J, 25).*

Even where the prior learning or experience was recognised, another obstacle experienced by some of the interviewees was 'proving' it:

*"They said, you know "Because you haven't brought your documents from Iran you need your thing from the University, if you want to go to university, that you've been there at the University", but I can't, you know? I cannot get any documents from Iran you know, because of my background you know? I explained all of this to them yeah? I said "I can prove my knowledge to you if you get any exam for me for example in Maths, Physics or everything that isn't related to a very high level of English - I can pass it for you but I cannot bring any documents." I don't want to go to any courses and, which I don't know the basic about it, I'm sure if I do for any Building Studies in this country I can do it, I can prove my level from University, I can bring myself up to date, but they didn't help me" (K, 25).*

K (25) was the only member of the group to have progressed on to university in Iran, although others in the group had wanted to but had not been able to do so. This was due in part to personal problems and also because of the comparatively much higher entrance requirements that were required by Iranian institutions:

*"In my country, as soon as you reach to the Diploma, you get choice to take an exam, a really big exam to go to university and that is between 6/7 students - they only accept not more than 100,000, and I have to be so much clever to go to university" (J, 25).*

K (25) however, having been accepted into Tehran University in Iran (which he explained took the top 120 students out of this 100,000) was left feeling particularly frustrated by the difficulties he had been experiencing with the British education system. This frustration was intensified by the contrast between the high level studies he had been following before having to leave Iran, with those he had been advised to do in the UK:

*"...three years I'm gonna just study in a course which I knew all of them you know? For example when our Maths teacher was doing the Maths, he was doing some examples, you know, he turn on the board, you know, before he finish the last one I was doing all of them. You know, he was teaching to the other students "You should do this" you know, each one five, ten minutes and then they don't understand he said "You should come to our office and ask for some modules, I can't help the class in this time now" you know? Very low level course, Maths and Physics, I know everything you know, so maybe I can find some other way to get to university" (K, 25).*

Even where interviewees were advised that their qualifications would be recognised on receipt of documents, the problem was English. Two of the interviewees had been advised that they needed to pass the IELTS exam before being accepted into university. One however had been told he would have to wait another year as the course was full, whilst the other had not been able to take the courses due to the cost. Therefore he had decided to attempt the exam without any tuition:

*"All, the students, the people who desire to get the IELTS and pass it all go to IELTS classes - unfortunately I have no chance to do. I wanted, two months ago I've been told, I want but is expensive for me [.....] I went to the careers advisor and she told some different places for me and finally she found out that [name of college] is cheaper than everywhere for this course. £500 for one month, four weeks but I haven't that much money" (L, 28).*



It appeared therefore that availability of free (or very cheap) provision of English language courses at a higher level was needed and preferably specific to the language required for particular vocational subjects. As in K's case, however, the tendency was rather to direct those in this situation into low level courses of the particular field that they were already knowledgeable or experienced in. This was also the experience of M (42), who between raising a family had worked in hairdressing since leaving college at 18. Her need was therefore not to learn hairdressing but to learn the related language, and subsequently to find a course which would qualify her to teach the trade to student hairdressers:

*"All of the person tell me, you go in [name of college] and you can be a hairdresser you know? But I don't wanna be hairdresser. I want teaching hairdresser because I was hairdresser in my country, 12 years is very more time you know?" (M, 42).*

Availability of vocational courses themselves was often also very limited. N (43) for example in his quest to find a plumbing course even contacted two colleges ('x' and 'y') that were both at a considerable distance from Brighton and Hove. However, he was still unable to secure a place for the next academic year:

*"I tried to find a course as a Plumber and I couldn't find it. In 'x' they said is nearly 100 in the queue; 'y', they said maybe I could get on the course in 2005, 4 or 5; and here they got it part-time, which I went and they say it doesn't have a teacher. Maybe they start it in September or next September, January or when they don't know" (N, 43).*

The five interviewees in this group therefore, had between them a wealth of experience, knowledge and ability which they were keen to build upon. Too often however this was thwarted by constant delays and set-backs encountered in their efforts to move forward. The need for a clearer, more straightforward pathway was therefore highly evident. M (42) and N (43) being of an older generation to the others, were particularly conscious of this pressing need to find suitable courses and make progress in terms of their education and training needs:

*"And I am now 42, and this is very important I find it very soon" (M, 42)*

*"That's why I couldn't find any course, you know up to my age I'm 43, I want to take part-time course it takes next three years, I'm 46, I've not a long time to do anything" (N, 43).*

#### **Group 4**

The final group also comprised of 5 interviewees, but these five had already been educated to degree level in their home countries. All of them were over 25 when arriving in England. Four out of the five had been taking courses in English, but two of these didn't intend to do any further English classes. As for the other groups, the chosen degree courses reflected a tendency towards very vocational interests. Degrees held were in Electronics, Commerce, Medicine, Engineering and Accountancy. Except one (who had been recruited for the army before leaving Iraq), each member of this 'group' had also been working in these fields for some time before coming to the UK.

This group had sought information about education through a variety of sources. In terms of FE and ESOL information, this included community groups and networks and statutory services. For information about routes into HE, interviewees had used their own initiative by visiting a university and asking for help at Reception. Also, in one case an interviewee had accessed information

through a university website.

As with group 3, several members of this group had experienced difficulties obtaining clear and accurate information regarding recognition of qualifications. Even where this information had been obtained, the lack of available options in terms of refreshing or updating previous learning (rather than re-studying an entire course) had proved to be a barrier, and aspirations had generally fallen very low. This was particularly true for the ex-doctor who having lost all hope of re-gaining his career had become resigned to working in a pizza shop:

*“At this age you cannot start Medicine. I cannot re-study Medicine. Medicine is a six years course. I cannot re-study Medicine but I can refresh my knowledge, so simply Medicine have been dropped [Right]...unfortunately, and I consider this is the penalty to pay for being here” (R, 46).*

A particular barrier to returning to education for this group therefore was the sense that they were now too old. Even the youngest interviewee in the group was very conscious of his age and the length of time it would take for him to do a degree with the required foundation year:

*“I need now four years to finish my degree and ...erh....very difficult for me because I am 30 years old” (O, 30).*

Issues about age were in part related to cultural perceptions (see 5.7). It was also the case that the older informants were more likely to have competing demands placed on their time and energy because of family responsibilities:

*“Now I have my parents here, they over 65, especially my mum they need care for everything and my childrens are growing up and they need more help and work 31 hours every week, back home 6 o'clock, to be honest not enough time to study” (Q, 40)*

*“I have many problem, my health not good and I have four daughters, always am busy shopping and many problems” (S, 53).*

Despite the obstacles however, one interviewee had managed to return to her previous line of work (accountancy). She describes however the long struggle to return to her career explaining how, during these six years, she took courses and any job opportunities possible in order to meet people and improve her English:

*“I try everything to get myself back again to my career, I'm not just suddenly back again to my career: I start work as a dinner lady, I worked as a volunteer, I worked within the nursery, I had a course for working in the playgroup, before I worked with the bi-lingual or anything I had a course for two years in [local ESOL provider]” (Q, 40).*

Another informant was hopeful that his qualifications would be accepted and he would thus be able to go on to study at post-graduate level in the UK. If this were to be possible however, he still anticipated difficulties related to his level of English and the cost, although again this was in part due to a lack of accurate information and guidance about the options:

*“You know, yeah, it’s I think, it’s about £2,500 or something like this. [For the post graduate course?] Post graduate course yeah, for research courses for one year, but I don’t have any, this amount of money, that’s all to pay the University, it’s the first problem and another problem was my English you know, the Language is a big problem. I can’t remember the other requirements that they need, their quite sure that they need [...] they need IELTS exam for the, I find that the other students are not home students you know? I don’t know if they need IELTS for me or not. I think FC is just like IELTS and I’ve got the FC Certificate” [interviewee is referring to First Certificate English – Cambridge ESOL] (P, 35).*

Some of the other interviewees in this group were also conscious of the financial barriers:

*“Housing Benefit - now it is very difficult for me because I pay my rent...erh...it is very difficult for me because [...] it is very small amount. I couldn’t pay the rent and pay for myself and for my education. That was very problem for me” (O, 30).*

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has demonstrated something of the variety of educational backgrounds, needs and aspirations of individuals that are included in a broad sense under the banner of the term ‘refugee’. It has also sought to give an overview of the different types of needs and challenges faced by those who entered the UK at differing stages of their education.

These groups have highlighted the different ways in which support is sought / received, i.e. groups one and two have largely accessed any advice and support through the compulsory and FE system (as well as to some extent through family or Social Workers). Groups three and four on the other hand, who have not automatically been directed into school or FE, have turned more to community groups and networks for support (as well as staff within FE and ESOL providers once enrolled on a course). Therefore the groups have identified gaps in provision in particular areas, which have implications on potential methods and vehicles through which these needs can be addressed.

Groups have also shown there are shared difficulties experienced in several areas, particularly regarding the whole issue of information and guidance. Other issues however have been identified as particularly relevant to groups three and four, e.g. recognition of qualifications and funding of courses (where not eligible due to age). These issues are discussed in greater depth in Chapter 5.

**Table 3.1 Previous / present highest level of education (i.e. completed) of interviewees, current employment and future aspirations**

<b>Education from home country</b>	<b>Education in UK</b>	<b>Current employment status</b>	<b>Future aspirations</b>
<b>Group 1</b> Primary / Secondary	Level 2 - GCSE Level 3 – A-Levels Level 3 – GNVQ	Student* - FE Student* - HE Bi-lingual assistant	Business Photo Journalism Teaching or Social Work
<b>Group 2</b> Level 2 (GCSE / equivalent)	ESOL – Elementary ESOL - Intermediate Level 2 - GCSE Level 3 – A-Levels Level 4 - Degree (Electronics)	Student* – ESOL Student* - NVQ Taxi driver Student* - HE Unemployed	Nurse Doctor Unsure Study post-grad To 'get a job'
<b>Group 3</b> Level 3 (Diploma) <i>Business Unspecified</i> <i>Unspecified Maths and Physics</i> <i>Maths and Physics</i>	ESOL - Elementary None NVQ (Engineering) ESOL Higher Intermediate ESOL – unspecified	Student – ESOL Unemployed Unspecified Interpreter Sales Assistant	Plumber Teach Hairdressing Robotic Engineer Chartered Surveyor Hospital Manager
<b>Group 4</b> Level 4 (Degree) <i>Chemical Engineering</i> <i>Electronics</i> <i>Accountancy</i> <i>Medicine</i> <i>Commerce</i>	First Cert English ESOL & Electronics ESOL - Intermediate None ESOL - Elementary	Unemployed Student* - Foundation Accounts (bank) Shop assistant Student – ESOL	To study post-grad Electrician Team Leader No aspiration Work in retail

*\*NB: As the interviews were conducted in the summer holidays, those who intended to continue or had been accepted on to a course the next academic year have been included as students, even where they currently were working part-time. Level (i.e. ESOL/FE/HE) refers to that due to start in next academic year.*

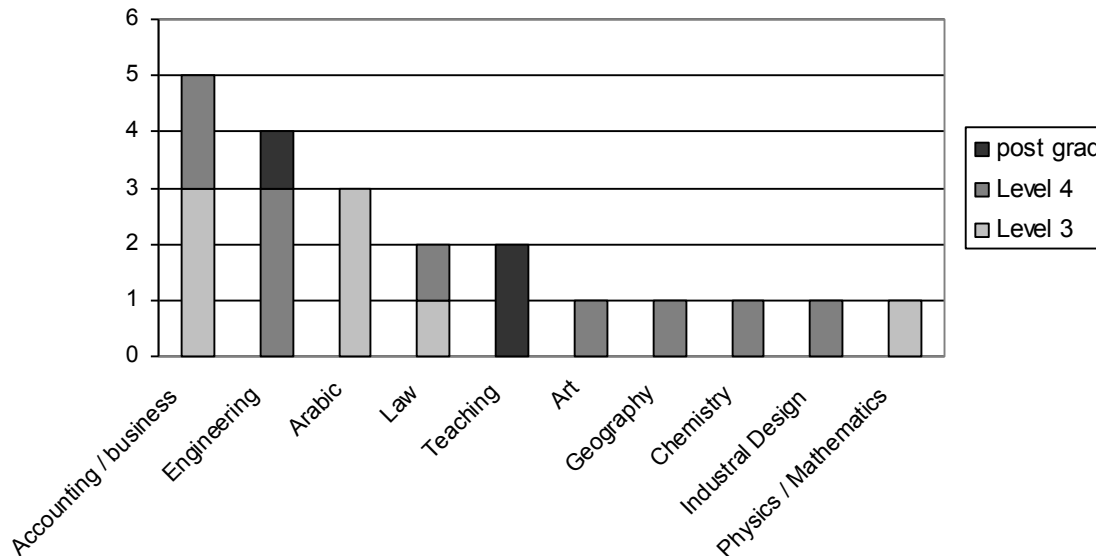
### **3.2 The questionnaires**

The questionnaire completed by refugees asked for information about previous qualifications before entering the UK, education gained since arriving in the country, current occupation and future education / career intentions. This section will therefore present a brief analysis of this information.

