

# ASSET UK

## Skills Audits for Asylum Seekers and Refugees: A Practitioner's Manual

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# Introduction



## Introduction

Refugees and asylum seekers often possess diverse and significant levels of skills. Unfortunately, however, the skills of many asylum seekers and refugees are never recorded, and so these unrecognised and consequently unused skills may be lost to both the individual and to our society and economy. A skills audit provides the opportunity to record skills and experience gained overseas, and can be used to inform subsequent career and employment decisions.

This manual aims to provide practitioners and programme managers with an understanding of the requirements, necessary knowledge and practical means to undertake skills audits with asylum seekers and refugees. Organisations that may wish to adopt this skills audit methodology might include Jobcentreplus, Connexions, Nextstep, learning providers, refugee community groups and voluntary sector organisations providing services to refugees and asylum seekers.

The manual also aims to provide policy- and decision-makers with an insight into the complexities and benefits of using skills audits in programmes to facilitate the social and vocational integration of asylum seekers and refugees. Although the skills audit approach was developed during the ASSET UK project to primarily supporting of asylum seekers, it would be equally helpful in providing a means to assist the integration of other groups of people who are new to the UK or are returning to the UK, such as migrant workers or overseas-born spouses of British citizens, and British citizens who have not been resident in the UK for some time.

Without an understanding of the individual's skills level, there is little hope of helping a refugee or asylum seeker to identify appropriate employment or training opportunities in the UK. This inevitably contributes to the situation described in *Working to Rebuild Lives*, the DWP employment strategy, which states:<sup>1</sup> 'Where refugees are working it is frequently at levels below their capability.' Skills audits could be a valuable component in trying to help refugees plan and work towards more appropriate employment outcomes. As well as the

<sup>1</sup> *Working to Rebuild Lives, A Refugee Employment Strategy*, Department of Work and Pensions, 2005

long-term benefits that a completed skills audit can provide, a refugee or asylum seeker can derive are immediate benefits just by taking part. An increase in self-esteem often accompanies the skills audit process, as it enables refugees and asylum seekers to reflect upon and feel good about their previous experience and achievements. Self-confidence is also often increased when the findings of the skills audit are incorporated into a CV – often the first document in English to describe a refugee's or asylum seeker's skills. The skills audit process can also introduce UK occupational terminology and initiate discussions on differences between UK and overseas occupational career structures.

## The national context

ASSET UK, a NIACE, ESF Equal project, used the skills audit methodology and tools described in this manual in to support asylum seekers in the East Midlands between 2002 and 2005. During this time both *Integration Matters: A National Strategy for Refugee Integration*<sup>2</sup> and *Working to Rebuild Lives*, the DWP refugee employment strategy, were published. Both these strategies identify finding employment as a pivotal factor in securing integration, the integration. These strategies were partly based on findings of previous studies undertaken on the nature of refugee employment and the barriers faced by refugees in securing work that was commensurate with their skills and experience. The studies found that unemployment rates amongst refugees are particularly high in comparison with the general population, the unemployment rate for refugees being estimated in *Working to Rebuild Lives* to be approximately 36 per cent. An earlier study reported that for refugees there was 'a notable lack of involvement in professional jobs despite pre-migration experience, with many refugees finding themselves in low-skilled, short-term employment with little opportunity to develop their skills'.<sup>3</sup>

2 *Integration Matters: A National Strategy for Refugee Integration*, Immigration and Nationality Directorate, Home Office, 2004

3 *Refugees' Opportunities and Barriers in Employment and Training*, Department of Work and Pensions, 2002

The NIACE skills audit of asylum seekers in Leicester in 2001,<sup>4</sup> and several subsequent skills audits of other regional and local asylum-seeker populations, have all reported that a great variety and often high level of skills are possessed by people seeking asylum in the UK. *Working to Rebuild Lives* has recognised this, and the implications of refugees finding work at levels below their capability: it stated 'For so many refugees to be unemployed or underemployed is a waste of human resource and is socially divisive, since work helps integrate people into the community and, in the case of refugees, helps them settle and rebuild their lives.' An interesting emerging findings report<sup>5</sup> on several DWP pilot projects established to test new initiatives prior to incorporation in the Refugee Employment Strategy was published by ECOTEC in 2004.

The nature and multiplicity of barriers to employment faced by refugees are well recorded. As many of these relate to their initial difficulties in finding adequate assistance to reorientate their skills, *Working to Rebuild Lives*<sup>6</sup> states: 'Getting early and correct advice on how to proceed is vital.' A thorough skills audit crucially underpins and informs advice and guidance. This is because without knowledge of the starting skills position, it is impossible to identify correctly how an asylum seeker or refugee could progress. We would like to interpret the 'early advice' as recommended in *Working to Rebuild Lives* to mean 'whilst awaiting the outcome of an asylum claim', as the constructive use of this waiting period could be very helpful in ensuring maximum progress is made once refugee status is granted.

4 *Asylum Seekers' Skills and Qualifications Audit Project Pilot*, National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, 2001

5 *Emerging Findings for the Refugee Employment Strategy*, ECOTEC, 2004

6 *Working to Rebuild Lives, A Preliminary Report Towards a Refugee Employment Strategy*, Department of Work and Pensions, 2003

## Structure of the manual

In chapter 2 we describe the skills audit tool in practice through an example of its use during the ASSET UK project. Chapter 3 aims to provide a guide to the practical considerations in preparing to undertake skills audits. Chapter 4 provides a guide to undertaking skills audits. Chapter 5 identifies factors relevant to provide information, advice and guidance ( IAG) to asylum seekers following the completion of an individual skills audit. Chapter 6 focuses on arranging activities for asylum seekers and refugees to facilitate social and vocational integration and reorientation. Chapter 7 examines the nature of barriers to reorientation activities and how a skills audit and personal advisor support can help overcome them. The appendices include two examples of CVs derived from skills audits, a further example of a completed skills audit, a glossary of terms and a list of organisations providing related and supporting services.



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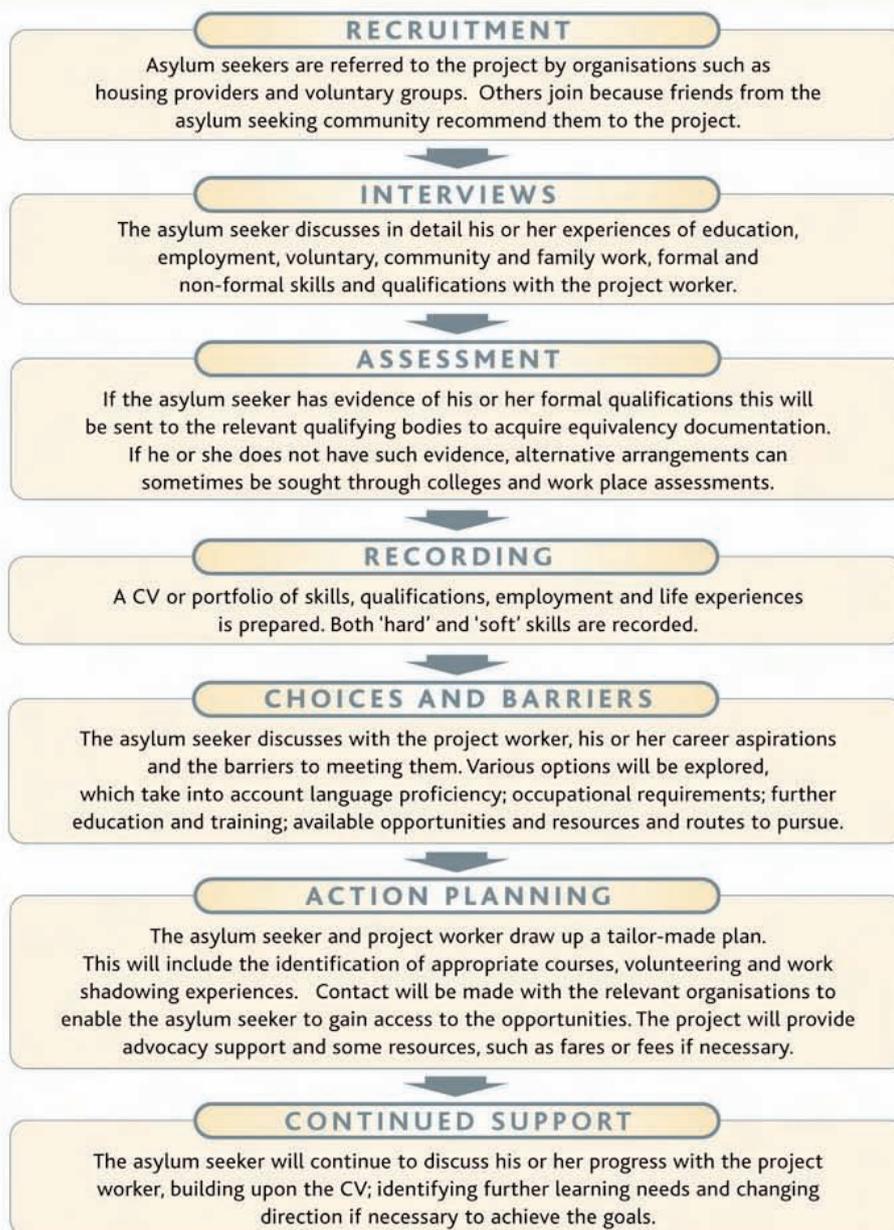
The skills audit methodology and an example of a skills audit programme in practice



## The skills audit methodology and an example of a skills audit programme in practice

The skills audit methodology developed to provide vocational and social reorientation for asylum seekers in the ASSET UK project is described below. The audit took place early in each participant's programme, enabling the audit results to inform later career decisions and activities. Following the description of the skills audit methodology, there is an example of the skills audit generated for Bueno Lgumbwe and a description of Bueno's programme. For many participants there are complications and additional needs directly or indirectly related to vocational reorientation, and it can be seen how these impacted in Bueno's case from the description of his programme.

## The Skills Audit Methodology



## ASSET UK SKILLS AUDIT QUESTIONNAIRE

### Personal details

**Name:** Bueno Lgumbwe  
**ASSET UK No.:** NIACE D 0049  
**ARC No.:** NASS ref. 02/10/04432  
**Telephone No.(s):** 07753309160  
**Email Address:** N/A  
**Date of Arrival in UK:** 4/10/2002  
**Referred from:** Self-referral through other asylum seekers  
 who lived in the same accommodation

### Work experience

(All occupations including any secondary ones – most recent first)

Job title	Duties and responsibilities	Location	Employer	Dates
Farm Manager	Management of employers' livestock, land and other farm assets as well as sales and supplies.	DR Congo	self-employed	1979–1996
Market Trader	Buying farm produce from small farmers. Selling groceries and fruits and vegetables in local markets.	DR Congo	self-employed	1976–1979
Salesman	Direct customer relations; banking; logistics	DR Congo	Kalinda Enterprises	1975–1976

Additional information: N/A

## Work experience

Job title	Years of study	Subjects/modules	Qualifications	Where?	Other information
Primary	1964–1970 6 years	French Mathematics Arts Sciences		DR Congo	
Secondary	1970–1975 5 years	As above	'Senior four' certificate	Institute 'Bustani' in Masisi in Congo	Equivalent to GCSE, NVQ level 2
Higher					
Vocational (incl. work based training)					
Adult education (incl. ESOL and IT)	Dec. 2002– ongoing	ESOL ICT	Currently attending	Fern Training and Development, Derby	

Certificates available? No  
Which certificates? N/A

## Other life skills/experiences

Bueno is 47 years old and due to his age and wealth had an important standing in the community in Congo.

Bueno has parenting skills, since he has nine children. He has always looked after the welfare of his extended family as well as his workers. He considers himself to be adaptable, resilient and have good stamina.

