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**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON**

**FACULTY OF LAW, ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

School of Social Sciences

**REFUGEE COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS: A SOCIAL CAPITAL ANALYSIS**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

July 2010

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON**

**ABSTRACT**

**FACULTY OF LAW, ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**REFUGEE COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS: A SOCIAL CAPITAL ANALYSIS**

By Alexa Kellow

This thesis considers how refugee-led community organisations generate social capital for their service users. The concept of social capital has become popular in policy debates in recent years, and previous research has attributed social capital creation for their service users to refugee community organisations (RCOs). This research aimed to analyse the process by which social capital is created by refugee community organisations, and what this means for the members of these organisations in terms of resources.

The potential of the current political and economic climate to affect individual asylum-seekers and refugees, and refugee community organisations is considered, with particular emphasis on the funding situation for RCOs.

Data was collected via an eight-month case study with an RCO for ethnic-Albanians in London. Interviews and focus groups with staff, volunteers and service users were held. To further understand the broader context in which RCOs are operating, interviews were also held with professionals that work with refugee community organisations, either as representatives of funding bodies, or as capacity-builders. A questionnaire survey of refugee community organisations with income over a certain threshold in London was also carried out in order to further contextualise the findings from the case study. Data from the researcher's observation journal, the interviews and focus groups was analysed using software Nvivo 8 software.

Woolcock's work on social capital was used in combination with Rex's typology of immigrant association functions. It was found that in the case study there was strong evidence of bonding and linking social capital. These social capital connections enabled service users to access a wide range of resources. There was less clear evidence of bridging social capital creation.

Data from interviews with professionals and the survey revealed that other RCOs work, or at least, aspire to work, in the same way as the case study RCO to create social capital for their service users. The case study also revealed that working in partnership with specialist agencies was key to the success of the RCO, a finding that was also supported by the other data. Finally, the research found that funding uncertainty is an ongoing difficulty for many RCOs.

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## Academic Thesis: Declaration Of Authorship

I, Alexa Kellow

declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

Refugee Community Organisations: A Social Capital Analysis

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. Either none of this work has been published before submission, or parts of this work have been published as: [please list references below]:

Signed: .....

Date: .....

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## **Abbreviations Used**

BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CB	Capacity-builder
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
CVS	Community Volunteers Service
DCLG	Department of Communities and Local Government
DWP	Department of Work and Pensions
EACO	Ethnic-Albanian Community Organisation (the name given to the case study RCO for this study)
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ECRE	European Council on Refugees and Exiles
ELR	Exceptional Leave to Remain
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
EU	European Union
F	Funder
ICAR	Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JRF	Joseph Rowntree Foundation
NAO	National Audit Office
NAM	New Asylum Model
NASS	National Asylum Support Service
NCVO	National Council for Voluntary Organisations
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OTS	Office of the Third Sector
RCO	Refugee Community Organisation
UK	United Kingdom
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VCO	Voluntary and Community Organisation
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector
VSU	Voluntary Services Unit

## **Introduction**

Asylum has become one of the most debated and controversial issues in the United Kingdom since the early 1990s. A rise in the number of asylum-seekers, which peaked at 44,480 in 1991 (Refugee Council, 2002:13), and again at 84,130 in 2002 (Home Office, 2008:26) is only part of the story. Despite a reduction in numbers seeking asylum to around 24,000 per year since 2005 (Home Office 2008:26; 2010:44), successive governments continued to legislate in order to tackle what is framed as a 'problem' both at the European Union and domestic levels. The issue is inextricably linked to issues of illegal immigration, terrorism, religious fundamentalism and international crime in the public imagination, and rarely discussed in relation to refugee-producing conflicts around the world. In this climate, public debates about asylum frequently reference wider concerns about multiculturalism and racial tensions, as well as concerns about benefits, jobs and access to public service.

Against this backdrop of a suspicious general public and often hostile press, successive governments have responded with unprecedented levels of legislation in this area. Since 1993 there have been six Acts passed in the area of asylum (often in combination with immigration legislation). Each act served to heighten restrictions on entry and to deter would be asylum-seekers with decreasing levels of entitlements and support. The impact of these legislative changes upon individuals seeking asylum has varied widely. Some categories of asylum-seeker, including those that were perceived as making asylum claims in the wrong way, those accused of breaking immigration laws, or applicants from countries to which they could not be returned, have been vulnerable to destitution. This is due to a combination of withdrawal of the right to work and an increasing number of rules such as those disqualifying people from receiving state support. There was scope for more and more people to be left without immigration status and without the means to support themselves.

Civil society responded in two ways to this situation, as Chapter 1 reviews. Lawyers and humanitarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) worked to combat restrictive interpretations of the Geneva Convention and to protect the human rights of asylum-seekers. At the same time, voluntary groups led by members of the public, often based in faith groups, worked to meet the needs of people rendered destitute by asylum policy.

Refugee community organisations (RCOs) also worked to meet the needs of refugees and asylum-seekers and are the focus of this research. Most importantly, given the new service delivery role assigned to them in reception policy after the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act, and the perceived importance of such organisations in social capital creation, this research focuses on whether RCOs create social capital for these vulnerable members of society. If it is found that a refugee's connection with an RCO does indeed represent social capital, how does this process work in practice, and what impact does broader asylum policy have on this process? These are the central questions of this work.

Social capital is relevant to the analysis of RCOs because it has become a popular concept amongst policy makers. Social capital has been perceived as beneficial to communities, and as a by-product of voluntary activity. In government discussion about social capital, definitions of the concept are indistinct. Recent government documents on local authority funding prioritises bridging over bonding social capital (DCLG, 2008a:8; DCLG, 2010:20). This is highly relevant to RCOs, who, in providing services to refugees and asylum-seekers on the basis of nationality or ethnicity, are likely to be primarily creators of bonding social capital, if indeed they do represent social capital to their service users.

At the same time that asylum became highly politicised, the voluntary sector in the United Kingdom was changing. The Conservatives in the 1990s, and then Labour from 1997, were keen to access what might be called the 'added-value' of the voluntary sector, namely their innovation, specialist knowledge and cost-effectiveness. Voluntary and charitable agencies were increasingly invited to work alongside the state, and in some local authorities, were consulted and involved in policy-making processes or delivery of services. Under Labour, funds were put into developing the capacity of the voluntary sector, which increasingly was not 'voluntary' in the strictest sense, but rather the 'third' sector, employing an estimated 739,000 people by 2009, which represented a 19% rise since 2004 (Booth, 2010:6).<sup>1</sup> The new status of the voluntary sector was enshrined in national and local Compact documents, which committed the government to working in partnership with the voluntary sector,

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<sup>1</sup> There are a number of different names for this sector. On the whole 'Voluntary and Community Sector' will be used, though the terms 'voluntary sector' and 'third sector' will also be used as they are present in the literature being reviewed. However, it is recognised that these terms can be seen to represent slightly different kinds of organisation, see Section 1.6.3. of Chapter 1.

whilst safeguarding its independence. Whether all parts of the voluntary or third sector are able to participate in this new governance is a relevant question to refugee community organisations. They tend to be small, local, refugee-led voluntary associations or charities. Services provided by refugee community organisations vary; depending on the needs of the community and the length of time that the population involved has been in the UK. Older refugee populations may use associations primarily for socialising, and as a site for sharing cultural traditions. Newer immigrant, and especially asylum-seeking, communities may contact organisations run by co-nationals for advice, information and even for essentials such as food or clothing in the climate of increasing destitution amongst asylum-seekers.

In order to consider whether refugee community organisations do represent a source of social capital for asylum-seekers and refugees, the researcher closely followed the work of a case study RCO in London. This charity provided advice, information and a range of cultural activities and services for ethnic-Albanians primarily from Kosovo and Albania. This organisation is referred to in this work as EACO. The researcher volunteered in the organisation whilst undertaking observation of their activities, staff and service users over a period of eight months. As well as participant-observation, semi-structured interviews with staff, volunteers and service users were carried out. Focus groups were also conducted with service users. To consider whether the findings of the case study reflected the experiences of other refugee community organisations, a small-scale survey of RCOs meeting certain income and charitable status criteria in London was conducted. Finally, to add to the understanding of the context in which EACO and other RCOs were operating, semi-structured interviews were conducted with professionals working with refugee-led organisations, either as capacity-builders or as funders.

An introduction to the politicisation of asylum, the resulting restrictive policies and the changing nature of the voluntary sector are discussed in Chapter 1. This contextualises the political and funding context in which organisations led by, and for, refugees and asylum-seekers are operating.

Chapter 2 reviews the use of social capital in social policy debates generally, and in relation to community cohesion. The approach to social capital that is most relevant will be

discussed after a brief review of other schools of thought. The focus here is on the work of Robert Putnam and Michael Woolcock and on bonding, bridging and linking forms of social capital. The work of John Rex on immigrant associations is also introduced as his typology of the five functions of immigrant associations forms the basis for later discussion of resources that result from the possession of social capital connections.

The decisions informing the collection of data, and the process of collection itself, are reviewed in the methodology in Chapter 3. The problems and opportunities involved with relatively long-term observation of EACO are also discussed.

Chapters 4 and 5 review the data collected in order to answer the research questions about the role of RCOs in social capital creation. The case study data on social capital and resources shows that EACO represents a successful organisation that offers bonding and linking social capital and associated resources to service users. The evidence on bridging social capital is less clear in relation to individual service users. Chapter 5 reviews these findings from EACO in combination with the data from the survey and interviews with capacity-builders and funders. Much of the survey and interview data confirms the findings of the case study that refugee community organisations have potential to be a valuable resource to service users, but that the role of committed staff and volunteers, and the role of organisational networks, are important components in this.

Funding is the focus of Chapter 6. For EACO, funding was an ongoing problem, and this appeared to be the case with a significant proportion of surveyed RCOs. Interviews with funders reveal that there are concerns about the level of professionalism amongst refugee-led organisations, but that primarily funders are concerned about the high numbers of RCOs and their long-term sustainability. Overall, whilst it appears that there are some trusts and foundations that remain committed to supporting RCOs, future funding is potentially threatened by competition between different RCOs, competition between RCOs and larger mainstream charities, and a national government agenda that emphasises cohesion over single-issue funding.



## **Chapter 1 – Asylum Policy in the UK and the Voluntary Sector Context**

### **Introduction**

To understand the current context in which refugee community organisations (RCOs) are operating, immigration and asylum policy in the recent past is reviewed, including an analysis of how the issue became politicised. Restrictive policies of containment and deterrence that have characterised asylum policy since the 1980s will be reviewed, as will the impact of this legislation on individuals seeking asylum. The reaction of civil society to the curtailment of asylum-seekers' rights is discussed in reference to the Courts and voluntary and community groups. The focus here is on the latter, with particular reference to the role of refugee community organisations. Whether RCOs can access the potential opportunities for voluntary groups in the new governance context will be discussed, with consideration of their size and degree of professionalism.

### **1. The Politicisation of Asylum**

This section explores the different factors involved in the politicisation of asylum. It is useful to consider the changing nature and prominence of UK asylum policy in the context of wider European and global factors. The European Union has had a significant impact on immigration and asylum policy in the UK, and forms the basis of language and discourse that surrounds the debate. The construction of asylum as problematic will be explored, centering on the distinction between 'genuine' and 'bogus' asylum applicants and how this rhetoric is used in domestic political debates to gain electoral success. Britain's colonial past and subsequent immigration will be briefly reviewed, as it is essential in contextualising specific British factors in the politicisation of asylum.

#### **1.1 The Global Picture and Increasing Numbers of Refugees Worldwide**

To some extent the politicisation of asylum in the UK is related to the changes in conflicts and migration around the world that have led to an increase in the number of refugees worldwide. This increase, coupled with advances in technology and communications, means that more asylum applications are being lodged in countries such as the UK, the United States, Canada and Australia, and in the European Union. The arrival of asylum-seekers into Europe needs to be contextualised in relation to immigration that occurred after the Second

World War. Finally, national historical factors such as the legacy of colonialism are important in explaining why asylum-seekers may choose to make their claims for refuge in the UK.

In the last forty years there have been many refugee-producing conflicts across the world. Conflicts in former Yugoslavia, Somalia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and Iraq, to name just some, have created refugees that have sought asylum within their own regions and within the West. In Europe a rise in applications reflected the end of the Cold War, as well as the war in former Yugoslavia, which began in 1991 (Kushner and Knox, 2001).

A full analysis of why there were more conflicts in this period is not possible here, but some trends are visible, including the problems affecting post-colonial states. Countries struggling to recover from the legacy of colonialism have tended to have weak democratic structures, severe corruption and economic difficulties (Joly and Cohen, 1989:5-6). As a result, inter-communal violence, often along the tribal, ethnic or class lines that colonial leaders emphasised in their ruling strategies, has emerged as different factions attempt to seize power in this volatile situation (Marfleet, 2006:41). The end of the Cold War meant changes to, or the end of, strategic superpower involvement in some states (Marfleet, 2006:41). The downturn of the global economy, which meant an end to labour immigration to the West, caused significant problems in developing countries and is another important factor in the rise in the number of refugees worldwide. In an integrated, but essentially uneven, world economy, many developing states suffer from economic difficulties. Market forces have not delivered 'trickle down' benefits to poorer states or regions expected by those neo-liberal proponents pushing for liberalisation of trade in the 1980s. Instead, open markets have brought large pressures to bear on states and rich and poor regions are polarizing (Castells, 2002:348; UNHCR, 2006). This has implications for the number of refugees, as well as the kind of situation that has forced them to migrate.

The increase in conflicts in parts of the world would not necessarily have led to high applications for asylum in Western countries if it hadn't been for advances in transport and telecommunications. Organised smuggling of people for the purposes of claiming asylum

has also been a factor in the rise of 'jet age' refugees (Gibney, 2004:132); especially as legal entry into host countries has been effectively curtailed, as will be shown below.

However, it would be incorrect to give the impression that countries in the West are receiving the most asylum-seekers. For reasons of cost, necessity and emergency, most displaced people end up in neighbouring countries that are often poor and may be struggling with conflicts of their own. Whilst politicians in Europe sometimes give the impression that their state is shouldering an unfair share of the burden of asylum-seekers, this is often untrue, or true only in a regional sense. For example, whilst Germany has tended to receive proportionately more asylum applicants than other EU states in the early 1990s, worldwide the picture is different (Gibney, 2006:156). In 2008 four fifths of the world's refugees lived in developing countries. South Africa alone received one quarter of all applicants for asylum made in the world (UNHCR, 2009:2).

## **1.2 Transformation of the European context**

An understanding of the European context is essential in relation to Britain's asylum and immigration policies. The project of integration in the European Union has affected British decision-making over asylum and immigration. The establishment of a free-market and free movement of workers has meant the external borders of the EU, and therefore other member states' immigration and asylum policies, have become increasingly important to all members of the Union (Geddes, 2000a:3). The economic aspects of the EU have implications for the British economy and welfare policy, which in part reframes the debate on support for asylum-seekers. The changing nature of claims for asylum made in the EU, and the different nature of applicants has had implications for multilateral and communal legislation, which will be reviewed below. Finally, the way in which asylum has been constructed as a problem and the rhetoric of this approach is influential on the UK debates on refuge.

### **1.2.1 Asylum Applications in the EU**

The number of asylum applications in the EU has risen considerably from the mid-1980s – forming part of the context for the politicisation of this issue across the nation states of Europe but also within the EU structures. In 1988 the combined EU figure for total asylum

applicants<sup>2</sup> was 210,600. By 1992 this has more than tripled to 672,500 (van Selm, 2000:230). The rise in asylum applications has affected traditional countries of immigration and asylum such as Germany and Britain and also nations more used to emigration, including Italy and Spain (Hein, 2000; Castles and Loughna, 2005).

The rise in asylum applications to Europe needs to be considered with reference to immigration. After the Second World War, the economic boom created labour shortages across Western Europe. Countries actively recruited workers from other countries, including those with which they had colonial links. Though immigrants often arrived as temporary workers, in the economic downturn of the 1970s, many remained and incentives for return were largely unsuccessful (Marfleet, 2006:84). The end of the Cold War and the resulting flow of people leaving the former USSR, and the conflict in the former Republic of Yugoslavia are also important factors in the rise of asylum applications across the region.

An understanding of the European Union is needed to contextualise the current asylum policies and environment in the UK. Though there is not scope here for a full analysis of the EU and its structures relating to asylum, briefly borders policy, policy harmonisation on asylum, the EU and the welfare state, and the importance of discourse about asylum at the EU level will be reviewed.

### 1.2.2. EU Internal and External Borders

The opening up of the EU's internal borders in 1985 gave free movement to European member state nationals. This meant that the external borders of the EU became important to all member states. For the countries that have become part of the Schengen group that share open borders, their asylum controls are only as strong as the weakest amongst them (Stevens, 2004:367).<sup>3</sup>

The difficulty in entering the EU area to claim asylum has a great deal to do with member states' national policies – for example the use of carrier sanctions and other measures to

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<sup>2</sup> Figures for previous years are unobtainable. The figures for 1988 and 1992 are based on the 15 EU member states in that period.

<sup>3</sup> Though Britain and Ireland have not joined the Schengen group, they have selectively opted in to some aspects of shared policy.

prevent travel, as we shall see in relation to the UK below. However, EU-level policies enhance the controls on restrictions the EU members may have in place.

### 1.2.3 Harmonisation of Asylum Policy

As well as externalising border controls (Geddes, 2000a:106), member states have made resolutions on shared visa policies and carrier liabilities (Gibney and Hansen, 2005). This project is often referred to as 'fortress Europe'. However, Geddes is right in arguing that the term 'net' may be more appropriate than 'fortress' because not all non-EU citizens are kept out. Highly skilled workers are able to enter with relative ease, but unskilled workers and asylum-seekers find entry into the EU area increasingly difficult because of the externalisation of borders, the use of commercial carriers to check passengers and visa requirements (Geddes, 2000a:128).

As well as measures to prevent entry, EU policy on reception standards and decision-making has emerged. From 1985 states worked together to coordinate their reception standards – motivated by a desire to ensure that no one state was targeted by applicants because of perceived better standards of reception. The fact that this earlier cooperation has occurred intergovernmentally has tended to mean that a 'lowest common denominator' approach amongst cooperating states has emerged, as restriction was the one policy to which all states would agree (Geddes, 2000a:8; van Selm, 2000:43).

The Amsterdam Treaty of 1997 and the 1999 Tampere Council both seemed to signal a move away from intergovernmental policy making on asylum (Stevens, 2004:433; Lavenex, 2001:4). However, from a human rights perspective, both have been perceived as lacking. The national governments are still in control, and Common Asylum Policy is somewhat weak (Stevens, 2004:433).

The Hague Programme, which will end in 2010, contains plans for joint work on Justice and Home Affairs (including asylum and immigration). It is envisaged that a joint European asylum system will emerge, though border controls will remain national (House of Lords, 2005:14; Geddes, 2005:733). So far, however, directives on immigration have been about general principles, and states still have the power to decide the details of policy (Schain,

2009:100). With regards to asylum specifically, EU member states are working on a common asylum policy, and it is possible that a European Asylum Support Office will be established (ECRE, 2009:1).

#### 1.2.4 The European Union and the Welfare State

The impact of the European Union on the welfare state generally, and in relation to asylum-seekers specifically, is of importance. There are two factors of interest. Firstly, the way in which the economic and monetary union has led to the commitment to neo-liberal policies that affect attitudes towards asylum and the context within which the welfare states of Europe operate. Secondly, there have been steps towards an EU-level harmonisation of asylum welfare provision.

The rise of neo-liberal ideology and practices has had an impact on the concept of the welfare state across Europe, reconstructing it in a way that affects those on the margins of society, including immigrants and asylum-seekers (Bommes and Geddes, 2000:3). At the European level, the creation of a European single market, shared currency, the power of the independent European Central Bank and policies of economic deregulation signify the acceptance of neo-liberal reforms and the move away from government interference in the economy. With this restructuring there have been related changes in the welfare state, including moves away from the universal benefits of the Keynesian welfare state towards means-testing for eligibility. The EU generally can be seen as a limiting factor on social demands in the way that it entrenches neo-liberal economic policies, making national economies more competitive and limiting the extent to which policies that may fund welfare programmes can operate (Ryder, 2003:63).

It is at the EU level that categories such as EU citizen or Third Country National emerge, highlighting the difference in entitlements and belonging (Geddes, 2000b:140). Britain, unlike the majority of other member states, has opted out of measures that would grant rights to migrants or Third Country Nationals – such as directives on family reunion and rights for long-term residents (Geddes, 2005:737). This pattern of opt-outs on measures that enhance rights can also be seen in the UK's recent securing of an opt-out from the newly revised Constitution's European Charter of Fundamental Rights (Traynor, 2007). It also

appears that the UK intends to only opt into certain parts of the Hague Programme that includes plans for a common European asylum system (House of Lords, 2005:47). In summary, via arrangements with the EU, Britain is able to control economic migration for labour purposes whilst benefiting from some asylum and immigrations controls and returns policies (Geddes, 2005). It is unclear how long the UK will be able to maintain its in/out approach to integration in this area, but so far engagement with the EU has further enhanced the restrictions evident at domestic level.

The EU harmonisation of welfare provision for asylum-seekers is in part due to efforts to make no one state more or less attractive to asylum-seekers (Bloch and Schuster, 2002:394). This has unfortunately tended to mean a lowest common denominator approach whereby states reduce their levels of assistance fearing its potential as a 'pull factor' for economic migrants and/or asylum-seekers and because, as said above, this is the easiest aspect of policy for states working intergovernmentally to agree on.

#### 1.2.5 EU Asylum Discourse

The European Union discourse around asylum has had a part to play in anti-asylum rhetoric that is evident in national debates on the issue. Within EU policy discussion and actions asylum has been framed as a 'problem' (Schain, 2009:103), with member states converging around an agreed shared discourse that emphasises the negative aspects of asylum-seeking. Geddes, and others, argue that "the securitization of migration on the basis of subjective fears has been a salient feature of European and EU migration policy and politics since at least the late 1980s" (Geddes, 2005:730; See also Lavenex, 2001:13). Huysmans argues convincingly that the way in which EU-level experts work on and present issues of international crime, smuggling and the crossing of borders by terrorists alongside issues of migration means that the fear of the former activities is transferred onto those migrating into the EU or seeking asylum there. In this way asylum-seekers and migrants are spoken about by technocrats as a 'threat' to be dealt with, transferring asylum policy away from a social or humanitarian sphere towards one of security (Huysmans, 2006:83). This trend is clearly shown in the Maastricht Treaty – under which the newly created Justice and Home Affairs pillar brought together asylum policy, rules on external borders, drug trafficking, international fraud, terrorism and police and judicial cooperation in a way that:

[H]elped to blur the distinction between internal and external security in a frontier-free Europe...immigration was constructed as an external challenge and an internal threat to societal stability and cohesion (Geddes, 2000a:94).

These issues have been kept together as a package in subsequent legislation, including the Amsterdam Treaty and the Hague Programme (House of Lords, 2005:7). The presentation of crime and migration issues as related or interlinked security problems translates into anti-asylum rhetoric on the part of politicians at EU and domestic levels (Huysmans, 2006:72). EU discourse has therefore moved from portraying asylum-seekers as heroic dissidents to their 'demonisation' (Harvey, 2000:85):

The mud of criminalisation sticks to all those seeking refuge. The figure of the refugee and the asylum-seeker has been transformed from that of political émigré to that of de facto criminal (Back et al, 2002:450).

'Criminalisation' is implied in the way that all who use smugglers to enter European member states to seek asylum are seen as illegal immigrants, breaking the rules, despite the fact there may be very few alternative routes of entry (Stevens, 2004:223). Links to crime are also evident in the way that policy on fingerprinting for asylum, international crime, smuggling, trafficking and illegal immigration tend to be dealt with as a package. This criminalisation of asylum-seekers is also present in UK domestic political language and to some extent these different levels of discourse feed into and re-enforce each other – making it hard for other approaches to be heard. "In significant senses the struggle to achieve a rational discussion in this area was lost even before the process had begun"(Harvey, 2000:86) – in the sense that the oversimplified categories of 'genuine' or 'bogus' asylum-seeker became accepted at EU level, making it harder still to advocate other positions.

### **1.3 Background to Asylum Policy in the United Kingdom**

Prior to 1962 all Commonwealth citizens had the right to enter and settle in the UK. Immigration began to be curtailed in 1962, with the passing of the Commonwealth



Immigrants Act, which was the first in a string of legislation that would eventually halt nearly all immigration (except for family reunification and asylum). Restrictions on entry were motivated in part by concerns over the ethnicity of immigrants and partly by the drop in demand for labour (Spencer, 1997:144). That the European Common Market was replacing the Commonwealth was also a factor, as it meant that British politicians were able to put in place restrictions on immigration that previously would have been deemed damaging to Commonwealth relations, something which was less of a concern with the rise of the European Economic Community (Layton-Henry, 2005:230).

In the UK the virtual end of all but secondary immigration has meant that those seeking asylum now represent the biggest category of entrants. This, combined with a rise in the number of asylum-seekers, has meant that since the mid-1980s attention has been transferred to this category. This is also because of the widely held suspicion that claiming asylum represents a chance to enter the UK as other channels have closed.