## Previous qualifications

A large proportion 47% (26) of the informants stated they had previous qualifications from their home countries. If those who were under 18 when they arrived in Britain are excluded, those with previous qualifications would form an even greater proportion (62%). The level of these qualifications were also high, with 42% considered Level 3 (i.e. A-Level / Diploma / equivalent), 36% at degree level and 8% post graduate. Previous subject areas were mostly very professionally / vocationally orientated, with subjects such as Business / Accountancy and Engineering noted as the most common.

**Chart 3.1 Questionnaire responses regarding previous education**



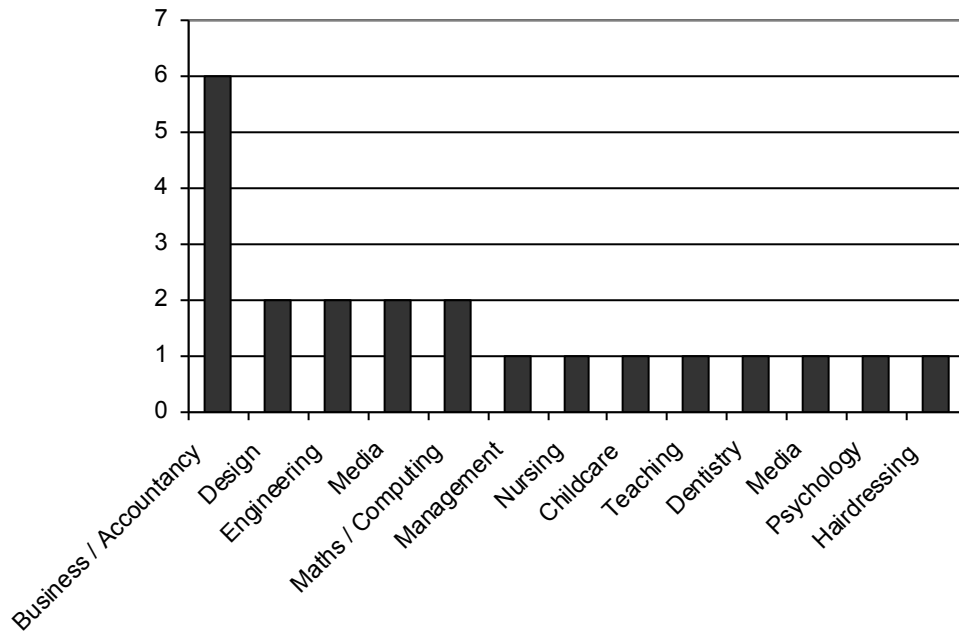
## Education in UK

Since arriving in the UK however less than half of the refugees (44%) had completed or were currently enrolled on an ESOL course. Twelve (22%) had completed a GCSE, but only two of these were over 16 when arriving in the UK. Nine had either completed or were studying towards an A-Level, but again only two (the same two that had completed GCSE) had been over 16 when entering Britain. Only one participant had completed an NVQ, although one was working towards it (Level 3), and another had dropped out of an NVQ course. None of the participants had gained a degree in the UK, but one was currently reading a degree in Psychology.

## Future aspirations

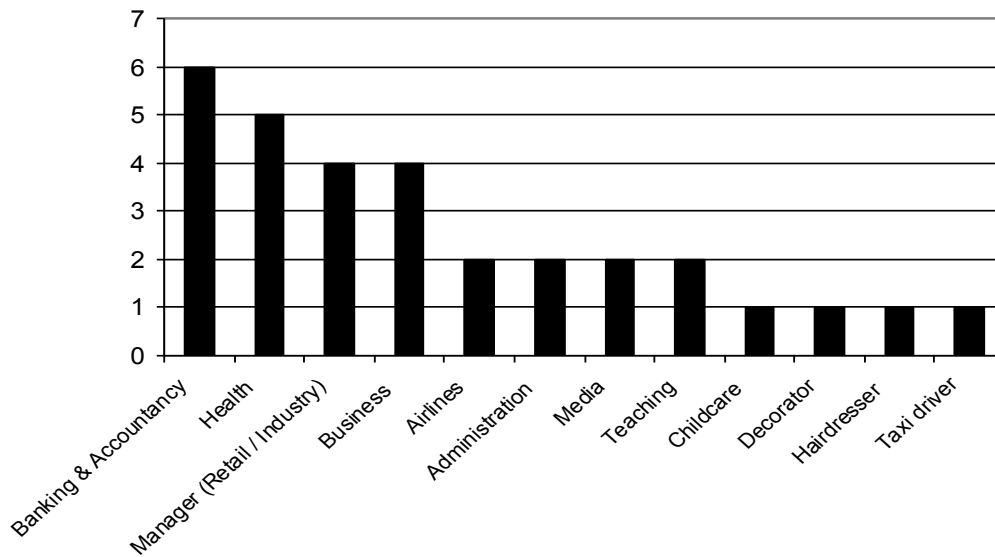
The majority (54%) intended to do further study and a further nine (16%) indicated they would do so if this were possible. As with those subjects previously studied, participants preferred more professional / vocational subjects with the most popular being in the area of Business / Accountancy and Finance. Only half of those intending to go on to do further study specified at which level. Of these, the majority (73%) wanted to study at degree level.

**Chart 3.2 Questionnaire responses regarding preferred subject areas for future study**



A range of types of employment were specified as desired for the future. Unsurprisingly, considering the preferred choice of subjects, jobs in business and accountancy were particularly popular. Several participants specifically indicated that they would like to go into management whether in Industry or Retail. Various types of medical jobs were also specified, such as nursing and dentistry. Other lines of work specified by more than one respondent were Teaching, Tourism (working on the airlines), Media and Administration.

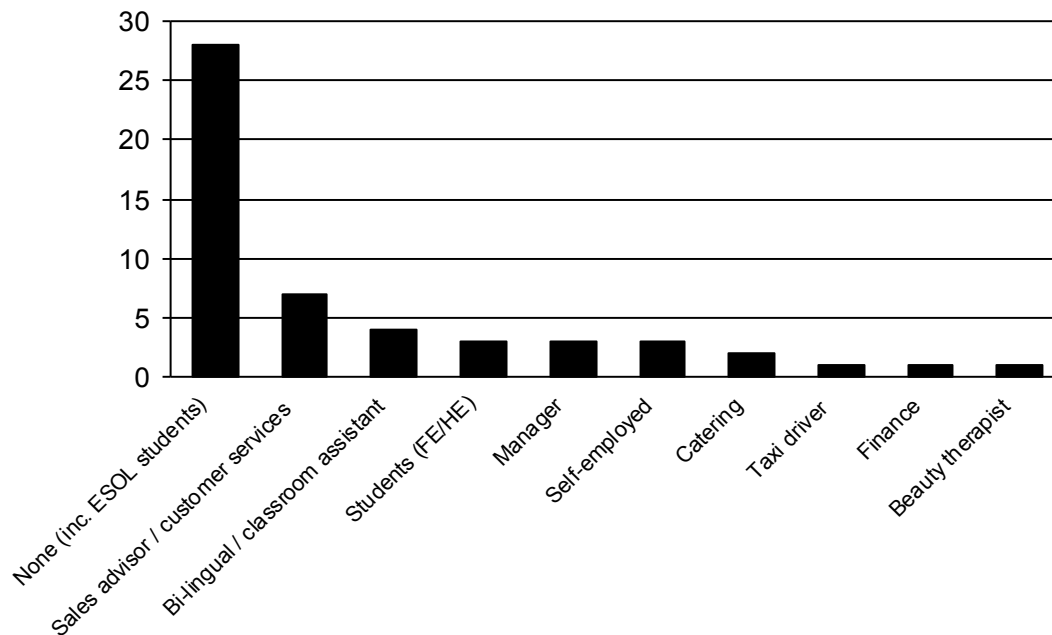
**Chart 3.3 Questionnaire responses regarding future employment aspirations**



## Current employment / education situation

The contrast between these aspirations and current job situations was notable. Over half (56%) were currently unemployed, and only seven of these were enrolled in any form of education (including three that were under 18 when arriving in the UK). A very high proportion therefore (44%) were neither in any form of paid work (although four were volunteers and two specified themselves as housewives) nor education. Of those who were in employment, most were in semi-skilled occupations, such as sales assistants, although there were three in management positions and four working as interpreters / bi-lingual assistants in schools.

**Chart 3.4 Questionnaire responses regarding current types of employment**



## Conclusion

To conclude this section it should be re-stated that this was not a representative sample and therefore findings should be treated tentatively. It should also be noted that 62% of the sample were Sudanese and therefore the findings may be a better reflection of experience amongst the Sudanese Coptic community, than of refugees in general. Nevertheless, the data suggests that there is a severe gap between previous education and qualifications gained in home countries and educational / employment achievement in the UK. Despite this however, the majority of the sample hoped to go on to do further study, and yet more stated they would do so if they were not prevented by the barriers they perceived to be too great. Most, (85%) had experienced such obstacles or expected to meet them in the future. Of those who didn't feel they would face any difficulties with continuing in education, only 3 were over 18 when they entered the UK. Information about the types of barriers participants considered significant is discussed in Chapter 5.

## **Chapter 4 - The Stakeholder Groups**

### **4.1 Introduction**

For the purposes of this chapter 'stakeholder groups' refers to voluntary, statutory services, community groups and education providers that provide a support, advice and / or education service accessed by refugees. In addition to the five 'Community Partners' on the Research Team, these include a number of other groups that responded to the questionnaires. In total, questionnaires were received from two FE colleges (one in East Sussex), one sixth form college, three voluntary sector education centres, two universities, and 13 other community, voluntary and statutory organisations. There is some overlap between groups providing educational courses and those offering advice and support. However, for the sake of this research, organisations have been divided into these two groups, i.e. education providers and the 13 other groups responding to the questionnaire (which in this chapter come under the heading 'Support / advice groups and services'). This chapter presents the information gathered from these groups in terms of the service they provide for refugees, the type of refugee clients that access their service and the perceived gaps in provision.

### **4.2 The asylum seeker and refugee clients / students**

All stakeholder groups were asked for numbers, if known, of ASR clients or students accessing their organisation. All groups except education providers were also asked for additional information regarding age, gender and country of origin (education providers were not asked for these details as it was felt that this was unlikely to be available and therefore such a request might be off-putting). The responses to these questions are presented below.

#### **Education providers**

Education providers were only asked in the questionnaire for details of the numbers of asylum seekers and refugees enrolled on their courses. Only two provided figures for both asylum seekers and refugees, although two others gave figures for either asylum seekers or refugees only, and another gave an approximate figure of total ASR's. Between the four providers who specified numbers of asylum seekers, this totalled 290. Over  $\frac{3}{4}$  of these were studying at the FE college (academic year 2002/2003), although it should be noted that this may include some double counting (i.e. where asylum seekers are enrolled for more than one course). One provider stated that they did not accept asylum seekers at all as they only accepted those in receipt of benefit<sup>xxxiii</sup>. Several respondents commented on the particular problems with obtaining information on numbers of 'refugees' as there was no monitoring of those with refugee status. The two providers which did give information on numbers of refugee students gave approximate figures, which totalled 117.