Language Skills: (List competency of all languages used in the following areas)

Speaking/understanding: Swahili, French, English

Reading/writing: Swahili, French, English

Fluent in English? No

## Aspirations

- To familiarise himself with the UK labour market.
- To find out if some of his existing skills are useful and transferable.
- To complete forklift training.
- To consider farming work through learning about farming in the UK, and
- To learn IT skills.

## Perceived barriers

- Finances
- Not understanding the language and culture of the UK community
- Not sure where to look for information
- Missing his family and worrying about them
- Feeling guilty for leaving his family behind
- Worried about the situation in DR Congo
- Not sure of the outcome of asylum claim

## Next Steps

(including career options in the UK, placement/learning support required/desired in the UK etc.)

- To receive sound information, advice and guidance from Careers Advisor.
- To continue with IT training and work towards qualification.
- To explore possibilities of attending agricultural courses.
- To explore possibilities for voluntary farm work.

## Outcomes/actions

- Completed CLAIT 1, awaiting certificate.
- Following an interview, accepted for First Diploma in Agriculture at Derby College.
- Attended a Summer School Voluntary Work placement at Derby College, Broomfield Hall 7–18 July 2003.
- Was provided with funding for books to help with learning English and protective clothing as well as travel cost to voluntary placement.
- Granted ILR at the end of July 2003.

## Support into mainstream provision:

- Supported into New Deal programme re accessing forklift training, and obtaining driving licence.
- Advised on agencies that can provide support re. family reunion.
- Advised and referred to CAB re welfare rights advice.

**Project worker signature:**

**Client signature:**

The following description of Bueno's programme is helpful as an illustration of the use and benefits of undertaking a skills audit. A copy of the CV arising from the skills audit is included in the appendices (see p 87).

### **The individual and his family**

Bueno Lgumbwe came to the UK in October 2002 from the Republic of Congo. He applied for asylum because he was fleeing persecution. He had been captured by rebels who had taken his farm and killed his livestock. Bueno managed to escape and tried to reclaim his farm and restock it but the rebels threatened him again, which led him to seek asylum in the UK. Bueno was a leading member of his village community. He left his wife behind in the Republic of Congo with several of his many children. Some of his children managed to escape to a neighbouring country where they are continuing their education. Bueno is a mature and man, resilient but he naturally worries a great deal about his family.

Bueno was sent to the East Midlands where he lived in a shared house with other asylum seekers. He was granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK in August 2003 when he was required to move out of the shared house and find employment and his own accommodation. He has since decided to stay in Derby. Now allowed to work, his main aim is to earn sufficient money to bring his wife and children to the UK.

### The initial experience

When Bueno came to Derby in October 2002 he immediately joined English classes and very quickly acquired the ability to communicate in English. He was referred to the ASSET project three months after he arrived by an Education Adviser who had arranged the English classes. She suggested that he should contact the project because he wanted to consider his future employment opportunities in the UK and needed help in examining the options and refining his aspirations. The house where he lived had other asylum seekers tenants who had previously joined the project and who were very positive about its benefits. They advised him to join the project and were able to provide information about IT classes, which he joined.

### The initial experience

#### The contact and meetings:

Bueno and the project worker met on many occasions. In addition to meetings that took place at the Derby office of Connexion they also jointly visited colleges for information and interviews and an initial New Deal appointment.

Although Bueno lacked confidence in his English language skills and his vocabulary was not very wide, interpreters were not needed. Bueno felt that through allowing enough time in the meetings and in an environment where there were few interruptions he could communicate through word and body language, and he was able to express himself effectively. Bueno often requested information to be provided in writing to study at leisure and with the help of a dictionary at home.

#### The process:

The initial skills audit, which covered the history of education and work experience, was conducted at the first meeting.

An action plan was agreed, reviewed and updated during the process:

- The project worker gathered information regarding accessing local provision such as

professional careers advice, agricultural courses, Internet access and literature.

- Through referral to relevant agencies and intensive advocacy the worker supported Bueno in accessing this provision.
- With the completed Skills Audit, Bueno was referred to the careers advisor to build a CV, which was used when looking for learning/voluntary work on his behalf.
- The process took account of Bueno's personal circumstances. For example, on one occasion he said that he had received some disturbing and upsetting news from his country and was unable to proceed with a previously agreed appointment. The process also reflected change in Bueno's circumstances, such as being granted refugee status, becoming homeless and applying for family reunion. This change meant that his priorities changed and the process reflected the change.
- The fact that Bueno's housemates and friends were also ASSET UK beneficiaries helped because they exchanged information about different types of support that ASSET UK can provide and could approach the project worker with queries.

The project worker said: 'I feel that in my contact with Bueno my role in supporting him was mainly through advocacy. I realised that this was leading to some unnecessary dependency and I encouraged Bueno to act on his own behalf whenever possible, such as responding to the correspondence from college directly. We based our communications on mutual respect, which enabled me to address some sensitive issues around attending training or voluntary work such as race and age discrimination. Bueno expressed his appreciation of my support frequently and also demonstrated it through recommending his friends to join the project.'

**Supporting documentation for validation**

Bueno had left secondary school having passed the leaving examinations but he had no documents with him and these could not be acquired.

**Application to national regulations and accreditation processes**

There is no national system in the UK that assesses and accredits the skills and knowledge of adults without proof of formal qualifications.

**Validation**

Bueno decided that he wanted to build upon his earlier experience as a farmer in the Congo and seek a career in agriculture or related fields in the UK. He needed training to do this and with the help of the project he applied for a course at the Derby Agricultural College. He had no documentation to prove his experience or ability. He was invited to two interviews where the ASSET project staff member accompanied him. The assessment of his suitability for the course was based upon these interviews. The college decided to offer him a place on a one-year Diploma Course in Agriculture if he was successfully able to participate in a 2-week placement at the college. The project funded the cost of fares and necessary protective clothing. The systems of farming are very different in the Congo and the UK. None the less Bueno successfully completed the placement, learned a great deal about different aspects of farming in the UK and was able to demonstrate his aptitudes and abilities to learn and succeed in new environments. As a consequence he was offered a place on the course, which he accepted. He has now deferred starting this course because he was suddenly granted refugee status and has the right to work. He recognised that he was required to seek employment rather than take up a full-time college place in order to support himself and send money to his family. However, the validation of his skills in this area has had a

beneficial outcome in terms of other short-term training opportunities (see outcomes), which he has taken up

### Outcomes

In concrete terms, Bueno gained a great deal from the skills audit process. He was able to identify the most appropriate careers in the UK and to gain experience of the qualification systems. He has produced, as a result of the audit, an impressive CV. He was given the support to take up a relevant placement where his abilities were tested in a variety of ways. When he gained refugee status and the right to work he needed to take pragmatic decisions about his future. He needed to find employment as soon as possible to support himself and his family and with the help of the project was admitted immediately to the New Deal Programme (a government programme for the long-term unemployed). He was fast-tracked onto the training he wanted to get a reasonably good job quickly with potential for overtime. This was because the skills audit process (which was recognised as valid by the employment adviser) enabled Bueno to be prepared for immediate entry in the labour market. Bueno undertook a short training course in forklift operations and found a semi-skilled job. He has demonstrated by his previous actions in the Congo and his achievements in Derby that this kind of work is well below his capacity, but the project's expectations of him are that he will very quickly be able to prove his value to any employer and gain promotion.

In addition, the skills audit provided Bueno with an understanding and awareness of the issues he might face in the UK, including discrimination and the need to continue to prove himself. It was an empowering experience, which gave him confidence in his own abilities and helped to maintain his motivation despite his very real concerns for his family.

Bueno has been able to make a contribution to the wider community. The knowledge that he gained through the skills audit process has been shared with other asylum seekers in Derby. He is seen, because of his wisdom and standing, as a man to be trusted and listened to, and therefore he has been able to advise other asylum seekers and refugees.

The main difference that the skills audit has made is that Bueno has recognised that he does have choices and influence – he is not a passive recipient. He was able to understand how to make changes in his plans when refugee status was granted, because the skills audit process had enabled him to explore a variety of options.



3

Preparing to undertake skills audits



## What skills are needed to undertake skills audits?

A great variety of skills are helpful, such as:

- listening skills, interpersonal skills, communication skills and recording skills;
- tact, diplomacy and sensitivity when discussing distressing past experiences;
- other attributes such as patience, empathy and a sense of humour.

## What knowledge is needed to undertake skills audits?

- A general knowledge of UK careers structures and occupational requirements, in order to be able to offer comparisons with overseas experience and to identify ways in which skills possessed may be used in a UK context.
- An Understanding of the variety of immigration statuses.
- A Knowledge of the eligibility regulations pertaining to employment, welfare and education. This is very helpful when a skills audit forms the first part of an IAG programme which subsequently identifies educational and employment opportunities.
- An awareness of the circumstances of asylum seekers and a degree of cultural awareness.

## When might interpreters be required?

People with English at Entry Level 2 or below will generally need interpreter support to describe their skills and experience effectively. However, people with English as a second language at Entry Level 3 or above will still almost certainly need help in using UK occupational terminology, with which even interpreters may not be familiar. If very fortunate, help may be provided by another person originating from the same country with similar skills and strong English language skills. Alternatively, trade magazines, textbooks, specialist dictionaries and Language Line may provide the help required to find the correct English vocabulary.

## From where may asylum seekers or refugees be referred to a project undertaking skills audits?

People were referred to the ASSET UK project from a variety of organisations, most of whom were in some way connected to the NASS (National Asylum Support Service) support or dispersal arrangements:

- **NASS and other housing providers.** Housing providers are uniquely placed in that their staff are often the first people to develop working relationships with newly arrived asylum seekers and maintain contact for extended periods of time. Consequently, asylum seekers often turn to their housing provider's staff for information: a suggestion from these staff to an asylum seeker that a skill audit could be useful will often be taken on board, resulting in the asylum seeker choosing to be referred to the skills auditing project.
- **Welfare service and education providers.** Welfare service and education provider staff often develop strong working relationships with their service users and will often be keen to access other provision that might benefit asylum seekers and refugees in ways in which their service cannot.
- **Refugee community groups and campaign groups.** These were always enthusiastic about making referrals. However, they often did not provide a steady stream of referrals owing to the funding and infrastructure difficulties that are often associated with community and voluntary sector groups
- **Self-referrals.** As the project matured, ever-greater numbers of people seeking asylum approached the project directly. This was partly due to the project's profile rising as time passed. However, the majority of people approaching the project directly knew at least one person who was already a participant, showing the importance of personal recommendation within the asylum seeker's community, a community which is often understandably cautious about approaching official service providers. We found that the impact of personal recommendation caused whole groups of friends and acquaintances to join the project, creating participant clusters. Members of these participant clusters tended to have shared interests or characteristics

such as age group, country/region of origin or previous occupational experience, as these characteristics had caused them to meet and get to know each other originally. This could have important implications for the project: we could suddenly find ourselves with five new Zimbabwean hairdressers or three new Iraqi mechanics.

## How can the interviewing environment impact on a skills audit?

The interviewing environment can have a significant impact on the ease of delivery and quality of a skills audit programme. In the East Midlands region we were able to identify the characteristics of three different interviewing environments: designated permanent offices, outreach clinics, and participants' homes, all of which are described below.

**Designated offices**, which may be more available and affordable in urban centres than in rural locations, will often be the preferred choice of established providers. The characteristics of designated offices include:

- The availability of private areas, enabling confidential and sensitive issues to be more easily addressed.
- Greater permanence, enabling the required resources to be built up and to be at hand during interviews.
- The availability of reception support, which ensures distractions are kept to a minimum.
- The office environment is likely to be modern and high quality, and therefore attractive to participants.
- Accessibility issues such as city centre location, child friendliness, and accessibility for disabled people will often have already have been addressed

**Outreach clinics** were established in several host organisations' premises because they enabled us to engage with otherwise hard-to-reach asylum seekers who frequented the premises.

