AUTHOR(S):

TITLE:

YEAR:

Publisher citation:

OpenAIR citation:

Publisher copyright statement:

This is the _____ version of proceedings originally published by _____ and presented at _____ (ISBN _____; eISBN _____; ISSN _____).

Syrian new Scots Information Literacy Way-finding practices: Phase 1 Research Findings

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SWANSEA UNIVERSITY (BAY CAMPUS) 10-12 APRIL 2017

Lost in Information?

Syrian new Scots' Information Literacy Way-finding Practices

Who is a refugee?

...a person who: *'owing to a well-founded fear of **being persecuted** for reasons of **race, religion, nationality, membership** of a particular social group, or political opinion, is **outside the country of his nationality**, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is **unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country**'*

(Article 1, 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees)

An **asylum seeker** is someone who has applied for asylum and is waiting for a decision as to whether or not they are a refugee.

The status of a **refugee** is formally recognised only after having been given a formal refugee status by the Government.

'refugee integration' (RIS)
advice and advocacy over a period of a 12 month programme

Fulfil initial <u>critical needs:</u> housing, welfare rights, education and access to benefits, employability options as well as their rights and entitlements should they are granted Leave to Remain

- Family Key Work Service
specialised advice and support to families with children from 0-8 yrs

- Scottish Guardianship Service
partnership between Aberlour Child Care Trust and Scottish Refugee Council: unaccompanied young people going through the asylum system.

Progress Report & Year 2 Implementation

New Scots: Integrating Refugees in Scotland's Communities

YEAR 2 IMPLEMENTATION
PROGRESS REPORT

COSLA

Employability and Welfare Rights

Outcome 1
New refugees are supported to move on from asylum support within the 28-day move-on period by ensuring benefits are in place when asylum support ends.

Outcome 2
Refugees are supported to fully understand their rights to welfare support, the labour market and volunteering and employability opportunities and as a result are increasingly able to access these.

Outcome 3
Refugees access services designed to support entrepreneurialism and an increased proportion use their skills to contribute to Scotland's economy and society.

Health

Outcome 1
The planning and delivery of health services in Scotland is informed by the needs of asylum seekers and local communities leading to an increase in integration.

Outcome 2
An understanding of refugee integration pathways is embedded in all health-related strategies leading to more person-centred services.

Outcome 3
Refugees and asylum seekers are supported to full understand their rights and entitlements. Service providers are increasingly aware of how to meet their needs. As a result refugee and asylum seeker health needs are better met.

Education

Outcome 1
Refugees and asylum seekers are able to achieve the English Language skills they need to successfully integrate with Scotland's communities.

Outcome 2
Refugees and asylum seekers access appropriate education opportunities and increase their qualifications/ knowledge/ experience as a result.

Outcome 3
Refugees and asylum seekers are supported to use pre-existing qualifications and access appropriate employment/education opportunities as a result

Outcome 4
Scotland's linguistic diversity is promoted and as a result is valued, enabling refugees to contribute full/effectively to Scottish society.

Communities & Social Connections

Outcome 1
Refugees are enabled to build social relationships and are involved and active in their local communities.

Outcome 2
Refugees live in communities that are safe, cohesive and, as a result, are welcoming.

Outcome 3
Refugees engage in cultural activities and Scottish cultural life reflects the diversity of Scotland.

Outcome 4
Communities across Scotland have a better understanding of refugees and asylum seekers.

Housing

Outcome 1
Refugees are supported to fully understand the housing options available to them by a range of agencies and as a result are able to make the best possible choice.

Outcome 2
Refugees are able to access suitable housing options.

Outcome 3
New refugees are supported to move from asylum accommodation to a more permanent home during the 28-day period by agencies working together to ensure they are aware of their long-term options and not left without somewhere to live.

http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00497690.pdf

Lost in information? New Syrian Scots' information way-finding practices

Aims –

A scoping study that aims to examine the information related experiences and information literacy practices of Syrian new Scots (the Syrian refugees in Scotland) during their resettlement and integration.

Objectives –

To explore Syrian new Scots' 'ways of knowing' for addressing critical social inclusion needs (e.g. housing, welfare, education, benefits, employability, rights and entitlements). This may involve interaction with people, tools and processes within their new socio-cultural setting.