It was clear therefore that monitoring systems needed to be developed in order to be able to track effects of any future changes made with regard to support for refugees studying at college or university. As it was anticipated that staff may not monitor or have access to this numerical information, questionnaires included a question asking whether this could be made possible (i.e. to monitor numbers) in the future. Most felt that this should be possible in regards to asylum seekers, but doubts were expressed about the validity of monitoring those who already have refugee status.

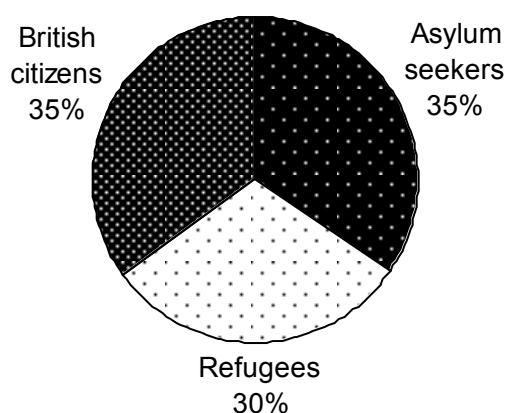


The opposite was the case however in regards to universities, where refugees would be identified through the UCAS form, but asylum seekers simply classed as ‘overseas’ students. However, even where information regarding refugee status could be made available at an operational level for fees purposes, another problem was that status is not ‘flagged’ beyond this, and it was felt that there would need to be clear reasons for doing so (i.e. in order to prevent this from being perceived as discriminatory). Neither of the universities were therefore able to give any information about numbers of asylum seekers or refugees enrolled, although the University of Brighton confirmed that it had received 107 Category C applications<sup>xxxiv</sup>. The only other related information available was regarding numbers of BME / International students. At the University of Brighton these figures were (for 2002/2003) 11% non-white and 6% international, and at the University of Sussex: 12% of under-graduates were non-white (2002/2003) and 10% were classed as non-EU (at December 2001)<sup>xxxv</sup>. No conclusions could of course be reached through these figures, as ASR’s do not necessarily fit into either the ‘non-white’ or the ‘international’ / ‘non-EU’ categories.

### Support / advice groups and services

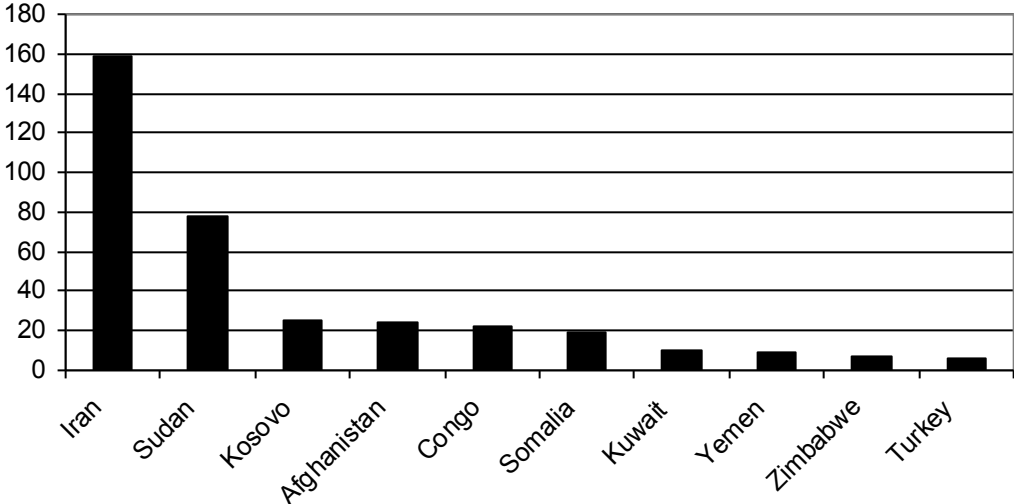
Community groups and other support services in receipt of the questionnaire were asked to give total numbers of ASR clients who had accessed their service in the past four weeks. 11 out of the 13 were able to respond to this by giving accurate or approximate figures. These totalled 530. Organisations were also asked to state how many of these were currently seeking asylum, and how many had already received refugee status. One organisation which had given the total number of ASR’s was not able to give this information. The other ten organisations however in total indicated that almost half (47%) of their ASR clients had refugee status. In addition a significant number (136) of clients who had obtained British citizenship (i.e. who previously had refugee status) had accessed these services in the last four weeks. It should be noted however that a large majority (88%) of these British citizens were accessing one particular organisation. Some of the other organisations focused more on providing a service to either asylum seekers or those with refugee status. The pie chart below (figure 4.1) refers to those that gave a complete breakdown of their clients’ immigration status (i.e. those who had accessed their service in the four weeks previous to completing the questionnaire).

**Chart 4.1 Immigration status of clients accessing services**



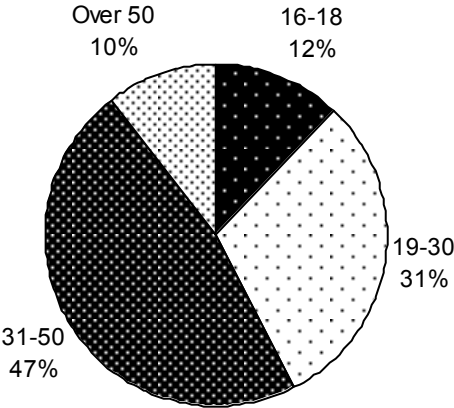
Respondents were also asked for details of the countries of origin, age and gender of these ASR clients. Figure 4.2 displays the ten most commonly stated countries of origin. There were a further 188 stated as 'other' on the questionnaire and 167 of these were unspecified. As shown on the graph below, the proportion of Iranian clients is significantly greater than the proportion of those from a Sudanese background. This is because the majority of Sudanese Coptic clients had acquired British citizenship and were therefore not included in these statistics.

**Chart 4.2 Main countries of origin of ASR clients accessing services**

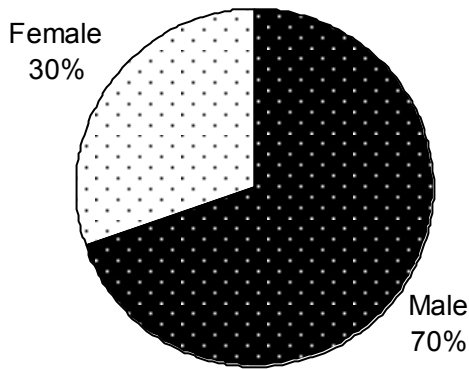


In terms of age and gender, figures showed that services were accessed by a range of age groups (although with a relatively small proportion over 50), and that a large majority were male (see Figures 4.3 and 4.4 below).

**Chart 4.3 Age groups of ASR clients**



**Chart 4.4 Gender of ASR clients**



### **4.3 Services provided**

#### **Education providers**

Only two of the seven local education providers (plus the East Sussex college that responded) had a designated member of staff with specific responsibility for the support of refugees. This support included general welfare support, befriending scheme and in one case career and course information, including progression on to HE. Both providers also referred students to outside agencies for additional support.

Neither university provided designated support to asylum seekers or refugees. When investigations were being made to locate the relevant member of staff to whom to send the questionnaire, some felt this should be the International Welfare Officer. However, refugees with 'home status' would strictly speaking not fall within the International Welfare Officer's remit, and one member of staff contacted from International Welfare, stated that they had no dealings with asylum seekers.

When asked about the main source of support refugees turned to, several respondents were unable to choose just one answer, feeling this to be a mixture of informal support through the tutor, mainstream support services and outside groups such as careers services. In particular the interviews highlighted the important role played by the personal tutor as often the first point of contact for many ASR's. Individual tutors however are not always equipped to provide the information and help requested:

*"The first person they will come to is the person they trust and that first person will be their front line tutor who teaches them English and IT - then it bubbles up to somebody like me and then I say what we can do and what we can't do. I know my tutors are fielding an absolute minefield of information that the student is asking for assistance with and I think we are going to have to be clearer and clearer about what we can and what we can't do" (Community Partner).*

The two education providers interviewed also stressed the importance of links with community groups and other relevant services in order to be able to effectively signpost where they are not be able to provide the required support or information:

*“I mean one of the things that our sort of pastoral support does is to refer people on to, to know which other agencies to refer people on to. It’s very important I think for them to know everything that they’re entitled to and everything, and where they can go to get specialist help for different things” (Community Partner).*

In particular they had found it helpful where there had been particular named contacts within such organisations to whom they could trustingly refer their ASR students:

*“I have to say that trust is one of the key features for these students to even be able to seek the help that they need. So introducing them from one trusted face to another face who I say they can trust and will help them” (Community Partner).*

## **Support / advice groups and services**

Groups were asked whether they provide advice services regarding careers options, access to local ESOL, access to Basic skills, FE and / or HE courses. The majority did provide information and advice in all of these areas, especially regarding ESOL. When asked about their organisation’s involvement with education providers, the majority (69%) also indicated they were ‘fairly confident about whom to contact and refer people to’ and 31% that they had a ‘close partnership with educational providers’. Community groups and other types of advice agencies were also asked about other services they provided for ASR’s. Some of these groups were more focused on providing a service for asylum seekers, others on refugees and others on a wider group which included ASR’s (e.g. BME groups). Groups also gave details of other services accessed (whether or not provided specifically for ASR’s) by asylum seekers and refugees, included advice and referrals on a range of subjects including immigration, employment, benefits (and other financial matters), family issues, training, health, housing and recreation. Other services were also described such as organising social / cultural events, help and support regarding children of students (access to schools, groups, help at school), help with CV’s and interview skills and befriending / general integration support. In addition a few groups provided courses / support in language, computing and community development (e.g. how to set up a group, find funding etc.).

## **4.4 Gaps in provision**

Stakeholder groups were asked whether refugees and asylum seekers required more support on education, and all except one of those that responded to the question answered ‘yes’. The gaps in provision for refugee students / clients included:

- One to one designated welfare support.
- Subject specific language support.
- Access to professional counsellors / therapists.
- Designated time for staff to offer information about FE / HE.
- Financial support for courses that go beyond ESOL / basic skills for those aged over 19.
- Welfare and guidance support for those aged over 25 (Youth Advice Centre provides a service for under 25 year olds).
- Learning support and facilities.
- Language translation of relevant printed information.
- ESOL courses with more hours than are currently available.
- Financial support for asylum seekers wanting to enter HE.
- Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning schemes.

- Availability of flexible part-time courses for those with family / work responsibilities.
- Support with the application process for HE.
- Promotion of adult learning for ASR's.
- Comprehensive accessible information for community groups to use for referral (e.g. about eligibility, financial assistance, local education providers etc.).

Some of these issues are discussed in more depth in Chapters 5 - 7.

## Chapter 5 - Barriers to accessing higher education

### 5.1 Introduction

As described earlier in the report, the diversity of backgrounds and experiences of refugees is reflected in the multiplicity of aspirations, needs and challenges faced. Indeed, distinctions can be made between each individual case, which presents the challenge of how to 'sum up' the main issues and barriers for this 'group'. However, this research has also highlighted particular areas of shared experience and convergence between both 'individual' refugees, and those belonging to more established refugee communities. Some of these issues have been referred to in Chapter 3, which attempted to capture something of the individual experiences and needs of refugees. This chapter however, although referring in part to specific experiences, gives greater focus to the main barriers revealed through all aspects (qualitative and quantitative) of the research.

It is recognised that whilst some of these barriers are more relevant to refugee students (e.g. standard of English, recognition of previous qualifications), others could relate to all non-traditional students wishing to enter HE.