Characteristics of outreach clinics include:

- Childcare provision is often provided by the host organisation.
- Contact with participants can be re-established after a break, as contact with the host organisation will often be continuous even though contact with the skills auditing project will not.
- The host organisation will often encourage its members to join the project and provide further support and encouragement, although this can lead to confusion about the separateness of the host organisation and skills audit provision.
- Reception and administration support is often provided.
- Regular timeslots for the skills audit provision help accessibility and retention.

**Visits to participant's homes** were used as a last resort during the ASSET UK project when no suitable venue could be found. We envisaged that a great advantage of home visits would be that the participant would always be in; however, this was often not the case, attendance rates for home visits actually being about equal to those for all other interviewing environments. Other characteristics include:

- Participants do not have to locate the venue to join the project.
- Home visits are particularly helpful for people with mobility difficulties or childcare responsibilities.
- Participants tend to be more at ease – sometimes too much, as there can be many distractions such as friends coming round, football on the telly, mealtimes etc!

- Travelling between participant's homes can be very time consuming.
- The skills auditor can only bring a limited amount of interviewing/careers resources.
- No office facilities, such as photocopiers and telephones, are available.
- There are serious safety concerns which have to be considered, many of which can only be partially resolved by precautionary measures.
- Not all participants are comfortable with home visits and there are equal opportunity ramifications.





4

Undertaking skills audits



## How can we reassure the participant that the skills audit is worthwhile?

We have found it is more helpful to show a participant a copy of a CV, which is in effect the finished product of the process, than to try to explain the benefits of a skills audit itself. On seeing how smart a CV can be, many participants will wish to have one of their own. For participants who come from countries where CVs are not used at all, it helps to go further and show them employment vacancies in a local paper. Often the majority of advertisements will ask for a CV to be sent in and this will often convince the participant that one will be essential when they wish to apply for work in the future.

## How can we reassure the participant during the skills audit?

An asylum seeker or refugee will have been asked for personal information many times since coming to the UK and may not have always known the reasons for this. The participant may find further questions quite intrusive, especially the number and depth of the questions that have to be asked during a skills audit. Therefore it helps if reassurance can be provided during the skills audit by:

- Referring to similar circumstances experienced by other participants and the benefits of the skills audit process for them, whilst still maintaining participant confidentiality.
- Giving recognition for achievements which are described by the participant during the skills audit.
- Showing genuine interest in how other countries' occupational structures and societies in general are organised.
- Being willing to listen if the participant brings up what might seem irrelevant information.
- Not being hung up on verification at this stage.
- Being generous with time.

## How can the skills audit be started?

The information can be recorded in the same order as laid out in the skills audit proforma (see page 81). However, sometimes it is appropriate to postpone dealing with a section for communication or sensitivity reasons. For instance, if we thought the participant had a very limited education, we might start with the work experience section, then the interests and languages sections, approaching the education section at a later stage when the participant was more comfortable with the process. It helps if the interviewer has a natural curiosity about other people's lives when embarking on a skills audit, as this approach is most likely to bring out the fullest response from a participant. What might have started as an unrelated conversation initiated by the participant has often led to very relevant experiences being described which were then important enough to be included on a CV. Generally, we have found that the auditor leads the process by asking relevant questions, the participant answers giving the information required by each section of the skills audit. Occasionally a participant will have made notes or have a CV already which can form the starting point for discussions. Most of the skills audit proforma column headings make the questions required to gather the information quite obvious. However, the employment description column and additional interests/leisure interests sections may need more probing questions to get the fullest response.

## Suggested questions for the employment description section

You could begin by asking, 'What was involved in this job?' and then follow with 'What else was involved?' or 'Could you give more detail on this part of the work?' To get added dimensions to the work you could ask, 'Who or what departments did you work or liaise closely with?' as this will often bring up other aspects to the job. Other questions that can help give a fuller response are 'Did you need to fill in any records?', 'What part of the job did you like most?' and 'How did you prepare for the next day's work?'

## Suggested questions for the additional information section

The additional information section can be used to record experiences that do not easily fit into work experience or education. Simply asking someone if they have anything to record like this will invariably produce a negative response, so it helps to prompt the participant by asking: 'Have you done anything to help people in your community, some charity work perhaps or something you have done to help a friend or someone in your family?' The responses given to this question have been astonishing and often add much greater insight into the abilities and attributes of the participant.

## Suggested questions for the leisure interests section

This question gives scope for the participant to relax and reflect on what they enjoy doing in life; for this reason it helps for this question to be the final question as it helps end the interview on a relaxed and positive note. Participants will often need great prompting to respond to this. It helps to ask them about sports they like to play or watch. Following this you could make some suggestions about other things they like to do when not working. If a participant cannot think of anything you could suggest something silly such as eating pies. For some reason, in trying to ensure that eating pies does not go on to their CV a participant will often come up with a dozen interests that they really do have! If all else fails suggest common interests such as reading fiction, going to the cinema and entertaining friends. It is interesting that many participants will describe cultural pursuits such as teaching traditional dancing, wine making, singing folk songs and making traditional meals during festivals, showing the richness of culture of their countries of origin.

## How can the process be made to go more smoothly?

Helpful techniques during the skills audit process:

- Provide a pen and paper for the participant so they can write down spellings of names, places, people and organisations and work out dates (particularly complex where calendars are different to ours).
- Create a timeline when the participant is particularly unsure about dates, as the date of one activity can often be recalled only in the context of other known activities.
- Ask only for the year an activity took place – to ask the participant for the month on which events took place is very challenging and almost always irrelevant.
- Make suggestions as to what the content of a course or occupation might have been, as the participant's English vocabulary may be limited such that although they may not be able to come up with the appropriate word they will often recognise a word suggested by the project worker – descriptions of occupations in the Connexions Occupations Manual can be very helpful here.
- Provide a framework of qualifications on to which the participant can superimpose or relate their qualifications. If the project worker suggests that in some countries people get a secondary school certificate at 16, a high school diploma at 18 and a university degree at 21, the participant can often give near equivalents to these, enabling sense to be made of what otherwise might be a jumble of qualifications.
- Explain that a section can be returned to at a later date if the participant is not able to recall all the important facts. This could be due to many different reasons such as memory loss, difficulty in expressing themselves or insecurity.
- Be aware of particularly sensitive topics that may cause distress, such as periods in the armed forces, difficult childhood experiences, imprisonment, and don't dwell on these
- Take a reasonable amount of detail and do not get too bogged down on one work or educational experience at the expense of a more comprehensive audit. Generally the amount of detail required for a CV entry is a good guide.

- Ask open questions to enable the participant to give further useful information. What might seem a very full timeline of events may be missing a second occupation which the participant carried out in the evenings or at weekends alongside a main job. Participants will often not recall assisting in a family business even though considerable experience of a trade can be derived from this.

## How long does it take to complete a skills audit?

On average a skills audit will take approximately two hours to complete. However, in practice they can range from one to four hours. The greatest factor in influencing the time they take is the number of employment and educational activities undertaken by the participant. Someone who changed employment many times and returned to education throughout their lives will have a significant amount to record, which could take some time.

Other factors that can cause the process to take additional time are:

- Having to detail very complex skills and experiences.
- Significant occupational or general language difficulties – the necessary use of interpreters in working with people with limited language skills naturally causes a very significant slowing-down of the process.
- Age: both younger and older participants tend to respond more slowly to questions.
- Mental health problems and the medication for these, which can cause difficulty in concentration and drowsiness.
- Anxiety, distress and distraction due to difficulties external to the project, e.g. housing problems, approaching asylum case hearings, support issues.
- Trauma that has resulted in memory loss.

## How are the aspirations, perceived barriers, next steps and outcomes sections used?

The ASSET UK project involved providing careers guidance on completing the skills audit the audit results informing the guidance process. The aspirations, perceived barriers, next steps and outcomes sections on the skills audit proforma provide a framework for the guidance process. If you wish to provide the skills audit only and do not wish to give careers guidance, it is appropriate to stop on reaching the aspirations section. If you do wish to give careers guidance, it helps to begin discussing the participant's aspirations at the beginning of a new interview, rather than to try to continue into these sections immediately on completing the previous sections of the skills audit proforma. This is because it is very difficult to change mindset from past events to future aspirations, and also because the recollection of past events can be quite draining for the participant, and the questioning and recording of answers quite an effort for the auditor.

## How can the UK equivalent of overseas qualifications be found?

An equivalence of each participant's highest or most relevant overseas qualifications is essential for them to make progress in the UK. One major benefit of undertaking the skills audit is that the qualifications requiring equivalence are identified from a confusion of other less important qualifications, as by the end of the process the auditor will have details of all the qualifications taken and the most relevant qualifications will often be quite apparent. NARIC provides a rapid unverified indication of the equivalent qualification using their database, which can be subscribed to by the auditor's parent organisation. A verified and certificated result can be obtained if the original qualification certificates, translations and transcripts are sent to NARIC itself. The rapid unverified identification of equivalence using the database is very helpful as it allows career decisions to be taken and progress to be made sooner than if having to wait for full verification. The outcome from NARIC and other equivalence providers is, however, not always good news for two main reasons:

- The process occasionally results in the qualification being found to be equivalent to a lower than anticipated level, which makes immediate return to an occupation impossible without extensive further study to meet the UK occupational requirements. For instance, many primary school teachers from Zimbabwe possess Certificates or Diplomas in Education which are equivalenced to be equal to a UK level 3 qualification, well below the degree level required to teach in UK primary schools
- NARIC may report that it is currently not able to provide an equivalence for the qualification if it is awarded by an institution from which limited assessment has been undertaken. For instance, it was not possible for NARIC to provide an equivalence for many qualifications from Aziz University in Iran at the time of printing this manual.

Great sensitivity is required in breaking bad news from NARIC to participants as further disappointment can add very unhelpfully to their already distressing circumstances.

In some cases, generally only where occupations are highly regulated or highly technical, there are specific occupational organisations which must carry out the equivalence, for instance the Health Professions Council must verify the equivalence of some medically qualified staff. Often the most difficult circumstances are those in which qualifications are only part completed on arrival in the UK. In some occupations and at some levels schemes for accreditation of prior learning (APL) do exist, but provision is patchy. Some very innovative schemes have been created to accredit work experience, such as within the Scottish ATLAS project. These schemes may allow people from countries where work experience is emphasised and qualifications are rare to get the opportunity to have their skills assessed and receive formal recognition for them.

## How can the skills audit results be presented?

Completing the skills audit will be a great achievement for the auditor but often mean little to the participant who has patiently given their life-story to a relative stranger who has bombarded them with questions. To give the process meaning for the participant it helps for the results to be presented in a format which can provide a service to the participant. A CV is an obvious choice but alternative formats, such as records of achievement, could also be created. A perceptible change often comes over the participant on being given their smartly produced CV (typed up by the auditor outside the interview). The CV is likely to be the first document in English that describes a participant's previous skills and experience and provides both a sense of achievement and a sense of having arrived. On the ASSET UK project, the CV created for each participant was found to be immediately useful in approaching potential work-orientation activity providers and, of course, proved invaluable for participants who had permission to work in applying for job vacancies. The CV is also extremely useful in filling out application forms as the chronological ordering of information and the emphasis on key occupational skills had already been done in creating the CV. Examples derived from an ASSET UK skills audit are shown in the appendices (p87 and p95).

