



## NCVO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Good employment practice case study:  
Collaboration on HR –  
Developing and expanding training networks

### Organisations:

#### **Hact (the Housing Associations' Charitable Trust) working with:**

- **Refugee Action Liverpool/ CDS Housing/Riverside Group, and**
- **East Midlands Consortium for Asylum and Refugee Support**
- **(EMCARS)/Refugee Housing Association Organisation**

Hact is a development agency that acts as a catalyst for change in the housing sector.

Working in partnership, it develops and promotes solutions for people on the margins of mainstream housing, combining extensive grant-making with the visions of a specialist housing development agency.

Programmes have an impact locally through individual projects and nationally by influencing policies and practice through shared learning. One of the three major programmes hact is currently running is The Refugee Housing Integration Programme. As part of that programme, hact has been working in collaboration with local refugee organisations to deliver free refugee housing training courses. Two such projects have been run with the above organisations in the East Midlands and in Merseyside.

### Project

The training courses are designed to provide advisors and volunteers – mainly from refugee-led community organisations – with basic information, skills and resources to improve the quality of advice and support provided to their community members. Using speakers from a range of local statutory and voluntary organisations, tackling a variety of topics the courses aimed to:

1. Provide basic up to date knowledge on housing, community development and the welfare entitlements of refugees
2. Raise awareness about the role of the consortia and local voluntary and statutory agencies thereby enabling advisors to signpost and network more effectively, and
3. Highlight examples of good practice around housing advice and related service provision.

A seminar is held on the final day of the course, which brings together around 100 people from refugee sectors, housing associations, local authorities, regional bodies and other voluntary and community sector organisations to look at refugee housing issues in the region and celebrate the successes of the trainees.

## Benefits and challenges

Working in collaboration with local partners ensures that the courses are relevant, they reach the target audience and the local logistical input, for example in providing venues, ensures that the courses run smoothly.

One of the major benefits and aims of the training programme is to create and develop sustainable local networks. As well as the opportunities to network with other course participants, by inviting such a diverse group of speakers further opportunities for networking and potential joint-working with key players were provided.

The final seminars have proved highly successful and it is often the first time that the different stakeholders working on the issue of refugee housing have had a chance to come together and discuss the issues. Part of the time during training is spent working with the trainees to ensure that they can participate fully and present their issues to the seminar.

## Future development

This collaborative working model has been highly successful and further courses are planned over the next two years in Yorkshire & Humberside, Manchester and London. However hact is not a service delivery organisation and thereafter they hope to accredit the courses and work with another agency to deliver two more courses in 2008, following their adoption of the model and commitment to take on its delivery for a longer period.