### 5.2 Finance

The majority of those completing the questionnaires (51%) considered 'lack of money' a main barrier to continuing in education. It was also seen as the most significant factor by the education providers who completed the questionnaire and 50% of community groups considered it to be a main barrier. As the questions about barriers were closed-ended, it is not possible to surmise how much of this may have been an actual lack of necessary finance, a lack of support for the prospect of not being able to earn money in the present (see 5.7), or rather a simple dearth of information about the fee situation and financial assistance available (referred to in 5.3). It was also difficult to distinctly separate these issues through the interview material, as they were often so intertwined. In any case, all these types of barriers were significant in terms of their discouraging effect on the continuance in education of those from all sections of the refugee communities. As in A's case (see 3.1) this even applied to those who had entered the UK at a young age, and were considered free of the disadvantages faced by older members of the community:

*"So, those who have been born and grown up here, especially when they have their citizenship, I don't think there is anything to stop them...[Yeah]... unless there are some financial things" (R, 46).*

In one sense the financial barrier is evident to many from non-traditional backgrounds in terms of the sections of society that are under-represented in HEI's. However, it is particularly problematic for refugees who are often unable to complete the courses (e.g. at Level 2/3 or IELTS) necessary to enter HE before they reach 19. This is because whilst many courses are only free for those on Benefit, full-time students are often not eligible to receive them:

*“It means that as a 19 year old your access to full-time education is very difficult. So it basically means that if you don’t achieve your full-time education by the age of 19 then your only way of accessing it - we’re not talking university here we’re talking level 2/3 - GCSE and A levels - either they’ve got to be supported by their family to get that level of education or they have to do it in a part-time fashion where they are actively seeking employment to claim JSA and doing somewhere like [name of college]” (Community Partner).*

For M, for example, who had inquired about starting a course at a local college, this was one of the main problems:

*“Benefit said to me, you can’t, you, we haven’t support about you, you going to college because you, we haven’t money about you, you know? I think so about my years, I am 42, they need, I think so, they need a young person” (M, 42).*

In addition, others had experienced problems with the National Asylum Support Service (NASS). One of the community partners gave an example of how this had adversely affected one of her students:

*“Now if the system works correctly, before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday Social Services should move them on to NASS and NASS will then continue to at least support them in things like housing and benefit as Asylum Seeker - which I think is something like £35 per week but at least they get carried over into a system. What can happen and what has happened in one case where, for whatever reasons the student didn’t get transferred to NASS at that point fell down the black hole and put themselves in an illegal position. It is not quite joined up” (Community Partner).*

### **5.3 Information and guidance**

*“I think there has been a gross lack of knowledge and an ad hoc approach” (Community partner).*

The problem of the lack of information was the second most commonly identified barrier through the refugee questionnaires (38%). This barrier however is related to and overlaps with a number of others. For example, as has already been acknowledged in 5.2, some refugees refer to the financial barrier where they are not adequately informed about actual costs, financial support available, the conditions for paying back student loans and so on. Other issues such as the recognition of qualifications are to some extent also hard to navigate through the maze of inconsistent, patchy and confusing information on offer. As with financial issues, problems with accessing appropriate information and guidance are applicable to many groups targeted by widening participation strategies. The interviews indicated however, that these problems are often magnified for refugee individuals and communities due to a lack of experience and limited understanding of the British education system, coupled with the complexity of issues involved with the recognition of qualifications, and accentuated by the language barrier. The frustrations of the severe deficiency in the clear and co-ordinated advice and support available were not only felt by the refugees themselves, but also the community groups and education providers who were often unsure about how and where to access the required information. One of the community partners for example, spoke of the need for greater knowledge amongst staff as to whom to contact within local HEI’s in order to be able to obtain this information and guidance on behalf of their clients / students:

*"I think having people that you know [at the University], because sometimes it can be daunting for people working here, you know, not an asylum seeker or refugee but someone who is actually working here might feel a bit funny about ringing, you know? Also, if you're busy having to kind of go through, not quite knowing who the right person to talk to is and all that kind of stuff can be quite difficult, so if it was kind of very easy, you know if we all sort of knew each other, I think that's very important" (Community Partner).*

Another Community Partner described how despite huge efforts on his part, there remained significant gaps in his knowledge and subsequent ability to assist refugees in applying for university:

*"I know that the steps one or two but how to, where to go to get the form, how to apply, by when you will get your grant, your student loan, when your specific course start, where you get UCAS application, how you fill in this application, I don't have a clue" (Community Partner).*

Yet another had experienced occasions where refugees had been ill-advised by the education authority regarding issues such as eligibility for courses (in terms of immigration status) and recognition of qualifications:

*"So there is a total ignorance here and there's a lot of towing and throwing where the education authorities seem to think they know what is going on and we think 'Well I'm sure that's not the case but they should know'. So there's a gap in the information here, the guidelines I think" (Community Partner).*

The interviews with refugees also highlighted a lack of joined-up thinking and practice between institutions and support services. One for example inquired at one college whether it would be possible to do a particular course in a year. He was told that it wasn't, but only some time later discovered that it was possible at another college. It was not made clear that the advisor was referring only to the courses on offer within that particular institution:

*"They didn't advise other courses because they didn't advise me "Ok, we don't do it but if you try other colleges maybe you can get it" and finally yesterday I rang [name of college] and they said "Yes it is possible" (J, 25).*

Information was also too often extremely patchy and concentrated on dealing with immediate needs rather than providing advice and guidance which would help refugees to formulate and pursue long-term career and educational goals. One interviewee for example had arrived in the UK as an unaccompanied minor (aged 16). During this time he had not been offered any advice about careers or course information, but had taken it upon himself to seek help from Student Support. He was then assigned a Personal Advisor who helped with a range of matters including information about the college and other general assistance, such as how to access health services. However, the help he had received in terms of course choices was minimal:

*Translator: "He said that he went to ask his personal advisor whether he could do this course and his personal advisor said to him that if you feel you can do it then, then go for it" (D, 16).*

However as D was given no real careers advice, he was left under the impression that this NVQ 2 course would enable him to go on to read Medicine at university:



*Interpreter: "He said that he wants to go to university after he has finished this NVQ"*

*Interviewer: "Will that be at a high enough level to go to university?"*

*Interpreter: "He said that for him, he feels that way, but he doesn't know how, how this applies within the British system of education or higher education" (D, 16).*

Similarly another interviewee who had already gained a Diploma in Iran felt he had been ill-advised about doing an NVQ course, when he later realised it was not at a high enough level to apply for university:

*"To be honest, if I knew NVQ is not good enough to go to university, I really wouldn't do that [...] I took the course and after that I apply for university then they say, no the course is not enough for us" (J, 25).*

G (see Chapter 3, group 2) faced the similar obstacle of a lack of timely communication of information concerning available options. She was thus left with a sense of frustration, not only for her own situation but for many in her community, even those who were younger than herself:

*"The young ones that are here, they were already educated, and they have the qualification, all they needed was, they just needed somebody to grab them and just feed them with the information instead of like, you know, telling the 'Oh no, you can't, you have to pay this amount of money' or 'You've got to do this amount of courses to build up your qualification'. You know, when you graduate, you think 'Oh I'm graduated and I need to work' and then when they tell you 'Oh, you have to sit again for another 2 or 3 years', then it's you know, you think 'Oh, I've spent already all that time'" (G, 29).*

With little information available or accessible in other languages, another difficulty with accessing appropriate information was the level of English often required to be able to understand it. Finding information was identified as particularly difficult for asylum seekers when they first arrive and have little or no understanding of the language:

*"It looks now easy for me because I know everything but when I arrived I was very scared and I couldn't speak English so it was very difficult for me to go round and explore things" (F, 22).*

Even having acquired a reasonable level of English however, obtaining information by telephone could still prove problematic:

*"If you have to call a university and ask a particular question, you always have that fear of not being able to ask people the questions you're interested in and that could obviously be very difficult" (F, 22).*

Some refugees however, explained how they had visited advice agencies or education providers in person and had still come away feeling dissatisfied:

*"[Name of agency] wasn't very helpful for me, you know I'm talking about myself, it wasn't very helpful, they're just doing something, just talking for half an hour but they don't go further and they don't care, I think they didn't, they just gave me, they just signposted me, they didn't, they didn't listen what do I want" (K, 25).*

*“Everything is new and everything foreign for us and even struggling to get something. I went to [name of] University twice but I couldn’t manage to get this information which I want. They just gave me some leaflets” (L, 28).*

For those without family support in the country, accessing information and support services was often particularly challenging. One interviewee, for example who had no family in England, spoke of his perception that this was easier for those who already had relatives in the UK, and were part of an established community:

*“After 6 or 7 months they knew everything about this country, more than me which I’ve been in this country 3 and a half years” (L, 28).*

Another, who was also a lone parent, voiced the total sense of disorientation felt by many who were completely unaware of how to access the information and support services required:

*“I haven’t any idea about your country because, yeah I know which way I must I must start in my country yeah, before, but now you know, when you going new place you don’t know...where is bathroom, where is kitchen, where is, you know?” (M, 42).*

## **5.4 English**

‘Poor English’ was identified as the 3rd main barrier by the refugees completing the questionnaire (selected by 26%). This was perhaps a lower proportion than might be expected. However, it should be noted that the majority (53%) of those completing the questionnaire were now British citizens who had on average been in the UK for 11½ years and some of these had entered the UK at a young age. Therefore one would expect that the English level of these participants would be more likely to be at a higher level than those who had refugee status, and had been in the country for a shorter period of time.

Amongst the interviewees however, there was only one who had entered the country with her family as a young child (aged 6) and therefore spoke the language fluently. The English level of the other interviewees ranged from elementary through to intermediate and advanced (with one having passed the IELTS exam). In general, even those towards the top end of this scale, perceived their current level of English as inadequate (in relation to that required to continue or return to HE), whilst those at intermediate level or below generally seemed unable to even see beyond the immediate need to improve their English.

Several refugees and community partners spoke of difficulties experienced with obtaining appropriate ESOL provision<sup>xxxvi</sup>. This was partly due to in many cases to the insufficient number of hours available:

*“Well the main issue has always been, well twice a week, twice a week is not enough” (Community Partner).*

The other difficulty several interviewees complained of was the unhelpful grouping together of students with differing levels of English:

*“Then different students with different levels being put into the same class for example and then the teachers tending to focus on the, you know the higher level students and the others being ignored” (Community Partner).*

One interviewee explained how she had experienced this problem:

*“Four of them have very good English, very excellent, excellent English and I am afraid I am the only one that can’t understand. I want stop in the middle because I think, I’m not feel I can’t finish it, but I feel like oh, no way for me, I mean no way because everything is dead, I feel depressed, I feel down” (Q, 40).*

On another course which included students at various levels of English, Q had also experienced the difficulty of being one of the more advanced students in a group:

*“In the class it’s too many people, they’re not keen about your personally, they’re about 25 of us, all of us not from here, from different places, maybe I can’t understand him, the other, the one beside me, he’s Chinese, he can’t understand anything, he want all the time the teacher repeat for him. I fed up because I know these things and if you repeat it for three or four times, oh it’s just a waste of time for me but for him it’s useful” (Q, 40).*

There were also a number of issues raised about IELTS. One of these issues is the cost of the course which has been referred to in group 3 (3.2); another was the relevance of such a precise language qualification particularly for those who were interested in a more vocational course. As acknowledged in group 3 (3.2), a particular need felt amongst interviewees was for English for specific purposes such as a particular vocation for which they may have already been educated / trained before coming to the UK. One Community Partner for example spoke of cases in which students previously trained in specific areas, were advised to do IELTS, whereas she felt this was overly time-consuming and complicated for those who were here in the UK with previous qualifications.

## **5.5 Recognition of qualifications**

*“You know we have the best qualified taxi ranks here in Brighton!” (Community Partner).*

The 4<sup>th</sup> most commonly selected main barrier by refugees was the problem of non-recognition of past qualifications (20%). However, again the age factor should be noted in that this would not be a barrier for younger participants who may have entered the UK as children. Those who selected the barrier of ‘past qualifications / learning’ not recognised were on average older than those who did not identify this to be a main barrier. The majority (57%) of education providers also felt this to be a main barrier as did 39% of community groups.