## CASE STUDY FOR OSMAN

*Osman joined the ASSET UK project following a referral from his NASS accommodation provider, who accompanied him to the first appointment. His housing support officer was keen for him to join the project as he had expressed lack of confidence in*



*being able to manage in the UK if he received refugee status. His education in Somalia, his country of origin, had been very disrupted by the conflict there. As a consequence he still had difficulty reading his first language and had just begun to learn to write for the first time at a local FE college.*

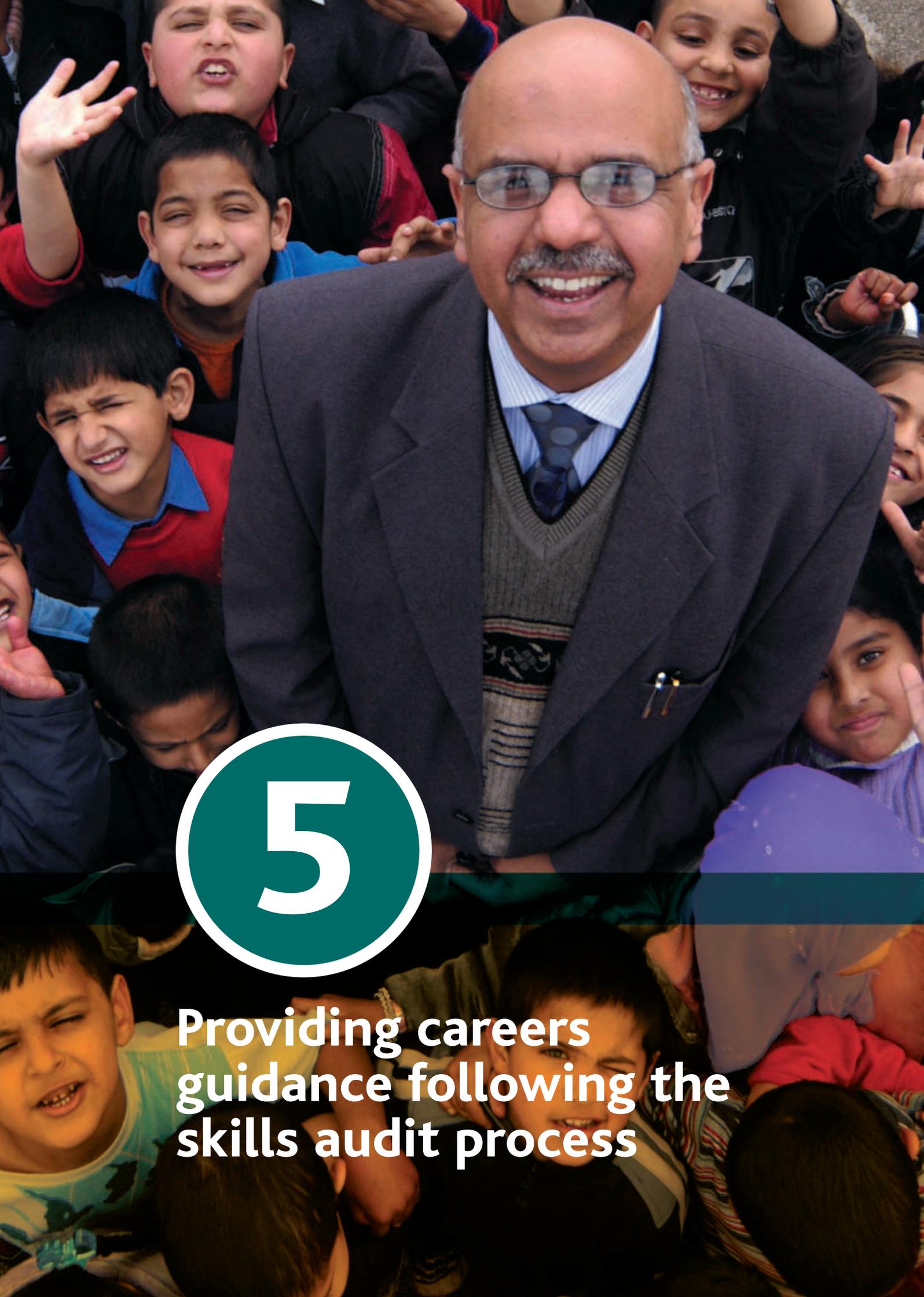
*On completing the first interview, which involved welcoming him, briefly discussing the project and discussing how it could help him, Osman said he was happy to attend further appointments on his own. To remind Osman of the forthcoming appointment, the project officer sent him an invitation letter three days before the appointment date reminding him how enjoyable the previous meeting had been and confirming the date of the next one.*

*At the second interview the project officer asked him about his previous work experience and about his current college studies. Osman showed reluctance and embarrassment in giving details of his disrupted education and the nature of the unskilled work he had undertaken, so the project officer only gathered as much detail as needed to ensure that the careers advice stage was well informed. Osman had undertaken two years of informal education and worked as an occasional fisherman at times since then.*

*After the project officer described how people develop their skills and the nature of employment in the UK, Osman asked about many different jobs, the project officer describing these with the assistance of*

*Occupations2004. Osman had heard from his friends that a forklift truck licence was helpful and he asked the project officer if he could help with the costs of the licence training. As requests for forklift truck licences are frequent, the project officer is normally cautious: a request for this often indicates that the participant wants a quick-fix solution that might provide temporarily good earnings without having considered longer-term careers options. However, in Osman's case, a forklift truck course could be undertaken at his literacy level, unlike most other vocational training, and it would be a huge boost to his self-confidence if he were to achieve it. The forklift truck licence would also be a helpful addition to his CV.*

*The project officer supported Osman in his preparations for the forklift truck licence training by taking him to his interview with the course provider and ensuring that he had warm clothes, as the training was being given outdoors in January. The project officer also ensured that the training also took place at a time of the week when Osman had some remaining NASS money for food, as this often ran out before the next instalment. Osman contacted the project officer on the final day of training test to let the project officer know he had passed the licence. He now plans to undertake HGV training in the future, with the aim of becoming a long-distance lorry driver.*



5

Providing careers guidance following the skills audit process



## Why is careers guidance so important for asylum seekers and refugees?

*Working to Rebuild Lives*, the 2004 preliminary report towards a refugee employment strategy stated that, 'Where refugees are working it is frequently at levels well below their capability' and goes on to say 'for so many refugees to be unemployed, or underemployed, is a waste of human resource and is socially divisive'. The under-employment and unemployment experienced by refugees is in part due to the often considerable career adjustment required to enter the UK labour market, as skills and experience gained overseas may not be directly transferable to the UK workplace. In the most extreme cases an individual's occupation may not take place in the UK at all, in which case their transferable skills may need to be identified and mapped against a new choice of career. Early provision of careers guidance is, therefore, crucial in helping refugees and asylum seekers reorientate themselves effectively to the UK labour market.

## Why might the guidance approach be different for asylum seekers and refugees?

The informal support that many British-born people take for granted when taking career decisions is not easily accessible for many refugees and asylum seekers, as they are unlikely to have an occupational network of contacts, unlikely to know where to go to get occupational information, and unlikely to have an understanding of the evolution of their occupational field in the UK and its likely future development. Therefore, more formal careers guidance support is needed to help overcome the relative isolation experienced by refugees and asylum seekers.

Many asylum seekers and refugees will need sustained support to achieve their career objectives. Their rapidly changing circumstances and entitlements, the need for ongoing encouragement, and the multiple and successive barriers facing them when trying to reorientate their careers, make a single careers interview ineffective. There is also a need for a holistic approach, to enable progress on many fronts to be made simultaneously, as leaving out a crucial developmental

need will mean the participant may have to return to address this at a later stage, causing considerable delays. Young asylum seekers and refugees often experience considerable difficulty. Many young people will have faced serious disruption to their education. Other young people will have participated in education in several different countries and languages.

## **What other organisations need to be involved alongside careers guidance provision?**

The ability to work in partnership with other careers-guidance organisations is important, as participant needs will be multiple and so complex that no one organisation can effectively meet them all. However, prior to referring people on, it may be necessary to provide advice to other careers-guidance services to enable them to orientate their services to the needs of refugees and asylum seekers. Many participants will encounter health and welfare problems whilst receiving support from careers-guidance programmes, so it helps to maintain close links with the agencies to which you may need to refer them – enabling you to concentrate on providing careers guidance and ensuring other pressing concerns do not adversely disrupt progress. Close links with refugee community groups and individuals with influence in the refugee community can also be very helpful in keeping abreast of the changing perceptions and needs of the local refugee population.

## **What are refugees and asylum seekers seeking to gain from careers guidance?**

Many refugees and asylum seekers may not understand the role of a UK careers advisor, provision of this type not having been available in their country of origin. Therefore it is very helpful to describe the role of a careers advisor to refugees and asylum seekers on meeting them to help establish appropriate expectations of the help you can provide. Following this, however, many participants will still wish their careers advisor to direct their career choices as they may be unused to taking these decisions: in their country of origin such choices may have been the

preserve of their extended family, under state control or determined by economic circumstances or privilege. A refugee or asylum seeker might also feel that their knowledge of the UK is so limited in comparison to the careers advisor sitting opposite them that it would be much wiser to delegate decision making to the careers advisor. This problem can be overcome by trying to provide enough information to the participant to encourage them to consider choosing between options themselves. However, this can make providing careers guidance for refugees and asylum seekers much more time-consuming than anticipated.

## **What unusual factors may influence the career decisions of refugees and asylum seekers?**

Many asylum seekers will have had to leave all their possessions and financial assets behind when fleeing from their country of origin. Even if they were able to arrange the sale of assets, such as homes or cars, before fleeing, the rushed sale and the unstable economic circumstances prevalent in war-torn or economically disrupted countries often make the proceeds worth little, especially if currency exchange rates reflect the turmoil in their home country. Consequently, the majority of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK are very economically disadvantaged, to the extent that this will impact on their career decisions.

Career development options such as unpaid voluntary work or study are often rejected by refugees and asylum seekers if taking them up would require giving up an offer of paid work, even if low-skilled and low-paid. Refugees and asylum seekers may also be supporting family members remaining in their country of origin, to the extent that the need to keep up remittances overshadows their freedom to take up anything other than immediately available paid work. Pressing short-term demands such as raising money for accommodation deposits and advance payments of rent may also cause immediate financial needs, rather than more long-term career considerations, to be at the forefront of their minds. For people in this situation, it helps to draw up both a short-term action plan to address their immediate need to find paid work and a more long-term plan to move them towards an appropriate career choice.

Some refugees and asylum seekers may wish to look at entirely different careers from their previous occupation, this change of direction coming about through a natural wish to diversify, through a wish to make a career change due to age, or as a reaction to their recent experience of having to seek asylum. However, it is important for them to be aware of the ramifications of this, as they may balk at the thought of several years of retraining, even if this can be undertaken alongside work and does not incur great financial expense.

For some individuals, the location of their work may be a major factor in their career choice: on gaining refugee status many people will want to be closer to friends or family members who have sought asylum in different locations in the UK. The need to move to or remain close to the few people they know in the UK can be uppermost in their mind, and can take precedence over career considerations. However, this can greatly restrict the options of refugees with professional expertise so it is helpful to bring up the issue of location very early in your career guidance discussions.

## **What skills do practitioners need to give guidance to asylum seekers and refugees?**

The personal skills of sensitivity, empathy, confidence, adaptability, leadership, good judgement and foresight needed by all careers advisors are obviously also needed when working with refugees and asylum seekers, as are excellent communication, research and negotiation skills.

Other skills required specifically for this type of specialist guidance work include an understanding of the circumstances of asylum seekers and refugees, a degree of cultural awareness and an up-to-date knowledge of provision and entitlements. It is very helpful to be able to adapt careers resources designed to meet the needs of the UK population in general to the needs of refugees and asylum seekers. It is also very helpful to have an interest in finding sources of funding to enable refugees and asylum seekers to access provision which they otherwise

would find prohibitively expensive. Practitioners who possess the self-confidence and advocacy skills to challenge barriers to participation can dramatically enhance the range of provision accessible to asylum seekers. The ability to motivate people is crucial, as there are often times when progress becomes so difficult that without encouragement and support people will fall away from programme activities they were undertaking.

Many refugees and asylum seekers have experienced traumatic events, memories of which can be triggered unexpectedly, therefore the ability to comfort people in distress is helpful. Because of this, it is essential to consider the emotional impact, as well as the practical careers considerations, of your suggestions and actions on the participant prior to each stage of the careers guidance process.