The legacy of the UK's colonial past is important. The holding of British passports by millions before the changes to immigration rules in the 1960s meant that Commonwealth citizens had the right to enter the UK and settle permanently. This led to the presence in the UK of small but significant populations of foreign-born citizens and their children. There is evidence that when asylum-seekers are able to exercise a choice over their country of refuge<sup>4</sup> they choose to apply to those to which their country of origin has colonial ties; those with a known language or pre-existing networks of co-nationals and routes of migration formed during voluntary immigration (Marfleet, 2006:89).

In Britain in the 1980s there were generally less than 4,000 primary applications for asylum each year, but numbers rose sharply in the 1990s, with an initial peak of 44,840 in 1991 (Refugee Council, 2002:13) and another of 84,130 in 2002 (Home Office, 2008:26). It needs to be highlighted that although numbers of asylum applicants have indeed increased, it is the "*government's interpretation* of the rise in the number of asylum applicants since the mid-1980s" that is important (Harvey, 2000:148, emphasis in the original). This is because

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<sup>4</sup> It is increasingly difficult for asylum seekers to do this due to restrictions on entry, carrier liabilities and increased use of smugglers to gain entry (Gibney and Hansen, 2005:72).

policies put in place to deal with the perceived asylum 'problem' do not take into account the rise in refugee-producing conflicts around the world. Instead, politicians have often acted on the premise that most claims are bogus, or that the UK's reception standards are attracting a high proportion of asylum-seekers. These ideas are discussed below.

### 1.3.1 The Politics of Asylum in the UK

Despite the fact that states have international obligations to protect refugees and the UK is involved, in part, with EU-level policy on asylum, the nation state remains the main unit of enforcement and decision-making on asylum claims. A national government's interpretation of the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees is still, largely, their own affair.

The national (and international) political context of the time has an effect on how strictly the 1951 Convention definition is applied, and the extent to which other forms of protection, like temporary refugee status (NAO, 2009:8), may be used instead. Asylum policy has always tended to be open to the affects of foreign policy (Harvey, 2000:46). It has been argued that before the 1980s groups of forced migrants that did not strictly fit the definition of refugee were accepted on humanitarian grounds, particularly if their case could be used to make an ideological point, or if they had useful skills (Adelman, 1999:93). Since then, there have been changes in the way refugees have arrived and been assessed. Now applicants for asylum are more likely to arrive as individuals, whereas previously, large groups arrived together (Stevens, 2004:91). Assessment of refugee claims now focus on the individual, and high standards of proof are required to show that they have personally been persecuted and are at specific risk of harm if they are returned (Stevens, 2004:264-265).

The perceived need to control the number of non-white immigrants was often, and still is, based on fears that there will be problems with assimilation, and the idea of a threshold of tolerance amongst the public beyond which race relations will be problematic (Bloch and Schuster, 2002:407). This argument also arises in relation to asylum. For example, the 1987 Carriers Liability Act, which was a key first step in preventing the entry of those wishing to claim asylum, was at the time justified on the grounds of needing to maintain racial

harmony (Steiner, 2000:111). This trend is also present in New Labour discourse on asylum – for example:

To enable integration to take place and to value the diversity it brings, we need to be secure within our sense of belonging and identity and therefore to be able to reach out and embrace those who come to the UK...Having a clear, workable and robust nationality and asylum system is the pre-requisite to building the security and trust that is needed. Without it, we cannot defeat those who would seek to stir up hate, intolerance and prejudice (Home Office, 2002a:4).

It has been argued that British governments have dealt differently with African refugees and that proportionately less asylum-seekers from this region are granted refugee status or exceptional leave to remain (ELR) (Kushner and Knox, 1999:375; Schuster, 2003:138).

### 1.3.2 The Race Card and Asylum

At various points in the post-war period there are examples of politicians ‘playing the race card’ in relation to *immigration*. Typically this involved pandering to, or indeed, sometimes boosting, the public’s prejudices and fears of ethnic minorities for electoral gain. After briefly reviewing a few notable instances of the ‘race card’ this section will consider whether asylum has also been used in this way – can we speak of a specific ‘asylum card’? It is argued that by competing with each other over the ‘need’ for restriction and containment, political figures appear to be leading the media and the public into a panic over asylum-seekers in order to gain political advancement and to implement increasingly restrictive policies.

It has usually been the Conservative Party that raises the issue of race, in connection to election campaigning. Perhaps the beginning of race being seen as a vote loser for Labour, was in 1964 when Conservative Peter Griffiths won a previously safe Labour seat on a racist campaign (Layton-Henry, 1984:57). Labour, subsequently, seemed to realise that their policies on race were an electoral liability (Holmes, 1991:56), hence the move from a position of opposing immigration controls in the late 1950s, to introducing the next restrictive Bill (in 1968) (Layton-Henry, 1984:68). The scope of the ‘race card’ to win the support of working class voters was seen in the popularity of Enoch Powell in the 1970

election, considered an important factor in the Conservative victory (Layton-Henry, 1984:72).

In 1978 Thatcher appeared on the television show *World In Action* expressing sympathy with people concerned about immigration and stating a need to win back supporters from the National Front. This event, before the general election of 1979, was seen as damaging to extreme right-wing organisations, especially the National Front, as it drew their support away and back to the mainstream. It also went some way to reinforce public concerns about immigration (Layton-Henry, 1984:104; 1992:94). These instances show the connection between race relations and political rhetoric about race, with the often repeated idea that there is a threshold of tolerance, which was used here to significant political advantage. Before this episode, 9% of British people surveyed felt that there were too many immigrants, afterwards the figure rose to 21% (Winder, 2004:400).

It can be argued that the current focus on asylum is at least partly due to similar political motivations. Immigration has been curtailed to the point that only highly or semi-skilled migrants can enter, whereas asylum numbers have risen to the extent that governments appear worried about maintaining controls of their borders. As discussed above in relation to the European level, the context of numbers, the reconstruction of the welfare state and the way in which other channels of migration have been curtailed feed into a new 'problematisation' of asylum which is intertwined with party competition:

In many countries, anti-asylum sentiments have become a topic for party competition between mainstream political parties, as well as a source of potential support for the radical right (Statham, 2003:165).

As seen in relation to the EU, discourse has moved away from a need to protect refugees, towards a climate of suspicion around asylum-seekers – which is used to justify restrictive measures. The use of the 'asylum card' is both a response to the changing asylum situation (the factors outlined above), and a factor in changing the asylum situation further. By portraying it as negative and as a problem that parties must be 'tough' on it has become a problem in the public mind (See Section 1.3.3).

The 1996 Asylum and Immigration Act has been viewed as an attempt on the part of the Conservatives to play the 'race card' in relation to asylum in the run up to the 1997 General Election. A head of research in Conservative Central Office said that the immigration and asylum issue had been raised successfully in 1992 and in the 1994 Euro-elections, and that it "played particularly well in the tabloids and still has the potential to hurt" (Lansley, 1995). Since then the issue has frequently been used by the Conservatives to attack Labour – Hague's accusation that Blair was 'soft' on asylum in 2000 and his pledges to enact tougher domestic restrictions on asylum-seekers, including detention for all applicants (Gibney, 2004:125), set the tone for debate on this issue. Again, as in the 1970-80s (Layton-Henry, 1992:154), Labour appear to be on the defensive – battling to show that they are not weak on issues of immigration, whilst at the same time trying to follow an inclusive multi-cultural domestic agenda (Back et al, 2002:448). In 2001 the Conservatives placed adverts in the *Folkestone Herald* saying that it had before and could again reduce asylum applications (Schuster, 2003:168). In their 2005 manifesto the Conservatives said they would withdraw from the Geneva Convention were they elected (Conservative Party, 2005:19), whereas the Labour Party has committed to working to 'update' the Convention (Labour Party, 2007; Wintour, 2009).

Nonetheless, Labour have also played the asylum card. Blunkett, particularly, as Home Secretary tended to "mollify rather than confront the sentiments demonstrated in increased support for the British National Party across the northern mill towns" (Back et al, 2002:445). He introduced language tests as part of attaining British citizenship (Back et al, 2002:446) and emphasised the need for ethnic minorities to increase their sense of 'belonging' (Home Office, 2002a:27).

As mentioned above, the number of asylum applications is an important factor in the prominence of asylum policy in UK politics. However, it is argued that successive governments' treatment of the issue has politicised asylum and portrayed this increase as problematic. A great deal of this politicisation is connected to the use of what is called here the 'asylum card'.

In this climate, where the two main political parties seem intent in outdoing each other in terms of ‘toughness’ on asylum-seekers, it is hard to imagine how asylum could *not* become a highly political issue. This need to ‘crackdown’ on asylum is based on the distinction between those ‘genuine’ asylum-seekers and those who are in fact ‘bogus’ economic migrants. It is to this that we now turn.

### 1.3.3 A ‘Culture of Disbelief’, the Media and Public Opinion

The discourse of ‘genuine’ and ‘bogus’ asylum-seekers is misleading and highly political in a way that obfuscates the complex realities of forced migration. It is this discourse that represents the *interpretation* of the rise in asylum applicants, which in turn prompts current policies of regional containment and domestic restrictions (Shacknove, 1993). There is no evidence that more asylum-seekers are now, in fact, economic migrants (Harvey, 2000), though politicians routinely state that the high number of refusal rates is proof that many seeking asylum are economic migrants (Bloch, 2000; Conservative Party, 2005; Home Office, 2005).

The overly simplistic ‘genuine’ or ‘bogus’ distinction feeds into the ‘culture of disbelief’ said to exist in the Home Office (Harvey, 2000:148). The terminology used by politicians and official documents appears in the media, where more negative terms are also used in relation to asylum-seekers that are along the same lines of disbelief. Terms such as ‘frauds’, ‘parasites’, ‘benefit cheats’, are highly prevalent in the media (Bloch and Schuster, 2002:406). Some sections of the media seem to be preoccupied with outlandish and often entirely fictional stories, including the report that asylum-seekers were spit-roasting the royal swans (Winder, 2004:440).

Politicians often argue, as Thatcher did in reference to immigration, that their stance on asylum is in response to public concerns about asylum. Though politicians seem to believe that the public are worried about asylum, and enact policy designed to restrict entry and the rights of asylum-seekers based in part upon this, there is some evidence that politicians influence feeling on the issue by framing it in a negative way. Public opinion about asylum is generally negative (Lewis, 2005b; Statham, 2003). Statham’s research shows that the government is the dominant voice on asylum and is overwhelmingly negative compared to

the statements made by other societal actors (2003:170). Statham's study shows that the public tends to group together grievances about asylum – on which they tend to take the lead from government and media – with any other grievances around immigration, race and urban decline. This means that even those with little or no direct experience of asylum-seekers express concern about the issue (Statham, 2003:173). In this way, the government legitimises hostile sentiment towards asylum-seekers (Statham, 2003:172; Bloch and Schuster, 2002:404), leading, or enhancing, the public opinion on which restrictions are in part justified.

Recent measures of public opinion in the UK generally show that people are concerned about asylum. Many people feel strongly about this issue and tend to over-exaggerate the extent to which immigration and asylum occurs, as well as the degree of assistance received by those seeking asylum (Crawley, 2009:3; MORI, 2000; MORI, 2002). For example, one data set shows a rise in the percentage of people concerned about this issue from 23% in 2001 to 46% in 2007 (Ipsos MORI, 2009).

The British Social Attitudes survey authors believe that a rise in self-rated 'prejudice' shown in their data is due to a focus in the public sphere, and especially the media, upon asylum-seekers and newer forms of immigration from the Middle East and Africa (Heath and Rothan, 2003:190; Evans, 2003:213). That the rise of self-rated racial prejudice is also linked to feelings about asylum, again, reinforces the picture that since 2000 the public have become increasingly concerned about, and potentially hostile towards, immigrants and asylum-seekers.

#### **1.4 Development of the UK Asylum Policy**

It has been essential to review the EU and UK political climate around, and language used about, asylum because it informs the policies that have been put in place to deal with what is generally perceived as a problem. There is a need to understand the policies of containment and deterrence, as they have potential to considerably affect asylum-seekers and refugees, and organisations that work with them, including refugee community organisations.

Containment and deterrence sound similar, and are interlinked, but are distinctly different. Both are restrictive and rely on the premise that many seeking asylum are economic migrants and not refugees. This is despite the fact that restrictions will affect all would-be entrants, regardless of their reason for migration. It is deterrence which will be the focus below, because it has the most scope to impact on refugee community organisations.

Briefly, measures which seek to keep migrants within their own country or region can be seen as 'containment' (Shacknove, 1993:522). This term covers the use of visa requirements, carrier liabilities, forms of pre-inspection for travel and also the use of 'safe havens' in the areas of conflict, all of which have been used by the UK in recent years. Positive forms of containment, such as donations to neighbouring states and resettlement schemes, have become an important part of Western governments' policy, but are often used to justify curtailment of asylum, and are not backed up with policies to address the underlying factors in forced migration (Shacknove, 1993:523).

#### 1.4.1 Measures to Deter Attempted Entry for the Purposes of Claiming Asylum

As well as measures to physically prevent entry, there are policies to make life as unappealing for asylum-seekers *within* the host country in the hope that would-be economic migrants who may wish to lodge false claims for asylum will be deterred. In this process, however, asylum-seekers sometimes live in situations of extreme poverty, isolation and legal uncertainty, despite the fact that an asylum-seeker's choice of destination is often due to factors other than standards of living or appeals, rights and procedures. As mentioned previously, links of family, language or colonial history have a greater impact when refugees can exercise a choice, which increasingly they do not due to increased use of smugglers, which is related to the restrictions on entry.

The main aspect of deterrence is the limiting of asylum-seekers' rights to employment, housing and welfare (Gibney and Hansen, 2005; Joly, 1996). This began with the reduction in the scope of local authorities to house asylum-seekers under the 1993 Asylum and Immigration (Appeals) Act (Griffiths et al, 2005:4). The 1996 Asylum and Immigration Act differentiated between port and in-country applications (Griffiths et al, 2005:39), with only the former receiving cash benefits, equivalent to 90% of social security that eligible British



nationals received (Kushner and Knox, 392). In-country applicants (viewed by the government as less likely to be genuine refugees<sup>5</sup>) lost their entitlement to assistance, though a successful legal challenge on the grounds that this caused destitution meant the responsibility for asylum-seekers was placed on local authorities (Kushner and Knox, 1999:393). In 2002 support was again removed from applicants who lodged their claims in-country, premised on the fact that many claiming in-country had been resident for months and so were not in need of assistance. However, some research carried out by the Inter-Agency Partnership working with asylum-seekers disqualified from benefits under Section 55 shows that 48.8% of them applied for asylum the next day after arrival; and 65% within three days (Refugee Council, 2004:3).

The 1999 Act was a departure from what had preceded it. Asylum-seekers were removed from mainstream welfare provision and were dispersed around the country in order to share the costs, and act as a deterrent for false applicants (Griffiths et al, 2005:41). Under the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) welfare and housing were conditional on accepting the first place of dispersal, despite the fact that places tended to be dictated by housing stocks, and many were placed in ill-suited accommodation (Griffiths et al, 2005:46). At this point welfare for asylum-seekers was equivalent to 70% of that of British nationals and the Act removed welfare assistance entirely from asylum-seekers who had lost an appeal and were awaiting judicial review, making them entirely reliant on friends, family, charity or community groups, and many were left destitute (Bloch, 2002; Pirouet, 2001: Chap. 9; Amnesty International, 2006). The possible impact of such legislation on RCOs will be discussed in Section 1.7.4.

Detention of asylum claimants is increasingly used in the UK beyond the groups it was traditionally targeted at – those seen as likely to abscond and rejected applicants about to be deported. Though the right to detain was allowed under the 1971 Immigration Act, it was, until recently, designed to be used sparingly (Pirouet, 2001:Chap. 5). From March 2007, under the New Asylum Model, however, it was expected that around 30% of all applicants would be detained on the fast-track scheme (Home Office, 2005:36).

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<sup>5</sup> Research has shown that this does not tend to be the case (Bloch, 2002).

#### 1.4.2 Measures to Reduce the Length of Stay in the UK

Various measures have been introduced in the various asylum Acts to reduce the length of time that a person remains in the UK. This is because the longer a person remains in a country the harder it is to remove them. This is due to the rights that residency can confer and also the fact that people who have been living somewhere for some time have greater access to legal assistance, friends, pro-refugee groups and community or religious groups who become involved in any attempts to deport the individual (Kushner and Knox, 1999). Measures to limit stays include fast-track decision-making, restrictions on appeals and temporary protection (Refugee Council, 2007).

One way in which time asylum applicants spend in the UK has been restricted is the reduction in appeal rights against negative decisions (Gibney and Hansen, 2005:81). The need for appeals is clear when considering the rate of appeals that are allowed, which is generally around 20-30%<sup>6</sup>. However the scope for appeals has been reduced based on the assumption that lengthy appeals processes attract bogus applicants and also the appeals process is so lengthy *because* of bogus applicants (Blair, 2003). Hence appeals have been reduced to a single time-limited tier, and in-country appeal rights have been removed from some categories of claimant (Stevens, 2004:172). It can be hard for applicants to find legal representation as legal aid for these purposes has been cut and changes to registration has meant fewer bodies qualify to give approved legal advice on matters of immigration (Pirouet, 2001:66). The New Asylum Model has introduced even stricter time-limits on interviewing and appeals. For the fast-track scheme the whole process is expected to take place within eleven days. Pro-refugee groups are concerned that this does not give enough time for those who may be traumatised to open up about their experiences, or indeed for their lawyers to obtain the necessary documentation with which to support a claim, for instance, medical evidence of torture (Refugee Council, 2007:5; Stevens, 2004:232).

#### 1.4.3 Summary

There has been a rise in the number of refugees worldwide and this has been reflected in the numbers of people seeking asylum in the EU and the UK. The way in which this rise has

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<sup>6</sup> In 2009 15,350 appeals were received. Of these 28% were allowed (Home Office, 2010:16).

been dealt with in the UK and within the European Union needs to be considered in reference to policies that acted to curtail immigration to the West from the 1960s, and in reference to concerns about race relations and multiculturalism. Asylum has become a highly politicised issue in the UK. Press coverage is frequently hostile, and opinion polls show a considerable level of public concern. In this climate politicians have tackled each other in regards to the toughness of their policies covering asylum and immigration and have put in place restrictive legislation that has curtailed access to the UK, rights of asylum-seekers once in the UK, and reduced the value of their support, whilst removing their right to work.

Because of the changes made in asylum and refugee policies outlined above, two main responses have occurred in civil society. The first is the response of the Courts to government restrictions. This is discussed briefly in Section 1.5. The second change has been in the voluntary and community sector, which is the focus of Section 1.6. Voluntary groups have long been involved in the reception of refugees in the UK but changes made to asylum policy have further involved voluntary groups in providing for asylum-seekers and refugees as government support is reduced and becomes increasingly difficult to access.

### **1.5. The International Refugee Regime, Human Rights and Domestic Courts**

There is not scope here to fully explore legal and human rights in relation to asylum, however a brief review of this complex subject shows that as the UK national government has acted to curtail asylum in the UK, the domestic courts have become involved in limiting this move towards restriction.

#### **1.5.1 The End of Judicial Deference**

There has been a tradition of judicial deference in the areas of asylum and immigration in the UK. The combination of a strong executive, able to dominate the legislature, and relatively weak courts have been seen as leading to strong and restrictive policy (Geddes, 2003:30). The landmark case of *Bugdaycay v Secretary of State for the Home Department* in 1987, in which the House of Lords judgement ruled that judicial bodies should give each case “the most anxious scrutiny”, was seen as an important challenge to the discretion of the British government (cited in Clayton, 2006:33; Stevens, 2004:318). Since this time,

judgements have tended towards a “progressive, human rights approach” in some key aspects of asylum, though the process is far from linear (Stevens, 2004:323).

The welfare entitlements of asylum-seekers are one area in which Courts have protected the rights of asylum-seekers. Simon Brown LJ declared the 1996 piece of secondary legislation removing benefits from everyone who was subject to immigration control to be unlawful. In the ruling he said that Parliament could not have intended for so many asylum-seekers to be destitute and that “Something so uncompromisingly draconian can only be achieved by primary legislation” (cited in Clayton, 2006:39). In relation to the government’s response (the 1996 Asylum and Immigration Act, which withdrew benefits from in-country applications), a further case ruled that asylum-seekers were to be supported under the 1948 National Assistance Act and the 1989 Children Act, again because of likely destitution. These judgments drew on both the 1951 Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Article 3 of the ECHR was breached by the legislation, it was decided, because the withdrawal of support would constitute degrading treatment (Stevens, 2004:323). Other judgements protecting the rights of asylum-seekers have also been made in relation to a more expansive definition of ‘persecution’, on the notion of designated ‘safe third countries’ in decision-making and in relation to fast-track detention (Stevens, 2004: Chap. 8).

The politicisation of asylum is not only affected by judgements from the higher courts. The Asylum and Immigration Tribunals, in deciding on appeals, also make judgements on government actions. For example, in October 2005, the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal ruled that then Home Secretary, Charles Clarke, appeared to show little interest in the fate of rejected and returned Zimbabwean asylum-seekers to an extent that was “rather alarming” and that investigations on conditions in the country seemed to be pre-occupied with proving the suitability of continuing the pre-existing policy of deportations (cited in the Guardian, 2005).

### 1.5.2. The Political Backlash

Some of these judgments have been politically controversial and have contributed to a backlash amongst politicians who find themselves frustrated in relation to asylum, immigration and security issues. The potential for politicians to react against human rights legislation that they perceive as unnecessarily binding can be seen in the 1997 *Chahal v UK*. Here the European Court of Human Rights was critical of UK security procedures, obliging the UK to set up the Special Immigration Appeals Commission (Clayton, 2006:256). This means that the UK cannot deport someone who is considered a national security risk if they are at risk of torture under Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights. In reaction to this judgement Blair, as Prime Minister, raised the possibility of the UK withdrawing from the ECHR and re-ratifying it without Article 3, though this did not occur (Clayton, 2006:Chap. 8). Even so, it is increasingly the case that politicians are openly questioning the relevance of international human rights obligations. As said above, the Conservatives, at the time of the 2005 general election were keen to withdraw from the 1951 Geneva Convention, whilst Labour later said it needed 'updating' (Conservative Party, 2005:19; Labour Party, 2007).

There does appear to be evidence that automatic judicial deference (Harvey, 2000:46) is in decline, due to an acceptance of and promotion of human rights, particularly in relation to the incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights (Stevens, 2004:364). However, the brief examples given here cannot capture the complexity of the situation. Stevens highlights the fact that that the more progressive judgements tend to involve the same Judges and that as yet it is hard to tell what role the courts and case law will play overall:

Until we can draw conclusions on the basis of a fuller corpus of judgements, the contention must be that the 'ebb and flow' of judicial decision-making, far from aiding greater consistency in asylum law, has added to the law's considerable uncertainty (Stevens, 2004:365)

It is clear, however, that at times human rights legislation and international obligations can prevent or at least address the more extreme restrictive asylum measures that have been

enacted in the UK. This has undoubtedly led to a friction between the government and the Courts which can only serve to politicise the issue further.

## **1.6 The Voluntary and Community Sector**

There are new demands on the voluntary sector, associated with changing asylum policy, that affect the role of refugee community organisations. Before considering this in further detail, several shifts in the general voluntary and community sector will be discussed. There have been a number of governance developments that have affected the voluntary and community sector since the 1980s. Under the Conservatives the use of the voluntary sector to provide services became popular as an alternative to direct service provision. New Labour have continued this trend, but with a new emphasis on partnership and voluntary sector involvement in policy-design as well as delivery. How these changes have affected the voluntary and community sector and their relationship with government, and local government in particular, will be examined. The notion that the voluntary sector is dividing into organisations that can deal competently in the new environment, and those, often smaller, organisations that cannot, will be examined.

### **1.6.1 Governance**

There is not scope here to cover fully the rich debates about governance. Suffice to say, 'governance' is a complex concept, with a range of different uses and meanings (Rhodes, 2000). Broadly speaking 'governance' refers to a set of, often global, changes that affect the ability of the nation state to govern. It is recognition of the modern complexity of finance, globalisation and diversity, and the fact that governments are not the only actor involved in 'governing' (Newman, 2001:12). The use of governance here relates to the fact that government, and especially local government, are not 'governing' in the traditional sense, rather, they are involved in 'steering' a range of actors in order to decide, design and implement a range of services in a complex network (Newman 2001:12; Stoker, 2000b).

Governance involves working across boundaries within the public sector or between the public sector and private or voluntary sectors. It focuses attention on a set of actors that are drawn from but also beyond the formal institutions of government...

Governing becomes an interactive process because no single actor has the knowledge and resource capacity to tackle problems unilaterally (Stoker, 2000a:3)

The term 'governance' will be used here, therefore, in a way that indicates the changing nature of 'governing', the increasing complexity of policy-making and implementation in terms of the number of actors drawn from a range of sectors.

### 1.6.2 New Labour and the Voluntary and Community Sector

New Labour has continued with the Conservative trend of working with the voluntary sector. This section reviews New Labour's stated commitment to the Third Way and communitarianism, and the policy changes enacted to support and boost the voluntary sector.