This barrier was also identified by a number of the interviewees included in groups 3 and 4 (see chapter 3). Again, it has been made clear that this issue is very much interlinked with others, such as the lack of clarity and consistency of related information:

*“A lot of my clients would like to have access to university, who would like to, already done their qualification back home, they already obtained a degree or a Diploma back home and they dunno if those Diplomas or those qualification will be recognised basically in terms of education in the UK, how, and how they can get into the course that they are doing back home in their country, how they can go about it, how they can enrol themself into university” (Community Partner).*

As highlighted in 3.2 (groups 3 and 4), a few of those with previous qualifications had been successful at finding how to have these assessed and verified. Others had suffered the frustration of making little progress through having to re-learn their particular subject at a low level, or be faced with the option of seeking unskilled labour. A key issue remained the difficulty with 'proving' qualifications:

*"One of the possible problems for refugee students is if they have left their country of origin with no paperwork - this is the crucial thing" (Community Partner).*

Therefore, many of those working with refugees felt dismayed at the wasted experience and potential, which was an all too common consequence of these barriers:

*"These are qualified people for goodness sake with so much to offer but the current Government system is not getting the best out of them" (Community Partner).*

## **5.6 Childcare / other caring responsibilities**

In 20% of refugee questionnaires the 'other' category had been selected. In most cases this was around issues related to the time and practical demands of family responsibilities. Several of the interviewees had such responsibilities and commented on the challenges they posed.

It was identified that ESOL provision was often unsuitable for those with childcare responsibilities as many had no available crèche facilities nor offered hours which were compatible with the school day. One interviewee spoke of how she didn't progress past intermediate level classes because of a lack of childcare and help or information about transport:

*"I was just fed up to be honest" [Why was that?] "With the small children, I can't leave them with anyone and it's too far for me. I'm not too far from the college but I feel it's too far for me, and I don't know the transport and I stopped at Intermediate, I'm not finish it" (Q, 40).*

Another interviewee referred to childcare as an issue when asked for reasons she had been hindered from continuing on to HE:

*"Yes maybe the children, because I was thinking about full-time course and it's very hard to do because I work, take care of the house and everything, so it's very hard" (C, 26).*

In addition to the actual difficulty with finding childcare whilst at college or university, those with other caring and family responsibilities were conscious of how these demands may detract from the ability to devote adequate time and concentration to the course:

*"It's not easy ignore anything, ignore your house, ignore your children, ignore your going to wash up or cleaning or anything" (Q, 40).*

Although this was mainly an obstacle for the women with children, the two Sudanese married men in the study also spoke of their perception of the precedence that family responsibilities should take over their own education. As referred to in 3.2 (group 4) however, this was related to age, i.e. a sense in which they had missed their opportunities for education and were now looking instead to the future of their children.

## 5.7 Socio-cultural influences upon attitudes and aspirations towards education

There were also some less tangible barriers which could not be easily categorised through a questionnaire although some of these issues relate to those of emotional support, confidence, cultural expectations and racism. As illustrated in graph 5.1, these were generally less commonly selected as main barriers than the 'harder' factors considered above. However, the interviews revealed that the related effects upon educational ambition and perceived ability / opportunity were significant.

### Aspiration and the influence of a refugee 'community'

It was not the case that there were very low ambitions and aspirations amongst the refugee interviewees as a whole. Indeed, there were several who held very high aspirations. However, it was evident that high aspirations as well as low could be a barrier:

*"I think one of the problems for many of the students is that they have high aspirations, wanting to be doctors and dentists. We tell them these courses are very difficult to get into etc. but actually I think if they had it from the horse's mouth that there are other courses that would be more accessible to these students at university which could possibly lead on to what they think they might want. With home students it would tend to be parents who might bring them down to earth and get them to apply for realistic courses" (Community Partner).*

The worry was therefore the possibility that this could lead to further discouragement, where such high aspirations were mixed with a lack of knowledge of how to achieve them. This was evident in the case of a young unaccompanied refugee as referred to in 5.3 (informant D).

Therefore it should be noted that any lack of ambition or negative perception of education should not be attributed towards refugee communities and individuals in a blanket fashion. One Community Partner commented on her experience of the differences in aspiration held by those belonging to various refugee communities:

*"Some of the groups - particularly the Iranian students - many of them had their higher education disrupted by having to leave their country and many of them have aspirations of going to university definitely. Some of the Sudanese population - their families have aspirations for them to go to university, but I think possibly more the young male Kosovan, Rwandan - these single students - their primary focus is getting a job." (Community Partner).*

Indeed the determination of many of the Iranians in the study to pursue their education is discussed in section 3.2 (group3). The high aspirations amongst Sudanese families for their children have also been noted. One of the Sudanese refugees, who was also a Bi-lingual Assistant commented on this:

*"I have one of the children in the special needs school, when we had a meeting with the parents they say they want them to be a doctor, which are very hard you know? But her teacher really was very pleased that the parents, you know, have this high expectation of their child" (C, 26).*

However, amongst the Sudanese who had entered the UK as adults, it was very apparent that there was often a deep sense of resignation to the perceived lack of education or career opportunities available to them. A leader from one of the refugee groups involved in the research explained how certain parts of his community had considered this their sacrifice on behalf of future generations, who, having grown up in the UK would be less prone to the various forms of disadvantage they had experienced:

*“When they came here, we sacrificed a few generations, I mean, we sacrificed those who started and didn’t finish, we sacrificed those who finished and didn’t continue, we sacrificed those who worked and didn’t, been equally qualified here. We sacrificed those who haven’t got English as well, but after 13 years, I mean children have been born here and entered school here and they are taking their grades from here [Yeah.]...so there is nothing to stop them now from higher study.” (R, 46).*

There were differences in outlook between those refugees who belonged to a more established refugee community and those who perhaps had few, if any, friends or acquaintances from their home country. In some senses there were obvious benefits for those refugees who could be knitted into an existing refugee community:

*“A lot of people coming through the system now are single Albanian Kosovans who basically have no infrastructure in the community, whereas the two people I’m thinking of that are going on to advanced level courses both come from the Sudanese community which is well established, has always had elders, has always likely had at least one parent and quite often two but we’re now moving into a new era of, I would say, Albanian Kosovans, Afghanis, Iranians - where these are single young men, very often with no community support and no elders, nobody to go to for advice and things like that” (Community Partner).*

On the other hand as one interviewee described, the presence of a refugee community did not necessarily ensure encouragement and support regarding education. Sometimes its influence could be quite the opposite:

*“They said “oh you’re just wasting your time, why are you going to college?” I used to wake up in the morning and when I, I was doing my ESOL classes we used to, in London we used to study for 5 days: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, from 9 until 4 o’clock. So they used to tell me “why are you going to do this”, you know. So you’ve got to be strong” (Community Partner).*

Rather, as one refugee argued there was a tendency for such groups to provide financial support through employment, which although perhaps beneficial in the short-term, often nevertheless detracted from the inclination towards HE:

*“Once you get to work or something in a restaurant with your own people you never think about other way, you always stuck in that area and you constantly work, work and then you get older, and then as you get older you obviously think I’m too old to study ... and that could be also one of the reasons why people don’t really ... they are not interested in studying” (F, 22).*

## Perceptions of age

Cultural perceptions of age as highlighted in the above comment, was also an issue that was commonly acknowledged in the interviews. The idea of returning to study later in life was for many a new concept, and not one that was easily adopted by some sections of the refugee community:

*“The thinking back home, that after 18 you are not capable to go to university, and it’s still with us here, even we go to England” (Community Partner).*

Several examples of how age was perceived to be a barrier have been noted in section 3.2 (groups 3 and 4).

## Perceptions of gender

Another issue raised, again relating to aspirations, was the cultural perception of gender (as referred to in 3.2, group 1). This however was said to differ, even amongst refugees from the same ethnic group:

*“Our community comes different places so, like we have a big group from somewhere which they have this problems, girls you know, it doesn’t matter really if you have, they don’t say ‘Stay at home and don’t study’ but it doesn’t matter, there are no expectations” (C, 26).*

*“This depends on the family actually because I, I, I know quite a lot of families here who insist that education comes first....[Yeah.]...and this is my belief as well, and you don’t expect your daughter just to grow up and get married and that’s it. She won’t get married unless she has some certificates. Well that’s the view of lots of the people here, but there is the other category that believes that well, let’s say Middle Eastern idea, the girl is to her husband’s house. [Yeah.] So, whenever she is at the age of 18, 20 then she is to get married” (R, 46).*

Another refugee however felt that the low educational expectations amongst many of the female members of her community were in part due to the lack of information offered to them about possible opportunities and options:

*“A lot, a lot of them don’t know anything, so they just go ‘Ok, I’ll just get married and you know stay at home’, but if, if they are given information they’ll know, ‘Ok I can do this, or I can do this or I can do that” (A, 17).*

## Perceptions of the rewards of education

For some refugees (such as H, 3.2) the perceived lack of reward for higher qualifications was the main reason for abandoning education. Another interviewee also commented how the tendency towards making money in the present rather than studying for the future was a common obstacle to HE. Talking of those within the refugee community, who were now in their 20's he stated:

*“I think there is something to be done for those people if they are not already involved in anything else I mean. If someone is involved in work or so, it’s harder to convince him to go back to study” (R, 46).*

The Research Team member representing this community also perceived this to be a major barrier:

*“There is no ambition, you know, the only ambition is to have money. Why? Because since they come here they are living on the lowest income, so, thinking of money demolish the ideas of having certificate” (Community Partner).*

Another factor involved in this emphasis on the tendency to look towards making money in the present, was a lack of conviction that gaining such qualifications would make any real difference to their employability and pay levels. This is an issue often recognised as significant amongst some sections of the indigenous population who are traditionally excluded from HE<sup>xxxvii</sup>. However, the problem is perhaps magnified for refugees who fear that they would be at an unfair disadvantage in the market place when competing for jobs with British nationals due to the prejudice of employers:

*“Would I find the work when I finish, yeah? Ok, what I work is with ethnic minority and they need bi-lingual assistant, but when I get my qualification is it easy to find the work or not? [.....] I mean you can choose, you can choose unless you have the, you have like a number of ethnic minority in your workforce, but you can choose, I mean if I have a private office for accountancy, I can choose between ethnic minority or English” (C, 26).*

*“I did need the money yes, but I thought as well, if I get a proper job there is no way I would earn as much as, and you know because you know the competition is high, if the English people and everyone applies for a job it will be a little bit difficult you know?” (H, 29).*

## **Racism**

In addition to the perception of the racism of employers many had become discouraged by their experiences of racist treatment within education institutions. One Community Partner for example spoke of the disruptive effect that racist threats had had on her son's education:

*“He can't go to school if he feel that if he go, they are going to kill him because they hold him responsible somehow for what happened on 11th September” (Community Partner).*

Another interviewee spoke of the difficulties of coming into a UK school from Sudan which was exacerbated by the racist bullying she received:

*“Some of my friends were at an English school [in Sudan] and had a lot of English but not my school, so it was very hard: the curriculum is different, everything is different and I had lots of bullying from other people, children at that time and teachers as well so I had a very bad experience” (C, 26).*

Later in the interview she spoke of how these bad experiences caused her to become fearful about the prospect of studying at university, particularly in regard to speaking out in English:

*“I think I don't want to like stand up in a lecture and say something wrong in English, yeah, which will make me feel worse about my English” (C, 26).*



In addition to direct forms of racism there were also examples of unhelpful insensitivity on the part of teachers or lecturers, in some cases causing the refugee student to become discouraged. One interviewee for example had been experiencing such difficulties at university, and was contemplating dropping his course.