## What are the practical considerations when providing careers guidance for refugees and asylum seekers?

Because UK careers resources tend to be designed for people originating in the UK, and consequently often assume significant amounts of prior knowledge, sourcing information and effectively explaining it to refugees and asylum seekers is crucial. Resources aimed at young people in the UK are less likely to assume prior knowledge and so can be very helpful for refugees and asylum seekers of all ages. Whilst providing careers guidance on the ASSET UK programme, we found the *Connexions Occupations Manual* indispensable because it provided an in-depth introduction to occupations in the UK. The manual information on prospects, pay and conditions for each occupation was especially helpful when providing guidance for refugees and asylum seekers whose difficult financial circumstances cause them to have to take time and cost considerations very seriously. The 'Occupations' section on late entry is also very helpful, as some refugees and asylum seekers may wish or have to consider alternative careers and as a result be somewhat older than the average UK entrants to these occupations.

Naturally, some refugees and asylum seekers are not at all sure of the career they would like to pursue in the UK, in which case spending some time discussing their

thoughts about their previous occupations and activities may help in identifying their underlying motivations. For participants who had little choice in their vocational occupation in their country of origin, enthusiasm for leisure interests and any community-based pursuits can be very helpful in identifying motivations. After these initial discussions we have sometimes used the contents list of the 'Occupations' manual and asked individuals to score each section in terms of how much they would like to work in that field. This scoring, and the discussions during it, really helps in eliminating occupational groups if nothing else. In a minority of cases an asylum seeker or refugee genuinely struggles to choose between different occupations and will request information on many of them. Providing guidance for these participants can become very time consuming, as they almost certainly will need considerable explanations alongside the information for each of these occupations.

It is vital to give refugees and asylum seekers time to consider and explore occupations, as the impact of no or little prior UK occupational awareness will often mean a huge amount of information has to be considered by them before any decisions can be made. They may also wish to consult with friends and family about the implications of their careers choice and, because these people may not be to hand, several weeks may pass while consultations take place. Occasionally, however, friends and family can misinform refugees and asylum seekers, so it is helpful to ascertain any influences or suggestions given to a refugee or asylum seeker during or before careers guidance.

As with people originating in the UK, career decisions are actually often not firmed up until activities related to the career have been experienced. Therefore a natural next stage would be to try to arrange activities related to their new career choice or activities that will help them reorientate their original occupation to UK requirements.

**CASE STUDY FOR SELDA**

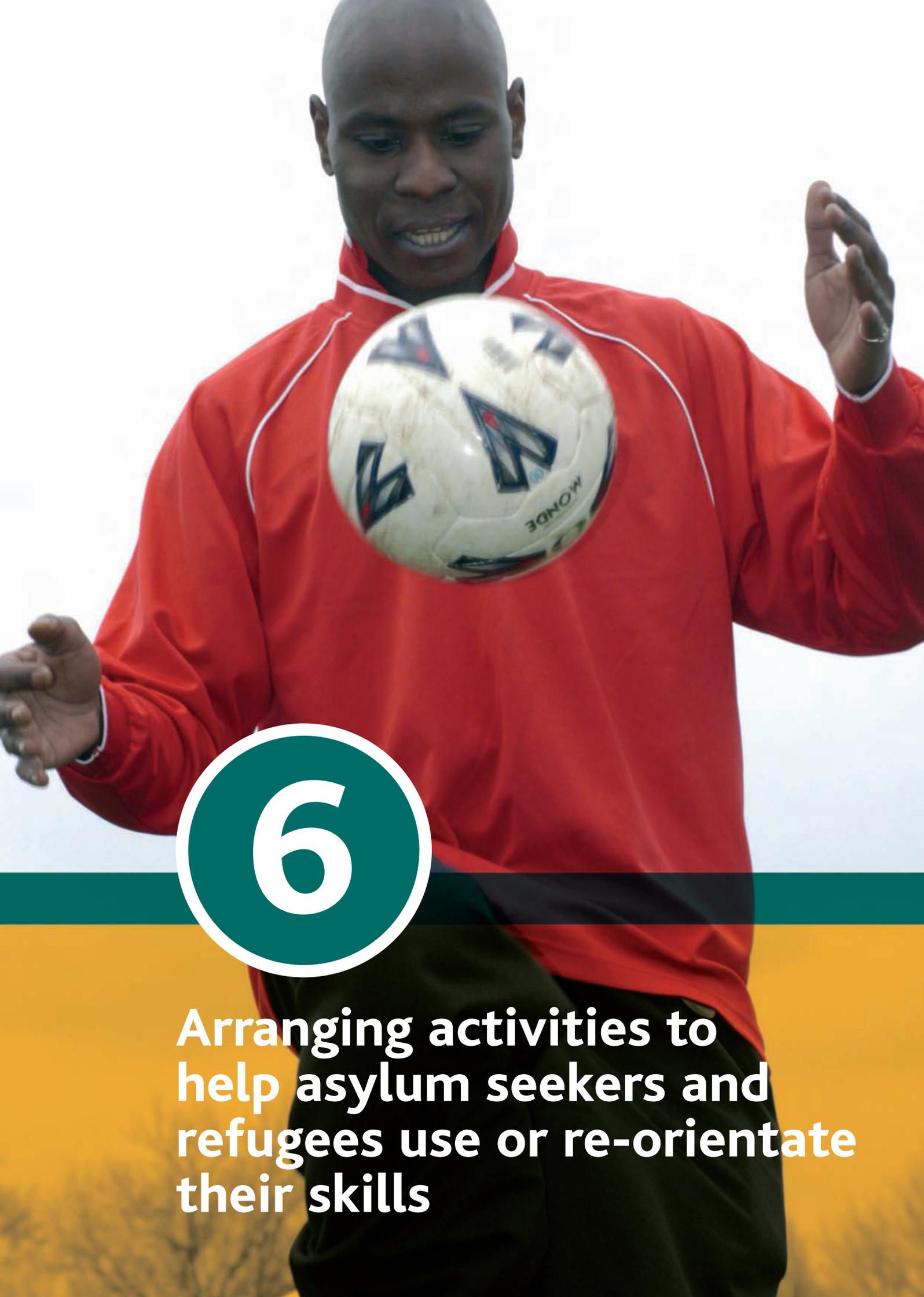
*Selda, from Turkey, joined the ASSET UK project to seek help to try to access more hours of ESOL as she felt her current course, which offered 9 hours per week, was not adequate.*



*As well as helping her to find further ESOL provision, the project was also able to complete a full skills audit and provide careers guidance. Selda had previously worked in financial administration in the banking industry and was keen to return to this or a related field. She chose accountancy as a new career as this offers a career progression based on a succession of part-time qualifications which can be undertaken alongside work up to and including Level 4, all within the FE sector.*

*She began an AAT foundation/intermediate combined full-time one-year course and obtained refugee status whilst undertaking this course. This required Selda to apply for Jobseeker's Allowance as her NASS support was terminated on gaining refugee status. Jobcentreplus kindly overlooked the fact that the course was over 16 hours per week and she succeeded in gaining the AAT intermediate qualification, moving on to the AAT technician (Level 4) course the following academic year.*





6

**Arranging activities to help asylum seekers and refugees use or re-orientate their skills**



## Why are skills reorientation activities helpful?

After undertaking a skills audit and receiving careers advice, many asylum seekers and refugees will need to undertake reorientation activities to align their skills to UK occupational methods and working environments. Without skills reorientation they can be very disadvantaged in the labour market. Reorientation activities can also address skills gaps and can be an excellent means for asylum seekers and refugees to become socially integrated.

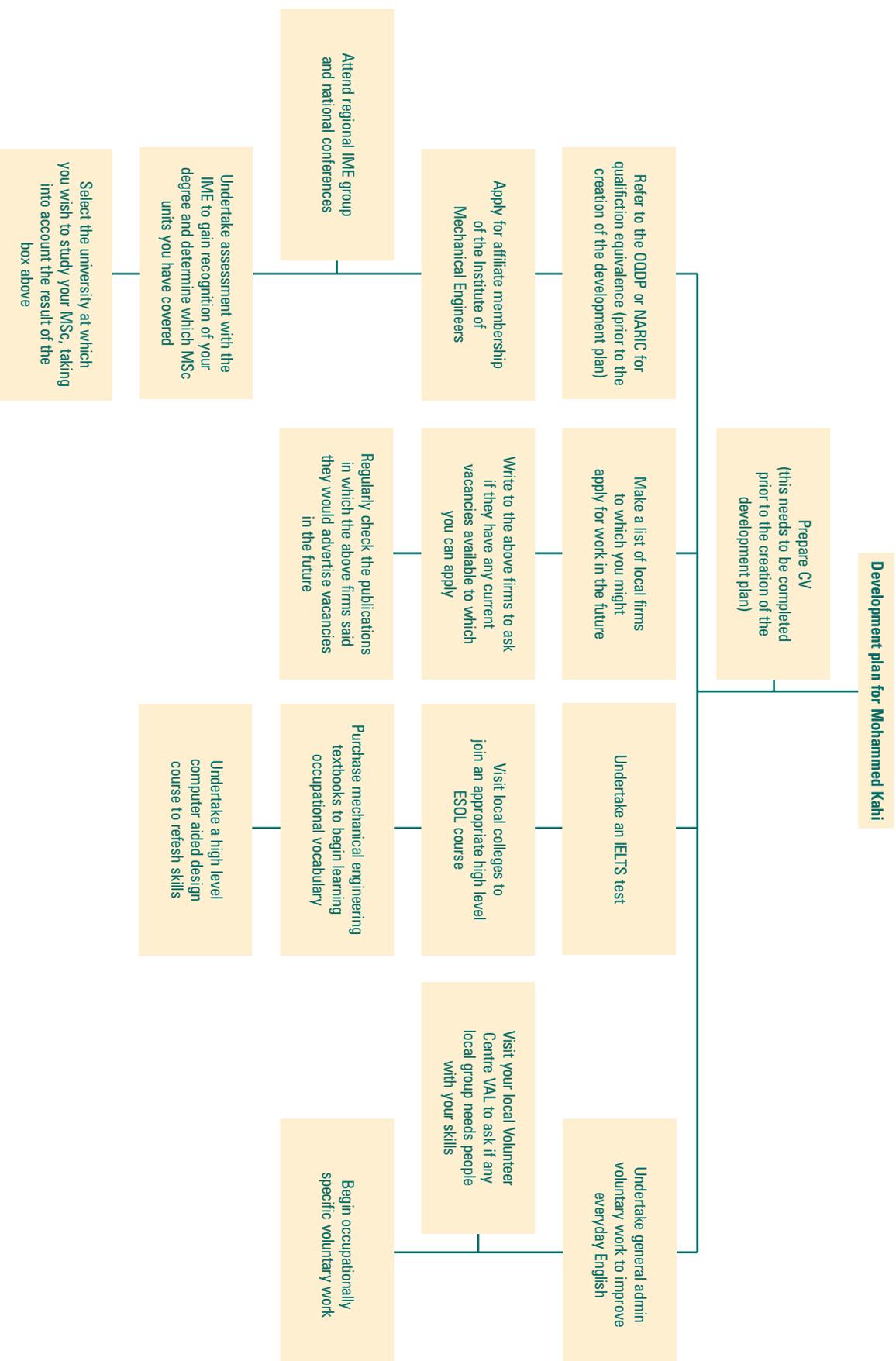
## Can action planning help illustrate the way forward?

On making a career decision, an asylum seeker or refugee will often need help to identify a route to achieve the take-up of, or return to, their chosen occupation. Action planning is therefore very helpful, especially as a written plan can be returned to if the individual is temporarily distracted from career development, as often will be the case for refugees and asylum seekers because of their difficult and changeable circumstances. The skills audit proforma has sections on aspirations, barriers and next steps, which can form a framework for action planning.

A flow diagram is a helpful way of displaying the plan, each box consisting of a specific, required activity, with subsequent boxes building on the achievement of the preceding one. This enables activities to be synchronised and sequenced, ensuring that the participant does not miss out some fundamental development which could otherwise hold up other activities.

