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Scotland Welcomes refugees – the roles of the library in resettlement and inclusion

Syrian new Scots Information Literacy Way- findings practices

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Syrian new Scots' Information Literacy Way-finding Practices



<https://syrian-information-literacy.blogspot.co.uk/>



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 critical needs: 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



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 fully 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

New Scots: Integrating Refugees in Scotland's Communities

2014 - 2017

Final Report



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot



<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00515713.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 3 Refugee Resettlement Officers**
- ▶ **Focus Groups with Syrian new Scots**
 - ▶ One urban and two rural areas
 - ▶ A total thirty eight Syrian refugees in six focus groups (September 2016 - March 2017)
- ▶ **Drawing exercise based on Information World Mapping (IWM) approach** (Greyson,
 - ▶ **Critical Incident Technique** was used which outlines procedures for collecting observed incidents having special significance for the participants (Flanagan, 1954 p.327).
 - Information Needs
 - Information sources & Enablers
 - Barriers
 - Communication and sharing of information
 - Information and cultural integration
 - Technology and digital skills

Demographics (phase 1)

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

Name	Age	Married/sing e	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/sing e	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	-	-	-

Demographics (phase 2)

Table 3. Focus group demographics – urban area (male participants)

Name	Age	Married/single	children
Aaron	47	married	4
Oscar	31	married	1
Elliot	31	single	0
Ivan	23	married	2
Andrew	29	married	2
James	N/A	married	3
Neil	27	married	N/A

Table 3. Focus group demographics – urban area (female participants)

Name	Age	Married/single	children	
Claire	20	divorced	1	housewife
Fay	26	married	2	housewife
Daisy	26	married	N/A	N/A
Paola	N/A	volunteer	N/A	Student

Focus Group 1 (rural)

- **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)

English

- "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 appointments, pictures of the buildings, special maps procured for families to show them their** (Resettlement Officer 2), "the... so many... integration, wellbeing... you do... **britise**" ?

Cultural differences, cultural integration, wellbeing

Shared Rhetoric / a common communication space

"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

Technology v interpersonal sources

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

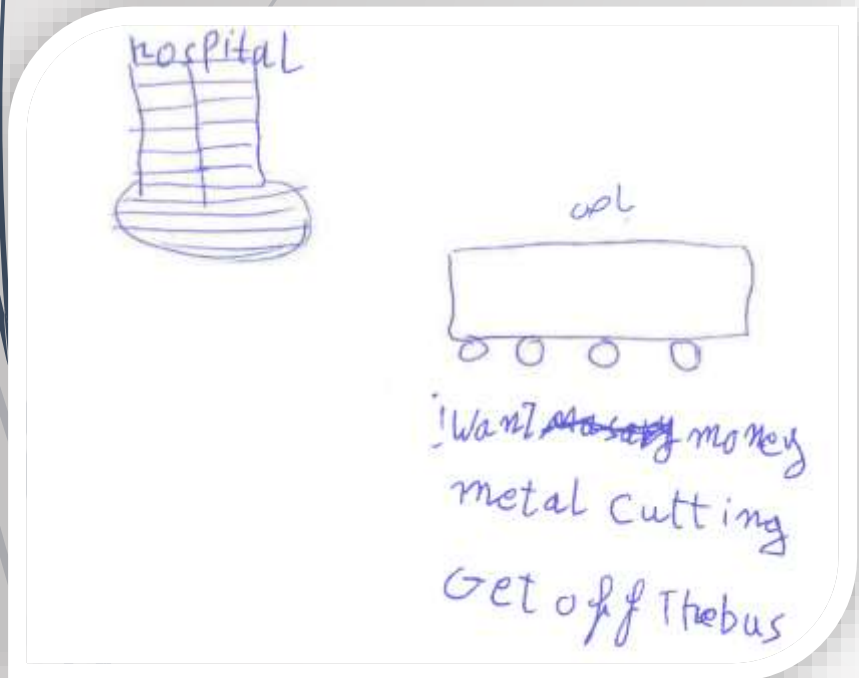
The community centre, where they regularly met to celebrate social occasions, learn English and socialise with the other Syrian families had made them feel safe and secure.



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

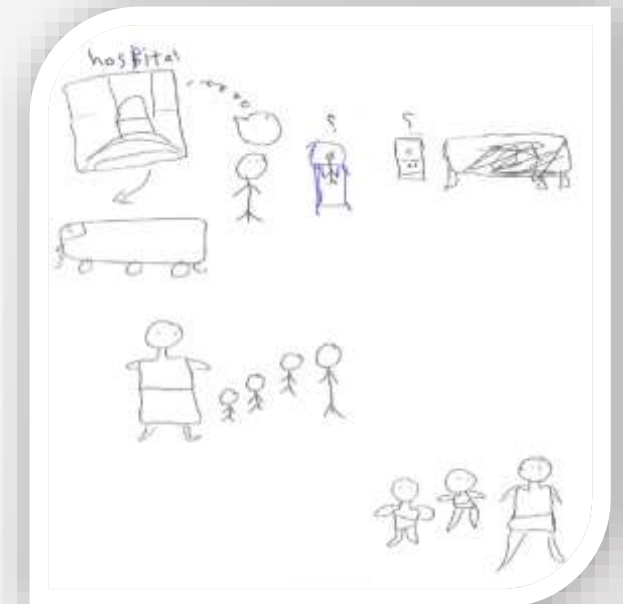
Everyday life encounters

- ▶ 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



Jane's drawing of bus/hospital incident

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



Emma's drawing of bus/hospital incident

Health information needs

- **Clear communication barriers** in the provision of health services and around the expectations the families had, based on their **previous experiences** in their **home country** (e.g. going to the hospital instead necessarily making an appointment with the GP).
- **Interpreters** were a **source of normality and stability** as opposed to a world of 'otherness' and 'confusion' that surrounds them in their effort to make sense of their different realities. However, interpreters were not always available in hospitals or during GP appointments
- A list of standard translated sentences into Arabic had been created but it was not always sufficient to address the **contextual needs of the patients** who arrived with complex medical histories.
- The Syrian families required more support to **develop health information literacy** within the different socio-cultural contexts of their new country

"At the end of the day there is no one there to help them. Sometimes they call. Sometimes people call me, but I'm just a volunteer. They call me to translate (Interpreter).

Some Syrians were illiterate: "they do not know how to write or read in Arabic and in those cases the need of an interpreter is a necessity"

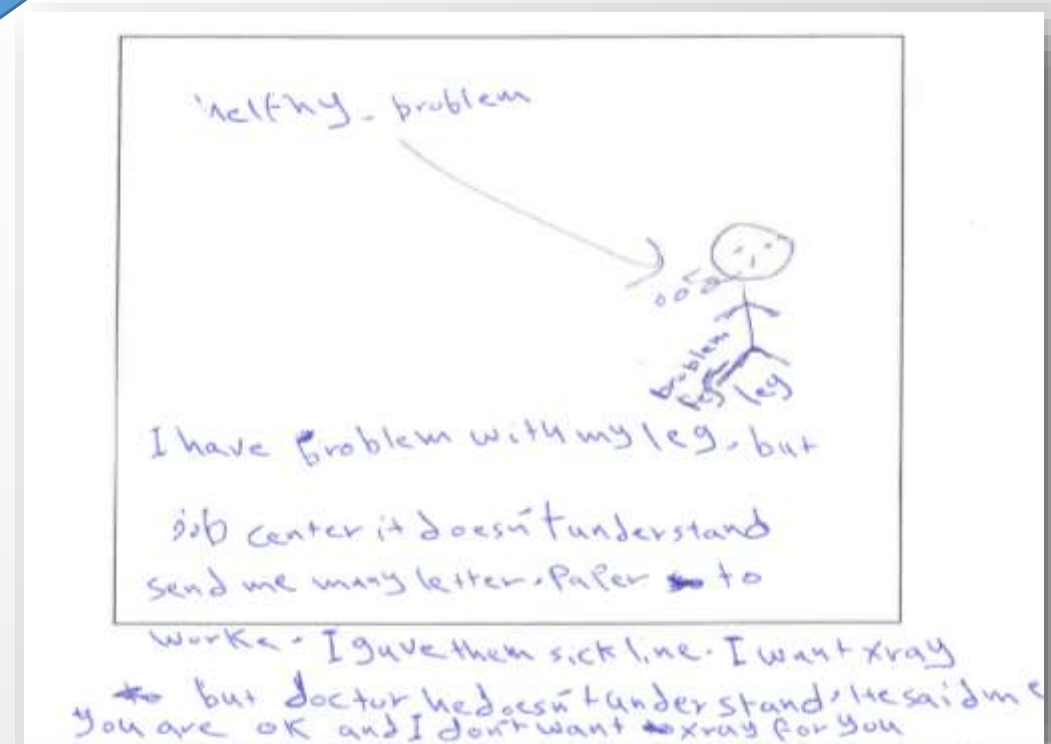
"I took her [his daughter] to the hospital. Cause he didn't know what to do, what to call, he didn't know how to call the ambulance, the NHS 24, so I was the easiest one" (Interpreter referring to Ivan a young father of two daughters).