*“The teacher used an expression and everyone laughed, damn I didn't know that expression, nobody told me why are they laughing, yeah and I laughed myself because I saw everyone laughing you know? Seriously. And he said, he explained something about computers and then he says “Guys, did you get it?” and then he turned to us because was like this [puts on 'blank' facial expression], and says “Oh your faces show no-one got it, look this expression we have in England, bla bla bla” so everyone start laughing and I says 'Oh', 'Now you understood it?' and everyone say 'Yeah, it's cool'. I didn't understand it, what it was about, so it made it more complicated for me, and that make me really, on that time straight away my brain told me, which is happen to human being, I really felt disappointed. I were looking at myself and saying 'My English is not God damn good'. While the teacher was talking, I was in the same time my brain was really fighting with myself, how my English is bad, so I already was missing the lectures. By the time the lecture's finished I don't understand, was it one hour? I wasted my time and I came out miserable”. (Community Partner)*

G (29) had also experienced and witnessed what she perceived to be racist treatment from a lecturer:

*“The way he was asking the questions, it was unbelievable, he was like really taking the Mickey out of us and we thought that is not nice, because other groups came out right, and they were fine with them, they don't even ask them, but our group, we were really hassled a lot; so we just went there and you know, we complained; we said you know, 'What is his problem because he's really picking on us?' And he used to mention things like you know, 'You're Greek, you're supposed to be good in Maths', you know, and you think, 'You're not supposed to say that, so what if you're Greek, you invented the zero, so what?' You know, he might be Greek, yes, but maybe he's not a clever Greek, but, you know, things like this he's saying it in front of everyone. It was a little bit you know, over the top so I would take that as a, you know, he doesn't like us” (G, 29).*

## **Anxiety and depression**

Several interviewees spoke of the difficulties of pursuing education whilst suffering from anxiety and depression. This was mostly a direct result of the stresses of the immigration system. For many, this process is not only extremely harrowing but lengthy, often requiring a wait of up to several years for a final decision. Therefore, this can result in a serious set-back to any educational progress (including possible preparation for HE) that might have been achieved during this time. Although for the research we felt it appropriate to concentrate on refugees, (for reasons outlined in the introduction) it became clear that in reality it is somewhat artificial to draw an imaginary line between these two experiences. It is thus important to acknowledge how such difficulties faced by an asylum seeker could lead to very real barriers to the same individual accessing university at a later stage.

One interviewee spoke of the challenge these stresses presented in respect of his studies. In this case however the interviewee found he was able to turn around this sense of de-motivation by using it to become even more determined to succeed:

*“That was the most stressful thing I found - coping with exams as well as getting letters from Immigration which ... um .... de-motivated me so many times but I was trying to look at it the other way and tried to motivate myself and go against their decision if they said they refuse you for whatever .... I tried to study even harder and do my best just to prove that I am actually worth something. Every time I had exams I received one of these letters. Once I remember opening the letter just an hour before the exam and my brain went blank completely - that was the worst time I went through when I did my GCSEs and then my AS levels - that was really, really hard to concentrate on my studies because you don't know if you're going to stay in this country or whether they will throw you out. Sometimes you think is it worth studying? But I never looked at it that way, I was trying to look positively and think that I'm going to [unclear word] and this is the country I'm going to live ... spend the rest of my life in, that's what kept me motivated” (F, 22).*

He also acknowledged however that he was strengthened in this determination by having a supportive family around him:

*“I think it was really helpful, my mother and my brother - just being as a family and supporting each other, we are in the same situation so we understand each other, and try to help and see how we can find the best way to succeed” (F, 22).*

Others though, perhaps due to a lack of such support, were not able to keep so positive. One Community Partner spoke of how depression caused by problems outside, (particularly regarding an outstanding asylum case) was one of the main causes of low attendance and dropping out of courses:

*“I think depression is probably one of the biggest reasons why they don't come, they might be on medication, it might be difficult to make their classes” (Community Partner).*

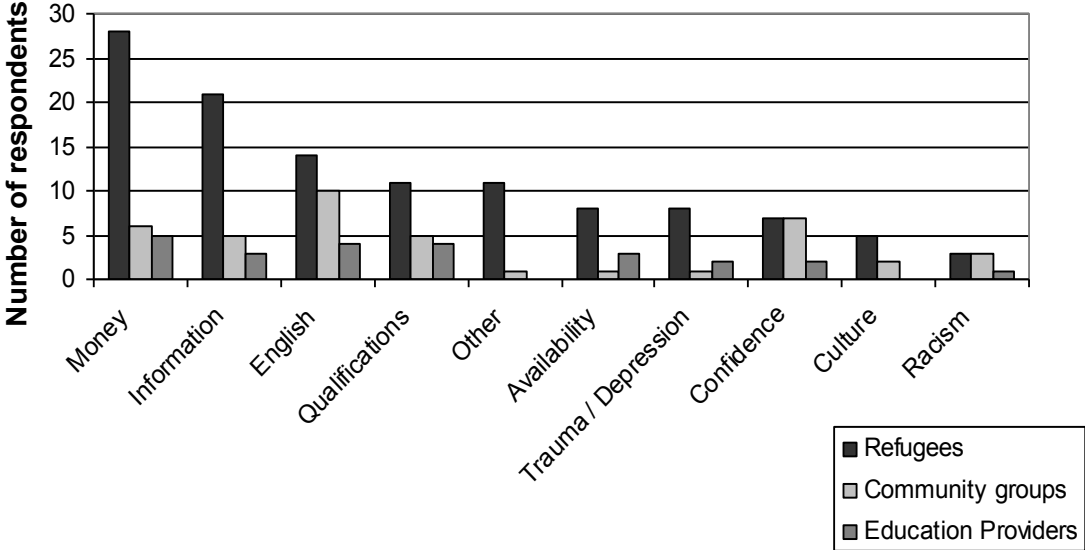
Such anxiety and depression was raised as an issue by only a few of the refugees interviewed, and a fairly small proportion identified it as a factor on the questionnaires (only 15%). However, there was some indication that others who may have been hindered by depression were perhaps reluctant to speak of it (or perhaps even acknowledge the issue to themselves) due in part to a cultural sense of shame about having depression. This was indicated by one interviewee who expressed to the interviewer how she had felt uncomfortable about discussing these issues freely (earlier in the interview) due to the presence of another member of her refugee community, who had since left the room. She then began to speak of how she had not felt able to concentrate on study due to the depression that was intensified by the stress and pressure of her immigration case. Only since gaining a positive decision had she begun to consider herself able to return to education. Thus she had not been able to make the necessary progress in English during her time as an asylum seeker, which might have prepared her to proceed to a further course or job:

*“I had depression and my body hadn't good feeling you know, and now, now I haven't good feeling, just my mind start working you know? [.....] I need again find myself and I want to start for learning English” (M, 42).*

In regard to the graph below, it should also be noted that although the questionnaire to refugees asked whether respondents suffered from 'depression', community groups and education providers were asked if they considered a lack of support for 'past traumas' suffered by refugees a main barrier. As these are linked they have been included together in the graph below. However, it is recognised that there is a difference in that for example those suffering from depression or other mental health problems may have been affected by the experiences of

current stresses regarding their immigration case, adapting to a new culture (i.e. a process which has been referred to as 'retraumatisation')<sup>xxxviii</sup> or other issues. Therefore, it is possible that if organisations were asked about the lack of support in a broader mental health context, a greater number may have selected this as a main barrier.

**Graph 5.1 Main barriers to continuing in education as perceived by refugees, community groups and education providers completing the questionnaires**



## Chapter 6 - Suggestions for change

### 6.1 Schools, Colleges and Universities

The following emerged when we asked respondents to suggest what should be done by schools, colleges and universities to address the problems and barriers they had identified:

- a) Improvements to provision of English language teaching (quality, level and hours)
- b) Improvements to provision of information and guidance.
- c) Improvements to levels of support offered
- d) Review existing procedures for recognition of previous learning.
- e) Provide a wider range of appropriate/affordable courses.

#### English

- There was widespread support for provision of ESOL classes to be increased in the city to enable students to study for more hours each week.
- The need for more intensive English courses was expressed.<sup>xxxix</sup> It was felt that such courses would remove some of the frustration currently experienced by some students who find current provision too drawn out and slow moving.
- Education providers to work together and with community groups in order to inform Government of negative effects of the limited hours currently allowed for study if in receipt of state benefits.
- There is a strong desire for courses to be developed which incorporate vocational vocabulary.
- Universities to offer subject specific English language support, e.g. 'English for engineers'.
- Identify 'learning mentors', possibly other students, for support and extra help with English.
- Universities to review the use of IELTS as an entry requirement.

#### Information and Guidance

- Schools to ensure that systems are in place to encourage and support full integration of ASR children.
- Build/improve relations with community groups in order to ensure they are kept up to date with course developments, admissions, procedures/requirements, open days etc.
- Develop an easily accessible database of information on local education providers detailing range of courses available and entry requirements. This should cover all levels and types of qualification available. Ensure it is kept up to date at all times<sup>xxxix</sup>.
- Each education provider to have designated personnel with knowledge and expertise related to ASRs who can offer clear and coherent information and guidance on education to community groups as well as individuals.
- Universities to recognise home students from different cultural/linguistic backgrounds as distinct from overseas students.
- Universities to tailor delivery of information (e.g. when visiting FE colleges) to the needs of ASRs – i.e. offer one to one sessions alongside group sessions.

## Support

- Identify 'learning mentors' to be available to refugee students if required.
- Easily accessible, designated personnel familiar with the range of issues which might impact on refugee students' learning experience. One to one meetings preferred. Liaison with community groups to inform training for such staff.
- FE colleges and schools to offer personal support with application process and finances for university. Ensure link is made with designated staff member at university to offer assistance with enrolment, assignment of mentor etc. Ensure that all sources of finance to support transition to HE are publicised widely and work with students to budget for HE.

## Previous Learning

- There should be greater recognition given to previous learning/qualifications when applications for university are considered. Universities should develop systems for measuring prior learning where documentation is unavailable.
- Education providers should increase use of the APEL (accreditation of prior experiential learning) when assessing applicants.

*“APEL recognises the value of learning which takes place outside formal education institutions. It enables adult learners to identify the skills and knowledge acquired informally and to reflect upon their learning processes, enabling them to make the transition from informal to formal learning. It is also an important vehicle for enabling adults who possess few, if any, qualifications to return to learn in adult, further and higher education and subsequent re-entry into the labour market.”<sup>xi</sup>*

## Availability / cost of courses

- Universities to explore possibility of bursaries and scholarships for refugees.
- FE colleges and universities to work together to develop more coherent pathways through the post-compulsory system.

## 6.2 Community Groups

The following emerged when we asked respondents to suggest what should be done by community groups to address the problems and barriers they had identified:

- a) Develop resources to advise / offer information on HE matters
- b) Promote further and higher education to clients

## Advice / information

- Ensure all existing sources of information on educational matters are up to date and available to staff.
- Make / maintain contact with designated staff members in colleges and universities in order to ensure that information being given out is correct and up to date.
- Liaise with other community groups to ensure information is shared and reaches as wide an audience as possible.

## **Promote education to clients**

- Work closely with clients to establish their educational needs.
- Build confidence of clients with regard to education through offering support.
- Encourage adult education through emphasis on social advantages.

## **6.3 Partnerships**

The following emerged when we asked respondents to suggest what should be done by partnerships to address the problems and barriers they had identified:

- Organisation of seminars / conferences to discuss issues related to ASRs and HE.
- All related organisations to examine current progression pathways and look for ways of improving these.
- Education providers and community groups to work more closely together to ensure that there is a two way exchange of information to enable both to provide refugees with the best information and guidance possible.

## Chapter 7 - Conclusion and recommendations

### 7.1 Conclusion

The findings from all elements of this research highlight barriers, both actual and perceived, to accessing HE for a sample of refugees / ex refugees currently living in Brighton and Hove. The in-depth interviews carried out with refugees demonstrate the very complex nature of interwoven circumstances that can lead to problems in accessing HE. These findings were corroborated via the interviews carried out with education providers and community groups working closely with this group. Furthermore, the results from the questionnaires distributed to a wider range of refugees and related organisations threw more light on the issues as well as offering information on services currently provided.