#### 1.6.2.1 New Labour and the Voluntary and Community Sector - Ideology

In order to understand the degree of emphasis New Labour has placed on the voluntary and community sector, it is important to understand their political ideology. There appears to be some degree of tension between their commitment to enabling the voluntary sector to provide flexible, responsive local policy-making and the continuation of Conservative trends that act to counter this move toward communitarianism, which will be discussed briefly below.

The Third Way sets out Labour's distinctive new approach to politics. Under this banner they aimed to avoid "an Old Left preoccupied by state control" and a "New Right treating public investment, and often the very notions of 'society' and collective endeavour, as evils to be undone" (Blair, 1998:1). Blair's pamphlet argues that the world has changed and that globalisation is a reality that must be accepted by the Left.

Commitment to community in the Third Way is often centred around the voluntary and community sector and the need for governments to avoid 'stifling' local communities and the voluntary sector, and the drive to involve them in partnerships with government:

The Third Way recognises the limits of government in the social sphere, but also the need for government, within those limits, to forge new partnerships with the voluntary sector (Blair, 1998:14).

Labour was keen to emphasise their commitment to an inclusive society, with active citizens aware of and able to exercise their rights and responsibilities (Blair, 1998:4). It is seen as necessary to empower local communities to be involved in partnerships with local government, which will improve both the service delivery but also empower citizens, making them more active in the community and so promote social capital (Fyfe, 2005:538). The reinvigoration of civic life is a key theme in New Labour documents, and again, voluntary and community organisations are central to this:

The Government is passionately committed to the work of the voluntary sector. We believe that voluntary and community sector organisations have a crucial role to play in the reform of public services and the reinvigoration of civic life (Boateng, 2002:3)

The Third Way has been criticised as less a specific reform programme, and more about defining New Labour in relation to its differences compared to the neo-liberal right, and the old socialist left (Newman, 2001:46). There is a lack of clear objectives and policy, but this could be, in part, due to a stated commitment to pragmatism in policy-making (Blair, 1998). More contentiously, the Third Way has been viewed as a re-packaging of Thatcherite neo-liberalism, with a new social emphasis to appease the left (Newman, 2001:2).

Despite the new political ideology that New Labour created around the Third Way and communitarianism, in many ways it has continued with themes of the previous Conservative administrations. The Third Way project was normative and linked to the need for the left to accept the realities of globalisation, the importance of consumer choice and the need for services to be 'modernised'. This often meant the use of competition in order to improve performance, all of which are seen as key aspects of Thatcherite reforms (Newman, 2001:48). Market mechanisms in the provision of public services continued, with the use of targets, audit and inspection and value for money (Newman, 2001:51). Hence, in terms of the government's relationship with the private sector and the use of quasi-markets in



service delivery, Labour displayed considerable continuity with Thatcher and Major's reforms, albeit with a new emphasis on partnership and 'joined-up' responses to social problems (Blair, 1998:7). How the party attempted to prepare the voluntary and community (VCS) sector for partnership and the reality of VCS participation will be discussed further below.

#### 1.6.2.2 New Labour and the Voluntary and Community Sector – Policy and Practice

Labour's commitment to the voluntary and community sector is clear in rhetoric and in actions. References to the VCS were made in a considerable number of early documents, often praising the VCS for its essential contribution, for example:

The voluntary and community sector has a vital role in society as the nation's 'third sector', working alongside the state and the market. Through its engagement of volunteers, the services it provides and the support it gives to individuals and groups, its contribution to community and civil life is immense, invaluable and irreplaceable (Straw and Stowe, 1998:5)

The Labour party were not the first to see the value of the voluntary sector. The Conservatives, in the early 1990s, were also keen for the voluntary sector to do more, and gave advice to voluntary organisations about how to work towards successful relationships with local authorities. This involved an expectation that the Voluntary and Community Organisations (VCOs) selected for involvement would become more professional and take on managerial reforms to boost efficiency in the same way that local authorities were required to (Deakin, 1991:12). Reflecting changes in governance, the VCS grew considerably from 1990-1995 and the state became the biggest funder of the VCS – with government funding to the sector rising by 40% between 1991-2001 (Kendall, 2003:37). However, the degree of focus that Labour gave the voluntary sector was new – and this was part of the bid to appear distinct both from the traditional Labour party on the left and the Conservatives on the right (Kendall, 2003:12).

### 1.6.3 The Voluntary and Community Sector in the UK

The Treasury definition of the Voluntary and Community Sector includes charities, non-profit organisations, 'third sector' organisations and 'social economy' (HM Treasury, 2002:5). Though the exact definition of the VCS is somewhat open to debate, Kendall's definition is one that is popular in academic literature and is somewhat clearer than that of the government. Kendall defines the VCS as formed of "organizations which are formal, non profit distributing, constitutionally independent of the state, self-governing and benefiting from voluntarism" (Kendall, 2003:6).

There are an estimated half a million VCOs in the UK (based on the HM Treasury definition), from small local community groups to large national or international organisations. Some are large organisations with a significant number of paid staff, but most are small local groups run entirely by volunteers. Income in the VCS is extremely uneven. As of December 2009, 45.4% of charities were in the income bracket of £0-10,000. Thirty-one percent earned between £10,001-100,000; 10.03% earned £100,001-500,000 (Charity Commission, 2010).<sup>7</sup> It is very likely that this picture would be even more skewed if these figures included voluntary organisations *without* charitable status, which are frequently very small community-based friendly societies, or constituted voluntary organisations that have not been through the formal procedures for obtaining charitable status.

#### 1.6.3.1 Funding of the Voluntary and Community Sector

Funding to the VCS comes from a range of sources, including private or business donations, generated income from provision of goods or services, and grants from private trusts and foundations. Government at all levels make grants, though recently public funds are more likely to be given in return for contracted services as well as, or instead of, grants. An NCVO report on statutory funding to the sector in the UK is worth reviewing. It found that in the financial year 2006/07 voluntary sector income from all statutory sources was £12 billion,

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<sup>7</sup> These are the brackets most relevant to this study. The other income categories were: 4.8% earned £500,001-5,000,000. Just 1.1% earned more than £5m in 2008, though 7% were 'not yet known'. This was as of December 31<sup>st</sup> 2009 (Charity Commission, 2010).

representing a third of all income. Local government contributions represent most of this money, but central government input is growing (Clark et al, 2009:10).

Most charities in the UK are small, local and run almost entirely by volunteers (Morris, 2000:412; NCVO, cited in HM Treasury, 2002:9). Until the early 1990s a range of local voluntary and community groups received funds from local authorities in the form of grants – semi-restricted monies which the group could use to carry out their activities. Government funding of the VCS rose by 40% between 1991-2001 (Kendall, 2003:36), but it is likely that much of this was not unrestricted grant funding, but contract specific. The NCVO found that the balance between grant and contract funding was changing, with a move towards the latter. In 2006/07 statutory funding of £12 billion was made up of £4.2 billion of grants and £7.8 billion of contracts (Clark et al, 2009:11). This means that many groups no longer receive semi-restricted funds, but rather are entering into legal contracts with local authorities, including local councils and health authorities, to provide certain specified services for a fixed fee (Morris, 2000). This was part of Conservative initiative to reduce the role of the state in direct service provision and it continues to form the basis for funding under Labour.

However, it is important to understand that most statutory funds, whether from central or local government, tend to go to larger organisations, especially those in the social care field. Seventy-five percent of voluntary and community sector organisations do not receive any income from statutory sources (Clark et al, 2009:10-11).

Other sources of income for VCOs include grants from charitable foundations or trusts. In the UK in 2003/04 trust and foundation grants to voluntary organisations represented around 5-10% of total VCS income (Wilding et al, 2006:59; Goody and Hall, 2007:4). Trusts and foundations are particularly important to RCOs, as will be discussed in Chapter 6. This is because:

[T]rusts and foundations are uniquely placed to support innovative or risky ideas and are able to fund areas of the sector that lack popular or political support (Goody and Hall, 2007:3)

Many VCOs also receive donations from firms or individuals. Increasingly, charities are also able to generate their own income – for example by selling goods, or by providing specialist services relevant to their area of expertise. As Section 1.3.3 revealed, public and political attitudes towards asylum have been generally negative in the past two decades, as such refugees and asylum-seekers issues can be perceived as lacking widespread support.

#### 1.6.3.2 The Value of the Voluntary and Community Sector

As outlined above, it was their commitment to the Third Way and communitarianism that prompted Labour's drive to give the voluntary and community sector a stronger role in public life. The values ascribed to the VCS, as well as the situation of the VCS that the Labour party inherited in 1997, will now be considered.

Firstly, VCOs are perceived as valuable in the way that they create a link between individuals and public life, either by providing people with services or engaging them in voluntary activities. Labour, in particular, emphasises the scope of the VCS to regenerate civic life:

Voluntary participation in the range of areas spanned by charity is critical because it promotes active citizenship, which is vital for building strong communities and ensuring that those who live in them are at the forefront in making the decisions which affect them (Strategy Unit, 2002:40).

New Labour portray the voluntary sector as vital in helping to address problems of social exclusion and in terms of boosting social citizenship, and the creation of social capital to address intractable and complex social problems (Fyfe, 2005:538; Kendall, 2003:59).

Secondly, the VCOs are seen as being innovative and capable of developing new ideas and approaches for service delivery (Kendall and Knapp, 1996:3), or as the Strategy Unit put it, the VCS is better at “innovating new ways of tackling social problems” (Strategy Unit, 2002:29). Engagement with the VCS, which is seen as being able to respond quickly and creatively, is of particular value to the Labour party and its commitment to finding ‘what works’ in policy-making (Blair, 1998:14).

Thirdly, Labour has emphasised the way in which the VCS can deal with social exclusion and work on behalf of those 'in states of disadvantage' (HM Treasury, 2002:16), for example:

They [VCOs]...often act as advocates for those who otherwise have no voice. In doing so they promote both equality and diversity. They help to alleviate poverty, improve the quality of life and involve the socially excluded (Home Office, 1998:7)

This might be because of specialist knowledge or experience of a client group and their needs, or be due to the way that voluntary organisations may involve service users and volunteers in decision-making and delivery (HM Treasury, 2002:16). Voluntary organisations tend to be perceived as more trustworthy and approachable than private or public agencies (Fyfe, 2005:541) and are thus more able to engage with the socially excluded, who may be wary of government agencies. The way that 'social exclusion' has become the dominant frame of reference (instead of 'poverty'), with an emphasis on non-monetary aspects of a person's situation, also brings the resources that the voluntary sector has – community level relationships and volunteers – into a position of importance (Taylor, 2002).

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, VCOs are seen as able to provide cost-effective services. The Conservatives stressed this factor more than Labour has (Deakin, 1991:15), but cost effectiveness and the sense that charities, who are used to working with less, can cut public spending, is likely to be as appealing to Labour as to its Conservative predecessors (Deakin, 1995).

Alternative perceptions of the VCS (Taylor and Warburton, 2003:322) are not discussed in the Labour documents relating to the usefulness of the sector. Overwhelmingly, the VCS is perceived as a good thing. This is, of course, debatable. The voluntary sector, or at least some parts of it, can be viewed as embodying paternalistic philanthropy in a way that is potentially uneven, particular or exclusionary. Parts of it may be seen as amateurish and there may be issues with accountability and representativeness (Kendall, 2003:94). This latter point could be of particular concern in the moves to involve VCOs further in policy-making.

#### 1.6.3.3 Initiatives to Support the Voluntary and Community Sector

There have been a considerable number of initiatives to support the voluntary sector, most notably the use of the national Compact negotiated in consultation with voluntary organisations, which set out how the government could effectively work with the VCS. Funds have also been made available to develop the strength of the sector in order to meet its new role as 'partner' in governance structures.

The Compact sets out forms of working between the government and VCOs and guarantees the independence of the voluntary sector. Though not legally binding, it covers relations between the VCS and government departments (Home Office, 1998). The Compact was 'refreshed' in 2009 to take into account legal and policy changes (Commission for the Compact, 2009:4). A 2002 Strategy Unit report was also influential in reforming the context in which the VCS operates. It highlighted the need for the capacity of voluntary organisations to be increased, for example for development funding in order for VCOs to be able to engage effectively or bid for contracts (Strategy Unit, 2002).

The development of local compacts, broadly along the same lines as the national Compact, has also been encouraged. This involves each local authority working in consultation with local VCOs (though with which VCOs is up to the local authority in question) to develop codes of practice to govern their working relationship (Craig et al., 2002:2). The response of the VCS has been mixed. On the one hand, some local Compacts have been initiated by local VCOs, keen to get their relationship with the local authority on a more official footing (Craig et al., 2002:7). One study reported dissatisfaction with the scope of groups that local authorities involved in drawing up the compacts, and others felt that the Compact document was not widely known about within local authorities beyond those involved in its design (Taylor et al, 2002:7). Small organisations, those without paid staff, or groups representing black and minority ethnic (BME) interests, reported feeling sidelined. Not all feedback was negative, others felt reassured by the presence of a structure around which VCS-local authority relations could be formalised (Taylor et al, 2002:7).

Development of the infrastructure of the VCS in general was seen as important in order for the VCS to modernise and be able to fulfil its part in Labour's vision of community governance. In 1999 the Active Community Unit was launched and given more resources to develop the voluntary sector. A Community Empowerment Fund of £36 million to support the voluntary sector's involvement in Local Strategic Partnerships, which promote joined-up working locally, was also launched (Kendall, 2003:68). Specific support for local communities was also made available, with initiatives like the New Deal for Communities set up to work with local communities, often via pre-existing community groups, in specially designated deprived areas. The Office of the Third Sector was created in 2006 to provide financial investment in the VCS and to create a policy environment sympathetic to the sector (OTS, 2010).

Kendall believes that all these changes "represent an unparalleled step change in the position of the voluntary sector in public policy" (Kendall, 2003:46), and indeed the degree of activity and the level of funds available for VCS development, backed up by a formal commitment in the form of the Compact, as well as the encouragement of local level compacts, was an unprecedented level of input into the VCS.

However, though Gordon Brown attributed the "quiet revolution" (cited in Fyfe, 2005:539) in this sector to Labour's various actions, the foundations of this work were laid by the Conservatives, which presented the VCS as a way of providing services that they it was keen to remove from the bureaucratic state, which was seen as stifling choice and innovation (Fyfe, 2005:539). The Conservatives were the first to change the grant-making system to one of contracts in local government funding to voluntary organisations, which resulted in a rise in overall VCS income, as well as a significant change in the way local authorities worked with and supported VCOs.

#### 1.6.4 The General Impact Upon the Voluntary and Community Sector

Changes to the context in which the voluntary sector is operating appears to include increased scope for VCS organisations to develop their skills, build their capacity, secure funding for service delivery and be involved in the design of these services. How has this affected what is a diverse and complex sector? Several trends can be seen. Firstly, the VCS

appears to be, in some parts at least, becoming more professional. Secondly, the sector appears to be dividing, with one part of the sector able to (and choosing to) benefit from the available opportunities to grow and become involved with government initiatives; and another potentially left behind. Thirdly, in response to the changes in context, there appears to be an increase in the number of intermediary bodies.

#### 1.6.4.1. Professionalisation

In the national and local Compacts discussed above, it is made clear that as well as rights, VCS organisations also have responsibilities. Higher standards of accountability and enhanced consultation with service users are expected (Home Office, 1998). As the sector has grown in terms of income, there have also been increasing levels of professionalism in the voluntary and community sector. One indicator of this is the rise in the number of paid jobs. As discussed in the introduction, the shift amongst some organisations from voluntary to paid staff has occurred because qualified people are needed to support organisations in working towards contractual goals. In many cases, however, volunteers may still outweigh paid staff, even in the very large national or multinational charities. Deakin summarises the divide created by professionalism succinctly:

The big national service delivery organisations have generally managed to acquire all the paraphernalia of full-blown 1980s management systems complete with mission statements, strategy documents and logos. Some small community-based organisations structured ‘around enthusiasms’ find difficulty in even comprehending the demands of the new universe, let alone responding to them. They exist to react directly to the needs of their members and their credibility depends on demonstrating their responsiveness in terms that those members will understand (Deakin, 1991:16)

In a study of VCOs’ engagement with the policy process, it was found that government valued and preferred to work with those organisations there were able to display ‘functional’ or ‘technical’ legitimacy, organisations that can demonstrate good ideas, provide quality evidence and have a good reputation in their policy area. The voluntary organisations’ representativeness was seen as less important (Taylor and Warburton, 2003; Craig et al, 2004). There is perhaps, therefore, a gap in how government view ‘legitimacy’



and how the VCS have traditionally seen it, as VCOs may perceive themselves as 'legitimate' if they are closely linked to service users, and act in accordance with their needs and preferences, rather than prioritising technical or functional proficiency.

Therefore, the sector may be becoming more professional in response to the changing policy environment, but this may impact upon priorities. Potentially VCOs may feel the need to focus on working effectively, efficiently and smoothly in order to gain contracts and influence, but the cost of this may be a loss of scope, time and flexibility to consult with lay members or service users. Of course, some VCOs, especially those with large resource of time and income, will be better placed to balance these tasks effectively.

#### 1.6.4.2. Division

Lord Dahrendorf saw the development of the national and local Compacts as a sign that the voluntary and community sector was being incorporated into part of the state apparatus (Dahrendorf, 2001, cited in Fyfe, 2005:543), which would prompt a split in the voluntary and community sector into two parts:

Increasingly it appears that 'the sector' is in fact two sectors: one genuinely voluntary, happily remote from government, hard-pressed to meet the charity tests of social usefulness – and the other linked to government as well as business, defined by its social objectives, subject to all sorts of controls and rules, and voluntary in only name. Sometimes the split runs through the same organisation. Often the old-style voluntary organisations feel neglected and even underprivileged, whereas their new-style colleagues wonder why they do not have civil-service privileges since they have become quasi-governmental organisations (Dahrendorf, 2003:xiv).

This 'split' is related to the changes in professionalism described above. It is those organisations that are connected with government and business that have more paid staff, and display more 'professional' tendencies in terms of procedures. Dahrendorf's approach implies that some VCOs are deliberately remote from government. Though this is undoubtedly true for some organisations, for many (especially local community groups or

those focusing on social welfare) the means to be remote – for example, enough private income to secure independence, and/or interest in a policy area that is relatively stable or uncontroversial – are not available. As grants have been replaced in some instances by contracts, such organisations may have little choice but to become involved with government. Deakin noted that the size of the organisation is also a very important factor in how a voluntary organisation will be able to respond to the new governance environment:

Some are well equipped to cope with it. Most large voluntary agencies have taken on board the lessons of the management revolution of the 1980s...Others have resisted but have recognised that survival has meant being able to play the game according to the new rules. Others are simply bewildered or hardly aware of what the rules are – ‘generic’ organisations operating at community level and many ethnic and women’s groups. Others still have been deliberately excluded because their objectives do not mesh with the project: they are the deplorable ‘pressure groups’ – mainly advocacy and campaigning bodies (Deakin, 1995:62)

The idea that some small community, ethnic or women’s groups are unable to work within the new context will be explored further below; as will the notion that advocacy and campaigning groups struggle to find a place in ‘the project’ of government engagement with the VCS.

#### 1.6.4.3. Intermediary Bodies

Intermediary bodies or larger charities working in the refugee and asylum field, or providing generic support for the VCS, can provide solutions to the pressures faced by medium or small organisations, helping them to engage effectively in the new climate of funding and partnership opportunities. Many small local groups may rely on a national head office for legal advice and support with capacity-building. Intermediary agencies may also provide research and information materials for smaller groups to use (Taylor, et al, 2002:5). Locally, umbrella groups of charities can offer a chance for the local voluntary sector to group together to have more of a voice with local authorities. Councils for Voluntary Services may play this role, though they may also be in the competition for funding, as are Local Development Agencies (Morris, 2000:423). In relation to refugee and asylum work, the

Refugee Council or Refugee Action work with small refugee community organisations on capacity-building, drawing up business plans, legal and employment training, and securing funding for services (Refugee Action, 2004; Refugee Council, 2008).

#### 1.6.4.4. Campaigning and Independence

Though few voluntary organisations undertake campaigning and, by their own estimate, tend to be unsuccessful in effecting change in policy (Kendall, 2003:104), the VCS nevertheless is an important voice in the public sphere in relation to a wide range of policy issues. In the past charities have been unsure of what counts as too 'political' and hence have tended to err on the side of caution, prompting recommendations that the law be made clearer (Strategy Unit, 2002:45). At present charities are not allowed to have 'political purposes' but they can campaign about issues, as long as they do not do so in an overtly political way. It is therefore permissible for them to voice criticism of government policy or advocate changes in the law as long as they don't lend support to a particular party (Strategy Unit, 2002:45).

The Compact governing relations between the VCS and the government recognised the part that voluntary organisations played as campaigning organisations, representing an important step in securing the independence of the VCS (Lewis, 2005a). The Compact committed the government in the following terms:

To recognise and support the independence of the [voluntary and community] sector, including its right within the law, to campaign, to comment on Government policy, and challenge that policy, irrespective of any funding relationship that might exist, and to determine and manage its own affairs (Home Office, 1998:8)

Of further concern in relation to independence, there is evidence that in the move towards contract culture and partnership arrangements, charities feel constrained in their abilities to perform advocacy or campaigning services. This can occur for two reasons. Firstly, contract management and delivery can mean less time for other work. The entire process can be time-consuming (Taylor et al, 2002:3). One study found that one local authority required voluntary organisations bidding for a contract worth more than £2,000 meet 17 conditions

in relation to employment practices and their premises; 11 in relation to management of finances; six in relation to accountability and also had requirements around equal opportunities, monitoring, and evaluation (Deakin, 1991:17). Larger organisations, again, may be able to meet these requirements more effectively without effecting other service provision (Morris, 2000). They can employ staff specifically to deal with contract requirements, whereas small agencies, some run by one core member or by volunteers, lack the time and resources to cover these demands as well as carrying out advocacy or campaigning work, which, though as valid, does not ensure the agencies survival and so cannot be treated as a priority.

Secondly, fears that funding to an organisation will be withdrawn or discontinued if campaigning work is not dropped, or reduced, can lead to self-censure before the issue arises (Taylor et al, 2002:3). One study found that funds *had* been withdrawn due to campaigning activities (Craig et al, 2004:225).

It has been argued that the best chance of influencing government is to be professional, and to show evidence of broadly supporting the government's core position whilst demonstrating the benefits of a small pragmatic change (Craig et al, 2004). This raises the question of how far a group fundamentally opposed to state policy over a certain issue can become involved in policy making forums, or in service delivery. The policy position of refugee community organisations may be so different to the Government stance on asylum and refugees issues that it is a barrier to their involvement in official policy networks.

If a voluntary organisation becomes too close to the state there is therefore the chance that this will "directly or indirectly influence their willingness or ability to represent important interests to the state. It could also alienate important contributors, including members, volunteers and private funders" (Kendall, 2003:78). In this situation it is arguable that such organisations have, as Dahrendorf predicted, lost certain aspects that make them truly voluntary and could also mean the loss of characteristics, such as ability to be close to the community, or to innovate, that made them a valuable partner to the government in the first place.

Another approach might be either to opt out of the system altogether, and raise money from donations and trusts. This is what can be called an 'outsider' strategy, though the reality of the situation appears to be more complex than the terms 'outsider' or 'insider' allow, with evidence that some voluntary organisations involved in campaigning will follow both insider or outsider strategies over time, or even at the same time. Alternatively, small charities may merge to be able to compete in the new environment (Morris, 2000:427). Indeed, it has been suggested that small refugee community organisations do this in order to be able to bid for refugee employment funds, which seems to be replacing some other statutory funding for RCOs (Hillier, 2007). It must also be realised, however, that not all organisations have a choice of strategy – it is often a matter of opportunity and resources (Taylor et al, 2002; Craig et al, 2004).

Overall it appears that in a situation of competition for funding, between voluntary and charitable organisations, both within the sector, and with organisations from the private sector, some VCOs are likely to fare much better. Larger organisations, with the staff and resources to put in the time to bid for contracts and to be able to meet strict monitoring requirements stipulated by commissioning authorities, appear to find it easier to adapt to the requirements of the new context in which the VCS is operating. However, that is not to say that small charities do not get involved in contracts for service provision. Rather it is the case that smaller VCOs tend to operate more precariously within the system, often unsure of the legal status of agreements they have entered into, unable to afford legal advice, and sometimes overwhelmed by the sheer number of potential partnership initiatives or networks on offer (Kendall, 2003; Morris, 2000; Taylor and Warburton, 2003; Craig et al., 2002). This has prompted a growth in VCS infrastructure organisations or policy-specific intermediary bodies to support them.

### **1.7 Refugee Community Organisations: Their Role in the Reception and Integration of Refugees in the UK**

Voluntary organisations have been involved in the reception of refugees ever since they first arrived in the UK. This section looks at the increasingly institutionalised role of refugee community organisations in the arrangements for reception and integration of asylum-seekers and refugees. It will be argued that two aspects of legislation since the 1990s – the

use of reception policy as a deterrent, and the incorporation of RCOs into the official mechanisms for reception and integration – have meant an increasingly heavy and diverse workload for RCOs, which may impinge on the other services that they are able to offer to the communities they aim to represent. This expansion of role must be considered against a situation of a rise in competition for a decreasing level of funding for this part of the voluntary sector.