Health Information

Oscar wanted to organise some paperwork for the job centre who had asked him for evidence of the health problem he was experiencing

"I had an accident six years ago. When I go to the GP doctor, the doctor said 'what's the problem'? I said 'I have iron in my leg'. So he said 'ok, no problem'. He thought I was lying or I wasn't saying the truth so I said 'can you send me for an x ray'? He said no, no you don't need X-ray, you are okay... He said, in this system, you must not do direct X-ray, you must go to the physio" (Oscar)...But I need X-ray. I want to show them. I want to show them that I don't lie".

- lack of clear communication around the requirements of the job centre
- different expectations and incomplete understanding around standard health screening processes in the new environment

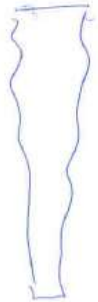


"I fear learning English will take too long".

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)

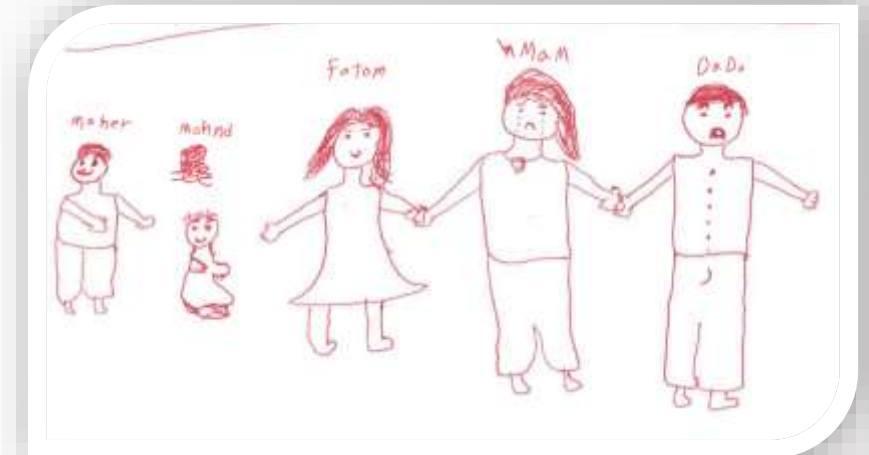
“we are always thinking, we are very stressed, very worried. We are not enjoying life because of our worries, being stressed, always being stressed about this...this makes it hard to integrate. It’s all an on-going worry...”



Maria’s drawing showing her holding her daughters and sons



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

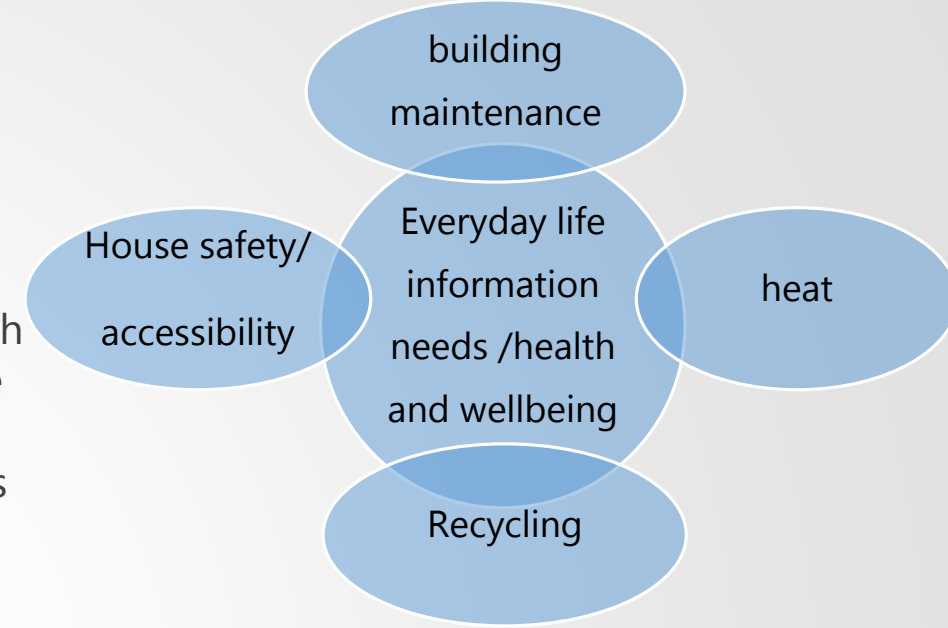


Nicola’s drawing depicting her family in Syria

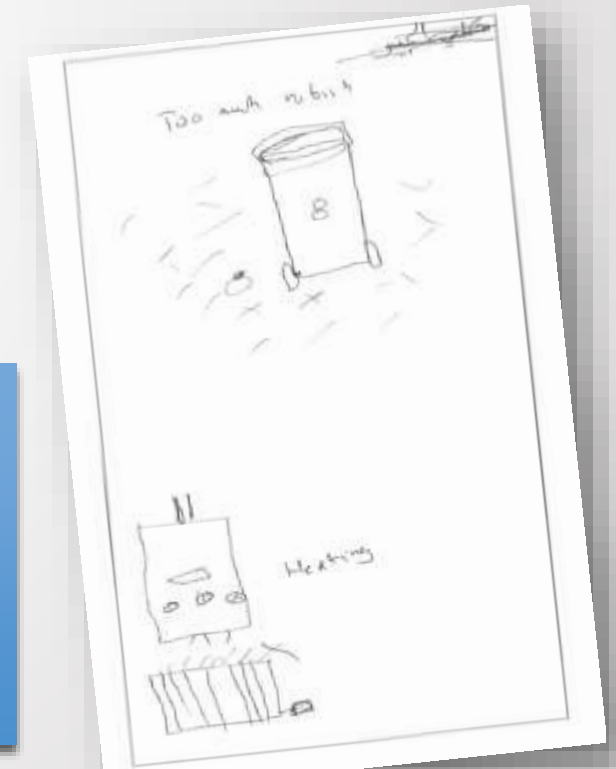
“I hope we can all be together in one place. I miss my two girls”, explaining that particularly one of her daughters is “suffering a lot in Lebanon...I need her to come here and be with me as soon as possible” (Maria).

Everyday life information needs

- Ivan's story:** concerned about a "big barrier" he had to deal with every day, which included the accumulation of household waste from the other apartments in his building, a "building of four floors with only one, two bins" within a shared bin in front of his house. Ivan was concerned that the council had not remove the bins and as a result the pavement outside his door was never clear of rubbish.
- Recycling:** When the council had come to collect the waste they had explained that there was a process of recycling. Although they had "a black and a blue bin for recycling different material" they were "not sure how to recycle".



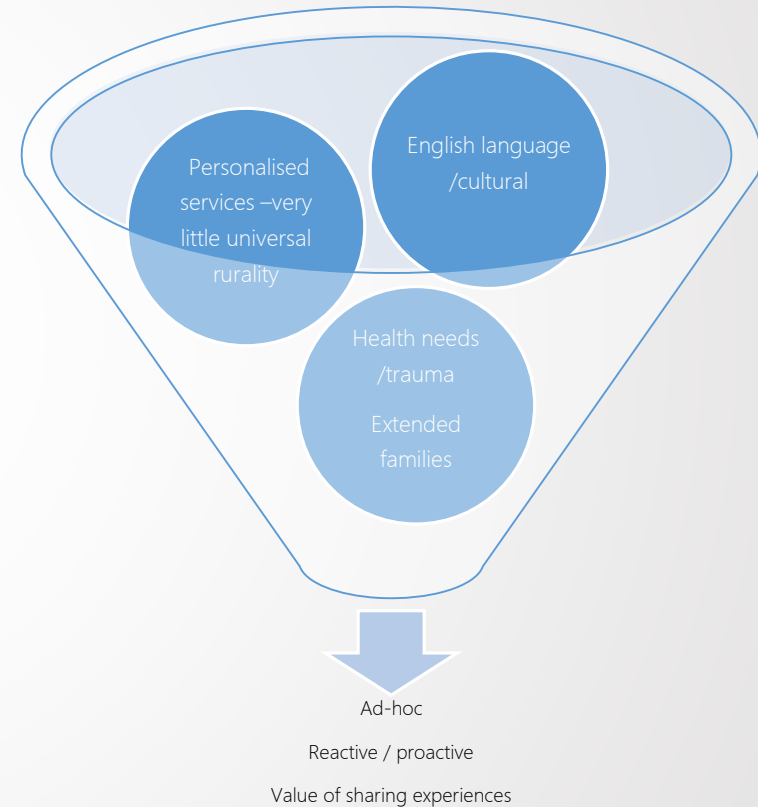
Fay's story: Fay described an incident of her son almost getting burned by the cooking oil because the kitchen and the sitting room were connected in an open plan design.



Challenges

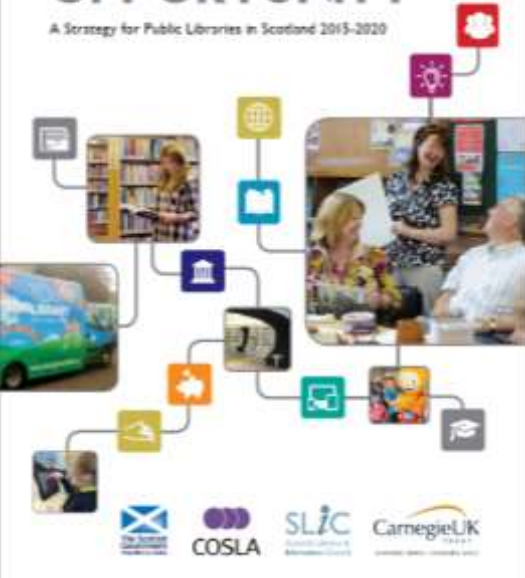
“When the families arrived we never took any images because I didn’t feel comfortable with it but it was a black and white picture. It wasn’t even a black and white picture, it was grey. **It was like a grey in sepia picture. They were subdued, they were exhausted, they were black-eyed.** I mean there 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)



AMBITION & OPPORTUNITY

A Strategy for Public Libraries in Scotland 2015-2020



Can libraries help?

- ▶ One of the strategic aims of public libraries in Scotland is to promote 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"

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

Local public library Syrian new Scots Support



❑ 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

- ❑ 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



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

Syrian new Scots cookbook



Photographs by: Paul Coleman and Chris Meek

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

The Al-Amal (hope) Group

► 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



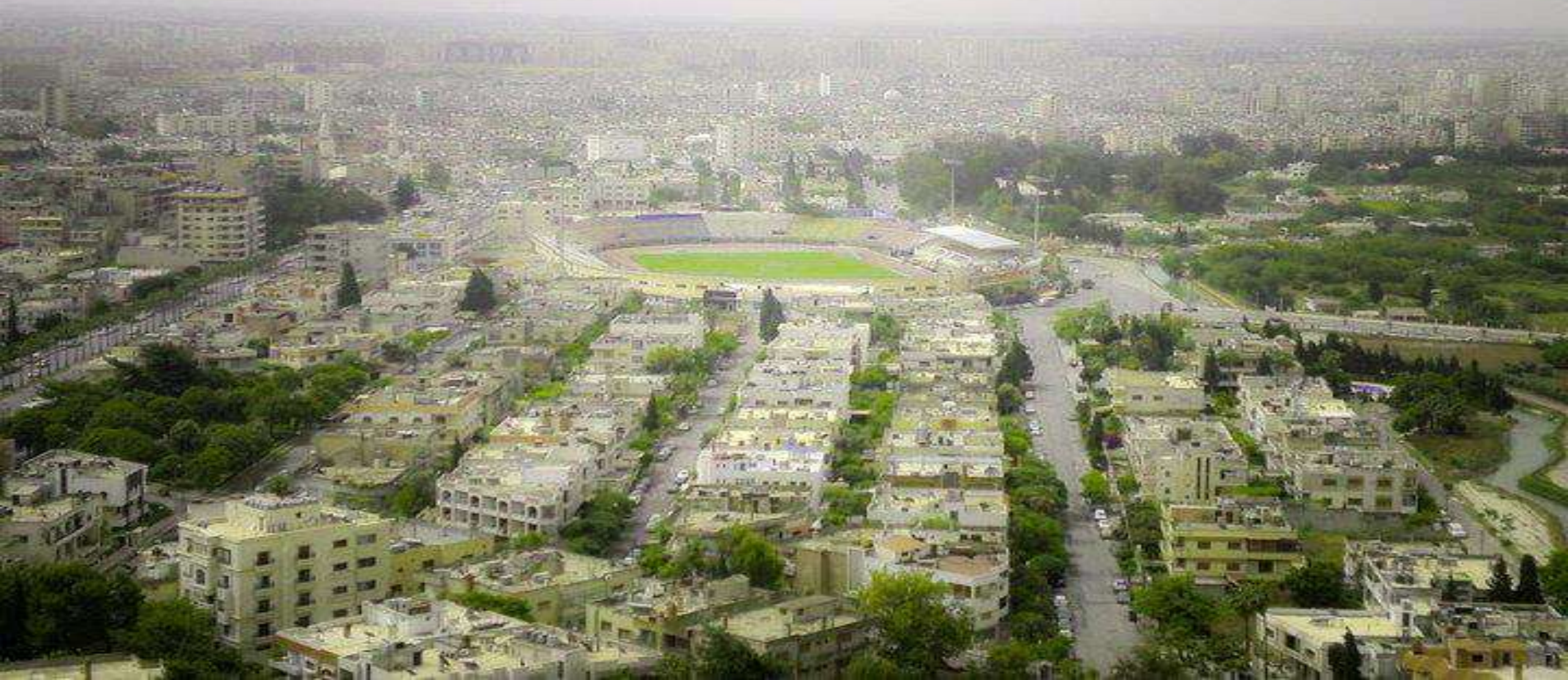


The following slides were presented by Dured Alhalabe (a young Syrian Scot, founder of the Al-Amal group) at a COSLA event.

Dured won the Young Scot Community Award. The awards “shine a light on the positive contribution young people make every day and provide a fantastic opportunity to see their efforts and dedication celebrated” ([Scottish Refugee Council, 2017](#))

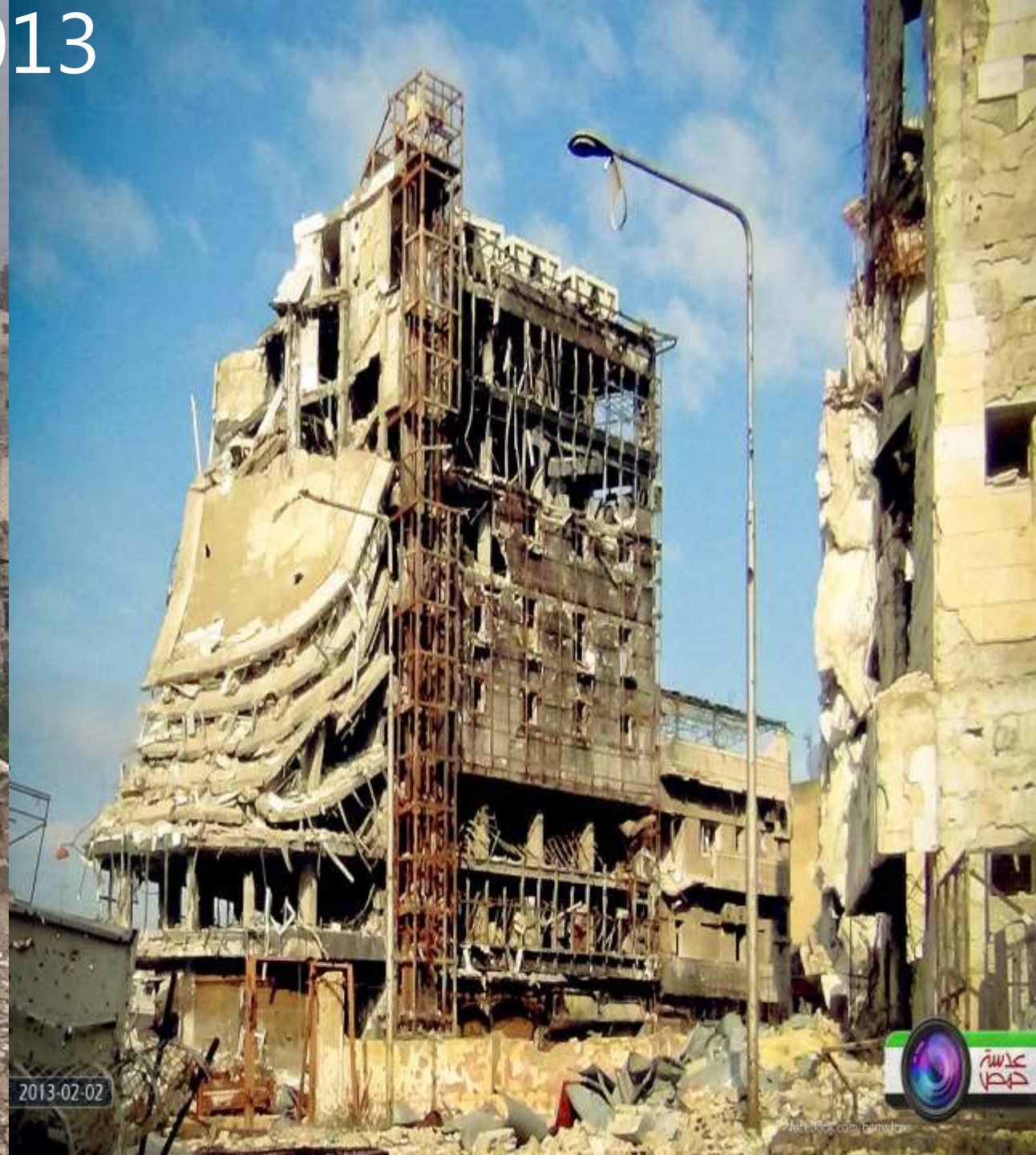
6 years ago

Homs 2011





2013



Alquatly's Square

2011



2013



Welcoming new families



Airport



At home



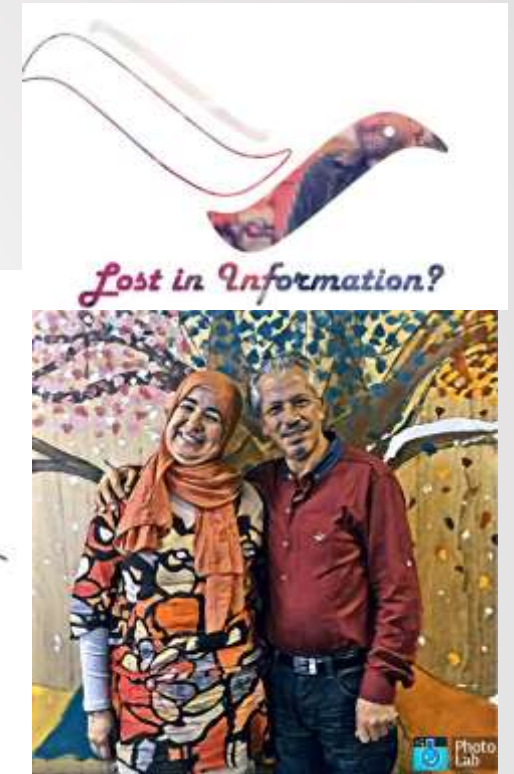
Edinburgh Castle

Computer Classes



Computer class organised by the Al-Amal Project

Would you like to help?