Although certain barriers identified apply to other non-traditional students, this research demonstrates that many refugees have additional problems which can magnify the scale of barriers. Examples of this would be: having English as a second language; being unfamiliar with this country's cultural norms (and education systems); uncertainty about currency of prior qualifications; worries around immigration/status of family members or lack of support due to being alone.

Key factors influencing attitudes to the worth of HE seem to be the age at which refugees come to the country and whether or not they have family support.

There are indications that for certain groups of refugees, especially those who are without family support, earning a living at the present time takes precedence over study for the future which it is realised would in most cases, incur high levels of debt. The research clearly shows that those entering the UK aged 16 or above face particular challenges on the path to university.

With regard to how and where refugees receive information and guidance, the study indicates that they will tend to turn, in the first instance, to people they know and trust. These would include people such as tutors or personal advisors at schools and colleges or (particularly for those over 18) staff working for community groups. At present, it would appear that this results in a very mixed quality of advice, depending on the advisor's level of knowledge, time for research, resources etc. It emerges that there is a clear need for processes to be developed to enable these people to give the best information and guidance possible. Many interviewees describe problems with accessing clear information about costs involved, financial help available, application procedures and eligibility criteria. In particular there is a need for clarity around the matter of qualifications gained overseas. There are issues around providing documentation of prior qualifications for some refugees whilst others encounter difficulties with the process of assessing equivalence to English qualifications. Problems with such can lead to great frustration as students can be directed to courses which are at an inappropriate level for their skills.

Similarly, the research highlights that some students are not receiving adequate guidance (in some cases not knowing where to go to seek guidance) when selecting courses, both at further and higher education levels. The findings suggest that there is room for improvement in the delivery of advice on both education and career choices and that by working in partnership, community groups and education providers could exchange knowledge and expertise to enhance each other's ability to deliver the best advice and support possible. Universities could do more to ease the reported difficulties encountered when trying to get information from them.

Fluency in English, both spoken and written, is crucial to building confidence and raising aspirations in regard to HE. With the exception of those who arrive in the UK at a very young age, poor English language skills were felt to be a major obstacle to successful study at all levels. Whilst on the whole there is satisfaction with the quality of Basic Skills courses, there is a demand for more intensive courses and for there to be an option of learning subject specific vocabulary. Also, increased provision is required to allow more hours to be studied each week and better timetabled to accommodate the needs of carers. With regard to provision following Basic Skills level, there was general agreement that this is insufficient and represents a serious blockage on the 'progression pathway'<sup>xii</sup>. There are many courses available but these are often out of reach of many refugees due to the cost and / or lack of financial support available.

To conclude, the research highlights a number of issues which could usefully be addressed to encourage and ease access to HE for refugees. Education providers from schools to universities could explore their current procedures in light of the findings above to improve the information and guidance on offer to refugee students. Making contact and working with community groups would facilitate an exchange of information which would enable all parties to deliver a more effective service. High quality information, guidance and support can help to build confidence and enable these students to participate fully at every level of the education system.

## 7.2 Key Recommendations

The following recommendations have been informed, to a large extent, by the suggestions offered by participants in the research. In order for these recommendations to be addressed, the successful partnerships established via this project will need to be maintained and further developed. Whilst it is hoped that the contents of this research will be of interest and use to other Higher Education Institutions, it is recognised that a specific commitment will be necessary from the University of Brighton in relation to examination of its own processes and procedures which, in turn, will facilitate access to HE for refugees.

*Note: Reference to the University in the recommendations relates specifically to the University of Brighton.*

1. The University should actively continue to build relationships with community groups and service providers with a view to forming networks and partnerships within Brighton and Hove and other areas of interest in Sussex, e.g. Hastings. Such would provide a pool of expertise which would inform training of advisors and monitor availability, exchange and delivery of information and guidance to refugees.
2. Through partnership work, the University should identify personnel working with refugees in an advisory capacity (how and where so ever) and ensure they receive guidance (and where necessary appropriate training) to ensure refugee students understand university application and admissions processes in order to promote realistic expectations.
3. Outreach work undertaken by the University should be sensitive to the needs of potential refugee students (e.g. offer one to one sessions if possible at information days at colleges)
4. Through partnership work, the University and other education providers should undertake to explore issues surrounding evidencing and accepting prior learning and produce clear guidelines.



5. Through partnership work, the University and other education providers should explore possibility of 'testing' for skills/knowledge where documentary proof of prior qualifications is unavailable. Develop links with existing projects such as the Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit (RAGU) at London Metropolitan University.
6. The University should ensure that there is a staff member, well versed in issues related to refugees, with responsibility for providing guidance from initial enquiry through to on-course support.
7. The University should ensure student support services are adequately trained with regard to issues related to refugee students. Particular attention should be paid to facilitating access to therapeutic support when necessary.
8. Through partnership work, the University and other education providers should develop mentoring schemes relating specifically to the academic experience and build on existing structures, e.g. from the Sussex Coastal Highway project. Particular emphasis should be paid to easing transition from one education level to the next.
9. Partners to explore level of provision and appropriateness of local support services with specific reference to therapeutic support.
10. Partners to explore with Sussex Learning and Skills Council (LSC) current local provision of English qualifications and support to establish if fit for purpose, particularly with regards to level of provision.
11. Partners to explore With Sussex LSC the possibility of increasing ESOL provision and ensure it is timetabled appropriately.
12. Explore in partnership how progression pathways, can be eased for students aged 19 plus who wish to access education, paying specific attention to related costs.
13. Partnerships to fully involve those providing careers guidance in order to ensure progression pathways to HE for refugees are fully supported and available to all age groups.
14. The University to explore, and improve where necessary, their recording of information to facilitate monitoring of number of refugee student applications and enrolments.

# Appendixes

## Appendix 1

### Questionnaire

*The following questionnaire is to inform the Community University Partnership Project. Names are not required as the information is to be kept totally anonymous and confidential.*

1) Please give the following information by ticking the appropriate boxes:

a) Country of origin \_\_\_\_\_

b) Current status in UK

Indefinite Leave to Remain	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exceptional Leave to Remain	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asylum seeker	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state below)	<input type="checkbox"/>

\_\_\_\_\_

c) Gender

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>

d) Age

\_\_\_\_\_

5) Length of time in the UK

\_\_\_\_\_ :

2) Education outside of the UK

a) Before coming to the UK, did you gain any qualifications?

Yes  No

b) If **YES** please describe (e.g. subject(s) / level):

\_\_\_\_\_

### 3) Education within the UK

Have you taken courses in any of the following subjects? If so, please tick the relevant boxes depending on whether you have completed, dropped out of, or are currently studying the course.

	Completed	Dropped out	Currently studying
a) ESOL Beginner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ESOL Intermediate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ESOL Advanced	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please state subject	Completed	Dropped out	Currently studying
b) GCSE _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NVQ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A-Level _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Degree _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 4) Aims for the future

a) Do you intend to do further study?

Yes  No

b) If **YES**, in what subject(s) / level(s)?

\_\_\_\_\_

c) If **NO**, would you like to continue with study if this were possible?

Yes  No

d) What job would you like to do? \_\_\_\_\_

e) If working, what job are you currently doing? \_\_\_\_\_

**5) Barriers to education**

If any of the following factors have discouraged, or made it difficult for you to continue with your education in the UK, please number the relevant boxes **from 1 to 3** (where 1 is the main difficulty).

Not enough money	
Unsuitable accommodation	
Lack of information	
Don't have confidence	
Views of family / friends	
Poor English	
Depression / anxiety	
Preferred course is not available locally	
Past qualifications / learning not recognised	
Racism	
Other (please describe below)	

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**6) Other comments**

Please use the space below if you have other comments about education:

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**Thank you very much for your help**

Please return this questionnaire to the person you received it from, or direct to the address below:

Miss Laura Banks,  
HSPRC,  
University of Brighton,  
Falmer,  
BRIGHTON,  
BN1 9PH

## Appendix 2

### E-mail questionnaire for staff working with refugee students

*For the purpose of this questionnaire 'refugee' refers to those who have received a positive decision on their case (ILR/ELR or HP) as opposed to those who are still seeking asylum.*

1a) If known;

How many refugees and asylum seekers were enrolled at your institution this academic year?

How many of these are currently seeking asylum?

1b) If not known, would it be possible to monitor this in the future?

Yes  No  Don't know

2. Please indicate the title / levels of courses attended by refugees and the numbers who have attended this academic year:

Name of course	Level	Number
		<input type="text"/>
		<input type="text"/>
		<input type="text"/>

3) Does your college / centre / university formally offer any of the following services specifically to refugees or asylum seekers in the following areas?

	Yes	No
Welfare Support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Careers advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information and guidance on access routes into higher education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4a) Do you have a member of staff with a specific responsibility for the support of refugees?

Yes  No

**If no, please go to question 5**

4b) Please give the job title of this member of staff

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4c) Please describe what these responsibilities include

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5) What do you think is the main source of welfare / advice support used by refugee students at your college / centre / university (tick one box only)?

Designated support for refugees within the institution

Mainstream services within the institution, i.e. those offered to all students

Informal e.g. through tutor

Outside agencies, e.g. community groups

Don't know

Other (please describe)

---

6a) Do you feel the refugee students within your institution require more support?

Yes  No

6b) If yes, what kind of support and how should this be provided?

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7a) In your experience, are refugees deterred from pursuing their education due to a lack of any of the following? If so, please indicate from 1 to 3 (where 1 is the most significant factor):

Money	<input type="text"/>
Adequate housing	<input type="text"/>
Information	<input type="text"/>
Confidence in ability	<input type="text"/>
Value attributed by family / culture	<input type="text"/>
Progress in learning English	<input type="text"/>
Support regarding past traumas	<input type="text"/>
Availability of suitable courses	<input type="text"/>
Recognition of existing qualifications / past learning	<input type="text"/>
Other (please describe below)	<input type="text"/>

---

7b) What do you feel should be done to address these problems within:

Schools \_\_\_\_\_

Colleges \_\_\_\_\_

Universities \_\_\_\_\_

Community groups \_\_\_\_\_

Partnerships between the above institutions / groups

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8) If you have any other comments please include these in the space below:

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**Thank you for your co-operation**

Please return the questionnaire via e-mail [l.c.banks@bton.ac.uk](mailto:l.c.banks@bton.ac.uk) or by fax (01273) 643496 or to the address below:

Miss Laura Banks,  
HSPRC,  
Friston House,  
Falmer,  
BRIGHTON,  
BN1 9PH.



## Appendix 3

### Questionnaire for community groups working with refugees

Please answer the following questions as fully as you are able. NB: The abbreviation ASR stands for asylum seekers and refugees, i.e. both those who have received a positive decision on their case (but do not yet have British citizenship) and those who are still seeking asylum.

1) Please give the name of your project / organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

2a) Does your organisation work in partnership with any other community groups / charities / organisations?

Yes  No

b) If yes, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

c) Please describe what this involves:

---

*If exact figures for Q3 and 4 are not known please give approximates:*

3) **In the last four weeks** how many adults (16+) living in Brighton and Hove, have accessed your service who are:

a) Asylum seekers **AND** refugees?

b) **Refugees** – i.e. those who have received a **positive decision** on their case (e.g. indefinite / exceptional leave, HP, DL)?

c) **British citizens** who previously had refugee status?

4) **Of the total number of ASR's included in 3a**, please specify how many are:

a) Sudanese

Iranian

Afghani

Congolese

Somalian

Other (please specify below)

- b) 16-18
- 19-30
- 31-50
- Over 50


- c) Male
- Female


5) Does your organisation provide advice in any of the following areas?  
**If so, please tick where applicable:**

Career options

Access to local ESOL courses

Access to other Basic Skills courses (e.g. Maths, Computing etc.)