#### 1.7.1 Refugee Community Organisations: Activities and Numbers

The difficulty in estimating the number of asylum-seekers, refugees or their associations is widely acknowledged in the literature. This is because of the way that statistics are recorded. For example, numbers of rejected asylum applications are not later amended if appeals are successful, voluntary returns are not recorded, and the numbers of people who have been refused asylum but who cannot be returned to their country of origin are not recorded. Combining a variety of estimates from different sources, Griffiths et al (2005:50) estimated the number of refugees in London alone to be over 300,000.

Regarding the number of refugee community organisations, again, it is very hard to make a reliable estimate. This is due to several factors. Firstly, no list of such organisations is kept. RCOs hold varying legal status, from friendly societies to registered charities or limited companies, and whilst records of charities and companies are kept, there is no one resource separating them out from all other charities or companies limited by guarantee. The number of small groups, which are not formally constituted, is impossible to ascertain accurately. Secondly, RCOs, particularly the small and informal associations, can rise and fall very rapidly. This means any database, such as those kept by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), like national refugee charities, is likely to be out of date quickly. Also, no one NGO keeps a record of all RCOs, but just those they are engaged with.

Despite the lack of data, the number of RCOs in the UK is estimated to be around 500-600, representing a growth from the mid-1980s (Griffiths et al, 2005:51). However, a 2001 study estimated that there may be as many as 5,500 BME organisations in the UK (defined as those led by members of black or minority ethnic groups), many of whom may provide at least some of their services to refugees (McLeod et al, 2001:1). The dividing line between

the two is indistinct, so this adds an extra difficulty to estimating the overall number of RCOs. If more data on such groups were available it would be interesting to consider how legislative changes have affected the number of RCOs.

Despite the difficulties in estimating the number of refugee associations, it does appear that the number has increased in response to the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act. The dispersal of asylum applicants to areas with few or no community organisations has prompted the creation of a considerable number of fledgling RCOs outside of London. However, the lack of data means that it is unclear whether this regional activity represents a movement of RCOs from London across the country, or whether the number in London remains constant. But it is clear that these regional RCOs are far smaller, more insecure and less professional than their counterparts in London. They have less funding, fewer paid staff and offer a narrower range of services (Griffiths et al, 2005).

#### 1.7.2 Refugee Community Organisations and Asylum Reception

Until the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act, reception and settlement of asylum-seekers and refugees had occurred on an ad hoc basis, with no one pattern of operation continuing from one group of asylum-seekers to another. Generally, policy was based on the tradition of cooperation between the Community Relations Unit or the Voluntary Services Unit (VSU) in the Home Office, voluntary bodies and NGOs (Griffiths et al, 2005:19). Generally, grants from the VSU would fund the work of NGOs and RCOs in their work with refugees – helping them to gain access to mainstream services by offering advice and language support, and by providing some alternative services themselves (Duke, 1996:463).

Much of the literature on the present policy environment emphasises the importance of RCOs to the integration and reception of asylum-seekers and refugees (Duke, 1996; Carey-Wood, 1997; Gold, 1992). Like the arguments outlined above for the value of the VCS, it is argued that refugee-led organisations and initiatives are more flexible, relevant and approachable than mainstream service provision. They can offer a chance for asylum-seekers and refugees to interact with a group of people with whom they have shared experiences, language and cultural understanding (Carey-Wood, 1997:39). However, more recently, commentators have questioned the degree to which RCOs are vital to reception

and integration (Griffiths et al, 2005:4; Zetter et al, 2006:10). Instead, it has been argued that it is the institutional structure in the UK that has led to the formation of so many RCOs. Zetter and Pearl used a comparative approach to highlight another model, one in which asylum-seekers are received and catered for directly by the government, as is the case in Finland, Denmark and the Netherlands. They believe it is the absence of government reception instruments in the UK that have forced refugee communities to organise and assist refugees, often co-nationals, or people of the same ethnic group (Zetter and Pearl, 2000:680).

It appears that two trends have increased the workload of, and demands upon, refugee community organisations. The first is that of the official incorporation of RCOs in policy and service networks. The second is the pressure of increasing levels of destitution amongst asylum-seekers, which means an increasing reliance on RCO services.

### 1.7.3 Refugee Community Organisations' Incorporation into Policy and Service Networks

The official involvement of RCOs in the networks for reception and integration could represent a chance for these often underfunded and marginalised groups to gain experience, funding and a voice in the policy affecting their members. However, their role under the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) and in plans for integration of refugees has been seen as marginal, and as a constraint on existing or potential activities. An overview of the workload and responsibilities of RCOs demonstrates that organisations run by and for refugees have responded to the changes in legislation and are now working to provide basic material assistance.

The 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act represents a departure from the ad hoc response to asylum-seekers that preceded it. For the first time there was to be a central body responsible for coordinating reception – the National Asylum Support Service. This centralised agency did not mean that asylum-seekers were to be catered for directly by the state, however. The role of NASS was to oversee nine regional consortia across the UK and service provision was to be delivered via a complex and regionally diverse system of partnership and contractual arrangements. Such partnerships between those involved in this scheme (including local authorities, NGOs, the private sector, the voluntary sector and



RCOs) were not new, but the institutionalisation of partnership arrangements for reception was (Griffiths et al, 2005:51).

Most importantly, RCOs were for the first time officially incorporated into reception and integration arrangements, but one study found that the voluntary sector generally, and RCOs specifically, had been “inadequately resourced and supported” (Griffiths, et al, 2005:46) and RCO managers often felt that their involvement represented ‘tokenism’ on the part of local authorities. Meetings took up a great deal of time, sometimes small RCOs had to close to allow the one staff member to attend. Paperwork too was extensive and involved, but overall RCOs did not feel their concerns were listened to. There are examples of RCO-led initiatives being overlooked in favour of large NGO or private sector-led provision, leading to a sense of frustration with NASS arrangements (Griffiths et al, 2005:184).

As well as being incorporated into policy for the reception of asylum-seekers, RCOs are also involved in the provision of services to help refugees to integrate once they have received refugee status or exceptional leave to remain. Government documents such as *Full and Equal Citizens: A Strategy for the Integration of Refugees into the United Kingdom* (Home Office, 2000:12) and *Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain* (Home Office, 2001:70) and *A New Model for National Refugee Integration Services in England* (Home Office, 2006:5) explicitly mention RCOs as having a part to play (along with the local community, NGOs, the private sector and local authorities) in helping recognised refugees to return to work, develop their education and training skills and learn English. Funding is offered, on a competitive basis, to NGOs and refugee organisations to develop their capacity, both via funding direct to them, and via funding of capacity-building projects run by larger voluntary bodies (Home Office, 2000:12; 2006:10). Refugees are also given a role in more specific policy areas – for example in the Refugee Employment Strategy RCOs will be expected to work in partnership with job centres, local authorities and other agencies to help refugees into work (DWP, 2005:12).

From March 2007 new asylum-seekers have been dealt with under the new asylum model (NAM). As yet, there is no literature about how the model is affecting asylum-seekers and

RCOs working with them. Initial plans for NAM envisaged that at least a third of asylum-seekers would be detained and that the process would be much quicker (Travis, 2006; Refugee Council, 2006b). Both of these elements could have reduced the burden on RCOs in terms of relieving immediate material needs of their clients. However, because of a lack of detention spaces, and inappropriate detention of those with complex cases, this has not occurred (NAO, 2009:6). Also, though decisions may be made faster, removal is more complex, and frequently takes time (NAO, 2009:8). Therefore asylum-seekers who have been rejected and have no forms of support still need assistance.

RCOs appear to occupy an uneasy and generally marginal position in policy networks. “In general, RCOs occupy an ambiguous role as junior ‘partners’ in the reception and integration frameworks” (Griffiths et al, 2005:58). ICAR found that on the whole refugee community organisations feel trapped by their ‘RCO’ status, on the margins of society and the voluntary sector, unable to connect fully with the mainstream and unsupported by local and national government despite the many asylum-seekers and refugees they work with (ICAR, 2005). It appears then, that involvement in the official structures of reception and integration does not necessarily help RCOs to develop their capacity, nor to make use of networks.

#### 1.7.4 Specific RCO Difficulties

There are key differences between immigrant groups (especially the longer established groups) and organisations serving refugees. For refugees it is less likely that they will have friends or family in the UK to help them settle (Kelly, 2003:39). In the process of fleeing their home countries, family and social networks may be broken as people are sent to fill different countries’ quotas indiscriminately (Joly, 1996:89). Refugees are often deeply traumatised by events in their home countries, by loss, and increasingly suffer due to the conditions of reception – for example distress is caused by higher levels of destitution and by detention (Oxfam and the Refugee Council, 2002; George, 2004:175-205; Refugee Action, 2006; Amnesty International, 2006). For asylum-seekers “without security of status and the associated citizenship rights, it is very difficult both structurally and emotionally to participate” in the host society (Bloch, 2000:86). For these reasons, it is harder for refugees and RCOs to mobilise and compete effectively for funding and a functional role in policy networks. Funding structures and incorporation policy may mean that RCOs try to represent

communities that are not really communities – for example, a study of Kurdish associations found that different Kurdish associations and organisations tend to identify themselves with different political parties in the country of origin (Wahlbeck, 1998:223). Problems can arise when funders or authorities feel that they have already funded or consulted a certain group, when in fact, they have not taken into account the different factions within it.

#### 1.7.4.1 Increased Asylum-seeker Dependency on RCOs due to Destitution

Refugee community organisations have had their workload and activities indirectly increased by various pieces of legislation during and since the 1990s. Legislative changes, all linked to the use of asylum reception standards as a deterrence to those who would consider seeking asylum in the UK, have dramatically increased the chances of asylum-seekers being destitute and without welfare entitlements (Zetter and Pearl, 2000; Oxfam and the Refugee Council, 2002; JRF, 2007). This left many asylum-seekers reliant on religious groups, friends and family or voluntary organisations, including refugee-led associations (Bloch, 2000).

From 1999 applicants could choose to remain in London with reduced benefits. Though this was designed to cater for those who had family or friends to stay with, it inevitably resulted in some applicants getting by on less. Those who refused their offer of dispersal accommodation lost their entitlement to support. Much of the dispersal process appeared to be led only by the availability of empty housing, and did not take into account language clusters, relevant services and support infrastructures, as legislation had proposed (Griffiths et al, 2005:46). Because of this, many asylum-seekers found themselves dispersed to unsuitable accommodation, often in areas where they became the target of discrimination and abuse (Winder, 2004:430). This meant an estimated 60% (Refugee Council, cited in Bloch, 2002:53) did abscond and go to London, where, without benefit entitlements, they, like those who had made in-country applications, relied heavily on friends, family and RCOs (Bloch, 2002:53). The right to work has also been gradually curtailed (Bloch, 2000:78). At present, asylum-seekers are not permitted to work at all.

A survey of RCOs conducted in 2002 found that levels of financial support for asylum-seekers were so low (representing 70% of Income Support) that 85% reported their clients

experienced hunger, 95% said the asylum-seekers they saw couldn't afford clothes or shoes and 80% said their clients were unable to maintain good health. Lack of money also meant asylum-seekers found it hard to stay in touch with their lawyers or to travel to important appointments (Oxfam and the Refugee Council, 2002:4).

Thus, parts of the VCS have responded to changes in asylum policy by working to provide more help with appeals, with benefits claims and also to give asylum-seekers essentials such as food and clothing. One report found the work of voluntary groups with asylum-seekers did much to tackle destitution that resulted from government policy:

We have been hugely impressed by the work being done by voluntary agencies, including many church groups, and some statutory bodies. However, all this work is essentially fire-fighting: an attempt to ameliorate the damage done by national policy (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2007:8)

This report found that the time and resources being used to meet basic needs of asylum-seekers meant that long-term integration work with asylum-seekers, refugees and residents was neglected, and that staff felt very demoralised and under pressure to be able to find funds to help destitute people that often had no other source of support (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2007).

#### 1.7.4.2 Competition and Funding

Generally, funding is the main problem for the BME and RCO sectors, which have been affected by public sector funding cuts since the 1980-1990s (McLeod et al, 2001), so much so that, "Conflict over resource allocation would appear to be endemic to the operation of RCOs and also to their relations with the other agencies in the refugee field" (Griffiths et al, 2005:207). Not only have funds, and targeted funds at that, decreased, the rise in the number of small BME and RCO groups means that competition between them is inevitable.

Competition may also occur between small, refugee-led organisations and larger charities, a scenario in which the RCOs are at a disadvantage because they don't often have the same track record, time, level of experience, specific staff or the match funding that some funding

streams require (Griffiths et al, 2005:83; McLeod et al, 2001:5). Competition for funding even occurs between RCOs serving the same community, for although they may have similar aims, competition for funding can force them into opposition with each other. Conversely, in order to attract funds and status within wider policy networks RCOs may feel compelled to enter partnerships with other RCOs or enter under umbrella arrangements that ignore tensions in that 'community'. The formation of umbrella Somali groups is an example of this (Griffiths et al, 2005:163).

Competition between RCOs is not equal. There is evidence of two kinds of RCO. The first, often catering for a longer established nationality group, has been able to build on expertise, its track record and experiences to consolidate and expand their service provision. The second type of group lives on the margins – with a weak funding base, no paid staff and struggling to keep going. Newer influxes of asylum-seekers, those with no home country experience of voluntary organisations, those without links to Britain or pre-existing groups of co-nationals, and those with language differences (such as Francophone Africans) tend to make up the second group (Zetter and Pearl, 2000:683). Funding organised on a competitive basis may be unable to take into account these differences in experience and ability and therefore some nationalities or ethnicities may be overlooked in terms of representation in policy networks and underfunded. It has been argued that if RCOs are to form part of the integration and reception response, appropriate and accessible funds need to be made available to them (Refugee Council, 2006a). It may also be necessary that consideration is given to the different resources available to groups bidding for money.

It is relevant to consider the assertion made by Ling (2000, cited in Griffiths et al, 2005:56-7) that the use of partnerships to provide services by government can be seen as the development of governability, where:

Governability...is concerned with making the voluntary sector, user groups and others fit to be partners within a new strategic arena...prior to their participation in the partnership they must demonstrate their capacity to be good partners (Ling, (2000), cited in Griffiths et al, 2005:57)

It may be the case, then, that the involvement of RCOs in provision for refugees and reception of asylum-seekers, with the bureaucracy and monitoring requirements that this entails, acts, whether inadvertently or not, as a limitation on the other functions RCOs aim, and their communities wish them, to perform. Indeed, there is some evidence that a focus on immediate needs means 'transformative work' to develop the capacity of a community group or of individuals in it, is neglected due to a lack of resources (ICAR, 2005; Bloch, 2002:174). For example, in the field of accommodation, Zetter and Pearl (2000:683) argue that, in having to provide housing that was once more freely available from statutory sources, RCOs have a conflict between working for and representing their communities on one hand, and having to manage and sustain income and housing stock on the other. Critically, it would be of further interest to explore the extent to which RCOs feel more or less constrained in their ability to promote their culture or campaign on behalf of their communities, because of their focus on meeting basic material and practical needs of their communities. There is some evidence to suggest that RCOs are currently 'defensive': they are reacting to problems encountered by their communities and are not able to develop their communities, as a whole or on the part of individuals (Griffiths et al, 2005:201).

#### 1.7.4.3 Outsider Status

The possibility that RCOs may be very much an 'outsider' group, as discussed above, is given weight by considering the funding available to such groups. While some BME groups are regularly funded by a range of local authorities, there are some clear patterns, including the fact that there is "little and often no funding for migrant, *refugee*, faith and specific ethnic groupings" (Davies and Cooke, 2002:21 emphasis added). In its 2002 review the Treasury found that the sections of the voluntary and community sector receiving the lowest level of central government funds allocated to the VCS was 'other' and 'asylum-seekers and refugees', receiving 0.1% each of total funds. In terms of local authority funding, social-service based VCOs received 51% of funding, whilst, again, refugees and asylum-seekers received the least, 0.4% (HM Treasury, 2002:13).

### 1.8 Conclusion

Asylum has become an important political issue, both for politicians and the public, as a result of several key factors. The reduction in the need for labour immigration meant that

asylum became the focus of restrictions at a time when worldwide refugee numbers were beginning to rise, reflected by an increase in the number of asylum applications across the world.

The impact of the European Union on asylum policy in the UK has largely been to strengthen the domestic restrictions that were already in place. This is partly because the nature of EU cooperation has favoured restriction, and partly because the UK has opted out of the more human rights-focused aspects of policy, whilst taking advantage of pooled control resources. The part that the EU has played in making asylum and immigration security issues, linked to the fears and threat of international crime, is highly important as it feeds into the language and debate of domestic asylum politics.

The use of the 'race card' in relation to immigration is a widely accepted concept in the literature. It appears that as the emphasis on controlling entry has shifted to asylum, politicians appear to play the 'asylum card' in the same way, hoping for electoral success, whilst at the same time raising fears and concerns among the electorate about asylum. Related to this is the impact of changing discourse of the welfare state, and of the asylum-seeker too. Those seeking asylum are now viewed with suspicion, based on assertions that the low number of acceptances automatically mean that many seeking asylum are really economic migrants who are eager to claim welfare state resources to which they have no legitimate claim.

Not one of these factors seems to be particularly important over the others, rather they are inter-linked and interdependent. It is unlikely politicians would have played a specific 'asylum card' if unskilled immigration was still allowed on a large scale; the bogus/genuine distinction is unlikely to have arisen if politicians hadn't been so keen to raise the issue of asylum, nor if the numbers remained at the 1980s levels. Undoubtedly, there has been a change in patterns of asylum seeking and in the numbers seeking asylum, it is not just government rhetoric. However, when the situation is discussed in public debates, is rarely contextualised in relation to the rise in conflicts and refugees worldwide, or in relation to the changing context of labour immigration. This has led to highly hostile and typically

underdeveloped public perceptions of the issue, on which further restrictive policies are competed over and enacted by mainstream politicians.

The restrictive policies on asylum that have emerged since the 1980s have been challenged to some extent by the domestic Courts. The voluntary sector, including but not limited to refugee-led organisations, has responded to the changes in asylum and refugee policy by working to support increasingly destitute individuals. At the same time the environment in which RCOs are operating is changing because of the new role envisaged for the voluntary and community sector by successive governments. New Labour has a high regard and enthusiasm for the voluntary and community sector and, in line with its commitment to the Third Way and communitarianism, portrays the voluntary sector as a vital counterbalance to the state and the market, as well as providing vital opportunities for the reinvigoration of civic life. Accordingly, resources made available to the VCS and the official recognition of its role represent opportunities for the VCS to engage with the government at all levels, whilst their independence is assured in the national and local Compacts. At present there is more scope for the voluntary and community sector to be involved in policy design and planning, not just as agents of service delivery. However, this new governance context appears better suited to larger, well resourced VCOs who can commit time and effort to the complex process of contractual bidding. RCOs tend to be small, local and may be politically at odds with the Government.

Though refugee-led organisations have been involved in the reception and settlement of refugees for some time, recent developments that have made them part of the official policy response do not seem to have increased their funding options, nor their engagement with the wider policy framework. Indeed, involvement with NASS and integration schemes may have increased their responsibilities. This, coupled with asylum policies that create destitution and reliance on local communities, means that RCOs appear to have proliferated, diversified and taken on more of the burden of reception. However, it does not appear that sufficient funds or support structures are in place to help these often small groups to cope, particularly the newer groups in the dispersal regions.



Funding structures based on competition may not suit RCOs. They are a diverse group, many lack the knowledge, experience and time that other larger NGOs, often applying in the same funding stream, possess. The structure for funding also creates competition between RCOs, even those with shared aims. This can create hollow 'contingent communities' where no such feeling exists and may therefore lead to some groups being underfunded, compelled into difficult partnerships, or excluded altogether. The increasing focus on the meeting of immediate material needs may be preventing RCOs from developing their communities and working effectively on their behalf.

## **Chapter 2: Social Capital Theory**

Social capital is a concept that has yet to be definitively written about by any one theorist, or even school of theorists. There are a considerable number of books, studies and articles ranging from inter-country comparison of national stocks of social capital, to micro-level analysis of social capital in relation to housing. Despite the complexity of the concept, social capital is highly relevant to refugee and asylum issues, and to the functioning of refugee community organisations in particular. This is because UK policy makers have taken a keen interest in social capital, and view it as a resource that is highly useful to communities. In Section 2.7 of this chapter the research questions will be discussed. Before that, however, there will be a brief discussion of different types of social capital theory. Then the most relevant aspects of the theory to refugee community organisations – bonding, bridging and linking social capital (which will be defined below) – will be explored in more depth. In order to operationalise the concepts of bridging, bonding and linking social capital, Rex's functions of immigrant associations will be used. These are introduced in Section 2.6.2.1.

### **2.1 Social Capital and Policy Making**

Social capital is relevant to the consideration of the operation of the voluntary and community sector because of the way that the concept has gained importance in policy debates in recent years. As discussed in Chapter 1, the Labour government has been enthusiastic about the potential of the voluntary and community sector to address social problems when working with government and local authorities. The potential power of local community groups is a strong theme in the government literature and social capital is a part of this. Kendall writes that the concept of social capital:

[N]ow provides a fashionable and politically resonant conceptual focal point for discussions of the voluntary sector's actual and potential contributions to social 'infrastructure' and 'social cohesion' through fostering community level relationships and building trust (Kendall, 2003:115)

The concept of social capital appears in New Labour speeches (Lewis, 2005:125), but is often not expanded upon. What exactly is meant by social capital is generally unclear, beyond a

simplistic assertion that people need to work together – for example in Blair’s speech to the NCVO Annual Conference in 1999:

We have always said that human capital is at the core of the new economy. But increasingly it is also social capital that matters too – the capacity to get things done, to cooperate, the magic ingredient that makes all the difference. Too often in the past government programmes damaged social capital – sending in the experts but ignoring community organisations, investing in bricks and mortar but not in people. In the future we need to invest in social capital as surely as we invest in skills and buildings (Blair, 2005).

This shows that the government believes that social capital can be invested in. How this is to be achieved in the long run is not discussed in detail, but investment in voluntary groups is seen as one way. This conception of social capital, in which it is embodied in associations, and existing in ‘stocks’ that can be added to, most reflects the work of Robert Putnam. His contribution to the social capital debate, as well as the criticisms of his approach, will be analysed further below.

In 2002 the Performance and Innovation Unit (based in the Cabinet Office) held a seminar on social capital that aimed to understand the policy implications of the theory. In this seminar the conception of social capital presented most closely resembled that of Putnam – speakers cited his work and there was a discussion of bridging, bonding and linking social capital – all his terms (Performance and Innovation Unit, 2002:4). Another presentation at the seminar talked of the need to build social capital to tackle social policy problems, in relation to crime, and also in relation to racial cohesion (Roche, 2002:3). Similarly, after the Summer 2001 riots in parts of the UK a report was commissioned into Community Cohesion in the affected areas. The resulting report highlighted social capital and its link to community cohesion. In this document Putnam, again, is influential (Home Office, 2002c:73-4).

Putnam’s influence on New Labour is most clear in a speech given by David Blunkett, when Home Secretary, in March 2004 to the Ash Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The

speech, which summarises much about New Labour's approach to social capital, integration, minorities and governance, mentions Robert Putnam three times, and indicates a working relationship with the theorist:

...I have had long-standing links with the Kennedy School as a whole through Professor Robert Putnam (Blunkett, 2004:1).

Labour's commitment to the concept of social capital, and more specifically to the Putnam approach to social capital that depicts a decline in societal social capital, is made clear throughout the speech:

[C]hange...can undermine the cohesion, the social capital, the networks and support structures which are [a] crucial part of every area of human activity – economic, educational and personal and family life. Old certainties have disappeared – but there is no room for nostalgia, we have to develop a new sense of identity and belonging – and government has to look to build new forms of social capital, new networks and new cohesion which will help us all to thrive in the new world in which we find ourselves (Blunkett, 2004:2).

The speech continues:

This is why government is still needed today – because left purely to individual choice we will not invest enough in social capital, and not in a co-ordinated enough way, to respond to the challenges of a rapidly changing world (Blunkett, 2004:4)

Blunkett's commitment to social capital, and to a Putnam-based belief in the importance of social capital, to a functioning democracy and civil society is also one of the main points of his 2001 book about democracy and civil society (Blunkett, 2001). Here, again, the need for government to enable communities to deal with social issues, to allow social capital to develop is a key theme.

Social capital has continued to be important to Labour under Gordon Brown's leadership. For example, the importance of the voluntary sector to that 'stock' is mentioned in the 2009 *Putting the Frontline First: Smart Government* document, which sets out reform of public services:

The past two decades also show that a partnership between government, citizens and civic society is essential for the renewal of our communities and to enhance the stock of social capital. Government does not provide all the answers, but neither does it crowd out social initiative. The UK has a wealth of vibrant communities and half of us volunteer regularly. Government's role is to nurture and unlock even more civic potential. So alongside reforms to improve public services, the Government has also worked to strengthen the social bonds of civic activity (HM Treasury, 2009:13-14)

It must be noted that there is an issue as to whether state intervention *can* create social capital, at least, as we see below, this is an area for further investigation. From the above contributions it is clear that New Labour do believe government action to create social capital is not only preferable, but vital. Lewis (2005) raises the salient point that in the UK, and to some extent within EU debates, politicians want to work in *partnership* with voluntary organisations to build social capital, which contrasts with the situation in the United States. In the US, where the term first became popular in policy circles, theorists, again most notably Putnam, envisage voluntary organisations working "autonomously...to build social capital" (Lewis, 2005:126).