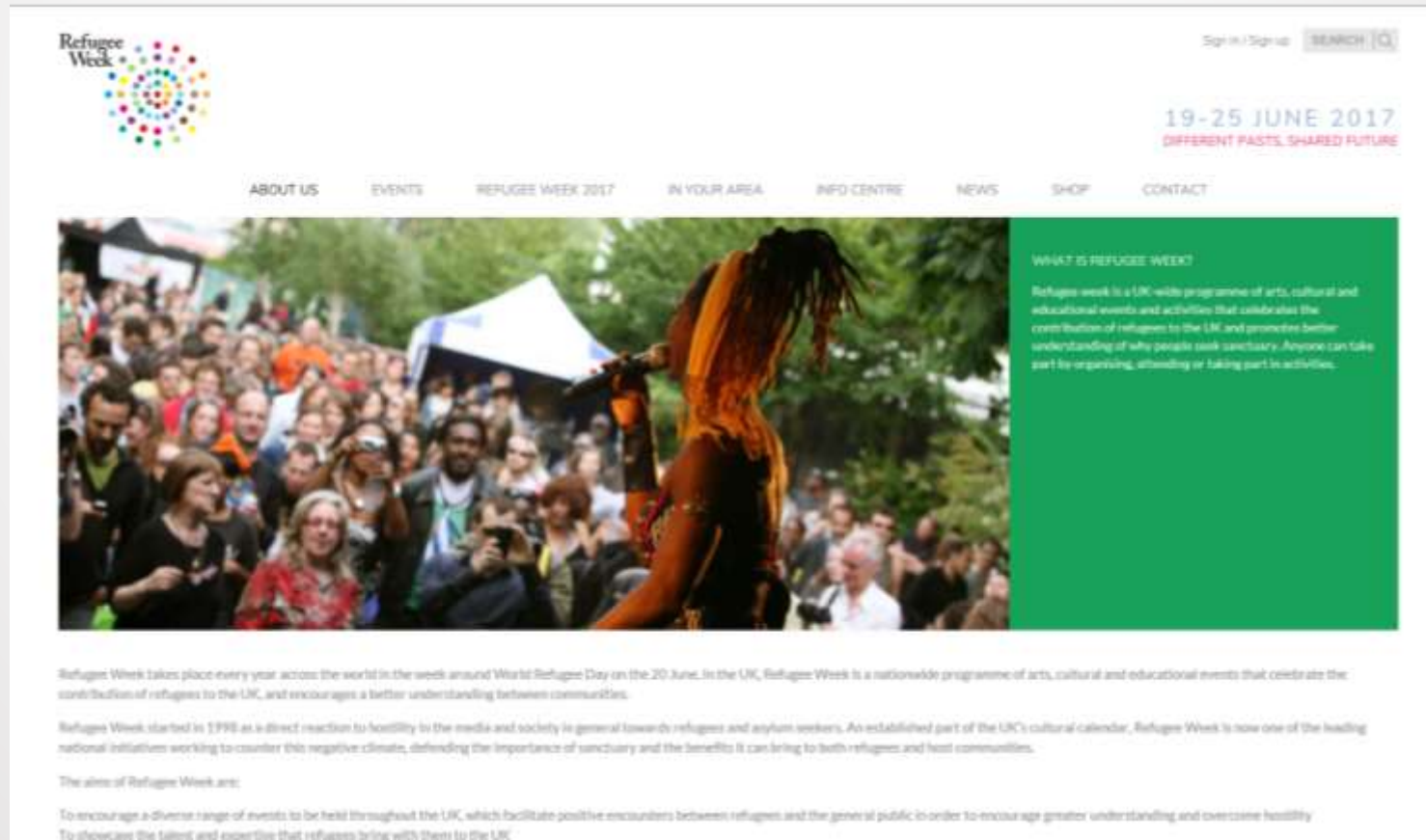
Blog: https://syrian-information-literacy.blogspot.co.uk/2016_09_01_archive.html

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)

Refugee Week

With the help of the **Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC)** we invited all public libraries in Scotland to **submit examples/case studies** around how they have helped/ organised **programmes and activities for Syrian refugees** in their libraries as part of the Refugee Week 19-25 June <http://refugeeweek.org.uk/>



The screenshot shows the Refugee Week website homepage for 2017. At the top left is the Refugee Week logo, a colorful circular pattern of dots. To the right of the logo are links for 'Sign in / Sign up' and a 'SEARCH' button. Below the logo is a navigation menu with links for 'ABOUT US', 'EVENTS', 'REFUGEE WEEK 2017', 'IN YOUR AREA', 'INFO CENTRE', 'NEWS', 'SHOP', and 'CONTACT'. The main content area features a large photograph of a crowd of people at an outdoor event, with a person in the foreground wearing a long, flowing orange and black garment. To the right of the photo is a green box with the text 'WHAT IS REFUGEE WEEK?' and a short description. Below the photo and green box are three paragraphs of text explaining the purpose and history of Refugee Week.

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:

- To encourage a diverse range of events to be held throughout the UK, which facilitate positive encounters between refugees and the general public in order to encourage greater understanding and overcome hostility
- To showcase the talent and expertise that refugees bring with them to the UK

Warsan Shire

"Home"

Five young London poets who have written about displacement and identity reflect on the refugee experience



Poet Warsan Shire. Photograph: Amaal Said

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/sep/16/poets-speak-out-for-refugees->

*"No one leaves home
unless home is the mouth of a shark.
You only run for the border
when you see the whole city running as well..*

*No one puts their children in a boat / unless
the water is safer than the land"*

Warsan Shire
"Home"

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