Access to local Further Education (e.g. A-Level / Access) courses

Access to Higher Education (e.g. Degree / HND) courses

6) Do you provide any other service(s) for ASR's? If so please describe below:

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7) How would you describe your involvement with education providers?  
**Please tick one box only:**

We work in close partnership with educational providers.

We are fairly confident about whom to contact and refer people to within local educational establishments.

We have attempted to obtain information from educational providers in the area but have found this difficult.

We have had no contact at all with educational providers.

8a) Does your organisation provide any courses available to ASR's?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b) **If yes**, please specify the number of ASR's currently on the course(s) and the Level / description of the course(s):

	Number	Level(s) / description
English language support	<input style="width: 50px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>	
Computer literacy training	<input style="width: 50px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>	
Other	<input style="width: 50px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>	

9a) Do you feel ASR's accessing your service require more accessible information and support about education, than is currently available?

Yes  No

b) If yes, what sort of information and support do you feel is required?

---

10) In your experience, are refugees deterred from pursuing their education due to a lack of any of the following? If so, please indicate which, (**no more than three**) by numbering the relevant boxes **from 1 to 3 where 1 is the most significant**:

<p>Money</p> <p>Adequate housing</p> <p>Information</p> <p>Confidence in ability</p> <p>Value attributed by family / culture</p> <p>Progress in learning English</p> <p>Support regarding past traumas</p> <p>Availability of suitable courses</p> <p>Recognition of existing qualifications</p>	<input style="width: 50px; height: 25px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 50px; height: 25px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 50px; height: 25px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 50px; height: 25px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 50px; height: 25px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 50px; height: 25px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 50px; height: 25px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 50px; height: 25px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 50px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>	<p>Racism</p> <p>Other (please describe below)</p> <hr style="border: 0.5px solid black;"/>	<input style="width: 50px; height: 25px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 50px; height: 25px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 50px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>
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11) What do you feel should be done to address these problems within:

a) Schools, colleges and / or universities:

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b) Community groups and organisations:

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c) Partnerships between different education providers and community groups:

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12) If you have any other comments about issues relating to access into Higher Education for refugees, please use the space below:

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13) If you would be interested in finding out more about the research project or being involved in any future developments, please fill in the details below:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Job title: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation name / address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Tel no. \_\_\_\_\_

Fax no. \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Many thanks for your help.**

## Appendix 4

### REFUGEES AND HIGHER EDUCATION Interviews with members of the research team

#### TOPIC GUIDE

- Information on their organisation
  
- Discussion on issues related to education in general for refugees
  
- Specific discussion on issues related to refugees and higher education
  - information
  - barriers
  - support
  - previous qualifications
  
- Recommendations of possible interviewees

## Appendix 5

### Interview Schedule for Refugees

#### 1/ General background information

- Age / country of origin / status (married / parent / younger person with or without family etc.)
- How long have you been in the UK - Brighton / other towns?
- What is your immigration status? (When received positive decision).

#### 2/ Education and employment in home country

- Did you do any further study in your home country? What subject(s)? Why? (Career goal / parental expectations).
- Did you learn / speak English in your home country? (To what level?)
- What age did you leave education?
- *If not in education when left home country* – What did you do after leaving school / college / university? Why did you choose this type of job? (Was it the job s/he wanted or was there another reason).
- *If younger* – Can you tell me about your experience of coming into a UK school / college? (Differences from home country / positive / negative experiences of the work / other pupils / teachers etc. Also explore issues around parental support).

#### 3/ Education and employment in the UK

- Can you tell me about any study or training you've done since you've been in the UK? (e.g. ESOL / other courses – why / where studied, opinions on value of course / tutors / facilities – met expectations? How helpful in achieving their desired goal / how could courses be improved? How has education differed from experiences of study in home country? Ever dropped out of a course or thought about dropping out – why?).
- Have you had any problems finding or getting on a course that you would have liked to have done (why, e.g. not available / qualifications not recognised / financial reasons?).
- What help have you had with finding information on courses / career guidance etc? Was this adequate? Is there any other information / help that you would like that you haven't been able to find? What sort of information / how should this be communicated?
- Have you had any other problems which have made it difficult you to do or continue with education (e.g. housing, health etc.).

- Have you had any employment since you've been in the UK? If yes, what sort of jobs (why / opinions on job); If no, is this because of difficulties with finding work or another reason?

#### **4/ Future plans and aspirations**

- What do you intend to do in the future (work / study)? Why? Do you see anything which might hold you back from achieving this? (What? Explore views of university).
- *If known* – Is this what you would ideally like to do? If not, what would you like to do / what puts you off pursuing this (e.g. influence of family or culture / negative experience of education / cost of study / lack of information etc.)?

#### **5/ Opinions on possible action**

- What do you think are the main things that need to be done to encourage / help refugees to take courses at college or university? (Explore other problems that s/he thinks may be faced by certain types of refugees and possible solutions).
- What do you think schools / colleges / universities / community groups could help you achieve your learning / training / career goals?

## Endnotes

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- <sup>i</sup> Information on status taken from the Refugee Council website: [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/infocentre/asylumlaw](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/infocentre/asylumlaw) and the DfES: [www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk)
- <sup>ii</sup> The Convention can be viewed at: [www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/o\\_c\\_ref.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/o_c_ref.htm)
- <sup>iii</sup> Hughes, B and Lammy, D, 27 October 2003 *New Legislative Proposals on Asylum Reform*, Home Office and Nationality Directorate, at: [www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk).
- <sup>iv</sup> See [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/infocentre/news](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/infocentre/news) for information.
- <sup>v</sup> Young asylum seekers have previously been dealt with according to section 17 of the Children Act (1989) and thereby not been offered support post 18. See Valios, N, 'Young Lives in Limbo' in *Community Care*, (2-8 October, 2003).
- <sup>vi</sup> *The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000*, [www.hms.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000035.htm](http://www.hms.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000035.htm), (accessed 01.12.03).
- <sup>vii</sup> Information about Sudan and reasons for the migration since 1989 can be found on the website: [www.karibu-online.demon.co.uk/news/sudan/uk.htm](http://www.karibu-online.demon.co.uk/news/sudan/uk.htm) (accessed 03.01.12).
- <sup>viii</sup> See Refugee Council at: [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/infocentre/asylumlaw](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/infocentre/asylumlaw).
- <sup>ix</sup> Zetter, R et al, *An assessment of the impact of asylum policies in Europe 1990-2000* Home Office Research Study 259, Development and Statistics Directorate, (June, 2003) pp.95-96.
- <sup>x</sup> See: [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration.html](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration.html) to access quarterly reports on Asylum Statistics.
- <sup>xi</sup> Disbenefited cases are cases which were previously supported under the main UK benefits system and have been moved onto NASS support.
- <sup>xii</sup> The Brighton and Hove City Council source stated that these spaces are usually full, conflicting with Home Office figures above (Graph 1) which show numbers of asylum seekers in NASS accommodation to have not have exceeded 70.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Kirby, P et al, *Black and Minority Ethnic Young People's Access to Education, Training and Employment in Brighton and Hove: A Consultation Report*, PK research consultancy (2002), states that 85 unaccompanied minors supported by West Sussex were accommodated in B&H.
- <sup>xiv</sup> This 4,000 is stated to be the community's own estimate in: Griffiths, D, *Asylum and Integration in member states of the EU: integration of recognised refugee families as defined by the Geneva convention considering their status with respect to the law of residence*, Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, (GMBH Berlin, 2003).
- <sup>xv</sup> Phillimore, J et al, *Asylum seekers and refugees: education, training, employment, skills and services in Coventry and Warwickshire*, Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, (2003).
- <sup>xvi</sup> This was indicated through the interviews for this research e.g. one Community Partner stated that many Somalis had in recent years moved out of the area.
- <sup>xvii</sup> HESA was contacted and stated "Unfortunately we only have statistics about a students domicile or nationality and these do not have a category for asylum seeker or refugee. We only collect data that is required by our statutory customers which include the funding council, Department of Education and Skills etc." The LSC were also not able to supply this information
- <sup>xviii</sup> Asrare, Y and Bellis, A, *ESOL Provision in Brighton and Hove*, The Brighton and Hove Learning Partnership, (September, 2001) p.17.
- <sup>xix</sup> The research focused on those with ILR/ELR but one asylum seeker and several who have acquired British citizenship were included, for reasons outlined in the Methodology.
- <sup>xx</sup> *The Education (fees and awards) Regulations 1997*, Statutory Instrument (SI) No.1972 (HMSO, 1997) at <http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/si/si1997/97197201.htm>. DfES guidance to this legislation can be found at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/gfees/index.shtml> (accessed 04.12.03)
- <sup>xxi</sup> Along with other universities that are part of the University Network for Asylum Seekers UK (UNASUK).
- <sup>xxii</sup> *Higher Education Student Support 2003/2004 Academic year*, at: [www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk) simply states 'The immigration status of students granted short time stay for reasons not covered above is not always clear and we have been advised that checks with IND should be made in individual cases, or the student asked to provide documentation of their status'
- <sup>xxiii</sup> UKCOSA *Guidance Notes for students 2003-2004: Asylum and studying at:* <http://www.ukcosa.org.uk/images/asylum.pdf> (accessed 04.12.03)



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- <sup>xxiv</sup> The LSC 'remission of fees policy' does not apply to courses classified as 'self-financing' or full-cost'.
- <sup>xxv</sup> RETAS, *Refugees' legal status and educational entitlements*, (June, 2003).
- <sup>xxvi</sup> There are some exemptions from this – e.g. single parents and those registered disabled.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Refugee Council, *Information for refugees and people with ELR*, (October 2000).
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Information can be accessed at [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk) and [www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk).
- <sup>xxix</sup> In terms of student support available, it should also be acknowledged that institutions in some cases receive funding from other sources which may be referred to as Access or Hardship Funds, but that should not be confused with the statutory funds referred to in the Table.
- <sup>xxx</sup> Part-time students do not need to be in receipt of a student loan in order to be eligible.
- <sup>xxxi</sup> If claiming Job Seekers Allowance, students must demonstrate they are actively seeking employment and ready to give up a course if a suitable job offer is made.
- <sup>xxxii</sup> The proportion of female clients reflects the overall proportion as indicated through the questionnaires to advice groups / support services (see Chapter 4).
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> It was unclear why this was and whether asylum seekers supported by the local authority would be accepted.
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> The UCAS definition of Category C is 'You are a refugee, or have been granted Exceptional Leave to Enter or Remain in the UK following an application for asylum, and you have lived in the UK since status was recognised or granted, or you are such a person's husband, wife or child'. It was unclear whether the number of category C applications referred to academic year 2002-2003 or 2003-2004.
- <sup>xxxv</sup> University of Sussex figures were taken from the website: <http://www.susx.ac.uk>
- <sup>xxxvi</sup> It should be noted that this has been identified through other pieces of research e.g. Griffiths, D *Asylum and Integration in member states of the EU: integration of recognised refugee families as defined by the Geneva convention considering their status with respect to the law of residence*, Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, (GMBH Berlin, 2003).
- <sup>xxxvii</sup> Archer, L, The 'value' of higher education. In: Archer, L et al *Higher Education and Social Class: Issues of Exclusion and Inclusion*, Routledge Falmer, Taylor and Francis Books Ltd, 2003.
- <sup>xxxviii</sup> Rutter, J 'Refugees in today's world' in: Rutter, J and Jones, C (eds.) *Refugee Education: Mapping the Field*, Trentham Books (Oakhill, 1998).
- <sup>xxxix</sup> Related recommendations (aimed at Connexions / Careers Service) have been made by: Kirby, P et al *Black and Minority Ethnic Young People's Access to Education, Training and Employment in Brighton and Hove: A Consultation Report*, PK research consultancy (2002).
- <sup>xl</sup> <http://crl.gcal.ac.uk/SOCRATESite/home.html>
- <sup>xli</sup> This has also been identified in: Asare, Y and Bellis, A, *ESOL Provision in Brighton and Hove*, Brighton and Hove Learning Partnership (September, 2001) p.46.