It is argued, therefore, that Putnam's conception of social capital has been considerably influential with policy makers in the UK. It needs to be noted too, that it is his circa 2000 definition of social capital that is found in public policy debates, for example:

[W]e...must recognise the importance of social capital – the informal norms of trust and co-operation which are created and strengthened by voluntary association in civil society (Blunkett, 2001:17)

As will be discussed below Putnam's theory on the concept has developed since this period, moving away from an emphasis on norms and trust, towards the importance of networks and recognition of the complexity of the concept.

## **2.2 Refugee Community Organisations, Cohesion and Refugee Integration and Social**

### **Capital**

The way that Refugee Community Organisations have been depicted in government literature on refugee integration also connects to the concept of social capital. As discussed in Chapter 1, refugee integration documents have as a central aim the building up of the role of RCOs in reception and integration policy. For example:

[A key challenge is to] build the capacity of RCOs, most of which depend on volunteer effort and other resources of their members (Home Office, 2004:15)

Government plans include funding to boost capacity, and make funding more accessible to these groups. The government appears to have a strong belief in the ability of RCOs to forge links between communities, and to reduce the isolation of service users:

The enormously valuable work of RCOs in helping refugees to acclimatize to life in the UK has already been emphasised. Based on the self-help principle, and usually run on slender resources, they build links between refugees and the wider community and provide English-language training and employment support (Home Office, 2004:20)

The same document talks of:

[RCOs'] immediate and positive impact on the lives of the individuals they involve, both refugees and members of the existing community (Home Office, 2004:28)

The government's commitment to RCOs is not as clear in regards to funding, however. In 2008 the Department of Communities and Local Government released *Cohesion Guidance for Funders: Consultation*. Though this does not mention RCOs explicitly, it is highly relevant

not only because the recommendations have the potential to affect single-group funding, but because the arguments presented for doing so are based on social capital.

The consultation presents social capital as “the ‘social glue’ between people, organisations and communities that enable them to work together to pursue shared objectives” (DCLG, 2008a:8). The three categories of social capital are presented as bonding, bridging and linking social capital, but bridging is prioritised:

Bridging – formed from the connections between people who have less in common, but may have overlapping interest, for example, between neighbours, colleagues, or between different groups within a community (DCLG, 2008a:8).

It goes on to say:

We know that cohesion is higher amongst those who *bridge* for almost every ethnic group. Analysis of the Citizenship Survey shows that having friends from different backgrounds is a strong predictor of community cohesion, even when other factors are taken into account. Bridging can therefore reinforce cohesion. For this reason, we are particularly keen for funders to use resources to promote *bridging* activities wherever appropriate. Those who have *bonding* social capital are more likely to bridge BUT when this is broken down by ethnicity this only holds for White and Chinese people (DCLG, 2008a:8, italics in the original).

In response to this two things are important: firstly community cohesion as related to having friends from a different background appears a somewhat tautological argument – you have friends of a different background surely, because you live in an environment of community cohesion? But secondly, and most relevant to funding, the Department of Communities and Local Government were keen to prioritise funding bridging work over bonding work. What the final sentence appears to imply is that bonding social capital is not important for all ethnic groups in relation to bridging. Much of the work on community cohesion in the *Our Shared Future* report, which prompted this funding guidance, emphasized the importance of integration and cohesion in the aftermath of riots in

Bradford, Oldham and Burnley in 2001 and the terrorist attacks in London in 2005 (CIC, 2007:15, 57). Therefore, though age and other factors of difference are mentioned, ethnicity is the central divide of concern. This is not to say that the document does not recognise the value of activities for specific ethnic groups, but the main message is that funders should use their influence to encourage bridging activities between different ethnically-defined communities. There are a number of recommendations, but this section on how funders should assess a project is typical:

Our aim is for funders to make better use of funding to maximise opportunities for building relationships across communities, so that projects delivered for a particular group in isolation are not seen as the only option for working with communities experiencing cohesion challenges. So the first question is really one to draw out:

- whether the group or community in question is being supported by mainstream provision or has a clear need for services outside of the mainstream
- whether the single group work proposed for funding by the grant is genuinely the only way to offer the right skills and knowledge for the delivery of services
- whether funding is being awarded in a way that builds cohesion, or whether an activity or resource that only caters to one group or community will be more divisive (DCLG, 2008a:17)

It will be of interest to see how this funding agenda has affected refugee community organisations and their funding options.

The changing context within which RCOs are operating (both in reference to the defensive action that appears to be occurring in the asylum field, the move towards an official role in reception provision and a funding agenda that prioritises cross-group working) makes their current situation interesting. The language used about RCOs and their functions in the refugee integration literature – of community, linkages, and support for people based on few resources is highly suggestive of social capital. That social capital centres on connections between people, and on associational activity, also make it a highly relevant theory for the consideration of RCOs. Finally, and more recently, social capital has been explicitly mentioned in the cohesion literature in relation to community groups in general. It is for



these reasons that this analysis will consider the networks and resources of RCOs via the lens of social capital theory.

## **2.3 Social Capital**

There are three main approaches to social capital. One approach focuses on collective action, another on networks. Finally, what is referred to here as ‘The Putnam school’<sup>8</sup> – a focus on collective stocks of social capital, which, though controversial, has been most influential with policy makers. The collective action and network approaches will be briefly reviewed below, followed by a more in-depth analysis of Putnam and Woolcock, as the most relevant to this research.

Before starting the discussion of the different schools, however, it is worth noting the contribution of Bourdieu, with whom modern interest in the concept started. His definition of social capital shares much with the authors that will be discussed more fully.

Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership of a group (Bourdieu, 1986:248)

Bourdieu used social capital to explain how networks (of families in particular) protected their social status by sharing key resources (1979; 1986). Therefore, for Bourdieu, social capital was negative for those outside of the privileged network. This differs greatly from the positive way in which social capital is portrayed in the government literature. The reality is more complex than either of these approaches allow, as social capital appears to have potential to help and hinder in different circumstances. However, Bourdieu’s concept of social capital remained undeveloped compared to his work on cultural and human capital.

### **2.3.1. Collective Action Social Capital**

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<sup>8</sup> These terms are based on the useful and thorough discussion of types of social capital in Curtis (2007).

James Coleman and Elinor Ostrom both use social capital as part of a broader theory addressing collective action.

Coleman, who Putnam cites as an influence on his own work on social capital, wrote about social capital in deprived inner-city communities in the United States (1988). His research focused on close-knit Catholic community networks and shared norms and the positive impact that these factors had in relation to children's educational achievements (their human capital). In looking at social capital in this way he highlighted the positive aspects for an *entire group*. He defined social capital as:

[A] public good that is created by and may benefit not just those whose efforts are required to realise it, but all who are part of a structure (Coleman, cited in Field, 2003:23-4)

This quote demonstrates one view of social capital that is broadly shared with Putnam, and that is also present in government discourse about social capital, the idea that there can be a general 'stock' of social capital benefiting a given community, whether or not they are directly involved in the network or norm that creates it<sup>9</sup>. For example, an effective Parent Teachers Association will improve the education of all the children in a school, whether or not their parents are participants. As we will see in regards to Putnam, it can be argued that an entire community can benefit from this general 'stock' of social capital, even if they themselves are unconnected, or even opposed, to the norm. It is this general sense of good for the community that policy makers wish to create.

Importantly, Coleman believes in social capital resulting from networks (like the Catholic Church in his research) and *norms* (Field, 2003; Baron et al, 2000:6). Putnam's own use of this concept has been heavily criticised because of the way that he applies norms, such as *generalised* social trust beyond the scope of small communities, as Coleman intended.

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<sup>9</sup> For Putnam, however the size of the community is far larger – a region or even nation – than that envisaged by Coleman. Coleman's communities tended to be small, local, and specifically connected – e.g. around a faith group.

Putnam's account has been at least partially revised in response to this criticism, as will be discussed below.

Ostrom, like Coleman, uses social capital not as a standalone concept (as Putnam tends to), but as part of a broader framework. Her use of the concept is in relation to development – which represents an important strand of social capital thought. For Ostrom, social capital is one resource available to developing communities. Like Woolcock, whose work will be discussed below, Ostrom is concerned with how social capital interacts with human and financial capital in development scenarios.

Ostrom defines social capital as “the arrangement of human resources to improve flows of future income” (Ostrom, 1995:132). It is the linkages between people that she argues makes all the difference in jointly owned and run development projects. For example, Ostrom's research into farmer-owned irrigation systems shows that a project with good social capital may perform more efficiently than an equivalent project with *more* physical capital (i.e. investment from international agencies), but less social capital. Social capital here, for Ostrom, includes the formation of rules, and shared understanding and expectations amongst the farmers working on the project (Ostrom, 1995).

### 2.3.2 Network Social Capital

Other authors have adopted social capital as part of network theory. In this school authors look at the social capital resources of individuals, rather than of the collective.

Nan Lin is the most prominent theorist in this school. His work (2001) represents a thorough and comprehensive theory of social capital, which, unlike most theories of social capital, explores the motivation of those pursuing resources, and those who give them. His theory focuses on how individuals access social capital by being part of a network. Because his work centres on people in companies, much is made of how social capital resources are tied into certain positions in a hierarchy, rather than necessarily possessed by that post-holder as an individual (Lin, 2001).

Lin's work builds on the often cited work of Granovetter who argued that different types of network tie are useful for different things. His research found that a 'weak' tie (for example to someone in another group, with few or no members in common) would better provide particular types of resource (including, importantly, new information) when compared to close-knit networks (1973:1370-1). Lin's work also contains one of the most sophisticated accounts of types of social capital and different kinds of action in relation to it. Briefly, he raises the idea of two types of social capital. The first is homophilous links – connections to others who are similar in terms of background and access to resources. The second is heterophilous links – connections to others who are not similar (Lin, 2001:47).

## **2.4 The Work of Putnam and the Putnam School**

As seen above in relation to New Labour, Putnam's work on social capital has been influential and popular amongst policy-makers. His work on social capital emphasises the positives that can come from social capital. For him, the key idea is that civic associations and connections between citizens are of use to people as individuals, but also of value to civic society generally.

This section will briefly examine Putnam's work chronologically, as it has developed over time. Criticisms made of his work will also be reviewed. Though many of these criticisms are valid, some no longer stand due to subsequent revisions by Putnam.

### **2.4.1 Putnam's Work on Italy and the Concept of Trust**

Putnam's work on social capital started with his study of the impact of long-term civic culture on political institutions in Italy. In comparing the civic nature of citizens in the North and South of the country, social capital appears at the end of the book as an explanatory factor, but is not theoretically developed or tested in the main body of the text. In this work, Putnam viewed trust as "an essential component of social capital", alongside norms of behaviour, like reciprocity and networks – or social relationships (Putnam, 1993:170). Here, he is referring to *generalised social trust*, not political trust or trust felt towards family or acquaintances. The very notion of generalised trust has been called into question in regards to social capital. It has been argued that general social trust measured at high aggregate levels is not detailed enough to reveal sufficient detail, for example, about how trust is

actually structured between different groups, such as different classes, ethnic groups or sectors in a society (Foley and Edwards, 1999:152). It is also the case that notions of trust and norms are the result of networks. Norms of reciprocity, fairness and cooperation cannot exist as stand-alone concepts; they need a network in order to exist (Woolcock, 1998:182). Hence, these commentators believe that, though norms are a vital result of social capital, they are not themselves representative of it.

Perhaps because of the difficulty in successfully researching notions of trust, and the criticism that it is too vague a conception to be operationalisable, Putnam's work has since developed in a way that gives less emphasis to trust as the basis of social capital. Though he remains committed to the idea that generalised social trust "lubricate[s] the inevitable frictions of social life" (Putnam, 2000:135), in later work, signaling a move away from norms and values towards a more structural approach, Putnam prioritises networks as the primary component of social capital:

The idea at the core of the theory of social capital is extremely simple: Social networks matter (Putnam and Goss, 2002:6).<sup>10</sup>

*Networks*, rather than norms of reciprocity or trust, became the later focus of analysis, though Putnam still asserts that their value is in producing both of these social goods.

#### 2.4.2 Bowling Alone

Putnam's *Bowling Alone* and other articles written around the same time (Putnam, 1996; 2001) have been highly influential with policy makers, as seen above, and also in academic literature. In this work on the declining levels of social capital in the US, Putnam uses several measures of social capital – formal and informal engagement in networks, political participation of various forms, religious and civic engagement with the community and volunteering – to show that connectedness between individuals is in decline and this has

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<sup>10</sup> See also Putnam (2001:41); Putnam (1999 cited in Baron et al, 2000:10-11)

the result of declining levels of trust and reciprocity (2000)<sup>11</sup>. He then explores a range of potential 'culprits' to explain this decline by comparing trends across time. Putnam believes that the decline of a more 'civic' generation, along with the rise in television watching (along with lesser 'accomplices') are found to be the most significant factors, leading to a situation of less overall societal social capital (Putnam, 2000).

#### 2.4.3 Contextualising Social Capital

There is not scope here to fully review the criticisms and counter-arguments made in relation to Putnam's work. Some criticisms, in particular the role of the state in social capital creation, are worth mentioning, however.

Putnam's perception of social capital as a property of communities or nations that can be evaluated by consolidation of national-level survey data – as in his work on the United States – has been criticised because of the way that it does not acknowledge possible socioeconomic and demographic differences. Foley and Edwards argue:

In cases where social capital is measured at the national level by aggregating survey responses into a 'grand mean', it cruises at an altitude from which differences among...contexts are indistinguishable (Foley and Edwards, 1999:149).

By aggregating data to the national or state level in the U.S., Putnam has been accused of ignoring issues of class inequalities and the fact that social capital may be experienced and accessed differently by people of different socioeconomic groups. Though his approach is similar to that of Putnam, Hall raises this issue of socioeconomic distinctions in work on social capital in Britain. Hall believes that the relative robustness of social capital in Britain (despite experiencing similar changes to the US, for example in levels of TV watching in the same period) is, in part, due to the changes in class structure as the economy has moved

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<sup>11</sup> At this time the concept of trust was still part of his theory of social capital, though less so than in his earlier work on Italy (1993).

away from industrialisation towards a service-based economy, thus making more of the population middle class (Hall, 1999:437; 2002:38).<sup>12</sup>

Though Putnam does include an overview of large-scale socioeconomic changes, the collection of data is again at the national level (Putnam, 2000). Thus it has been argued that his data analysis is not detailed enough to reach the conclusion he makes about television and associated private entertainment habits being overwhelmingly to blame for the decline in social capital. Skocpol demonstrates this point with reference to the changing employment market. She argues that by not considering the *types* of organisations that working women join, and by not providing a picture of how formal organisations began to decline, the analysis risks missing the fact that these changes may have left organisations bereft of capable, competent, connected and educated leaders to maintain and encourage them (Skocpol, 1996:2). Hence, the use of aggregate measures at nation levels can simplify the possible explanations behind changes in social capital (like the rise in women working) and the true distribution of social capital in a socioeconomic sense.

#### 2.4.4 Impact of State on Social Capital

Another aspect of context that Putnam's earlier work on social does not touch upon is the impact of the state or governance structures on social capital:

[Putnam] often speaks of social capital as something that arises or declines in a realm apart from politics or government (Skocpol, 1996:3)

Skocpol argues convincingly that the US government had an important role in the beginnings and maintenance of the kind of formal voluntary organisations that Putnam bases much of his analysis of the declining social capital upon. For example, a number of large voluntary organisations, including the American Legion and the American Farm Bureau, were not set up by local interested parties, but built from the top down, by the military and the US Agriculture department respectively (Skocpol, 1996:4). The government,

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<sup>12</sup> Hall acknowledges that the concept of class is open to debate – but notes that the changing labour market in Britain has moved more people into the types of jobs and social situations that are typical of middle class access to, and patterns of, social capital.

she is keen to emphasise, can create social change, for example, the number of groups working for women's and ethnic minorities' rights increased *after* the 1964 Civil Rights Act (Skocpol, 2004:1). This analysis, though not in-depth, nor proposing a clear theoretical approach to understanding the impact of the state on social capital, highlights the way in which Putnam's perspective dwells on the actions of individuals as if in a vacuum, or rather as individuals affecting institutions, and not the other way around. This is also demonstrated in reference to his work on Italy. It has been pointed out that those areas deemed most 'civic' are also those where socialist and Catholic parties deliberately founded secondary associations as a way of spreading their political influence – the analysis does not take this sort of political action into account. Also, the way in which the Italian state has treated the South differently is not seen by Putnam as a factor in explaining differences in civic culture, though others believe this is highly relevant (Tarrow, 1996:394). Analysis of social capital in Britain also highlights the importance of considering government policy effects on social capital. Robust social capital levels in Britain have been tentatively attributed to changes in education levels (brought about by changes in education policy) and the ongoing and increasing encouragement by the state of the voluntary sector providing public services (Hall, 1999).

#### 2.4.5. Putnam's Later Work

In later work Putnam does, as we have seen in relation to trust and networks, further develop his ideas on social capital. In *Democracies in Flux* Putnam recognises the impact of politics, or "both the institutions of government and the particular policies that those institutions promulgate" upon social capital (Putnam and Goss, 2002:17). Though he does give some examples of how policies could promote social capital – for example, by granting tax subsidies to voluntary organisations – and discusses how an open, fragmented and decentralised state structure would make it easier for citizens to engage with democratic institutions, discussion of this point is brief and Putnam views it as an area requiring further investigation:

The myriad ways in which the state encourages or discourages the formation of social capital have been underresearched (Putnam and Goss, 2002:16)



Many questions about the role of the state, and of other governance structures on the state, remain unanswered. How different policies maintain or destroy social capital; how some types of desirable social capital are to be promoted, and other negative types discouraged; is it indeed possible for the government to create social capital over a short timeframe, and is it viable? These questions, and others, are of relevance to the field and worthy of consideration, especially given the enthusiasm amongst policy makers for social capital, and their belief in the capacity of state action to nurture and create it.

As well as this recognition of the possible role of the state, Putnam has further developed his original concept to recognise the potential 'dark side' of social capital. Though he does not tend to cite and engage with critics directly in his later work, the overall tone is far less normative and social capital is no longer presented only as a positive:

[W]e cannot assume that social capital is everywhere and always as a good thing...we must take care to consider its potential vices, or even just the possibility that virtuous forms have unintended consequences that are not socially desirable (Putnam, 2002:8-9)

Alongside this recognition Putnam has developed a way of analysing different types of social capital, which will be explored further in the next section. Suffice to say at this point, Putnam acknowledges that some types of social capital – particularly 'bonding' social capital (most like that found in small, tight-knit, homogenous communities) – are more likely than others to be associated with some types of negative outcomes.

## **2.5 The Work of Woolcock**

Woolcock, like Ostrom, considers social capital as part of development theory. Working to synthesise two strands of development studies that use the concept of social capital (one centred on micro level or 'top-down' initiatives, the other on macro or 'top-down' development), he produced definitions of four distinct types of social capital. The concepts are useful in two ways, as they encompass social capital separated by level (macro or micro) and by type of interaction (embedded or autonomous) (Woolcock, 1998:166). These strands, though in Woolcock's analysis are perhaps interpreted in a way more useful to

development theory, represent a more sophisticated attempt at separating social capital into types that are analytically useful and distinct. Woolcock's essential contribution is recognition of different levels of analysis and a step towards understanding interaction between the macro and micro levels. This approach has scope to talk about social capital as the property of a large collective (such as a nation) with some degree of detail and understanding that goes beyond aggregates of individual-level data – for example via the examination of the impact of the state on society, and vice versa.

Woolcock, like Putnam, makes it clear that negative outcomes of social capital are more likely if only one type of social capital is present at the given level. For example, at the macro level, if a state is credible and functioning well, but does not have links to society, it is less likely to provide that which the population needs. Putnam has been criticised for not explaining how civic engagement is positively linked with good government (Boix and Posner, 1998:689). Woolcock's formulation of social capital has scope to explain such linkages. Also, it has more scope to cover the potential negatives of social capital (Portes, 1998:14; Portes and Landolt, 1996). For example, if a small community is highly integrated (dense links amongst its members) but holds no links with extra-community groups, it is likely to be inward looking and negative for both insiders and outsiders. Thus, this theory recognises that, in regards to the four strands of social capital: "collectively they are resources to be optimized, not maximized" (Woolcock, 1998:158).

## **2.6. Using Social Capital to Analyse Refugee Community Organisations**

The original prompt for considering RCOs via social capital was in response to Griffiths, Sigona and Zetter's (2005) interesting and useful book about the impact of dispersal on RCOs. They found that social capital theory was of little use in examining the issue of RCOs and the effects of dispersal that occurred after the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act. They tended to use the concept as a shorthand for the idea that connections matter, but did not attempt to gauge measures of social capital in an empirical way (2005:8).

Later work involving the same researchers focused on social cohesion and social capital, and said that the government's use of both concepts was somewhat simplistic. They found it did not take into account nuances within refugee communities, or the impact of the policy

landscape on the creation of refugee organisations. They concluded that social capital was being created by RCOs, possibly in response to a hostile policy environment (Zetter et al, 2006:22) and they found evidence of “[B]onding social capital within the group and linking capital to the provider institutions and agencies” (Zetter et al, 2006:15). This highly relevant contribution to the literature does not detail the process by which social capital is created within refugee community organisations, nor the resources that social capital makes available to service users. Though the impact of external factors on the presence of RCOs is raised, the way in which funding availability affects such organisations is not explicitly considered. These questions are the focus of this research, which aims to add to our understanding of refugee community organisations and social capital. This section outlines how social capital theory, when combined with Rex’s work on the five functions of immigrant associations, enables us to examine the social capital connections within a formal organisation like an RCO.

There is some debate in the literature about whether the term ‘social capital’ can be applied to a link or connection only, or whether it can also be applied to the resources that the link or connection enable the agent to access. A scenario put forth by Portes and Landolt summarises why conflating social capital and its resulting benefits can be misleading:

[In Putnam’s definition]...a student who obtains the money necessary to pay for college tuition from her parents or relatives is thought to have social capital; no tuition, no social capital. Such an inference does not take into account the possibility that the unsuccessful student also may have highly supportive social networks that simply lack the economic means to meet such an expense (Portes and Landolt, 1996:19).

Because of the confusion that this approach can create, Portes advocates a distinct separation of the resources obtained via membership networks and the membership of such networks alone (Portes, 1998:5; 2000:4), a separation that was clear in Bourdieu’s conception, where networks represented a source of social capital, and various other material or informational resources were the benefits that resulted (Bourdieu, 1986).

In order to keep social capital connections and the resulting resources separate in the analysis of the data two categories will be applied. Social capital connections (the three kinds outlined below) will be considered 'inputs'. The bonding, bridging and linking connections observed in RCOs will be seen as inputs. 'Outputs' are the resources that service users are able to access via the RCO *because of* these inputs.

### 2.6.1 Inputs – Types of Social Capital Relevant to Refugee Community Organisations

The three types of social capital that will be used to consider social capital in relation to refugee community organisations are bridging, bonding and linking. The work of Putnam and Woolcock are relevant to this discussion. Though their definitions of these three types of social capital are similar, there are key differences, and Woolcock's version is the most persuasive when considering how to apply labels to data.

#### 2.6.1.1 Bonding Social Capital

Bonding social capital has two slightly different definitions in the literature. Putnam describes bonding social capital as linkages between people who are alike in terms of class, ethnicity and gender (Putnam and Goss, 2002:11). Woolcock, however, defines bonding social capital as "relations among family members, close friends and neighbours" (2001:13).

It is likely that when analysing the data, Woolcock's definition will be of more use. Putnam's idea of connections between people who are alike in terms of key demographic details, such as class, ethnicity and gender is potentially problematic. For example, Putnam's examples of bonding social capital include "ethnic fraternal organizations, church-based women's reading groups, and fashionable country clubs" (Putnam, 2000:22). The point is clear, these organisations are focal points for interaction by people who are alike in some way.

However, people involved in such organisations may also be *unlike* in other ways. Members of what he calls ethnic fraternal organisations, which are potentially similar to RCOs, may share an ethnic background, but they may represent both genders, different religions and be diverse in terms of socioeconomic status. Therefore, whilst many bonding organisations have a central similarity amongst members, in other ways they might be different. Putnam asserts that in reality most organisations are a mixture of bonding and bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000:23; Putnam and Goss, 2002:12). However, in order to ascertain whether an

RCO has these kinds of social capital Woolcock's definition of bonding social capital as found amongst "family members, close friends and neighbours" might be more useful, as it describes the type of relationship, rather than shared characteristics amongst participants, which in reality are likely to be complex and multi-faceted.