The action plan in the example overleaf is grouped into four lines of activities relating to occupational recognition, job search, English language and work experience. However, other strands could be added, such as education needs and networking. If helpful, estimated timescales could be added to the plan to provide targets and an indication of likely progress in a certain time period across several strands.

## Demonstration development plan for a refugee mechanical engineer



## What support is a refugee or asylum seeker likely to need to arrange reorientation activities?

Refugees or asylum seekers are likely to need significant support to help them access beneficial activities. This support is more closely related to personal advisor support than careers guidance, as it is more geared to actioning an already identified career pathway. Whatever the activity, the support needed is likely to include:

- Identifying suitable and convenient activities from prospectuses, brochures and other marketing materials.
- Going through preparations for interviews.
- Discussing transport arrangements.
- Identifying alternative more effective means of achieving the same results.
- Helping complete written documents such as application forms and letters.
- Making complicated phone enquiries.
- Explaining complex entitlement regulations.
- Identifying how to overcome difficulties along the way.
- Helping source financial assistance, such as learner support funds, charitable support and discretionary funds.

## CASE STUDY FOR KHALED

*Khaled had been studying computing at university in Morocco when he fled to the UK. The skills audit ascertained that he possessed a diploma in communications technology equivalenced to Level 3 in UK terms. He also had several years' part-time experience as a computer engineer.*



*During the careers-guidance stage, Khaled said he was keen to develop his hardware engineering skills, and we identified a PC hardware and maintenance course for him at Leicester College, assisting him further by providing the materials and exam fees required and helping him during the enrolment process. The project worker also contacted an environmental charity to see if they could provide an opportunity for him to assist with the computer recycling work they undertook.*

*Khaled's CV reassured the charity's manager that Khaled had significant IT skills and an interview was arranged. Following the interview and a trial day, he was taken on as a regular volunteer, the ASSET UK project providing his lunch expenses and a bicycle to help him go to both college and his voluntary work.*

*The opportunity to undertake voluntary work related to his skills was vital in enabling Khaled to reorientate his skills and develop the occupational English language skills to enable him to function effectively in a UK workplace. As a result of Khaled introducing a new technical development to the charity, they were able to recycle 33 per cent more computers, which were previously having to be dumped – so the charity benefited greatly from having provided this volunteering opportunity.*

## What kind of ongoing support is helpful?

Once provision has been established, many asylum seekers and refugees will happily pursue their reorientation activities without any problems. However, some people will need further support. The level of this further support will tend to be much lower than that for previous interventions on their behalf, such as the skills audit, careers guidance and activity arrangement. Further support might be provided in the form of regular reviews, which can also pick up developing issues that may be more significant than the asylum seeker or refugee realises. Regular reviews also provide an opportunity to track outcomes and monitor provision if this is required by your organisation.

Common problems arising during activities are:

- Unanticipated costs such as exam fees, materials and equipment costs.
- Changing eligibility, for better or worse.
- Changing transport needs due to NASS relocation, or relocation following the granting of refugee status.
- Illness causing attendance difficulties.
- New and better opportunities becoming available.
- Despair following a final negative decision.
- Provider organisation changes which impact on the activity provision.

Unfortunately, problems which occur during the activity stage are often not easily solved and are likely to be out of your immediate control. Therefore, support at this stage often involves advocacy on behalf of the asylum seeker or refugee rather than direct involvement.





7

**Barriers to undertaking  
skills reorientation  
and how to overcome them**



The majority of refugees and asylum seekers will experience barriers to participating in and achieving success in educational pursuits, volunteering and work experience. However, personal advisor support can provide the means to overcome some of these. Where there are seemingly insurmountable barriers, action plans can at least identify possible future actions in the hope that in time an initial barrier will be overcome (many barriers facing asylum seekers will disappear once they are granted refugee status). From our work in the East Midlands we have identified the following groupings of barriers that prevent or hinder asylum seekers and refugees from achieving their aspirations and fulfilling their potential:

- Barriers in accessing education
- Occupational barriers
- Barriers due to restrictions
- Barriers due to ill-health

## Barriers in accessing education

Apart from some specialist vocational training courses, such as PGCE teacher training, and courses which involve a job as a prerequisite, such as apprenticeships, asylum seekers are not prohibited from joining courses. It is the level of course fees or ineligibility for learner-support funds which act as the barrier.

- Universities often categorise asylum seekers as overseas students and therefore charge asylum seekers overseas student fee levels, which are four times or more the home student fee level, and consequently prohibitively expensive for the vast majority of asylum seekers. Universities may use their discretion to offer asylum seekers the opportunity to undertake courses at home student fees, but this only happens in a minority of cases, occasionally a three-year residence requirement being imposed (this three-year rule being adopted from rules which are meant for refugees with forms of temporary

leave to remain). Hence, very few asylum seekers are therefore able to pursue higher education studies.

- Although, thankfully, LSC funding for tuition fees on further education courses is available for asylum seekers on a means-tested benefit such as NASS support or social services support, people who have chosen not to take up NASS support or have been denied this support are not eligible for LSC funding for tuition fees.
- Learner support funds are not available to asylum seekers on vocational courses, leaving them with no financial help with transport, childcare and materials costs. This discriminates against the very poorest asylum seekers and those with extra needs, such as single parents or people with disabilities who have mobility difficulties.
- The complexity of systems to join FE and HE provision in the UK is especially daunting for asylum seekers as they may lack confidence, be unfamiliar with admissions systems, have language difficulties and be expected to provide extra documentation describing their identity, and status. Even if eligible, many asylum seekers are hampered and in some cases put off accessing education.
- Some education providers fail to recognise the level of qualifications and experience gained overseas and are apt to enrol an asylum seeker on an inappropriately low-level course.

## How can personal advisor support help asylum seekers overcome barriers in accessing education?

- A professionally created CV, a NARIC assessment and practical skills assessments can all help ensure that an asylum seeker or refugee enrolls on the appropriate level of course.
- Support can be provided in helping the people navigate complex admissions procedures either by accompanying them to the various enrolment events and interviews or by preparing them in advance of these taking place.
- Help can be provided in completing applications forms, especially those, like UCAS, that require lengthy personal statements.
- If funds are available they can be provided as needed, to cover the small amounts of expenditure that can be significantly problematic because of the very low incomes of asylum seekers. It is doubtful that any programme could provide the level of funds needed to meet the overseas student fees that are often charged for higher education. However, a letter of support can be written on behalf of the asylum seeker with a request to the university to use its discretion to offer the course at home student fee level.

**CASE STUDY FOR SARAH**

*Sarah joined the ASSET UK project shortly after dispersal to Leicester. She had had to leave her law degree studies prematurely after she and her family were imprisoned in Rwanda, following which she sought asylum in the UK.*



*After the skills audit and during careers guidance, Sarah asked if it might be possible for her to resume her law studies in the UK. ASSET UK helped Sarah to apply through UCAS, in the hope that any university offering her a place would be able to use their discretion to offer her the course for home fees rather than charging overseas students fees, which would be prohibitively expensive.*

*Sarah was very pleased to be offered a place on a Law with French LLB course and although no answer had been received to her enquiry about the fees level she began the course in September. She studied very hard during the first year but it looked increasingly as though the university might not be able to offer her the course at home fee level, in which case Sarah would have to abandon her studies once again. However, in June, just before a final decision was to be given on the fee level, Sarah was granted refugee status and in light of this the university agreed to charge Sarah home student fees for the whole duration of her course.*

**CASE STUDY FOR MUHAMMED**

*Muhammed from Algeria joined the ASSET UK project specifically hoping to access help with his transport costs to enable him to attend ESOL classes and be more mobile generally.*

*He had a prosthetic leg which enabled him to walk short distances relatively easily. However, he*

*lived over two miles away from his college and walking this distance each day caused soreness and ulceration where the prosthetic leg joined his body. As he was ineligible for LSC learner support funds, and the college discretionary fund was exhausted, the college was unable to help financially toward a bus pass. The ASSET UK project purchased this for him.*

*The bus pass, although primarily a student concession, enabled Muhammed to access the city centre and shopping areas between his home and the college. As he also volunteered for a local charity during the summer ASSET UK was also able to justify purchasing a bus pass for him during the months that were not covered by the student bus pass.*



## Occupational barriers

Many asylum seekers are highly skilled but experience great difficulties when trying to return to their profession or skilled occupation in the UK. It is justified for professional organisations to try to maintain standards and competence levels by insisting that all new practitioners within the UK meet certain levels of English capability, theoretical knowledge and practical expertise. However, the barriers described here are not related to capability:

- The cost of registering and undertaking registration assessments can be prohibitively expensive, especially when significant study is required. The costs of books, travel to assessment centres and exam fees can be considerable. Loss of earnings whilst undertaking compulsory professional internships can also cause difficulties.
- There is a severe shortage of organisations able to give the specialist occupationally specific careers guidance required by asylum seekers and refugees. The costs of travel to receive advice from those that do exist is often prohibitively high. Dispersal to remote areas within the UK can make it almost impossible for asylum seekers and refugees to access such organisations. After having identified the appropriate career reorientation activities required, if dispersed to remote areas, it is very hard to access these as they tend to be only available in large urban areas
- Lack of recognition of overseas qualifications, even after NARIC assessment, can cause considerable problems. Refugees and asylum seekers also have considerable problems if their skills are gained through a system based on work experience rather than through the kind of qualification-based system that operates in the UK, as although they may be highly skilled their qualifications may not be at the level required by UK professional bodies.
- All UK professions which involve working with vulnerable groups require Criminal Records Bureau checks, which can be very difficult to undertake for asylum seekers and refugees owing to documentation requirements and the difficulty in getting cooperation from overseas organisations.

- Although general ESOL courses are reasonably widely available, occupational ESOL provision is rare. Where occupational ESOL courses are developed they are often the result of short-term projects and rarely become mainstreamed.
- UK-based work experience is very helpful in reorientating the skills of asylum seekers and refugees to UK methods. However, the availability of such work experience placements is very limited. Even within the voluntary sector, the number of placements which can help a participant learn English terminology or reorientate practical skills is very low, as many volunteering opportunities are designed primarily to benefit the voluntary sector organisation rather than the volunteer.
- Unfamiliarity with UK employers' expectations, application systems and the latest UK occupational developments greatly disadvantages refugees and asylum seekers seeking employment. The absence of a network of occupational contacts also greatly disadvantages them, especially in the private sector where fewer vacancies are advertised and many are heard about only through informal networks.
- Many refugees will need to claim Jobseeker's Allowance on gaining refugee status. However, this is not straight forward because Jobseeker's Allowance is primarily designed to encourage people to take up employment when offered, and expects a claimant to be fully available for work. Undertaking work experience and full-time education can temporarily make a refugee unavailable for work and so result in Jobseeker's Allowance being suspended.

## How can personal advisor support help asylum seekers overcome occupational barriers?

- Following a skills audit coupled with a NARIC assessment of all relevant qualifications it will be much clearer how and what level to engage with the professional regulatory bodies.
- Personal advisor's support following a skills audit can be invaluable in identifying the appropriate professional regulatory body.
- Small amounts of funding provided by skills auditing programmes can go a long way to enable a refugee or asylum seeker to meet many of the requirements set by professional bodies. Where large expenses are encountered, letters of support can help in seeking reduced fee levels.
- Staff on skills audit programmes may be able to identify work experience placements which otherwise would be impossible for refugees or asylum seekers to find without support. Staff can also develop or facilitate access to short courses to help the refugee or asylum seeker to gain familiarity with UK employer's expectations and UK application systems.
- Locally negotiated flexibility with Jobcentreplus in the application of employment availability requirements for people on Jobseeker's Allowance can be extremely helpful in giving a refugee a window of opportunity to undertake reorientation activities such as work experience or full time study.