To examine the barriers (e.g. English language, socio-cultural differences) and enablers (local community support, new technologies and media) they encounter in the process of addressing their key information needs.

To investigate how Syrian new Scots could be further supported to adapt to their local communities, feel a sense of belongingness and successfully establish their identity into the Scottish society.

Methodology

Interviews with Refugee Resettlement Officers and Focus Groups with Syrian new Scots

Phase 1
    Two SROs, 9 Syrian women & 9 Syrian men. 1 volunteer

- *Information World Mapping* (IWM) approach (Greyson, 2013)

- *Critical Incident Technique* was used which outlines procedures for collecting observed incidents having special significance for the participants (Flanagan, 1954 p.327).

    o Information Needs
    o Information sources & Enablers
    o Barriers
    o Communication and sharing of information
    o Information and cultural integration
    o Technology and digital skills

Demographics

Table 1. Focus group demographics – rural area (female participants)

Name	Age	Married/single	children
Helen	46	married	5
Jane	51	married	5
Anna	19	single	0
Georgia	46	married	3
Nicola	21	married	2
Sandra	55	married	8 (4 in Lebanon; 4 in other countries)
Maria	51	married	6 (1 in Lebanon, 1 in Egypt)
Emma	39	married	4
Kathryn	21	married	1

Table 2. Focus group demographics - rural area (male participants)

Name	Age	Married/single	children
Mark	64	married	6 (1 in Lebanon, 1 in Egypt)
Stuart	61	married	8 (3 in Lebanon)
Tom	47	married	4
Aaron	28	single	0
Henry	29	married	1
Dylan	21	single	0
Bill	54	married	3
William	32	married	1
George	18	single	0
A volunteer	-	-	-

Preliminary Results

English

- ESOL Classes
- A **welcome pack** with basic information, "where is the nearest corner shop? Who can you call if there's an emergency?" (e.g. emergency services, benefits, GPs, finance, the police and fire service)
- A **24 hour Arabic helpline** was set up with the Mosque, for any emergency cases so that the families were not reliant on 9 to 5 office hours, or if something happened over the weekend
- **In-house translation**/interpretation service which made possible to use interpreters for every appointment

Everyday life encounters

- GP appointments **credit card size flash cards** with Arabic in one side and English in the other with all of the most common questions asked at the doctors.
- **WhatsApp group** (volunteer interpreters)

Cultural differences, cultural integration, wellbeing

- "You know, you go to a checkpoint and for no reason at all back in your country, you're **detained, you're tortured**...there's a **very different role to the police** here for example, and many of the families who have come through this scheme to this country have been, by the very definition of being accepted to the scheme, victims of torture for example...**Should police officers wear uniforms?** Shouldn't they wear uniforms? Are we best to try and integrate them immediately by showing a positive role model of a police officer or not?" (Resettlement Officer 1))

- some people were **illiterate in Arabic**: presented verbally or in small chunks in another form: **using stickers, a diary, colour coding doctors and hospital appointments, pictures of the buildings, special maps procured for families to show them their areas** (Resettlement Officer 2). However, "there were so many areas to cover" so the question was **"How do you do that and how do you prioritise"** ?

Shared Rhetoric / a common communication space

Technology v interpersonal sources

"We talk about doctors as being 'the GP'. The language has been really important …maybe somebody is going to the surgery and people are thinking they will have their body off… that they are not going to the doctors". So shared rhetoric and language has been really really crucial….as peoples' language is progressing they are able to take more responsibility for information and you can see that growing" (Resettlement Officer 1).

A shared communication practice on WhatsApp

Technologies
Mobile phones   √ (pay as you go sim cards)
WhatsApp   √ (central communication point)
Google Translate   √ (used by young people)

Computers - (not much use)
Websites? - (not much use)

Interpersonal sources
The community centre, where they regularly met to celebrate social occasions, learn English and socialise with the other Syrian families had made them feel safe and secure.