It is bonding social capital that Putnam (and others) believe is most likely to result in 'negative externalities', or undesirable consequences for those outside of the group in question. For those in the group, such 'bonds' may be highly useful in terms of day-to-day social support (Putnam, 2000:23; 2002:11). However, it is strong ties that are most likely to be negative for those in the group too, either via the presence of 'downward leveling norms' or restrictions on individual freedoms (Portes, 1998:17).

#### 2.6.1.2 Bridging Social Capital

As with bonding social capital, Putnam and Woolcock have different definitions of bridging social capital. Putnam's view that bridging social capital brings together people who are not alike (Putnam and Goss, 2002:11) is problematic in the same way as his definition of bonding social capital. Here, the reverse argument made above in relation to bonding social capital applies. People who are unlike in one way may be alike in another. Woolcock's definition appears to be more useful when considering how to use social capital theory to analyse data. He writes that bridging social capital refers to "more distant friends, associates and colleagues. Bridging is essentially a horizontal metaphor, however, implying connections between people who share broadly similar demographic characteristics" (2001:13).

Bridging social capital links are portrayed more positively in the literature than bonding social capital links alone (Putnam, 2000:22-3; 2002:11). It is links between different communities that policy makers in the UK are keen to promote (Blunkett, 2001). However, Putnam is keen to establish that both bridging and bonding social capital are necessary:

...without the natural restraints imposed by members' assaulting allegiances and diverse perspectives, tightly knit and homogeneous groups can rather easily combine

for sinister ends. In other words, bonding without bridging equals Bosnia (Putnam, 2002:11-12).

Whilst it may be understandable that dense ties within but not between two distinct groups in one territory can be disastrous, Putnam is less clear about what would occur if bridging social capital were present without bonding social capital, if indeed, such a situation could occur.

#### 2.6.1.3 Linking Social Capital

Putnam does not write about linking social capital, so unlike bonding and bringing social capital, there are no competing definitions of this concept. Woolcock writes that “the capacity to lever resources, ideas and information from formal institutions beyond the community is a key function of social capital” (2001:13). Again, it is important to distinguish between the social capital itself, and the resources that are accessed via it. It is envisaged that linking social capital will be important in the analysis of how refugees and asylum-seekers are able to access resources via their involvement with RCOs. This is because RCOs are often small organisations and do not have the resources or expertise to provide some of the key services needed by their service users themselves, such as legal advice or English language tuition. Therefore it may be that what is important is the ability of RCOs to make functional links to organisations that do provide such services. If this is the case then an important difference between bonding and bridging as compared to linking social capital is that it might be found in connections between *organisations*, as opposed to individuals. In comparison, bonding and bridging connections are expected to be visible in relation to individuals.

#### 2.6.2 Outputs

One area that Putnam’s theory does not explain is how social capital actually works. How does a network resource convert into either a public or a private good – what process is at work? Foley and Edwards argue that in order for a network to represent social capital, two things are required. Firstly, “the perception that a specific resource exists” and secondly, “some form of social relationship that brokers individual or group access to those particular social resources” (Foley and Edwards, 1999:147). Refugee community organisations have

real potential to be the ‘brokers’ of resources to individuals. In order to analyse these relationships, however, it is important that the social capital relationship (input) is distinct from the resources that are accessed via the relationship. Therefore the resources will be considered ‘outputs’, and considered separately.

The work of John Rex on the different functions performed by community organisations offers a useful framework for investigating the different types of RCO function and the kinds of resource outputs that members of RCOs are able to access.<sup>13</sup>

#### 2.6.2.1 John Rex’s Work on Community Association Functions

Though Rex’s work is not specifically about refugee-led associations, the five functions he ascribes to immigrant associations are useful in examining the resources that are the outcome of social capital present in relations between a refugee community organisation and those who access its services. Rex undertook research into race and discrimination in Birmingham between 1962 and 1970. Rex identified four functions of urban migrant’s associations as:

- pastoral/social work
- overcoming social isolation
- goal attainment
- affirmation of cultural beliefs and values (1973:21).

Later work specifically on immigrant associations referred to the same four functions and added another:

- maintaining links with a homeland (1987:8).

Rex does not define each of the individual functions that he ascribes to immigrant associations. In talking about the role of associations, however, some examples are given, that are worth reviewing here.

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<sup>13</sup> Joly (1996) used Rex’s typology of immigrant associations in discussion of refugee-led organisations but not in reference to social capital. Here, it was used to classify types of RCO to demonstrate the varying needs of different refugee communities.

Some examples of pastoral work include supporting people in finding jobs, with passport difficulties and assistance in finding accommodation. Rex writes that immigrants would rather go to a service provided by someone of the same background than to a stranger, however well meaning, because they may not be able to trust them (Rex, 1973:26). This is potentially very relevant to refugee-led organisations, and will be considered in relation to the data that is collected.

Social isolation is not explicitly defined by Rex, but he writes that primary communities are “those groups on which individuals depend to keep them out of a state of absolute social isolation” (1973:14). He asserts that people who are part of primary communities can turn to the other members in times of distress and joy and with them they can relax and share secrets (Rex, 1973:15). Refugee community organisations are likely to provide this function if they are social organisations where service users have the opportunities to meet regularly over time and form friendships. If organisations are more practical, however, such connections may not occur.

Goal attainment is used by Rex to refer to community organisations working to achieve a specific goal or change that benefits members and often other non-members from the same background as well. The examples he gives are of raising wages, getting votes or opposing discrimination (Rex, 1973:20). Any campaigning or advocacy work on the part of a refugee-led organisation could be perceived as a goal attainment-related activity, whether successful or not.

The fourth function of immigrant associations is the affirmation of cultural beliefs and values. Rex writes that immigrant associations maintain the culture of a group in a situation where another culture is dominant:

Faced with the welter of conflicting cultural meanings of the city, the immigrant, at least until he knows his way round, needs a cultural retreat, where he knows the rules, and knows that other people accept the rules (Rex, 1973:27)



It is envisaged that this is a resource that might be provided by RCOs, particularly if the organisation offers specific cultural events or is associated with a particular nationality or religion.

Rex's final function of immigrant associations is that of maintaining links with the homeland. There is very little detail on how this is defined but the term is quite self-explanatory (Rex, 1987). This function was added to the previous list of four functions of community associations when he wrote specifically about immigrant associations.

It is worth noting that not all refugee communities will place the same emphasis on each of these functions. Joly's discussion of Chilean and Vietnamese community organisations in France and the UK demonstrate that the services an RCO offers will be affected by the identified needs of the group. For example, the Vietnamese associations in the UK gave more material help than French Vietnamese organisation because they had received less state support, and because the Vietnamese refugees in France tended to be better educated and able to secure employment. It is also the case that a group whose point of reference is still their country of origin, for example, the Chileans – whose focus was awareness raising, fundraising and campaigning in relation to the dictatorship in Chile – will not have the same needs, nor wish to take part in settling activities. Instead they prioritise defending the groups' interests (Joly, 1996:161-185).

## **2.7 The Research Questions**

Based on a consideration of the literature review on the current situation of RCOs (presented in Chapter 1), and of the above discussion of social capital and Rex's functions, the following research questions arise:

- In what way do refugee community organisations create social capital for their service users? What kind of social capital connections are present – bonding, bridging and/or linking?

- If social capital inputs are available to refugees and asylum-seekers via their membership of an RCO, what kind of resource outputs are associated with membership?
- What is the impact of asylum and refugee policy on refugee community organisations and their ability to generate social capital for users, and related resource outputs? This will be considered with particular reference to the funding situation.

It could be expected that an RCO displaying considerable organisational linking social capital may be expected to be well placed to provide its members with resource outputs. However, a high level of resource outputs, would not necessarily be associated with high levels of social capital, per se.

Based on literature about the requirements of competition and funding regimes reviewed in Chapter 1, it may be the case that connections with other official bodies, particularly with local government, may decrease the ability of RCOs to perform some functions. Integrative work, affirmation of beliefs and values and goal attainment may be compromised due to pressures on time and resources that come with involvement in policy networks, and provision of social/pastoral work under contract in particular. If RCOs are in receipt of government funding, the literature also suggests that campaigning roles (which can be classified as goal attainment) may be curtailed in a bid to avoid alienating funders.

The final research area centres on the general effects of the policy context on RCOs. As the literature review of the asylum and refugee policy, and of general VCS policy suggests, it may be the case that the involvement of RCOs in provision for refugees and reception of asylum-seekers (with the bureaucracy and monitoring requirements that this entails) acts as a limitation on the other functions RCOs aim, and their communities wish them, to perform. As has been shown, there is an increasing reliance on community groups to meet the basic subsistence needs of asylum-seekers, which may also act to limit the range of function that RCOs are able to perform. Indeed there is some evidence that a focus on immediate needs or on working to fulfil a contract, means “transformative work” or working on behalf of

community interests, is neglected due to a lack of resources both in relation to general voluntary services (Taylor et al, 2002:2) and also in relation to refugee communities in particular (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2007:8; ICAR, 2005; Bloch, 2002:173-4; Griffiths et al, 2005:201).

## **2.8 Conclusion**

Social capital is a relatively new concept, and has not yet been definitively written about. It has been used in a number of schools and in a number of ways to analyse a whole range of different topics. Overall, the usefulness of social capital is still somewhat open to debate and there is no one definition of the concept, nor an accepted approach to its measurement. One thing that commentators do agree on is that social capital is a useful heuristic device (Foley and Edwards, 1999:163; Baron et al, 2000:36; Portes, 1998:2). Perhaps because of the theoretical fluidity, social capital represents a way of looking at social relationships in new ways, and also has potential to bring together researchers and techniques from different disciplines in a way that could yield new insights (Baron et al, 2000:36).

Bonding, bridging and linking types of social capital, as associated with Putnam and Woolcock, are most relevant to analysing the social capital present in refugee community organisations. The use of social capital to analyse RCOs is appropriate because of the importance that government discourse has attached to the concept. Social capital has been employed in debates about the importance of the voluntary sector in a simplistic way. This analysis seeks to ascertain whether voluntary organisations are really capable of generating social capital, and if so, to find out more about how the process works in practice.

In order to keep social capital connections distinct from resources accessed via social capital, the concept of inputs and outputs was introduced. 'Inputs' signify the kind of social capital connections, whether bonding, bridging or linking that may be found in refugee community organisations. 'Outputs' refers to the potential resources that may result from an individual's possession of that social capital connection. Rex's five functions of immigration associations offer a useful and relevant framework on which to base the analysis of output resources associated with RCOs.

## **Chapter 3 – Methodology**

### **Introduction**

This chapter outlines the decisions behind the research design and the process of data collection for this research, with some reflections on the theoretical and methodological approach in Section 3.1. Data was collected using three methods. The first was an in-depth ethnographic case study with a refugee community organisation referred to here as EACO, discussed in Section 3.2. Findings from this case study were used to inform the other stages of data collection. The second stage involved a survey to RCOs in London that met certain criteria (Section 3.3). In the final stage the researcher interviewed representatives of eleven funding agencies and four professional capacity-builders working with, or with experience of working with, RCOs (Section 3.4).

### **3.1 Approach to Research**

The underlying epistemological approach to this study is interpretivist. Interpretivism is concerned with understanding meaning that actors attribute to the world and to their own actions. Interpretivists believe that the world is socially constructed. As such is it anti-foundationalist. Proponents of this approach also argue that understanding of the social meanings of actions can only be understood through the researcher's own constructions of social reality, they cannot be objective (Marsh and Furlong, 2002:19). This means that interpretivists must be aware of cultural values and reflexive in their data collection and analysis (O'Reilly, 2009:120).

Marsh and Furlong describe the approach succinctly: "A researcher from within the interpretist tradition is concerned with understanding, not explanation, focuses on the meaning that actions have for agents, tends to use qualitative evidence and offers their results as one interpretation of the relationship between the phenomena studied" (2002:21). As this shows, the focus is not on explanation or prediction, but primarily on narration and understanding (Bevir and Rhodes, 2002:134).

Though interpretivism is most associated with qualitative research methods such as interview, focus groups and vignettes (Marsh and Furlong, 2002:27), quantitative methods

may also be used by researchers in this school. However, quantitative data is unlikely to be central, and would be examined only after interpretations have been made based on qualitative data collection. Bevir and Rhodes give the example of statistics on marriage rates being studied “only after we are able to take for granted a whole series of interpretations” (Bevir and Rhodes, 2002:134).

### 3.1.2 Research Design and Case Studies

Within this broad interpretivist framework, a case study approach was chosen, primarily using ethnographic methods. It is important to note that whilst ethnography often involves case study research, not all case study research must involve ethnography. Rather, ethnography is a methodological choice, and case studies can be undertaken in other ways – for example using quantitative and other qualitative methods (O’Reilly, 2009:23-24; Yin, 1984:14).

Yin presents case studies as a worthwhile research tool, challenging the belief that case studies are only suitable for the “exploratory phase of an investigation” (Yin, 1994:3). He presents the different types of case study as exploratory, descriptive and explanatory, with recognition of the fact that any particular case study may not be a pure example of one of these types, but rather may have elements of more than one (Yin, 1984:3-4). The case study of EACO is primarily a descriptive case study, though the research aims to produce some explanations of how social capital in RCOs enables service users to access resources.

The original research design has changed somewhat over the course of the project. It was originally intended that multiple case studies, as many as eight, would be undertaken with different RCOs in different locations, and of different nationalities. The aim would have been comparative: to understand the impact that different refugee nationality experiences and characteristics, as well as how different local conditions in the UK (e.g. London as compared to Northern dispersal town), may affect the ability of refugee community organisations to generate social capital for their service users. This would have employed what Yin called “the *comparative case method*” (Yin, 1984:14, italics in the original). This idea was scaled down, however, because of the size of this prospective project and the large number of variables that would have been present.

It was then decided that RCOs working with only one nationality would be approached to take part in the research. Because of concerns about securing long-term access it was decided that a third party known to both the researcher and EACO would be asked to make an initial approach to EACO. Having gained EACO's support, the plan was to contact other ethnic-Albanian organisations in order to generate other cases, which would still have meant using the comparative case method. However, other groups that were identified as possible comparative cases were either unwilling to take part, uncontactable or too different to EACO to form a useful comparison. The representative of one of the key organisations serving the ethnic-Albanian population initially agreed to take part, but did not appear at the pre-arranged first meeting, and did not respond to any further attempts to make contact. One organisation, referred to here as Vend Takim<sup>14</sup> took part in a semi-structured interview, but was not considered suitable as a comparative case because it was not a charity, much smaller than EACO, and generally concerned only with weekend supplementary schooling.

Because of these factors the analysis eventually focused on one more intensive, longer-term single case study of EACO. Single case studies are often open to criticism on the grounds of being partial, and because it is difficult to generalise with confidence on the findings from one single observation. However, Yin believes that focusing on a single case can create findings of use to other cases if the focus is on analytical, rather than statistical, generalisation (Yin, 1984:36). In this way it can be a "*critical test of a significant theory*" (Yin, 1984:40: italics in the original). As such, the case study of EACO considers in-depth social capital generation and associated resource accumulation. It considers these processes in action, but does not claim that EACO is a representative case in a strong sense.

In order to assess whether social capital findings for EACO are found in other similar organisations data was collected using other methods (including a survey of relevant organisations and interviews with key actors), which are discussed below in Sections 3.3 and 3.4.

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<sup>14</sup> Vend Takim, meaning 'Meeting Place' is a false name. This interview is referred to in the data analysis chapters where relevant.

### 3.1.3 Ethnography and Mixed Methods

The research questions posed focus on the micro processes at work within refugee community organisations, and whether social capital is created, how, and what this means for participants (See Section 2.7). In order to explore such phenomena, an ethnographic study was undertaken with one RCO, as discussed above.

Ethnography has been described as:

“[T]he art and science of describing a group or culture. The description may be of a small tribal group in an exotic land or a classroom in middle-class suburbia. The task is much like the one taken on by an investigative reporter, who interviews relevant people, reviews records, weighs the credibility of one person’s opinions against another’s, looks for ties to special interests and organizations, and writes the story for a concerned public and for professional colleagues. A key difference...is that whereas the journalist seeks out the unusual...the ethnographer writes about the routine, daily lives of people”. (Fetterman, 1998:1)

Broadly, it is the study of the habits, behaviours and beliefs of a particular group or groups of people. Ethnography, sometimes referred to as participant observation, is traditionally associated with anthropological studies of distinctly different tribes or cultures, such as Malinowski’s study of the Trobriand islanders in 1922 (Burnham et al, 2004:222; Burgess, 1989:163). Ethnographic methods were later widely used in sociology to research social phenomena and issues within Western societies. One of the most well known and influential of these was Whyte’s study of street gangs in an unidentified city in the United States (Whyte, 1955) and Humphrey’s controversial study of gay men (Burnham et al, 2004:223). Ethnographic research is not as widely used in political science as it is within anthropological or sociological research traditions, though Burnham et al cite Richard Crossman writing as a social scientist whilst acting as a cabinet minister as one example (2004: 223).

Ethnographic research tends to generate a great deal of rich and detailed data that reveals much about “motivations, beliefs and behaviour of the individuals and groups” involved (Burnham et al, 2004:225; Burgess, 1984:79). Long-term presence in the field can be time

consuming for the researcher, for example Whyte spent three and a half years living amongst the people of Cornerville (Whyte, 1955:324), but as he and other commentators acknowledge, long-term presence allows modification of the research design and instruments in response to new information (Whyte, 1955:284; Burnham et al, 2004: 225). Spending a great deal of time with participants can create problems for researcher in remaining objective, as they have been alongside the group being studied for some time and may begin to identify strongly with them, or with their aims (Burnham et al, 2004:225).

There are four types of participant observation that might be used by researchers in the field. Burgess's discussion of these, based on Gold's typology is useful. The first type is 'complete participant', whereby the research activities are concealed from participants. The second, 'participant-as-observer', was primarily used in this study. This means that the researcher takes part in activities, whilst developing research relationships with the subjects of study. The third, 'observer-as-participant' involves observing with little participation. This was also used in the study in some situations – for example when attending a disco for children involved in the case study organisation. Finally, there is the 'complete observer' which can be considered as attempting to observe without interacting with the subjects – which could include reconnaissance activities (Burgess, 1984:80-82). Some researchers have challenged the extent to which a researcher can take on the role of participant observer if their own characteristics in terms of age, ethnicity or gender are too different from the subject group (Burgess, 1984:89). This will be discussed further below in relation to work with EACO in Section 3.2.

Within the case study, data was collected in a number of ways, including the creation of an observation journal, interviews with service users and staff of the RCO and focus groups. The instruments are discussed with reference to numbers and participants below in Section 3.2. Denzin describes this process as "method triangulation" combining "dissimilar methods to measure the same unit" and therefore helping to overcome the problems associated with any one method (Denzin, 1970:308). Hence, mixed methods were used in order to gather information on EACO from a number of sources in order to strengthen the overall validity of the interpretations made about the organisation and its members. Fetterman writes that:



“Triangulation is basic in ethnographic research... Typically, the ethnographer compares information sources to test the quality of the information (and the person sharing it), to understand more completely the part an actor plays in the social drama, and ultimately to put the whole situation into perspective” (Fetterman, 1998:93).

As well as mixed methods used to collect data from EACO, further data on RCOs in general were collected from two other sources. These were a survey of refugee community organisations comparable with EACO, and semi-structured interviews with professionals working in the field. These are explained further in Sections 3.3 and 3.4 below. Mixed methods were used in order to triangulate the data and to consider how far the findings of EACO appeared to reflect the experiences of other RCOs in London.

#### 3.1.4 Ethical Considerations

As with all research projects the researcher needed to ensure informed consent of the participants and minimise harm. Various researchers working with refugees have discussed the extra care that is needed when working with refugees, who constitute a vulnerable group. There is a need for researchers to be aware of the trauma that refugees may have experienced, and to design their research, and ethical procedures with this clearly in mind (Yu and Liu, 1986:484; McSpadden, 1998:147; Krulfield, 1998:22; Jacobsen and Landau, 2003:185). The research design, interview and focus group schedules and supporting documents were submitted to review by the School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee at the University of Southampton. It was recommended that the information sheets and list of sources of further support be made easier to understand and that the information sheet for service users be available in English and Albanian. These amendments were made and the project was approved prior to going into the field (See Appendices 2a and 5).

#### 3.2 The Case Study

In order to understand the workings of RCOs and social capital, a relatively large and successful charity was contacted to take part in the study. The charity will be referred to as

EACO<sup>15</sup> here in order to preserve the anonymity of the group. For the same reason specific locations, aside from the group being based in London, are not discussed. The charity was established by a group of refugee women from Kosovo in the early 2000s order to support each other and to offer advice and information and supplementary Mother-tongue schooling to the Albanian-speaking community in London.

Refugees from the former Yugoslavia, and in particular from Kosovo, began arriving in the UK in the early 1990s, but numbers rose from 1997 and continued to rise prior to and during the NATO bombing of the region from March to June of 1999 (Balicki and Wells, 2006:49). Kosovo lost independence in 1989 and oppression of ethnic Albanians had increased since then, despite representing the majority of the population (Judah, 2002:44). Many Kosovans were internally displaced, or left the country. Numbers rose in response to ethnic cleansing by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia under Slobodan Milošević from January 1998. The war in Kosovo ended in 1999, by this time around 100,000 refugees were taken by EU countries under quota agreements (Baliki and Wells 2006:44). Numbers of asylum applicants in the UK are hard to gauge because Kosovans were not recorded under a separate category in the gathered statistics, but were part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). Asylum applicants from FRY peaked in 1999 at 11,465 (Refugee Council, 2002:46). By 2003 this figure was at 805 (Balicki and Wells, 2006:24).

Ethnic Albanians have also come to the UK from Albania from around 1997 when economic instability led to upheaval and the collapse of infrastructure and the rule of law (IOM, 2008:4). Kosovan Albanians continued to arrive after the end of the Kosovan conflict as a result of secondary migration from other EU countries and as such some do not have legal status in the UK (IOM, 2008:8).

There was a high rate of voluntary return for this group – from July 1999 to August 2008 3,968 Kosovan Albanians returned home and a further 3,867 Albanians went back to Albania (IOM, 2008:8). There are no official figures on the number of ethnic Albanians currently

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<sup>15</sup> Standing for Ethnic Albanian Community Organisation, which is not its real name.

living in the UK but estimates range from 70,000 – 100,000, of which around 50,000 – 60,000 are believed to be living in London (IOM, 2008:18-19).

Ethnic Albanians have several distinctions from other refugee groups in the UK. Firstly they are white Europeans, and on arrival were relatively sympathetically portrayed in the media (Balicki and Wells, 2006:53). For ethnic Albanians from Kosovo, gaining refugee status or leave to remain was comparatively straightforward. Kosovans were processed quickly and accepted as refugees or given Exceptional Leave to Remain on the basis of their nationality until May 1999. After this date twelve month's protection was granted in the first instance, though violence continued in some areas of the province until at least 2004 (Balicki and Wells, 2006:51). As well as this, there was an asylum amnesty in 2003 for 15,000 families that had applied for asylum prior to 2000. This involved mainly families from Kosovo, Yugoslavia and Turkey (Balicki and Wells, 2006:33). This contrasts with asylum seekers from other, non-European countries. As raised in Section 1.3.1, Kushner and Knox have argued that refugees from a number of African countries have not been treated by the government in the same way as European refugees and that they are more likely to be perceived as "bogus" (Kushner and Knox, 1999:375). Also relevant to the situation of ethnic Albanians is the assertion by Zetter and Pearl (2000:683) also discussed in Chapter One (Section 1.7.4.2) that refugee groups without home country experience of voluntary organisations, links to Britain or pre-existing groups of co-nationals, and significant language differences (such as Francophone Africans) will experience greater difficulties in the UK. Though ethnic Albanians do not have all of these traits they arguably have a closer cultural similarity, and a history of running organisations parallel to the state (Judah, 2002:72)<sup>16</sup>. There were also some established Albanian community groups prior to the arrivals in the late 1990s, though overall numbers of residents were low – at around 2,500 in 1993 (IOM, 2008:6).

The case study organisation, EACO, expanded its services quickly after being set up and the same founding staff members are all still present. They now offer services in five London boroughs. Each year they provide supplementary schooling to around 300 children,

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<sup>16</sup> Albanians in Kosovo ran parallel health and education systems in some parts Kosovo due to public persecution from the early 1990s (Judah, 2002: 70-72)

including lessons in the Albanian language, culture, and traditional dancing. Young people also have the chance to take part in a range of activities including art, drama and sports. There are a number of Women's Groups held in various locations for women to access advice, information and support, including specific sessions on mental health and domestic violence. Volunteering within the organisation is highly encouraged and women and older youths in particular often access services as users and then become involved in a voluntary capacity.

This organisation was chosen for two reasons. Firstly, it was already known to the researcher to be an effective and successful organisation that appeared to create social capital resources for its members. Secondly, a mutual acquaintance was able to introduce the researcher to the organisation. This overcame the difficulty in accessing organisations, something that was to prove a problem later.

From October 2008 until May 2009 the researcher visited the offices of this organisation around twice a week to act as a participant observer and volunteer administrative assistant. The researcher also had the chance to attend a range of social events and meetings. An observation journal was kept throughout this time, in which notes were taken about the work that was completed and observations recorded about the organisation or any avenues of further inquiry.

As well as keeping an observation journal, the following data was also collected from EACO:

- Two semi-structured interviews with the Project Manager. One was held soon after starting the observation period, the other at the end.
- A semi-structured interview with the Women's Worker.
- A semi-structured interview with the Education Worker.
- Semi-structured interviews with five service users and/or volunteers (most volunteers had been or still were service users).
- Focus groups were carried out with the following groups of EACO service users:

- Focus Group 1 with Women's Support Group attached to a Youth Centre<sup>17</sup>
- Focus Group 2 with Female Service Users and Non-Service Users<sup>18</sup>
- Focus Group 3 with Women's Support Group attached to a primary school
- Focus Group 4 with Mixed Gender Service Users
- Focus Group 5 with Children and Young Adults aged 7 – 21 Years
- Focus Group 6 with Women Volunteers
- Focus Group 7 with Mixed Gender Volunteers and Ex-Volunteers
- Focus Group 8 with Mixed Gender Young People aged 17-21

Focus group numbers four to eight were carried out with two other researchers. The researcher was involved in a review of EACO's services and suggested that the planned focus groups for both pieces of research were combined in order to work more effectively and to avoid service users feeling that they were being over-researched. As the sessions were led by three people, they were more organised and generated more useful data than those carried out alone.

No focus groups were held only with men. This was because most of the service users that attended events and sessions (through which focus groups were organised) were female. Male service users were more likely than women to go to EACO *only* for advice and information and as such were not contactable in the same way as the women. Men or boys were involved in four of the eight groups.

Five interviews were held with service users in their offices. Women who came to the office for advice or to volunteer on a particular day were asked if they would take part in a short semi-structured interview. Though some had a high standard of English, not all did, and this led to some communication difficulties. Focus groups appeared to be more successful at

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<sup>17</sup> Due to sound quality issues the recording of this focus group could not be transcribed and notes made were incomplete, so data from this session has not been included in the analysis.

<sup>18</sup> This focus group was held to gather data for this research, but also as part of a review by the project manager about expanding services in a particular borough.

putting those not as confident with English at their ease, as those participants who were not able to express themselves in English spoke in Albanian and were interpreted by friends or acquaintances in the group. It was not deemed appropriate to bring in an external translator when so many of the participants were fluent in English and keen to translate. There were also concerns that an external translator might change the balance of the groups – many of the women were friends and were happy to talk to researchers together.<sup>19</sup>

As the discussion on ethnography raise, data collected in this way is likely to be very thick and detailed (Bevir and Rhodes, 2002:135). This was certainly the case with data gathered during the time spent at EACO. This was because of the length of time spent with the organisation, but also arguably because of the relationships built up with members of the organisation. By being in the office regularly the researcher had considerable access to a range of data that simply would not have been available if only interviews had been conducted. The researcher was able to get a good understanding of Albanian culture and social norms. By becoming a volunteer and working to further the aims of the organisation it is possible that relationships of trust were built up and that participants were more willing to share personal stories, or concerns and worries than may have been the case if the encounter was limited just to a one off interview encounter.

What is clear is the extent to which, just by being present in the organisation, a great deal of information could be gathered. The researcher was able to see processes in action, rather than just hearing them described. For example, the Project Manager of the organisation (a central person in the success of the charity, as discussed in Chapter 4) was often discussed by volunteers as a great source of inspiration and reassurance in their decision to undertake training or voluntary work. By being in the office and seeing these interactions first hand, the researcher witnessed this process, and was able to really understand the key importance of this one person in the organisation. This level of prior knowledge and trust meant that more pertinent questions could be raised in the semi-structured interviews with staff and in the focus groups.

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<sup>19</sup> Information sheets given to service users were translated into Albanian.

As raised above in Section 3.1.3, the extent to which ethnographers can fit into a role or an organisation may have an impact on how participants respond to them and therefore the data that they are able to collect. With EACO, the researcher had some barriers to full participation in regards to language and cultural background – being British and speaking only English in an organisation run by and for ethnic-Albanians who spoke English and Albanian. Language was not a large problem as staff and most service users spoke very good English, and people were always available to translate when needed. Members of the organisation were all white, as is the researcher. In terms of age there was little difference between the researcher and many of the mothers that made up the majority of EACO's service users. In this way, then, the researcher did not stand out to a great extent and was once mistaken for being an ethnic-Albanian with a very good English accent. Undoubtedly, this made fitting in as a participant observer more straightforward than if research had been undertaken with a group with very different demographic characteristics (for example, older black refugee men).

The research design was 'traditional' in that the researcher wrote the research plan and undertook data collection. However, the researcher was involved in the organisation over a relatively long period of time, eight months. The staff of the RCO had provided the opportunity to undertake this in-depth ethnographic study by granting access to their offices, their time and their lives, and to a lesser extent, the lives and time of their service users. Because of this, the researcher was keen to use time spent with EACO in a way that would not just be beneficial to the research, but also to the organisation. It is because of this that tasks undertaken whilst volunteer-observing in the office were those that staff most wanted doing, despite original misgivings about the impartiality of taking part in things like funding applications. Offering skills or expertise to people that have given their time and access to their lives is part of the "reciprocity" that Fetterman believes can be appropriately given by researchers undertaking ethnographic studies (Fetterman, 1998:143).

The researcher also worked on two small research projects of EACO's design whilst researching with the organisation. One was in partnership with two other researchers who offered their support to the charity in order to write about the successful model of the organisation, around which some of the focus groups were organised. The other was in

partnership with the manager of the charity who wanted to identify the needs of the Albanian-speaking community in an area they wanted to expand into.

Whilst volunteering and researching with EACO, the researcher had access to a number of documents about the organisation, including evaluation reports and external review documents. These represent a highly valuable grey literature on EACO, and they are referred to in the analysis chapters. The names of the reports mention EACO's real name. Therefore, to protect the identity of the organisation and its staff and members, report titles and authors have not been revealed and are listed as Withheld References.

### 3.2.1 Difficulties in Case Study Data Collection

There were several difficulties encountered in carrying out ethnographic case-study research with this RCO. These included some difficulties in implementing agreed ethical safeguards in the field, being closely involved with EACO, and difficulties in making an exit.

#### 3.2.1.1 Implementing Ethical Safeguards in Reality

Before undertaking any data collection, the research proposal was subject to full ethical review. A detailed proposal, consent forms<sup>20</sup>, interview and focus group schedules, separate information sheets for staff, volunteers, service users and other relevant professionals, and finally a sheet detailing sources of further support were included<sup>21</sup>. After some amendments to simplify the language, and agreements to have the relevant documents available in both English and Albanian, the project was given ethical approval.

However, in actually collecting data there were a number of difficulties, practical and otherwise, in doing what had been agreed. The main difficulty was that of communicating their rights to participants. When staff and volunteers were asked to read the information sheet, tick the boxes on the consent form and to sign it, most appeared to sign it without reading it, despite prompts. Further attempts to highlight that they were not obliged to take part, or could withdraw at anytime, were generally waved away. When talking to service

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<sup>20</sup> For use with staff only because of concerns that service users (especially those still seeking asylum) might be reluctant to sign documentation.

<sup>21</sup> Research instruments, information sheets and sources of further information are available in Appendices 2-5.



users, information sheets were given out (in English or Albanian as preferred) but, again, people were not generally interested in the implications of taking part, despite being keen to talk to the researcher. It is possible that because participants knew that the researcher was involved with EACO, they were more trusting than would otherwise have been the case. Whilst lack of concern over informed consent and protection from harm may be something all researchers may experience, it seems that this could be more pronounced in an ethnographic research scenario where the researcher has become familiar.

#### 3.2.1.2 Close Involvement with an Organisation

As well as participants possibly giving less thought to ethical concerns because they are used to the researcher's presence, there are other difficulties associated with long-term engagement. The researcher spent a considerable amount of time in the office of EACO, just sitting at a desk working, or taking part in various tasks. Though efforts were made to explain the project to people that the researcher had not encountered before, and information sheets were available, it was impossible to go through the information sheet and explain each person's rights.

Again, because of the prolonged presence in the office, there was a risk that staff, volunteers and service users who were well informed about the research simply forgot about it. This is something that can be seen in a positive light. Burham et al argue that with participant observation:

“the subjects of the study will learn to take the researcher for granted and will thus behave as though he or she were not there...the research will get ‘under the skin’ of his/her subjects and learn to think almost as they think” (Burnham et al, 2004:225)

Whyte, too, in the discussion of his methods used in the study of street gangs, said that if people accepted the presence of the researcher, then the answers to questions can be found out by observing, rather than asking questions, which he found to be preferable and more useful (Whyte, 1955:303).

In the study with EACO this certainly seemed to be the case, but it raised some ethical problems. Participants might, in the course of their working day or by chatting with friends, say something they perhaps would not share in a formal interview or if they had just been told about the researcher's role. Due to concerns about safeguarding participants' anonymity and personal information some of the information the researcher was aware of will not be used. Any relevant themes raised in this way were followed up later and more generally in interviews and focus groups – in order to 'legitimise' the data via a more 'official' forum, when the participant is clearly aware that the researcher is in 'researcher mode'.

#### 3.2.1.3 Exit

Though difficulties in accessing organisations to participate were expected, it was not envisaged that exit would also be problematic. Whilst volunteer observing with EACO friendships were made, particularly with key staff. The researcher became involved in their day-to-day work and was concerned that the organisation and its members would continue to do well. Finally, it was possible that involvement could continue over the longer-term. For up to six months after the end of the data collection period, work the researcher was involved in was ongoing and there was scope to offer support in subsequent rounds of bidding for funds. It has even been suggested that the researcher might continue to be involved in the charity, in various capacities. The researcher would have been honoured to have a role in such an organisation, but there are problems with continued involvement. Firstly, the research needed to move on to other areas and time was limited. Secondly, there was a need to collect only a finite and manageable level of data. Finally, being involved in an official capacity could make the charity easily identifiable and make the process of writing up less objective.

#### 3.2.2 Data Analysis

The Observation Journal was written up into one document and any unnecessary details, such as notes for work carried out in the office, were omitted. The interviews and focus groups were transcribed, with any extra notes, soon after they occurred.

This data was analysed using the qualitative data analysis software Nvivo 8. Codes were initially drawn up after reading and test-coding randomly selected sources. The coding frame was based on the three types of social capital – bonding, bridging and linking and Rex’s five functions of immigrant associations. Separate codes for men, women, children and EACO staff were used. Other topics, such as funding, were coded by theme, for example ‘funding uncertainty’. Once the coding structure was determined, codes were applied using the Nvivo 8 software. Outputs by theme were used to consider the evidence to provide examples in the discussions in Chapters Four to Six.

### **3.3 Survey to Refugee Community Organisations**

As discussed above in Section 3.1.2, the initial research plan was to interview and potentially observe a number of other RCOs serving the ethnic-Albanian population in London. However, the combination of a lack of responses to research enquiries and the small size of many such organisations meant that the research plan had to be amended.<sup>22</sup>

Therefore, in order to understand more fully the policy and funding environment in which refugee community organisations are operating, and to see how far the findings from the case study are present across the sector, data was gathered via two other methods. The first of these was a survey sent to selected refugee community organisations in London<sup>23</sup>. Collecting names of organisations was time consuming as no lists of refugee-led charities are available. A list was compiled from a range of sources including academic literature, third sector publications and various web directories. Finally, the Charity Commission and Guidestar websites were comprehensively searched using an array of general and nationality specific search terms to find other RCOs that had not been listed elsewhere. Those that were surveyed were selected on the basis of their similarity to EACO. This was to provide a set of data from comparable organisations. The criteria were as follows:

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<sup>22</sup> Another RCO working with this community was interviewed, but as it was so much smaller, and a different kind of organisation, it was not comparable with EACO (Interview with Vend Takim Leader). Vend Takim, meaning ‘Meeting Place’ is also a false name. This interview is referred to in the data analysis chapters where relevant.

<sup>23</sup> The survey is presented in Appendix 6.

- The RCO had to be a charity. This was because charities are easier to find and to collect data about. Also, RCOs with a certain income are almost certain to be charities and are more likely to be comparable with EACO.
- The organisation had to provide services specifically to refugees or asylum-seekers on the basis of nationality, ethnicity, language or geographic region. This was assessed via their website (if the charity had one), the description of their mission and activities in their online entry in the Charity Commission register of charities, and any of their documents kept online by the Charity Commission such as annual reports and annual accounts.
- EACO's income in 2008 was above £200,000. Most RCOs had an income considerably lower than this, though some had higher. Therefore a minimum income of £100,000 in 2008 was used to ensure organisations would be comparable. This figure was chosen because an income of £100,000 would usually mean the employment of at least one part-time staff member, thus making the organisation more professional and comparable with EACO, as opposed to an organisation run entirely by volunteers.
- The organisation had to be in the Greater London area. In the past most refugee-led organisations and services have been in London because of the concentration of service users. Although the policy of dispersing asylum-seekers away from London has meant a rise in third sector services for refugees in other parts of the country, many of these organisations are new and therefore smaller, or not led by refugees (Griffiths et al, 2005). They also have a different funding environment to those in London as some trusts and foundations only fund projects in London, and London borough local authorities have developed their funding of such groups over time.

Around 300 organisations were listed. Those not in London, that were not charities, or did not mention refugees or asylum-seekers were removed. This left 190 organisations that offer services to refugees and asylum-seekers in London and were a registered charity. The table below shows how many of these organisations were eligible.

Table 1. Refugee Community Organisations: Eligibility for Inclusion in Survey<sup>24</sup>

Category	Number of RCOs	% of RCOs	Eligible
Income over £100,000 in 2008	54	28%	Yes
Income under £100,000 in 2008	87	46%	No
No financial information available for 2008	49	26%	No

Fifty-four organisations were eligible in London. The twenty-six percent that did not have any financial information available for 2008 may simply be late in returning accounts, or they may have ceased to provide services. This appears to be likely for a significant proportion in this category, as many did not have financial information available for 2007 or 2006, or indeed any financial information at all. That nearly 50% earned under £100,000 in 2008 and a further 26% had no further financial information available is interesting. This shows how unusual EACO are in terms of income size. The high number that have ceased to exist, or whose records with the Charity Commission suggest that they have ceased to exist, reveals a high turnover rate of RCOs. Unfortunately data on the failure rate of charities in the UK is not available, so comparisons are not possible.

Comparisons on income are possible with the general charity sector, however. The income of UK charities is uneven and most have an income below that of the minimum selection criteria used for the survey, as discussed in Section 1.6.3 in Chapter One. This is an important reminder that most charities, let alone most RCOs, would not meet these criteria. Therefore, those included represent the most successful refugee-led organisations in terms of income, and as such are comparable with EACO. As said above, EACO's income was above £200,000 for 2008, and the average income for all the RCOs with financial information available for 2008 was £93,000<sup>25</sup>. It is important to note that many RCOs have an income

<sup>24</sup> Data on RCO was gathered via the Charity Commission and Guidestar directories, and from a number of lists of RCOs.

<sup>25</sup> This average does not include RCOs who also provided work overseas because international work allows the collection of additional funding, and it is not possible in all cases to see how much money is spent in the UK only. Organisations were not included because their international income (for one organisation over £2 million) would have raised the average artificially. Of the 141 RCOs with financial information available, 15 were removed because of this.

much lower than this, but because many of the smaller organisations are not registered charities they would not be included in this research.

Once RCOs were identified they were sent a postal questionnaire divided into the three areas that emerged as most important from the case study: services provided and service users, fundraising, and networks. Each organisation was sent a covering letter outlining the project that was signed by both the researcher and the Project Manager of EACO. The involvement of EACO in contacting groups was intended to encourage recipients to take part. Addressed and stamped envelopes were provided to return completed surveys. A month and a half after the questionnaires were posted email reminders were sent out to those that had not yet returned their postal survey. These included a link to an electronic version of the questionnaire online. This prompted a small rise in the number of responses. A further email, with the same link and details was sent again one month later. This time responses were lower. Some follow-up phone calls were made where necessary, but did not result in further questionnaire responses. In total sixteen useable questionnaires were returned in time for inclusion in the data analysis. This is a response rate of 30%.

### 3.3.1 Difficulties in Surveying RCOs

The process of surveying RCOs was time-consuming and did not generate a great deal of data in comparison with the case study, which, though also time-consuming, did generate a great deal of information. The construction of the list of RCOs to consider was hampered by a lack of comprehensive lists or directories. Even though every effort was made to locate groups, it is likely that a significant number were missed, especially in instances where the name of the organisation, such as a word from another language, is not typical.

Gathering contact details for organisations was sometimes problematic, as some listed two addresses, or out of date web addresses. This, alongside the fact that a number of organisations couldn't be included in the sample because financial information had not been returned, gave the impression of a shifting refugee charity sector, high failure rates and a lack of stability that meant some organisations were hard to contact. There was no way of knowing how many letters did not reach their intended recipients, but around 10% of emails were returned by mail servers as undelivered, even after alternative email addresses were found and used.

### 3.3.2 Data Analysis

The kind of organisations that responded do not appear to have any significant differences to those that did not, in terms of ethnicity, length of time they have been established or their level of income. The number of staff within an organisation might be a factor in whether a survey is completed or not, but there is no way of accurately assessing how many staff or volunteers an organisation that didn't respond has.

The data from the questionnaires were entered into Excel and tables of results and percentages were produced. The return rate of 30% was lower than hoped for, but some interesting results emerged nonetheless. Because of the small sample size and relatively low response rate analysis is simplistic and descriptive. For example, had more been returned it may have been possible to go beyond general findings and to find correlations between certain characteristics and types of organisation in terms of nationality served, or income size, for example.

Any self-completion questionnaire is potentially open to bias and so claims made by respondents cannot be considered as reliable as those that the researcher was able to actually witness in EACO. However, if the findings across all of the surveys are broadly similar, it is fair to assume that self-reporting bias is minimal. This will be especially the case if the findings broadly support the conclusions emerging from the case study.

### 3.4 Interviews with Professionals Working in the RCO Field

The third set of data was collected in a series of interviews with professionals working in the third sector. Of six organisations or individuals contacted, four professionals working as capacity-builders with refugee community organisations agreed to be interviewed. Two of these were self-employed advisors to RCOs; two were linked to large national refugee organisations. All had experience of working for RCOs, or with them, to raise funds and develop organisations to be more professional and effective (this is what is meant by 'capacity-building').

As well as capacity-builders, sixteen funding organisations were contacted for interview. Of these, eleven agreed to take part. The funding organisations represent a wide range of

funders from charitable trusts and foundations, statutory and other sources. All were based in, and fund, projects and organisations in London.

All of the professionals interviewed were given an information sheet and asked to sign a consent form. Most of the interviews were face to face, but some were over the phone. If interviews were over the phone or the interviewee did not wish to be recorded, notes were taken. Otherwise interviews were recorded and transcribed fully.

#### 3.4.1 Difficulties in Interviewing Professionals

The interviews with funders and capacity-builders were straightforward. There were no significant problems in collecting or transcribing data. A significant proportion of the sixteen funders approached agreed to be interviewed, as said above. This was partly because of assistance from the EACO Project Manager in contacting potential participants directly, though funders that had not supported EACO also responded positively. This meant a good sample of funders from the main types of funding organisation in the sector was involved.

#### 3.4.2 Data Analysis

The interviews with professionals were written up, with any extra notes, soon after they occurred. As with the interviews conducted with EACO, data was analysed using Nvivo 8. The same codes as used with the case study data were applied – covering Rex's functions of associations and social capital. Separate funding and capacity-building related codes were designed, tested on a sample of sources, and also applied to the data. As with the case study, outputs by theme were used to consider the evidence and to provide examples for the discussions in Chapters 4 to 6.

### 3.5 Conclusion

The data collected in a long-term ethnographic case study can be highly rich and detailed. However, the level of involvement that enables access to this kind of rich data is also more likely to lead to specific kinds of problems with ensuring ethical safeguards for participants. Whilst ethical review agreed on tight ethical safeguards, in the field the reality was more complex – either because people did not take consent seriously, or because the researcher



was party to sensitive information during the observation period. In order to deal with this, a secondary level of control was developed, allowing sensitive topics to be 'filtered' via formal interviews or focus groups. Ethnographic research also involved difficulties with exit.

The survey to RCOs did not allow as comprehensive a data set to be collected as was desired. It had been planned that the survey could raise further avenues of research through the analysis of correlations between types of RCO and certain characteristics – such as the relationship between nationality and fundraising difficulties, or between income and size of networks. Although this was not possible, the survey data can be used to contextualise the findings from the case study and raise relevant avenues for future research.

Finally, interviews with professional funders and capacity-builders were highly useful, and added to an understanding of the environment in which EACO, and other RCOs, are seeking funding and support.

## **Chapter 4 – Social Capital and Resources in the Case Study**

This chapter examines the case study refugee community organisation in terms of what it can reveal about social capital. The section will be divided into what are called here ‘outputs’ and ‘inputs’ in order to differentiate between the resources that individual service users can access as a result of these links (Section 4.1-4.5) and the actual social capital links (Section 4.6). The importance of separating social capital from any resources that have resulted from it has been discussed in Chapter 2. Resources, or outputs, are discussed first because the process by which social capital is created (inputs) is already widely discussed in the literature. This research contributes to the discussion of *how* social capital is used, how social capital can allow access to resources for beneficiaries.

Resources available via the case study organisation were considerable. Analysis of these has been divided into Rex’s five functions of immigrant associations typology. There was evidence of EACO carrying out all of these functions, but maintaining links to the homeland to a far lesser extent. The fact that the case study organisation was user-led and had an explicit ethos of self-improvement is also of importance, and it is argued that these factors maximised the gains (in terms of the functions) that service users, and particularly women, were able to make after they had been in contact with EACO.

The case study RCO displayed three types of social capital that will be discussed in Section 4.6. Bonding social capital was present in two ways: friends and family referral to the organisation was common and once people had become involved with the service they often formed new friendships, thus offering new social capital connections to those individuals. Evidence of bridging social capital, defined as horizontal linkages to similar organisations and individuals, though less clearly present in this case study, was found. Finally, vertical linkages and partnerships with a range of other organisations were also evident, and were important in the provision of services. Analysis of the case study suggests that the combination of bonding social capital and linking social capital in a user-led organisation meant an effective transfer of resources to service users.

The table below summarises the evidence found for the resources and social capital in the case study.

<b>Table 2. Evidence Found in the Case Study for Resources and Social Capital</b>		
Input or output	Specific Type	Evidence
Rex's five functions of immigrant associations – outputs (Rex, 1973)  Rex (1987)	Pastoral and social work – advice & information	Strong evidence
	Overcoming social isolation – creation of friendships; offering a social life	Some evidence
	Goal attainment – working to advance the interests of a community	Some evidence
	Affirmation of cultural beliefs & values – maintenance of a community's culture	Strong evidence, especially for young people
	Maintaining links with the homeland – connections to the country of origin	Indirect evidence
Types of social capital – inputs (Woolcock, 2001)	Bonding social capital – Connections between close friends, or family	Strong evidence for service users
	Bridging social capital – Connections to remote associates or friends	Mixed. No evidence for service users. Some evidence of staff/ organisational bridges.
	Linking social capital – Connections to formal institutions that result in resources	Strong organisational evidence

#### **4.1 Resources Available to Service Users in the Case Study RCO**

The distinction between the connections and linkages that are classified as social capital, and the resources that service users (and staff) are able to access *through* this social capital is central to the understanding of EACO, and of social capital in general. This section focuses on the resources. It is argued that the social capital – bonding, bridging and linking, that was identified in the case study RCO enabled service users to access an array of different

resources that they would not otherwise have been able to, or that they are able to access services in such a way (from people that speak their language, have a shared history and culture and who are relevant role models) that they are more able and more likely to take advantage of them. There is a mixture of both of these factors, depending on the resource in question, as will be clear from the discussion.

The list of resources available through EACO to service users is long. A simple list of projects and services would not accurately capture the essence of the organisation. It will be argued that the organisation has a strong and at times explicitly stated ethos of helping service users to improve their lives, gain skills and integrate into society in a functioning and productive way – a strong self-improvement message. Over and over again the researcher heard of people, and in particular, women, joining the organisation to get practical advice or to take their children to activities, and being actively encouraged by the staff and volunteers to take up training opportunities, to volunteer and to become more involved in either the voluntary sector, the labour market, or further education and training. The discussion below of samples of the data will aim to make this ethos clear.

The discussion is divided into five sections, each of which is based on one of Rex's classification of the five functions of immigrant associations; overcoming social isolation; affirmation of cultural beliefs and values; goal attainment; pastoral/social work; and maintaining links with the homeland. For each function, coding was divided into women, men, and children, though these categories will only be used in the following discussion if it is relevant to the topic. At times a discussion of staff use of resources is also salient.

#### 4.1.1 Pastoral and Social Work

Advice and information, and training are two of the main functions of refugee community organisations in the UK as discussed in Chapter 2. They are categorised as pastoral and social work, but discussed separately here in order to accurately capture what was observed in the case study. Also relevant here is Rex's assertion that immigrants would rather go to a service provided by someone of the same background than to a stranger, because they may not be able to trust them (Rex, 1973:26). This attitude was also found amongst service users of EACO.