**CASE STUDY FOR PETER**

*Peter, a highly qualified and experienced research scientist, joined the ASSET UK project in 2003. During his academic career, Peter had written numerous academic papers and held several university posts. However, on completing a PhD at a UK university he was unable to return home to Sudan due to the ongoing conflict there.*



*The initial skills auditing stages of Peter's ASSET UK programme were very straightforward as he already had a superb CV and an understanding of UK research. We ascertained early on that the project could best help Peter by trying to arrange voluntary work at a local university to keep his practical skills fresh and to keep up to date with developments in his field.*

*During our career guidance discussions, Peter mentioned that Africa has very limited scope, owing to lack of financial resources, to provide university staff with knowledge of and access to molecular biology techniques. We suggested that Peter phone local universities to ask if an introductory course in molecular biology was available. Initially we had disappointing results; however, shortly afterwards Peter contacted several universities further away and was offered the opportunity to undertake, as an 'occasional student', the molecular biology modules of a Biology BSc degree at a cost of £90 per module.*

*This university's offer to treat Peter as an occasional student at a very reasonable cost was the very best outcome we could have hoped for.*

*Peter joined the molecular genetics and virology course and two molecular biology modules, with course costs and transport being covered by ASSET UK.*

*Peter's dispersal by NASS to the East Midlands could have resulted in him losing touch with his scientific career as all his UK science contacts were based in London, so the opportunity to undertake some further studies whilst awaiting the outcome of his asylum claim was very helpful.*

## Barriers due to restrictions

Restrictions on the activities of asylum seekers have increased over the last few years, and these have had a negative impact on their participation in employment reorientation.

The restrictions affecting asylum seekers include:

- Withdrawal of the concession of permission to work (2002) prevents the majority of asylum seekers from finding paid employment, which for many asylum seekers prior to 2002 provided the best environment in which to reorientate their careers and develop their verbal English skills ahead of gaining refugee status.
- The limitations on the nature of organisations in which voluntary work can be undertaken prevents many asylum seekers from undertaking UK work experience related to their previous occupation, as their occupational field may not take place in the charitable sector.
- NASS dispersal to locations in the UK where an asylum seeker's skills are not required and the subsequent area-restricted provision of housing assistance for refugees can prevent a refugee ever returning to their occupation as they have to choose between a home in the area to which they were originally dispersed or their career in a location where their skills are required, but where no housing assistance is available.

## How can personal advisor support help asylum seekers overcome barriers due to restrictions?

- A skills audit may identify skills possessed by an asylum seeker which are in short supply and of importance to the UK, in which case permission to work for them could be sought by their solicitor by applying to the Home Office.
- Discussions during the skills audit provide an opportunity to inform an asylum seeker about the UK locations in which their skills will be in demand. Without this, on gaining refugee status people can search for years in vain locally for job vacancies related to their skills just because no one let them know that the majority of organisations requiring their skills were located elsewhere in the UK.

**CASE STUDY FOR AHMED**

*Prior to having to seek asylum in the UK, Ahmed was a highly qualified and experienced academic from Iraq who had worked across the Middle East. On being referred to the ASSET UK project and completing the skills audit, the project officer approached several universities to try to arrange an opportunity for Ahmed to volunteer within higher education, but had little success.*



*However, during the careers guidance stage Ahmed showed interest in gaining up-to-date knowledge of UK adult teaching techniques, and chose to undertake the City and Guilds 7407 part 1 and 2 adult teaching qualification. Whilst studying this at a local college, he undertook teaching practice in the ESOL department and, as there was a local shortage of ESOL tutors, he was asked if he would like to apply for a vacancy available at the college the following academic year.*

*Ahmed was keen to apply for this vacancy but had to first apply for permission to work from the Home Office. With the college's support permission to work was granted and Ahmed began work as a part-time ESOL lecturer the following year. Having been granted refugee status he hopes to apply shortly for academic positions within UK universities, his UK teaching experience hopefully enhancing his chances of succeeding in returning to work in higher education.*

## Barriers due to ill-health

Fleeing one's home country can be a particularly traumatic experience. In many cases asylum seekers have experienced torture and abuse, and have endured a difficult journey from their homeland. Once in the UK, many asylum seekers face further demands and stresses, particularly from being separated from spouse, children, and other family members, and in many cases from an inability to contact them for long periods of time and so remaining unaware of their situation in their home country. Not surprisingly this can all lead to mental and physical ill health which can in turn lead to extra barriers being faced:

- Application forms often request information about the applicant's health, illness preventing access to some occupations altogether.
- Periodic ill-health and medical treatment can prevent participation in career reorientation activities which require sustained attendance.
- Depression, which is common in asylum seekers, will often leave a person feeling helpless and demotivated, and so unable to face a sometimes challenging period of career reorientation.
- The need to remain located close to medical services can restrict mobility on gaining refugee status.

## How can personal advisor support help asylum seekers overcome barriers due to ill health?

- Although not able to help directly with physical health difficulties, personal advisors can increase participants' sense of well-being and optimism. The skills audit interview can be a very positive experience as it enables people to reflect on their previous experience and achievements. Careers guidance can also be helpful in mapping out a promising future for people, as can the activity stage in providing a positive distraction from problems and an enjoyable activity to pursue.

## CASE STUDY FOR REENA

*Reena was referred to the ASSET UK project by social services following very difficult circumstances and delays in her asylum application.*

*After seeking asylum from India in 1997 she had received several negative decisions,*



*culminating in her being taken into a detention centre for several weeks in preporatory for deportation. Having subsequently been given permission to appeal, Reena was understandably shaken and depressed on her release from the detention centre.*

*Social services felt that the ASSET UK project could help by providing her with a positive focus and encouraging her to consider some activities to take her mind off her problems. Following a skills audit and careers guidance, Reena, although highly qualified in languages, said she would enjoy learning beauty therapy and hairdressing techniques. The project arranged for her to visit a college and she enrolled on a part-time NVQ2 course.*

*Reena needed financial help, however, as although she was eligible for LSC funding for tuition fees she was not eligible for LSC learner support funds. So the ASSET UK project provided the funds to cover the special clothing and shoes required, and the college covered the cost of the exam fees and equipment costs from its discretionary fund.*

*Reena achieved her NVQ level 2 and is now undertaking NVQ level 3. Having recently been granted indefinite leave to remain, she hopes to establish her own beauty therapy salon on completing her course.*

*The therapeutic value of undertaking learning during unsettling circumstances was very apparent for Reena as even before her asylum claim was decided, there was a significant improvement in her outlook, which she ascribed to having undertaken the course and made many friends as a result.*





# Appendix

## Appendix 1: The skills audit proforma

### SKILLS AUDIT QUESTIONNAIRE

#### PERSONAL DETAILS

NAME:

ASSET UK NO.:

ARC NO.:

TELEPHONE NO.(S):

EMAIL ADDRESS:

DATE OF ARRIVAL IN UK:

REFERRED FROM:

## Work experience

(All occupations including any secondary ones – most recent first)

Job title	Duties and responsibilities	Location	Employer	Dates

Additional information:

## Education and training

Job title	Years of study	Subjects/ modules	Qualifications	Where?	Other information
Primary					
Secondary					
Higher					
Vocational (incl. work based training)					
Adult education (incl. ESOL and IT)					

Certificates available? Yes / No

Which certificates?

## Other life skills/experiences



## Language Skills

(List competency of all languages used in the following areas)

Speaking/understanding:

Reading/writing:

Fluent in English? Yes/No

## Aspirations



## Perceived barriers



## Next steps

(including career options in the UK, placement/learning support required/desired in the UK etc.)



## Outcomes/actions



APPENDICES

PROJECT WORKER SIGNATURE:

CLIENT SIGNATURE:

DATE:

## Appendix 2: Bueno's CV

### Bueno Lgumbwe

32 Rushville Drive  
 Nottingham  
 NG1 5GG  
 Mob. 0798 6473662  
 Tel. 01325 447538

### PERSONAL PROFILE

A capable, hardworking and trustworthy individual with sales and management experience. Able to communicate well with others and work as part of a team. Adaptable and hardworking

### KEY SKILLS

- Farm management expertise
- Staff supervision experience
- Financial management experience
- Possesses effective communication skills.
- IT literate with a working knowledge of Word 2000, Excel and Access
- Good organisational and time-management skills
- Able to speak 5 languages.

### CAREER HISTORY

#### 1979–1996 **Bueno Farm, Grudi, D.R.Congo, Self-employed livestock Farmer**

- Owned and managed a farm covering 5000 hectares with responsibilities including:
- managing 60 staff (including veterinary staff, managers and workers);
- organising the efficient running of the farm;
- marketing and promoting the farm to people in the local area and beyond;
- dealing with all the finance associated with running a large farm;
- collecting and banking cheques from customers;
- liaising with customers.

In 1996 the entire livestock herd of the farm was slaughtered by soldiers, after which Bueno was forced to flee to another part of the country. Between 2000 and 2002 began to start again on the farm, but was forced to flee again in October 2002.

- 1976–1979**      **Bueno Trading, Grudi, D.R. Congo, Retail Market Trader**  
Involved purchasing goods in bulk and selling in rural areas.  
**Also involved:**
- keeping records of transactions;
  - monitoring price changes and responding to changing economic conditions;
  - marketing and advertising.
- 1975–1976**      **Bulo Wholesale, Grudi, D.R. Congo, Wholesale Company Salesperson**  
Began working as an apprentice but was promoted to a sales position within one year. The work involved:
- customer service and cash handling;
  - banking cheques and taking customer payments;
  - liaising with delivery staff and processing orders.

## EDUCATION & TRAINING

- 2002–2003**      **Fern Training Centre, Derby**  
Initial computer training  
ESOL level 1
- 1970–1975**      **Bulo Educational Institute, Grudi, D.R. Congo**  
Achieved the D4 Certificate which involved studies in Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, French, Agricultural Studies and English language

## OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- Speaks 6 languages, including English, French, Swahili, Lingala, Luganda, Kinyarwanda.
- From 2000 until 2002, Chair of a primary school parents' committee

## INTERESTS

Enjoys watching football, keeping fit and reading.

## DATE OF BIRTH

06.07.1957

References available on request.

## Appendix 3: Skills audit for Mayet

### ASSET UK SKILLS AUDIT QUESTIONNAIRE

#### PERSONAL DETAILS

NAME:	MAYET SHARIB
ASSET UK NO.:	LE0100
ARC NO.:	IFBO2/045738/G
TELEPHONE NO.(S):	0116 2254680/ 07759353973
EMAIL ADDRESS:	mayetsharib@hotmail.com
DATE OF ARRIVAL IN UK:	04/06/00
REFERRED FROM:	REFUGEE HOUSING

## Work experience

(All occupations including any secondary ones – most recent first)

Job title	Duties and responsibilities	Location	Employer	Dates
Volunteer Accounts Assistant	Maintaining purchase and sales ledgers, providing remittances and remedial actions. Liaising with staff to resolve queries and undertaking general administration tasks	Leicester	Raycam	2003
Joint Finance Secretary	Maintaining accounts for a community organisation, managing covenants and submitting completed accounts to the head office	Leicester	Dresalaam Association	2003
Sales Manager	Managing the Sales Department staff, responsible for determining sales targets and monitoring performance, marketing and sales strategies, attending conferences and sales events, coordinating distributor's sales activities	Islamabad, Pakistan	B and G Company	1996–1999
Bank Operations MBA Training Placement	Spent two months observing the workings of the treasury and accounts department	Islamabad, Pakistan	Regional Bank Ltd	1996
Regional Development MBA Training Placement	Undertook a study on the dispersal of small enterprises in the rural areas of Guraj district	Islamabad, Pakistan	Guraj Financial Department	1995

Additional information:

## Education and training

Job title	Years of study	Subjects/ modules	Qualifications	Where?	Other information (including UK equivalences)
Primary	1978–1983	Mathematics, Urdu, Islamic studies, Art, music, Pakistan Studies	N/A	Federal Government Primary School P5/7, Islamabad, Pakistan	Primary
Secondary	1983–1988	Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology Pakistan Studies, English, Urdu, Islamic Studies	Secondary School Certificate	Federal Government Secondary School G-5/3, Islamabad, Pakistan	Secondary
Secondary Continued	1988–1990	Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Pakistan studies, English, Urdu, Islamic Studies	Higher Secondary Certificate	Federal Government H-7 College, Islamabad, Pakistan	Higher
Higher	1990–1993		BSc Double Mathematics and Physics	University of Islamabad, Islamabad, Pakistan	
Higher continued	1994–1996	Fundamentals of marketing, Marketing management, Research methods, Advertising and promotional strategies, Market research, International marketing, Cost accounting, Financial Analysis	MBA in Marketing and Finance	Islamabad University, Islamabad, Pakistan	
Vocational (incl. work-based training) Adult Education (incl. ESOL and IT)	2003	Advanced Excel, Training in graphical representation	N/A	Raycam, Leicester	

Certificates available? Yes

Which certificates? All

## Other life skills/experiences

Has worked as a volunteer researcher for four years on behalf of a local organisation conducting interviews and writing reports

## Language Skills

(List competency of all languages used in the following areas)

Speaking/understanding: Urdu, Punjabi, understands Hindi

Reading/writing: Urdu, Punjabi

Fluent in English? No

## Aspirations

Mayet would like to undertake ACCA studies to qualify as an accountant in the UK

## Perceived barriers

The ACCA exams are costly (approximately £1700) even when studying by distance learning. Mayet will also require a substantial (approximately 18 months) work orientation placement or paid employment (if given permission to work) in a finance department to develop the skills required to undertake the ACCA exams. Organisations are likely to be able to offer a short work-orientation placement but will very rarely offer any of this duration. Mayet's English language level could cause added difficulty in finding a suitable placement opportunity.