Jane's drawing of four support staff as key information sources

Everyday life encounters

how to communicate with others, express their needs and share information

e.g. going for shopping and if someone spoke to them in the street, when someone comes to read the electricity meter, when navigating in the city, when using the bus

"the transportation for us is even more important than food. It's very very important".
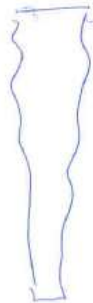

Jane's drawing of bus/hospital incident

Emma's drawing of bus/hospital incident

"I fear learning English will take too long".

I fear the future, I fear for my Children's future.
I have sisters in Lebanon and Egypt.
I have a problem in Learning English, I find it very
difficult. I did not learn it in my Country
I need to learn to speak English, it is difficult but very
important.
Thank you

Someone speaks English

No English

Reading and writing

William's drawing of English language barrier presented as a wall (translated with the assistance of the interpreter)

I want to learn English quickly.

I fear if something happens to me I do not know to speak English with the one I want to learn quickly.

Kathryn's drawing

"I think it all revolves around the language…communication. If we solved this problem things would be resolved"

- not just about learning a new language
- interlinked with increased self-confidence
- increased health and well-being
- reducing feelings of isolation
- creating more opportunities to engage in the community.
- increased possibilities of getting a job and ensuring financial security

Family reunion & Financial stability

"what worries me is the future; what is going to happen. Okay we are adapting but what's next? …Because we all have families elsewhere. Will we be able to have citizenship here? Will we be able to travel to visit our families elsewhere? Our families, will they be able to visit us here?" (Mark)
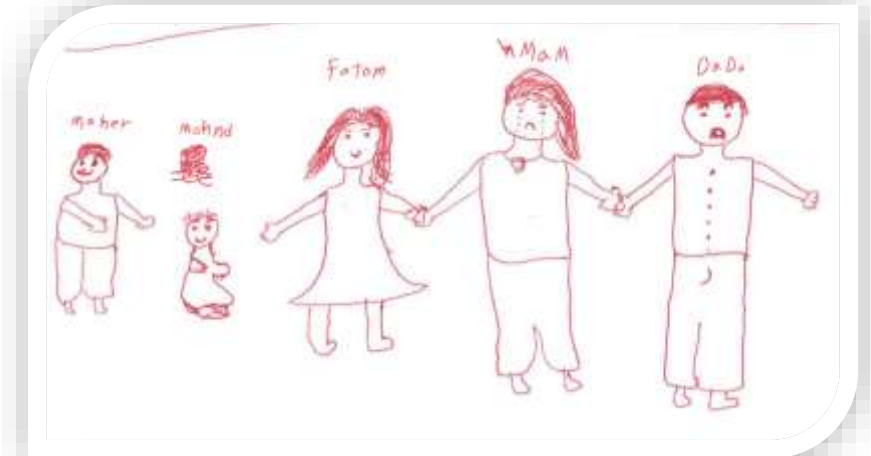
"we are always thinking, we are very stressed, very worried. We are not enjoying life because of our worries, being stressed, always being stressed about this…this makes it hard to integrate. It's all an on-going worry…"

Maria's drawing showing her holding her daughters and sons

Bill's concerns around family reunion, English language, financial security and integration
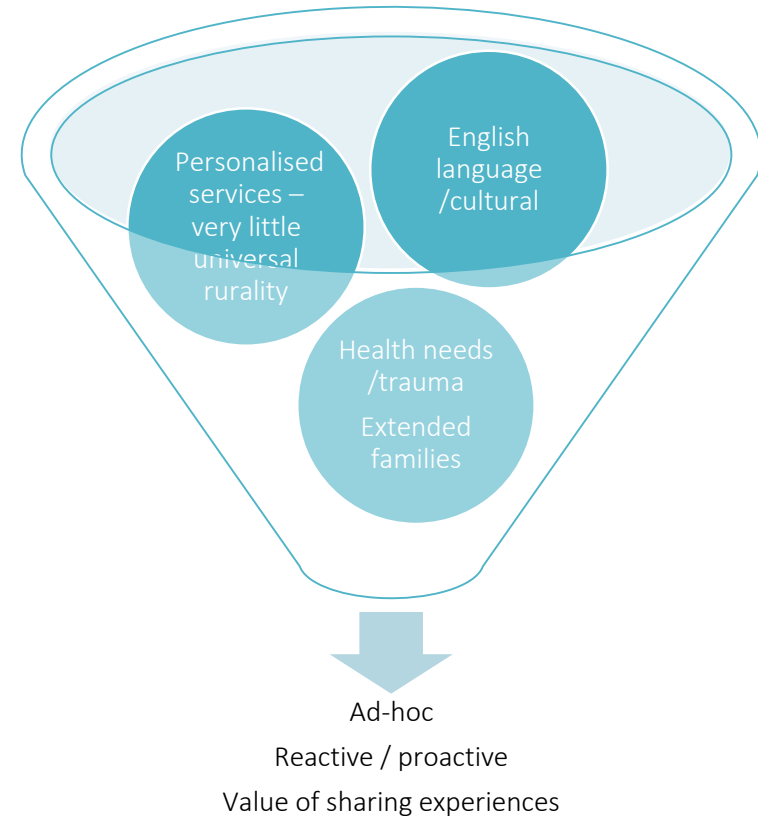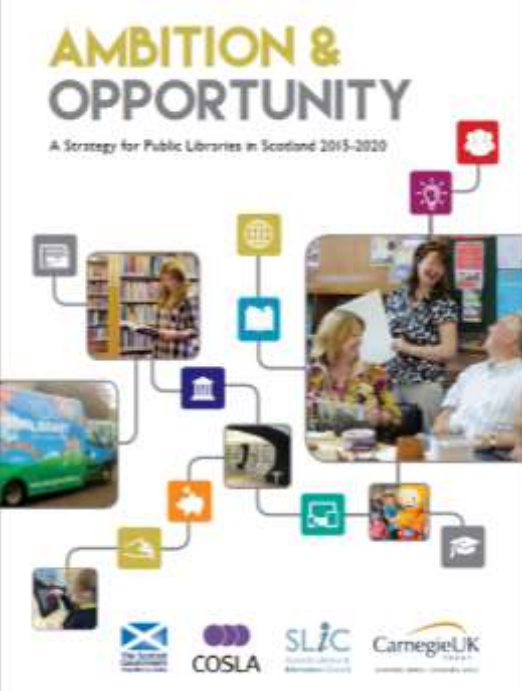

Nicola's drawing depicting her family in Syria

"I hope we can all be together in one place. I miss my two girls", explaining that particularly one of her daughters is "suffering a lot in Lebanon…I need her to come here and be with me as soon as possible" (Maria).

Challenges

"When the families arrived we never took any images because I didn't feel comfortable with it but it was a black and white picture. It wasn't even a black and white picture, it was grey**. It was like a grey in sepia picture. They were subdued, they were exhausted, they were black-eyed**. I mean there are still a huge amount of issues but there is some vibrancy, there is some colour, there is some character, people are beginning to return to themselves" (Resettlement Officer 1).

"a whole lot of other difficulties and challenges… around rurality"… "this isn't just about an urban city response… realistically it has to be about **centralisation of resources and services**. They have to be designed based around how people are going to be able to access them (Resettlement Officer 1)

Personalised services – very little universal rurality

English language /cultural

Health needs /trauma

Extended families

Ad-hoc

Reactive / proactive

Value of sharing experiences

Can libraries help?

One of the strategic aims of SLIC is centred on libraries promoting social wellbeing.

Ambition & Opportunity: A Strategy for Public Libraries in Scotland 2015-20 highlights public library support for social wellbeing in a number of ways:

- **Responding to the social needs of individuals and groups** in their communities and developing activities and programmes to respond to particular needs.
- **Making library space and support available for community** interest groups and members of the community looking to support one another.
- Contributing to the ability of individuals to **become involved in their local communities** and take part in local and national life.
- **Strengthening the identity and sense of community.**
- **Creating a public service hub** for the delivery of a range of public services (SLIC, 2015, p.25).

Public Libraries

Local Refugee Resettlement Officers

Arabic resources available (for example more resources were in Polish)

"if there was a resource there and every library had guaranteed a hub and they had this information they would go"

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no Arabic speakers

Increasing community awareness, presenting the whole picture of the situation that these families have encountered

- establishing a single library card for Syrian new Scots and automatically signing families as members

- setting up a community hub with volunteering opportunities for Syrian new Scots

- providing health information in accessible pictorial formats

- helping the families to develop their health & digital literacy (provision of additional classes)

- offering source material in Arabic (including newspapers and material for children) / Arabic speaker volunteers based in local public libraries

- setting up family sessions and getting the families to engage with the early years programme

- creating a friendly, welcoming and trusted 'third place' for families to learn, socialise and feel part of the community: e.g. introducing an induction session and a short film on what public libraries could offer

iL GROUP

Local public library Syrian new Scots Support

❑ A pop-up classroom area has been created on the library Mezzanine floor to accommodate 10 Syrian learners and a tutor for ESOL classes. The classes run twice weekly, a men only class and a women only class which solves issues surrounding childcare. Due to the success of the class the booking has been extended. Feedback from the tutor has expressed thanks for creating an "effective learning space in the library, for my Syrian classes". Library staff will be engaging with the learners to ensure ongoing support upon completion of the classes

❑The Syrian new Scots were taken on a **guided tour of the Children's Library** and shown resources and services available for children and young people through the library service. Those with families were encouraged to join their children as members of the library service

Peer Education - English Language

Peer Education Programme, English language (Nov – May 2017)

- *Pilot model developed in response to the resettlement Programme*
- *Aims to complement the current local authority ESOL provision*
- *Increasing social connections and language and cultural exchange between native and non-native speakers of English*

- **Groups are formed in local communities** to bring together newly arrived refugees and local people with two peer educators who have been trained

The Al-Amal (hope) Group

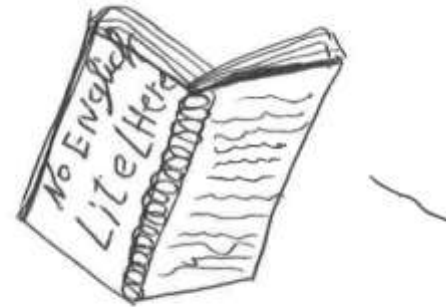'I don't know the words to explain what life was like before the war'

Objectives

- [ ] To improve resettlement experiences by enabling Syrian families to contribute to the planning, operational and evaluative process

- [ ] To reduce isolation, low mental health, boredom and frustration by encouraging active community participation (locally)

- [ ] To develop community projects that build on the skills, knowledge and expertise of Syrian new Scots

- [ ] Coordinate and work with other groups with similar objectives

- [ ] To develop employability skills and learning

- [ ] To raise funds for cultural trips and experiences

- [ ] To enable Syrian new Scots to support community events and projects (locally)

- [ ] To develop the use of Social Media to aid communication

- [ ] To advocate for the unmet needs of Syrian new Scots in Aberdeenshire

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/26/syria-heritage-in-ruins-before-and-after-pictures

Would you like to help?

Blog: https://syrian-information-literacy.blogspot.co.uk/2016_09_01_archive.html

The Network http://www.seapn.org.uk supports libraries, museums, archives, galleries and other cultural and heritage organisations (as well as individuals) who are working to tackle social exclusion and towards social justice.

Brief library case-studies by EBLIDA (the European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations)

19-25 JUNE 2017
DIFFERENT PASTS, SHARED FUTURE

ABOUT US   EVENTS   REFUGEE WEEK 2017   IN YOUR AREA   INFO CENTRE   NEWS   SHOP   CONTACT

WHAT IS REFUGEE WEEK?

Refugee week is a UK-wide programme of arts, cultural and educational events and activities that celebrates the contribution of refugees to the UK and promotes better understanding of why people seek sanctuary. Anyone can take part by organising, attending or taking part in activities.

Refugee Week takes place every year across the world in the week around World Refugee Day on the 20 June. In the UK, Refugee Week is a nationwide programme of arts, cultural and educational events that celebrate the contribution of refugees to the UK, and encourages a better understanding between communities.

Refugee Week started in 1998 as a direct reaction to hostility in the media and society in general towards refugees and asylum seekers. An established part of the UK's cultural calendar, Refugee Week is now one of the leading national initiatives working to counter this negative climate, defending the importance of sanctuary and the benefits it can bring to both refugees and host communities.

The aims of Refugee Week are:

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