



SHARE NETWORK PROJECT CONFERENCE

ORGANISED BY ICMC, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

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Presentation by Joseph G Walker

Resettled in Sheffield in 2004

Chairperson Gateway Protection Refugee Communities' Forum

Commonly call Gateway Communities' Forum

Sheffield, UK

Mobile: 00447853252160

Email: jgwalker2006@gmail.com



Presentation Overview

- 1. My personal experience of the resettlement programme and my involvement in setting up the Forum**
- 2. The Forum's role in establishment refugee communities and facilitating social interaction amongst resettled refugees and the wider community**



My Experience- Upon Arrival In The UK

- **Isolated and Cultural shock**
- **No knowledge of local community and city**
- **Missed families and friends from the refugee camp**
- **Local communities and service providers didn't know much about refugees**
- **Status document was not widely recognised by locals**

GATEWAY FORUM

Why Was The Forum Established In 2007?

WHEN WE ARE TOGETHER
WE ARE ONE

1. To bring together Gateway refugees regardless of backgrounds
2. To welcome new arrivals to share our experiences
3. To address issues facing us and others
4. To celebrate our different cultures and integration progresses we were making in our new communities and home
5. To raise awareness and host other communities that want to know who we were



Between 2004 and 2013, the forum has about 600 individuals members, 9 nationalities, 10 established community organisations and 12 activities groups across the city of Sheffield.



CULTURAL DANCE GROUP





The Forum's Activities

- ✓ **Refugee week celebrations**
- ✓ **Football tournaments**
- ✓ **Fundraising activities to support homeless people**
- ✓ **Newsletters and anniversary celebrations**
- ✓ **Skill share and information exchange events**
- ✓ **Women international cooking event**
- ✓ **Recipe books were produced**
- ✓ **Regular monthly meeting**



The Benefits Of The Forum To The City

- **To help to promote equal opportunity**
- **To prevents social isolation**
- **To helps break language and culture barriers**
- **To helps to celebrate and share cultural experiences**
- **To serve as a tour guide to refugees in the City**
- **To promote unity and community cohesion**



The Benefits of the Forum to Resettled Refugees

- **Helps resettled refugees attend consultative meetings**
- **Steps in when Refugee Council can't be reached on weekends and bank holidays**
- **Continue to support refugees after Refugee Council's one year support has ended**
- **Helps in receiving and supporting new arrivals with shopping, GP, hospitals, banks...**
- **Conduct conversation sessions to improve their English**
- **Help opens online accounts (Facebook, email, etc.) for them**



How To Get Refugees Involved

- Regular meeting to get feedback from them
- Help them to become independent
- Encourage them to serve as volunteer interpreter when necessary
- Encourage them to apply for post if they are qualified
- Support their community groups financially and professionally
- Refugees have vast amount of knowledge about refugees issues (from refugee camps to resettled countries)
- Refugees know what they want
- Refugees know how policies and communities affect them



Thank you

Sheffield Gateway Refugee Communities Forum