## Next steps

(including career options in the UK, placement/learning support required/desired in the UK etc.)

For the ASSET UK project to try to seek an initial placement to enable Mayet to familiarise himself with UK accountancy procedures ahead of Mayet subsequently trying to find a larger placement suitable for the requirements of the ACCA training

## Outcomes/actions

Mayet was very lucky in that Raycam a local voluntary organisation was able to offer him an 18 month placement suitable to meet the requirements of the ACCA training following the initial placement arranged there by the ASSET project. Raycam also very kindly offered to pay the ACCA fees enabling Mayet to proceed towards his goals of gaining the ACCA professional accountancy exams.

APPENDICES

PROJECT WORKER SIGNATURE:

CLIENT SIGNATURE:

DATE:

## Appendix 4: Mayet's CV

### Mayet Sharib

8 Hill Road  
Braunstone  
Leicester  
LE3 0TY  
Tel. 0116 2254680  
Mob. 0775 9352973  
mayetsharib@hotmail.com

### PERSONAL PROFILE

A friendly and approachable person with good interpersonal skills. Efficient, organised and effective even under pressure. Shows commitment and enthusiasm and leads by example.

### KEY SKILLS

- Supervisory and departmental management experience
- Familiar with a wide range of performance measurement strategies
- Familiar with the full range of accountancy procedures
- Computer literate with a working knowledge of Word2000, Excel, Access and Powerpoint
- Familiar with the analysis of accounts statements to track departmental performance
- Networking and building business relationships

### WORK EXPERIENCE

#### 2003 Raycam, Leicester, Volunteer Accounts Assistant

Maintaining Purchase and Sales Ledgers, providing remittances and remedial actions. Liasing with staff to resolve queries and undertaking general administration tasks

#### 2003 Dresalaam Association, Leicester, Joint Finance Secretary

Maintaining accounts for a community organisation, managing covenants and submitting completed accounts to the head office

## EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

### 1996-1999 B and G Company, Islamabad, Pakistan, Sales Manager

Managing the sales department staff, responsible for determining sales targets and monitoring performance, marketing and sales strategies, attending conferences and sales events, coordinating distributor's sales activities

### 1996 Regional Bank Ltd., Islamabad, Pakistan, Bank Operations

#### MBA Training Placement

Spent two months observing the workings of the Treasury and Accounts Department.

### 1995 Guraj financial Department, Islamabad, Pakistan, Regional Development MBA Training Placement

Undertook a study on the dispersal of small enterprises in the rural areas of Guraj District.

## EDUCATION

2003

### Raycam, Leicester

Advanced Excel training in graphical representation

1994-1996

### Islamabad University, Islamabad, Pakistan

MBA in Marketing and Finance covering:

- Fundamentals of marketing
- Marketing management including a project on small business start-ups
- Research methods and report writing
- Advertising and promotional strategies including a project developing the Indus Motor Company Ltd. marketing plan and advertising campaign
- Marketing research
- International marketing
- Cost accounting
- Analysis of financial statements

1990-1993

### University of Islamabad, Islamabad, Pakistan

BSc Double Mathematics and Physics

1988-1990

### Federal Government H-7 College, Islamabad, Pakistan

Higher Secondary Certificate including studies in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Pakistan studies, English, Urdu, Islamic studies

**1983-1988**      **Federal Government Secondary School G-5/3,  
Islamabad, Pakistan**  
Secondary School Certificate including Mathematics, Physics,  
Chemistry, Biology, Pakistan studies, English, Urdu, Islamic  
studies

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Worked as a volunteer researcher for 4 years on behalf of a local organisation conducting interviews and writing reports

### **INTERESTS**

Enjoys playing football, driving, reading books on sociology and economics, meeting people and socialising .

### **DATE OF BIRTH**

17/10/1972

References available on request.

## Appendix 5: glossary of terms

<b>Asylum seeker</b>	Someone who is fleeing persecution in their homeland and has arrived in another country, made themselves known to the authorities, exercising the legal right to apply for asylum.
<b>Discretionary Leave</b>	The Home Office grants discretionary leave to those who do not qualify for refugee status or humanitarian protection but cannot be removed due to a serious medical condition making travel or return dangerous, because removal would contravene their human rights, or other practical or legal obstacles. This is normally granted for a period of three years. Those with discretionary leave will also have full access to mainstream welfare and employment during the period of protection.
<b>Economic migrant</b>	Someone who has moved to another country to work.
<b>Exceptional Leave to Enter (ELE)</b>	This refers to the same status as ELR, however refers to individuals who applied for asylum at port.
<b>Exceptional Leave to Remain (ELR)</b>	Until April 2003, the Home Office granted ELR for asylum seekers who although had not been individually targeted for persecution, still faced danger if they were to return home. ELR was usually granted for a total of four years (one year initially, followed by a three-year extension). The individual could then apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) four years after being granted ELR.
<b>Failed asylum seeker</b>	Someone whose asylum application has been turned down and is awaiting return to their home country. If it is not safe for unsuccessful asylum seekers to return, they may have to stay for the time being.

<b>Humanitarian Protection (HP)</b>	From April 2003, the Home Office has granted HP in place of ELR to those who fail to qualify for asylum but who can demonstrate they have protection needs including a real risk of death, torture, or other inhumane or degrading treatment, which falls outside the strict terms of the 1951 Refugee Convention.
<b>Illegal immigrant</b>	Someone who has arrived in another country, intentionally and not made themselves known to the authorities such that they have no legal basis for being there.
<b>Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR)</b>	ILR allows permission to remain in the UK permanently.
<b>Refugee</b>	Someone whose asylum application has been successful and is allowed to stay in another country having proved they would face persecution back in their homeland.

## Appendix 6: Acronyms

<b>AAT</b>	Association of Accounting Technicians
<b>APL</b>	Accreditation of Prior Learning
<b>ASSET UK</b>	Asylum Seeker's Skills, Empowerment and Training UK
<b>BSc</b>	Bachelor of Science
<b>CV</b>	Curriculum Vitae
<b>DWP</b>	The Department for Work & Pensions
<b>EMDA</b>	East Midlands Development Agency
<b>ESOL</b>	English for Speakers of Other Languages
<b>FE</b>	Further Education
<b>HE</b>	Higher Education
<b>IAG</b>	Information, advice and guidance
<b>JSA</b>	Job Seeker's Allowance
<b>LSC</b>	Learning and Skills Council
<b>NASS</b>	National Asylum Support Service A Home Office unit that provides support for asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute until their claims for asylum have been determined
<b>NIACE</b>	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education.
<b>NICEM</b>	The Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities
<b>NVQ</b>	National Vocational Qualification
<b>UCAS</b>	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
<b>UK NARIC</b>	UK NARIC is the national agency under contract to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) providing the official source of information and advice on the comparability of international qualifications from over 180 countries worldwide with qualifications in the UK
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom

## Appendix 7: useful contacts

### **Africa Educational Trust (AET) African Women's Access to Education and Training Project.**

[www.aet.refugeewomen.care4free.net](http://www.aet.refugeewomen.care4free.net)

### **British Medical Association (BMA)**

[www.bma.org.uk](http://www.bma.org.uk)

### **British Medical Association (BMA) Refugee Doctor Database.**

<http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/refugee+docs+-+about+database>

### **British Refugee Council**

[www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk)

### **Council for Assisting Refugee Academics (CARA)**

[www.academic-refugees.org](http://www.academic-refugees.org)

### **ECOTEC Equal**

[www.equal.ecotec.co.uk](http://www.equal.ecotec.co.uk)

### **Employability Forum**

[www.employabilityforum.co.uk](http://www.employabilityforum.co.uk)

### **The European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)**

ECRE is an umbrella organisation of 76 refugee-assisting agencies in 30 countries working towards fair and humane policies for the treatment of asylum seekers and refugees.

[www.ecre.org](http://www.ecre.org)

### **Equality Direct, Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)**

[www.equalitydirect.org.uk](http://www.equalitydirect.org.uk)

### **Home Office Immigration and Nationality Directorate**

[www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk)

### **Home Office National Refugee Integration Forum Subgroup on Adult Education, Training and Employment**

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)

### **ICAR**

This is an independent information centre that exists to promote understanding of asylum seekers and refugees in the UK.

[www.icar.org.uk](http://www.icar.org.uk)

### **Jobcentre Plus Refugees and Employment Pilot Project**

Email: [sue.coulwell@jobcentreplus.gov.uk](mailto:sue.coulwell@jobcentreplus.gov.uk)

[www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk)

### **Learndirect minority languages helpline**

[www.learndirect-advice.co.uk/featured/min](http://www.learndirect-advice.co.uk/featured/min)

### **National Academic Recognition Centre for the United Kingdom (UK NARIC)**

[www.naric.org.uk](http://www.naric.org.uk)

### **National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)**

[www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk)

**Praxis**

[www.praxis.org.uk](http://www.praxis.org.uk)

**Reed in Partnership**

[www.reedinpartnership.co.uk](http://www.reedinpartnership.co.uk)

**Refugee Access**

[www.refugeeaccess.info](http://www.refugeeaccess.info)

**Refugee Action**

Refugee Action is an independent national charity that provides advice and support to asylum seekers and refugees in 10 regions across England.

[www.refugee-action.org.uk](http://www.refugee-action.org.uk)

**Refugee Assessment & Guidance Unit (RAGU), London****Metropolitan University**

[www.londonmet.ac.uk/ragu](http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/ragu)

**Refugee Council and the British Dental Association Refugee Dentists database**

[www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/downloads/questionnaires/dentists\\_leaflet.pdf](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/downloads/questionnaires/dentists_leaflet.pdf)

**Refugee Education, Training and Advice Service (RETAS) Education Action International.**

RETAS is a division of Education Action International and supports the social and economic development of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK and at a European level by facilitating their access to education, employment and training opportunities

[www.education-action.org](http://www.education-action.org)

**Refugees into Jobs**

3–7 Lincoln Parade

Preston Road

Wembley

Middlesex

HA9 8UA

Tel: 0208 908 4433

Email: [pru@brent.gov.uk](mailto:pru@brent.gov.uk)

Royal College of Nursing

<http://www.rcn.org.uk/>

**Scottish Refugee Council**

[www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk)