



## Community Empowerment Co-ordinator

### Job Title

- **Community Empowerment Co-ordinator**

### Organisation

- Regional Refugee Forum North East

### Job Purpose

- To deliver an empowering programme of learning and development for asylum seekers and refugees living across the North East region who want to take action to improve the lives of their communities

### Location:

- Based in our Middlesbrough office. Working across the North East region.

### Hours

- 35 hours per week

### Salary and pension

- £18,795 per annum (equivalent to new NJC pay scale 5) plus 3% pension contribution

### For

- 3 years (post funded to 2022)

### Reporting to

- Project Manager

**Closing date for applications:** 10am Monday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2019

**Interviews will be held on:** Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March between 10am and 5pm, in Gateshead



*This project is funded by a grant from the  
National Lottery Community Fund*

## **About the Regional Refugee Forum North East (RRF)**

We are an independent membership organisation, established in 2004 by and for the North East region's Refugee-led Community Organisations (RCOs). Our central aim is for the Collective Voice of our membership to influence Policy and Practice so as to promote equality and improve the lives of all refugees and asylum seekers living in the North East of England.

Our members work together to produce their authentic, collective, advocate voice and make sure it is directly heard by policy makers, commissioners, and service delivery teams so as to influence policy and practice. They speak up about the distinct, recurring and shared challenges that refugees and asylum seekers (RAS) face and offer practical recommendations for what would work best to tackle hardship and promote equality and integration for all living in the North East.

We are not a service provider. We contribute to change through the collective action of our members, through promoting evidence based policy, through informing commissioning, and through influencing the way services are delivered by front line practitioners. We pursue a strategy of constructive engagement and collaborative working.

### **Purpose of this project**

Many Refugees and Asylum Seekers want to take action to improve the lives of the communities they are part of. These are people who are committed to securing equality, human rights and social justice for disadvantaged communities. This is often the reason why they had to seek asylum. For others, it's a commitment born out of lived experience of the particular challenges RAS face in settling and integrating in the region.

Whilst back home they had the skills and confidence to challenge failing or unfair systems, without a 're-orientation' map for how things work in the UK, and where levers for change exist, they are disempowered. They want to be agents of change but, unless they have a chance to understand how change happens in the UK context and who to engage with and collaborate with in the process, they struggle to make a real difference.

From over 15 years' experience of working with the RAS community in the region, we know the unique contribution to change that motivated individuals can make if only their commitment and potential can be realised. But most would-be change makers never get far on this journey. They encounter setbacks, frustration, feel defeated and give up. Our project aims to ensure this does not happen. It aims to empower them to take the lead in civil society and be agents for change for the RAS community.

Over the next 3 years, our project will work with 150 would-be change makers from the RAS community living across the North East region, from Ashington to Darlington, and Sunderland to Durham. These will be people from across the asylum and refugee journey, including recently arrived asylum seekers, those still awaiting a decision or facing refusal, refugees resettled in the region, people granted leave to remain, and those who now have citizenship. Through a combination of group learning, peer learning and one to one support, the project will build their knowledge, skills and relationships so they can be effective agents for change in the issues they identify as affecting the lives of the communities they belong to, including health and wellbeing, asylum support, economic and social inclusion, community safety, and family resilience. We will use a 'Learning Communities' model, where groups of peers create a space to discuss real challenges, supporting each other to reflect on the complex judgements they have to make in bringing about change, assess what could be done differently, problem solve, innovate, motivate and support each other, fill knowledge and skills gaps, and so improve their capacity to be effective change makers.

We are looking for someone who is passionate about the potential of refugees and asylum seekers themselves to lead action to improve the lives of others in their communities, and who understands what 'empowerment' means, and what it involves.

Key relationships for this project:

Internal

The post holders will work closely with:

- RAS living across the region who want to make change for the communities they belong to
- Our membership of RCOs
- Our themed Working Groups
- Our Staff
- Our office and project based Volunteers
- Our Board of Trustees
- Our Funders

External

The post holders will be expected to build or contribute to working relations with

- Local services, for example Job Centres and Neighbourhood Police
- Local Authorities, through their community engagement and development teams and Refugee Integration teams
- Local Development agencies, and other sources of capacity building support
- RAS-assisting voluntary and community organisations across the region
- Home Office asylum support contractors
- North East Migration Partnership

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

The following is typical of the duties the postholder will be expected to perform. It is not necessarily exhaustive and other duties of a similar nature may be required from time to time in support of the organisation's objectives.

Key areas of responsibility:

### **A. Engaging, involving and empowering RAS with an ambition to improve the lives of the RAS community.**

The postholder will

1. Support project participants from the North East region's RAS community
  - to develop their knowledge and skills in leadership, evidencing need, advocacy, using levers of change, and engaging their voice
  - to build constructive and collaborative relationships with key agencies
  - to develop processes for sharing understandings with their community to help them orientate to life in the UK and secure appropriate support from local services
  - to evidence the impact of their actions, demonstrating how they are contributing to change for the RAS community
2. Develop and facilitate activities and engagement including
  - regular action-orientated Learning Communities by both locality and by theme
  - learning opportunities as identified by the Learning Communities, including learning visits and training through peer and external expertise

- one to one support to assist participants turn their ideas into action
  - promoting access to capacity building support from Local Development agencies and Local Authority community development/engagement teams
3. Secure inclusion of participants within the project through
    - promoting the project and identifying potential participants
    - carrying out initial assessments
    - agreeing on action plans and ensuring they are regularly reviewed and improved
    - supporting participants to use self-assessment tools, including video/audio diaries
    - being a focal point of contact and communication for participants
  4. Promote, develop and maintain
    - effective working relationships between participants and local services relevant to their action plan
    - inclusion of the participant voice within local, regional and national planning and policy
    - positive external relationships with other organisations working in community engagement, involvement and empowerment
    - effective liaison with Local Development Agencies and Community Development / Engagement departments within Local Authorities
  5. Contribute to the development of
    - themed learning resources for use with participants in groups settings
    - maps of support and engagement opportunities locally and regionally that are relevant to participants' objectives and action plans
    - dynamic communications with participants through our (new) website, facebook and other social media as appropriate, ensuring they carry up to date and relevant content

**B. Monitoring and reporting on performance. Striving for continuous improvement of the project.** The postholder will

1. Implement our project case management system
2. Collate monitoring data
3. Provide reports and project information as required
4. Contribute to the Evaluation process
5. Administer a petty cash system and maintain monthly expenditure records for all activities organised

**C. Team work.** The postholder will

1. Support the contribution of volunteers in the delivery of the project
2. Develop and maintain effective working relationships with our staff, volunteers, members and Trustees.
3. Uphold and promote the aims, values, policies of the Regional Refugee Forum North East
4. Support the objectives of the organisation and contribute to its future development
5. Travel regularly across the region

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

The following criteria will be used to short-list those applicants who will be invited to interview.

### ESSENTIAL

#### 1. Knowledge and understanding of:

- the unique contribution that RAS themselves can make in bringing about change for the RAS community
- what empowerment means and what working in empowering ways involves
- the UK asylum system and refugee resettlement programme and the distinct challenges faced by people in the asylum process and those granted leave to remain
- the role of the voluntary and community sector in the UK

#### 2. Experience of

- contributing to change at a local, regional or national level
- engaging with and building trusting relations with people from across the diversity of the RAS community
- building constructive relations with local services
- Empowering others

#### 3. Communication skills

- Be a clear, confident and competent communicator, both verbally and in writing, with people from diverse backgrounds, with those who do not have English as a first language, and at a range of levels
- Able to communicate accurately and effectively through the English Language
- Strong inter-personal skills of listening, questioning, feedback and rapport building
- Able to develop content for website and social media

#### 4. Organisational skills, experience of

- Organising and facilitating meetings and events
- Using Microsoft Office software (specifically word and excel) and outlook
- Prioritising, working under pressure, and self-management

#### 5. Qualities and Values

- Must be passionate about our work and values
- A demonstrable commitment to Equality, Human Rights and Social Justice
- Have an appetite to develop one's role, and be committed to personal development and continued improvement
- Be self-motivated and pro-active in seeking solutions to problems, able to use one's imagination to identify new or better ways of doing things, with the energy and stamina to help bring about change
- Flexible person who is committed to a team but also able to work alone and self-motivate
- Be able to travel across the region on a regular basis.
- be able, on occasion, to do some evening and weekend work

## DESIRABLE

### 1. Knowledge

1. Local &/or regional knowledge in the North East, in particular in relation to localities where dispersal of asylum seekers and resettlement of refugees takes place
2. Of contact points for RAS in the region

### 2. Experience

1. of developing or playing an active role within a community group
2. of case management systems
3. of record keeping
4. of monitoring and evaluation processes
5. of working with and supporting the role of volunteers
6. of loading content to websites and social media
7. of audio and/or video editing and sharing through websites or social media
8. of developing and delivering training

### 3. Qualifications and training

1. A qualification in Community Development Work, Youth & Community Work or related social sciences
2. Relevant training, for example in Learning Communities, empowerment, engagement or capacity building

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Please complete our RRF Application form and return to

Email: [info@refugeevoices.org.uk](mailto:info@refugeevoices.org.uk)  
(please enter 'CE Project application' in the subject line)

Post: Regional Refugee Forum North East, Design Works, William Street, Felling, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear. NE10 0JP  
(please mark envelope: 'CE Project')

**Applications must be received by 10am on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

Applicants will be informed by Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March if they have been selected for interview

- Please note that, due to administrative capacity, we cannot contact every applicant individually to let you know if you have been shortlisted for interview

**Shortlisted applicants will be interviewed on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March** between 10am and 5pm, in Gateshead

**Important note:** *Please make sure that, within your application form, you give full attention to how you meet the Essential and Desirable criteria shown in the Person Specification.*

Thank you for your interest in working for the Regional Refugee Forum North East.