#### 4.1.1.1 Advice and Information

In the case study RCO it was clear that the provision of advice, information and support services to aid Albanian-speakers to adjust to life in the UK was one of the organisation's main roles. Every day of the observation period spent in the office, service users would visit or telephone to ask the staff for advice. As well as this, one day per week people could come to seek specialist legal advice from an advisor from a voluntary organisation with whom EACO were partners. This is an example of the organisation's linking social capital making available an external resource.

Advice was given on immigration matters, benefits and council tax. Translation and interpretation was also a large part of their work – both informally for clients accessing advice from specialists within the centre and also formally – for example on request from health agencies (Interview with Women's Worker). When EACO had previously had funding for a specific volunteering project they had trained Albanian 'befrienders' who worked with service users at least once a week to help them adjust to life in the UK by translating, taking them on visits, or accompanying women to appointments (e.g. counselling sessions) instead of their husbands if his presence was not appropriate (Interview with Women's Worker). In an interview with a service user she explained that a volunteer had accompanied her to the doctors and the solicitors in order to interpret and translate (Interview with Service User 52<sup>26</sup>), and this kind of support is still given even though funding for the project is no longer received.

As well as pastoral and social services available within the organisation, referrals were also made to specialists, particularly concerning legal and immigration matters that could not be dealt with in the centre (First Interview with Project Manager).

#### 4.1.1.1.1 Service Users and Gender

Whilst men do not attend parenting groups and the attempted men's project was unsuccessful (First Interview with Project Manager), it appears that men do access advice and information as frequently as the women do. The Women's Worker, who was often the

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<sup>26</sup> The service users involved in focus groups and/or interviews were given a number. A table of these numbers and basic data is in Appendix 1.

person who gave advice or who organised the advice surgeries with external specialists, thought that the numbers of men and women asking for advice were equal, and this was also confirmed by observation notes (Observation Journal). This worker, in interview<sup>27</sup>:

(Researcher): *Are there any men involved particularly?*

(Women's Worker): *Not that come to the groups. There are men involved, men who come to the advice surgeries and you see sometimes even more men than women coming to the advice surgeries...* (Interview)

#### 4.1.1.1.2 Service Users and Literacy

In interviews conducted with staff the issue of literacy was raised. There appeared to be a divide between those who in their country of origin had been living in rural or urban environments. Service users from rural backgrounds were more likely to use the advice service regularly, especially if they had not been able to learn much English, or struggled with literacy in their mother tongue. In some cases families were dependent on the organisation to deal with even minor official matters over long periods:

Education Worker: *We have a mum of three living very close... and we've been involved with that family for two years for different reason and the mum is so young, 26 years old...but the problem is she is not educated, and such an easy, easy, easy letter to them is such a big worry for them. You know, just a letter to say 'the service charge is three pound sixty, they came and they wait for you two hours, three hours and you say 'look, don't worry, is nothing' but they say 'no' and you feel so sorry for them and at the same time you think what to do to help them... [they had to move to a new council house] and when the officer said to her 'I look at you, you happy' and she just lost her husband three months ago and he said 'why you so happy?' and she said, was trying to explain to officer 'I've got EACO very close from here, so for all the*

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<sup>27</sup> Most interviews were recorded, and all were conducted in English. Text in italics are direct quotes, the rest is reported text. In the quotes, text in (parentheses) indicates that a name or date has been removed for anonymity. Any text in [brackets] signifies a textual addition or change to the contribution to make it clearer to the reader, but where the original meaning is preserved. For focus groups only, text in {braces} indicates that this contribution was interpreted from Albanian to English and recorded by the researcher in English.

*letters I can go there'. So you think 'wow', life for some families [is] depending on your job...* (Interview)

Service users, too, explained that accessing services via the organisation was preferable:

*SU5 (Female, 30s): You need to exist EACO because, have many problems, not just me, Albanian people and some can't speak English and they needed EACO for interpret, for helping, and for to get money for activities because Albanian people not going outside.*<sup>28</sup> (Interview)

The lack of literacy in Albanian for some service users meant that learning English was unlikely and that dealing with official matters was complex and confusing. These kinds of services users would not be able to receive the same level of input in terms of time, reassurance and understanding from a mainstream service provider. Even if interpreters were available in a mainstream advice centre time would be a factor, and many might not even know of the existence of such a service, let alone be willing to use it. The comfort of a service being offered by people who understand your language and culture is returned to in Section 4.1.1.3.

#### 4.1.1.1.3 Service Users and Children

Children, as is to be expected, did not generally access advice and support directly, though young adults occasionally did (Interview with Service User 51). However, the Women's Support Groups and parenting sessions that were provided appeared to have an effect on service users' understanding of child-raising in a UK context, and in particular on their understanding of and engagement with the education system. The need for parenting work was based on two factors. The first was a lack of understanding amongst the service users of the UK education system, which was perceived as significantly different to that in Kosovo or Albania (Interview with Women's Worker). The second was different cultural attitudes to child-raising.

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<sup>28</sup> When asked about this last comment the interviewee expanded on the fact that Albanian husbands sometimes wanted their wives to stay at home. EACO's challenging of these traditional attitudes (which were not experienced by all women) is discussed in section 4.2.

A researcher with expertise in supplementary schooling undertook several evaluations of EACOs supplementary schooling and activities for children (Withheld references no. 3, 2008; 4, 2009a; 5, 2009b; 6, forthcoming<sup>29</sup>). In an overview of the whole of the supplementary schooling project it was found that parents in contact with EACO were more confident about contacting their child's school:

While several women report a lack of confidence in contacting teachers and difficulties in the past with communication, all those interviewed now feel that they can approach teachers readily. They know the procedure for making appointments and they particularly appreciate the ease with which they can talk informally to a teacher when they bring the children to school. Not only do they attend formal parents' meetings, but they are proactive in approaching teachers. (Withheld reference no. 4, 2009a:8)

In another evaluation report, minutes of a primary school meeting were cited, revealing that schools also believed the project had improved contact between Albanian-speaking parents and their children's teachers:

All parents think that this is still a project that is very helpful to their children. It has helped them a great deal to improve the communication with their children, and has helped them to better support their children at their homework. It has helped them to improve their confidence on talking to school teachers. They have had the chance to share with other parents their problems and success and learn from each other. (Withheld reference no. 3, 2008:20)

An evaluation of another school (nine schools have some form of EACO-run supplementary schooling) confirmed that women attending parenting sessions were well informed about the education system:

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<sup>29</sup> A number of useful resources written about EACO have been drawn on for this research. Whilst the researcher is extremely grateful for their work and would like to acknowledge them in full it has been decided that these works will not be fully referenced as their content and titles make EACO identifiable.



The women whose children attend classes have mostly attended the parental sessions run by EACO. They are particularly knowledgeable about how the school and the educational system operate and are very fulsome in their appreciation of the teachers' commitment to their children. (Withheld reference no. 5, 2009b:6)

Parenting sessions about education represent an important resource for both parents and children. These evaluations suggest that participating parents are well informed and able to take a more active role in their child's education. Children have benefitted from this, and from an increased understanding amongst school staff and pupils about their background culture.

The second problem in relation to parenting that EACO addressed concerned the different culture of child-raising in the UK. Staff told me, both in informal conversation and within interviews, that in Albanian culture physical discipline was an accepted part of child-raising, but that in the UK this had led to several cases of social services involvement with Albanian families.

Women's Worker: Back home parents could give a smack. Not a big thing like to involve social services. Here it is different, good, but parents can maybe get into trouble. Children are learning different ideas and won't accept discipline and they act differently. It is hard for parents to adjust. (Notes from Interview)

The Education Worker led parenting sessions based on an understanding of the rights of children. She was also trained in a number of resources designed to support migrant parents in the UK (Observation Journal, 04.12.08; Interview with Education Worker). She said that she found it hard to tell parents about how to raise their children because they were from the same culture, but, it is possible that service users found such information being delivered by someone who understood their culture is more effective than being told by someone who did not. Also, this is a moot point as parents do not generally receive this kind of information from any statutory sources. Rather, involvement of social services and even a

child being taken into care could be the first time that a parent is aware of a cultural difference.

Education Worker: *I studied all the children rights convention, Geneva Convention. So I started to work with them kind of chapter by chapter, what are their rights, how you can lose. But in the same time it's really hard because they think you have to be in their situation, in their position, and they say 'you come from the same country, you understand us, why now you pretend?' I was trying to do kind of intermediary between them, and the school, and social services and the children and the parents. So we got involved in lots of situations....But it give us lots of credit, because we sort out two very good cases, and other families came for help in different situation – kind of relationship between parents and children, relationship between children, relationship between our culture and culture here, so more that we stayed here, more that these problems show up.* (Interview)

Again, this extract raises the factor of service delivery by someone of the same culture – this is raised below.

#### 4.1.1.2 Personal Development

The second aspect of pastoral and social work in EACO was training. Service users were actively encouraged to take part in a range of training courses and voluntary opportunities. In order to depict the kind of personal development opportunities and resources that service users were able to access, a series of case studies are presented below that represent the types of engagement patterns that were observed. As will be seen from these case studies, service users, if they were willing and able to take part in what was offered, sometimes experienced considerable life changes that resulted in obtaining new skills, voluntary work and sometimes employment.

Training opportunities via EACO were either provided by staff within EACO or by referral to external agencies. In the latter case, large numbers of women tended to be referred to an agency at once, though individual referral also occurred. The training available included: workshops to build on and get NVQ qualifications in existing skills, such as childcare, cooking

and classroom assistance; English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL); citizenship classes; health and safety, interpreting and translation qualifications. The qualifications are free or at a reduced cost. EACO benefit from some of the courses too. For example, women doing an NVQ in childcare via EACO's links to training providers can do their placements within the organisation, therefore providing volunteers for crèche facilities (Focus Group 2).

Voluntary opportunities are also available – those with the skills or who have been on training are referred to partner agencies where they might work as translators, or as administrative support. A range of volunteering opportunities within EACO also exists – women help to make food for the children's activities or help with childcare. Others help to run Albanian lessons, work in the office, or translate during advice sessions (Focus Group 8; Focus Group 7; Interview with SU32).

#### 4.1.1.2.1 Illustrative Vignettes

It was far more likely that women would benefit from the personal development resources. Men, on the whole, did not take part in courses, though some men did, or had, volunteered in some way. These vignettes, then, are not a representative sample in terms of numbers of service users regarding gender – as many more women recounted their involvement in personal development activities. The reasons for men's lack of engagement with personal development were mentioned variously as: because they don't have time as the main earner (Focus Groups 4 & 7); because they are impatient to get into employment and are not interested in preliminary training or volunteering (Observation Journal, 22.11.08; First Interview with Project Manager); or because mothers, as the main caregivers, have to be able to speak some English in order to communicate with schools and healthcare providers (Interview with Education Worker; First Interview with Project Manager). However, the fact that men did not have social and regular engagement in the service in the same way that women did is an important factor in them not graduating, as many women do, to volunteering and training. Amongst women there was a sense that these were opportunities that they would not have had if they had stayed in their country of origin:

SU5 (Female, now 30s): {...I have benefited from activities and training courses. At home, being 25, I would not be able to access this}. (Focus Group 4)

And the staff members were viewed as role models for what women could achieve in the UK:

SU33 (Female, age unknown): I came in 2002, introduced to the organisation by (Education Worker). I helped with Albanian classes, volunteered with them. I have done training, worked in the office. *I really found my confidence. I've been inspired by them, especially (the Project Manager).*

...

SU30 (Female, 21): The people at EACO serve as role models for us – my parents come here...but they still live in the past...People like (the Project Manager) are an inspiration... (Focus Group 6)

Each of the illustrative vignettes below, though not representative in terms of numbers, does display a different path to personal development via EACO.

#### Service User 39 (Female, 40s)

I joined EACO in 2004, when I was doing accountancy training with (the Women's Worker) and she told me about EACO, and I joined as a user. A year later I became a Board Member – I was the treasurer part-time and finance worker until (year). I did lots of training. Working with EACO made everything different – workplace communication, finance, communication. They directed me where to go, not EACO giving the training. *Was a great experience – I got back more than my contribution.* I have had two jobs with charities as a finance worker...I am now the Finance Manager with (another charity) – I have three jobs. I still get involved with EACO when I have the time. Here you get great inspiration – they work all hours. There are benefits for us, but also the family.

(Focus Group 7)

This service user is an example of someone who was well educated before becoming into contact with EACO. Once she had been involved, however, EACO managed to get resources from her – here financial expertise – and also offer support and opportunities that enabled her to seek employment. She now works for three other agencies and EACO acted as a referee for two of them (First Interview with Project Manager). In the case study below, of

Service User 43 with a similar background, working as an interpreter for EACO enabled her to discover an interest in psychology.

Service User 43 (Female, 30s)

We got in touch after we saw an advert. I joined the volunteering project in 2004. I did interpreting and translation in mental health issues. Vulnerable women want women interpreters. EACO made it clear what I wanted to go for – psychology. I will do a Masters, but I am currently working full-time for a training provider.

(Focus Group 7)

A number of men also reported that EACO had enabled them to gain experience that helped them to get employment, here one of them recounts his experience.

Service User 40 (Male, 40s)

SU40: I joined EACO in 2005 – I was a volunteer and did it for a year. I graduated in Housing Studies and the main benefit was getting work experience around housing. I got a job soon after. From the first day I have enjoyed my time as a volunteer. I did mainly interpreting but also advocacy. It was very beneficial... I got work experience, but also wider experience in terms of many issues, training, career development.

(Focus Group 7)

Teenage and young adult service users have also benefitted from volunteering with EACO as the two examples below demonstrate. The first, a young female service user, got involved with the organisation through her mother.

Service User 51 (Female, aged 19)

*SU51: So later on knowing that EACO was running and [her mother] knew the people who were running EACO, obviously it was a good idea for me to get involved...and start doing a bit of voluntary work. The good thing about it is they have a lot of things running at the same time and... So there's a lot going on and you know they just throw everything your way...to begin with, I was...interested in doing a bit of admin work, and gaining a bit of*

*experience so I could have that down on my CV...But after a little while they just sort of start sort of sending you on training ...For different sort of things, childcare, and reception and...everything...So I initially got into it because of just wanting to...do a bit of experience for myself but then the training opportunities came along.*

(Interview with Service User 51).

#### Service User 14 (Male, aged 14)

*I've been involved in helping kids to come to the youth programme, starting a football team...I think (name of borough) youth are into crime – they don't care about education, get bored at home, get into alcohol and this leads to trouble you can't control. Before I was involved in EACO I used to be not a very good little boy...after I was involved...Parents sent me to EACO because I was getting in trouble at school. I've changed a lot, I've changed my friends...in school I don't have any problems. I'm happier because it makes Mum happy.*

(Focus Group 4)

In this case, because of time spent with the Project Manager to get him involved in activities and volunteering he was able to get away from gang culture in school and take part in volunteering (First Interview with Project Manager).

#### 4.1.1.2.2 Personal Development Ethos

As the above case studies have demonstrated, EACO staff actively encourage service users, especially women, to take on new challenges and to expand their career and training options. On one occasion a new service user met the Project Manager when the researcher was present – providing a good example of how the process could occur:

One [woman] (a new service user: SU2, female 30s) seemed quite confident. Gave me and (Project Manager) a lift back to (the main office)...Said she doesn't go out much when I asked about something... When her husband called had to explain where she was going and she said his suspicions would be allayed when he heard (the Project Manager's) voice – woman's. She felt now her children are at school... that she needs to do something for herself. Despite her great English and counselling qualification...she has been unsure how to progress. Being in touch with (the Project

Manager) from today she can see how it would work, though worried about combining it with looking after children. (The Project Manager) suggest she interpret at (partner agency). (Observation Journal, 26.02.09)

This factor of active encouragement from the staff also arose within focus groups, in particular the focus group with volunteers:

SU38 (Female, age unknown): Me and my friends had hairdressing qualifications. (The Project Manager) encouraged us to manage a shop. We have been doing it for three years now, we are doing well over there.

...

SU37 (Female, 20): *EACO helps people to help themselves.* (Focus Group 6)

In an interview with the Education Worker the ethos of personal development and encouragement through role models was discussed. From interviews and informal conversations it was gathered that the staff perceive themselves as very much like the service users, but with more experience. They understand why service users may not perceive straightaway how the voluntary system in the UK works or how it could benefit them, but they believe that it has helped them and can do the same for others:

*Women's Worker: We just started to encourage parents, 'come on and help us' and do the parents CRB check and send them to different courses and training. So, (the Project Manager) been role model for me and for (the Women's Worker), so we started us being role model for Mums...[We said] 'Look, we done it, we can work now, we are our kind of, it's a big deal for me being out of, having those benefits'. We can do something, we can work, we can earn our living and we can pay like everyone else. So was big step and had a good response from the Mums as well. They started to do, but in the same times back home is not, we didn't know nothing about a voluntary job, you don't do volunteering back home. You work, you get paid. You want to help someone, you helping because it's your cousin, it's your friend, it's your neighbour, but not because you doing voluntary work, not at all, so...[volunteering]*

*was a new term. We got used, we tried to explain and, but for me has been lovely, lovely, lovely.* (Interview)

An important part of ‘selling’ the benefits of the voluntary sector and what can be perceived as a kind of self-help and personal development ethos was that the women who were role models – the staff and volunteers – were themselves ethnic-Albanian women. It is to this user-led aspect of EACO that discussion now turns.

#### 4.1.1.3 User-Led Support

An important, and final, point about pastoral and social work touches on what Rex asserted – that immigrants would rather go to a service provider that shares their background because they feel more able to trust them (Rex, 1973:26). Trust was not explicitly raised in focus groups and interviews when people talked about why the preferred EACO, generally language and cultural reasons were given. When asked why people joined the organisation the Women’s Worker said that people felt more comfortable talking to someone Albanian:

*Some people will join for example initially if they need something. You have different people with different experiences, different needs and some people will join, if they need something and they find out that ‘ok we can get this type of support here, EACO’. They will come and join the group to get the support and some people will come because they feel totally isolated, they have nowhere else to go. They don’t know of other places or they wouldn’t feel comfortable to other places because of English and other reasons. Some women will come maybe say that they want the children to benefit from the activities and they at first they don’t realise what the group could offer and the potential that exists within the group and the organisation. So it’s different.* (Interview)

Trust was implicitly raised, however, by children taking part in the Children’s Congress. They revealed that they liked EACO because their parents did not let them attend other mainstream youth services. When the young people were asked about why that might be, issues of cost were raised, as well as the fact that parents trusted the organisation and appreciated the chance for adults to socialise alongside the children’s activities too (Withheld



reference no. 2, 2008:6). An external consultant who drew up a report about future options for the organisation was concerned that the service users were too reliant on EACO because of this trust issue. He felt that EACO needed to be able to say 'no' to request for new services and to enable people to access services from elsewhere (Observation Journal, 06.12.08). Trust, therefore, though not a clearly stated factor in the same way as language, was present and implied by some service users, or professionals working with EACO.

#### **4.2 Overcoming Social Isolation**

Rex writes that primary communities are "those groups on which individuals depend to keep them out of a state of absolute social isolation" (1973:14) and that people who are part of primary communities rely on other members in times of distress and joy, and with them they can relax and share secrets (Rex, 1973:15). The kind of resource that is meant, then, by overcoming social isolation is friendship. As discussed below in the section on social capital, the formation of new friendships in an RCO represents both the formation of new bonding social capital, *and* access to a resource in itself. Friendship is a resource because of the support, joy, relaxation and sharing of secrets that Rex mentions.

It was apparent from the way that people visited the offices of EACO regularly and the way that staff and service users greeted each other that many of them (though not all) were friends. At times the atmosphere in the office was very social with food, coffee and conversation (Observation Journal, various). Women, and to a lesser extent, men, said that they had made close friendships within the organisation.

The way in which the RCO created strong friendships is discussed in Section 4.6.1 Bonding Social Capital. However, here discussion will focus on the particular isolation sometimes experienced by ethnic Albanian women and EACO's specific work to overcome this.

It was felt in focus groups and interviews with staff, that men had less of a need to use EACO socially. This is related to the isolation of women in the Albanian-speaking community. It was felt by participants that men did not need to go to groups to make friends because they went out to work, and socialised in bars in a way that many women did not (Focus Groups 4 & 7). Some women in focus groups and interviews raised the fact that they had to persuade their husbands to let them attend the project at first:

SU5: {Back home the mentality is that wife stay at home, men jealous and fanatic...When first heard of EACO was happy to join group and persuaded husband to let me attend...}

Facilitator 2: *Does your husband have a community too in (borough)?*

SU5: {Husband had friends, single but not family friends. He was going out meeting people, having fun. Pubs, but for me not allowed to go out even to a friend's house}.

Facilitator 1: *How has your husband reacted to you being involved with EACO?*

SU5: {It took me a long time to convince him – I said kids need to go out and have friends}.

(Focus Group 4)

The same woman, Service User 5, also agreed to be interviewed, where she said that for her EACO enabled her to go out, which previously she had not be able to do, even to the park, because her husband wanted her to stay inside. EACO was perceived an acceptable reason for her to go out:

SU5: *And EACO had for reason to go and I say my husband I need to go with the EACO activities, 'yes' and my husband, he let me. But, if I say I need to go out by myself, 'never!'*

(Interview with Service User 5)

Service User 5 is an example of how some women in the ethnic Albanian community were isolated. A number of other women shared similar stories, but it must be noted that some women in the same focus group wanted to make it clear that their husbands were not at all restrictive (Focus Group 4). Because of the research methods employed the proportion or number of women experiencing isolation cannot be ascertained. However, the gender inequality experienced, and associated problems of domestic violence, were either raised or frequently implied in a way that gave the picture of this as a common issue amongst service users. This perception was reinforced by a number of EACOs activities, including a project helping female survivors of sexual violence in conflict and domestic violence in exile to access therapy resources; and the setting up of a Domestic Violence Project aiming to make people more aware of the issue and of sources of support (DVPAG Minutes, 2009; Second Interview with Project Manager).

Staff members spoke about how contact with people from the same background had benefitted them in a way that had changed their lives. One worker, who had previously been very depressed and isolated said that she found a sense of purpose from volunteering for the organisation from the start. She felt that support from others like her helped her more than professional mental health services had been able to:

*Interview with Education Worker: You look at me – if it wasn't for EACO I never met (the Project Manager) before back home, we lead two totally different identities, not one of them, but if it wasn't for EACO I was, you know, spending time, money and everything to this, kind of government because they gave me counselling, psychologists, going to hospital, someone to look after to me – all the stuff. And what I wanted, I wanted tiny thing – to be socialising with other people. They speak the same language, you don't feel ashamed, you don't feel guilty. So they changed your life basically, and I think all the communities when they came here they find the same problems. They see 'wow London is, you know, such a, different, totally different from back home and what is here. So if you don't find the right people to help you, I think you get lost.* (Interview)

As with this staff member, the way in which EACO encourages service users to volunteer is a large part of overcoming social isolation:

*SU36 (Female, age unknown): They made me feel good for myself. I was isolated, waiting for status. I felt useful working for other people. I got my self-esteem and have gone on to higher education. I still enjoy talking with Albanian women about their husbands.* (Focus Group 6)

*SU44 (Female, 40s): My son took dancing classes, I got some benefits advice with (specialist advisor based in EACO), so I joined EACO and stayed for four years... Was good for me and gave me a chance to practice what I was studying. I made calls in advice sessions, so it helped with my English. I made so many friends – I didn't have*

Albanian friends, I was very isolated – so now I have many friends. *It's great, I'm very happy.* (Focus Group 7)

There was a real sense that for women who had been isolated either by the attitudes of their husbands, or by depression, that EACO represented both a place to go that was seen as culturally acceptable and somewhere that they could begin to challenge these limitations – either by socialising, volunteering and overcoming depression and/or by becoming empowered to address restrictive cultural traditions. Volunteering and personal growth is the focus of Section 4.3 Goal Attainment.

#### **4.3 Goal Attainment**

The third function of immigrant associations noted by Rex is goal attainment. This refers to community organisations working to achieve a specific goal or change to benefit its members. The case study RCO's campaigning activities will be examined here under this theme. The organisation, though not overtly political – in that it would not define itself as such, and as a charity could not be partisan – nevertheless had worked on behalf of the Albanian speaking community over a series of campaigns and had been successful in securing new rights. For example:

- EACO have been involved in anti-deportation campaigns (Interview with Women's Worker).
- In response to difficulties amongst service users in opening bank accounts because they did not have the required identification, EACO persuaded a national bank to send a worker to their office so that people could open accounts (Second Interview with Project Manager).
- There is an ongoing campaign to get a GCSE qualification option for students of the Albanian language – so far petitions have been signed and their local MP has been involved in liaising with the Department of Schools, Children and Families and an examination board in order to find out how such a endeavour may be achieved (Observation Journal, various).

- EACO became well known in the Albanian-speaking community for a successful campaign that affected all ethnic-Albanians from Kosovo in the UK. Kosovans had been unable to get travel documents after a lack of cooperation from the Serbian Embassy. After collection of evidence from the Embassy, the involvement of two local MPs and a petition, the Home Office agreed to issue travel documents (Interview with Education Worker).

It appeared that aside from the practical campaigns of the past and present EACO has more recently been interested in campaigns that aim to raise awareness of a particular issue. The Project Manager had received training from a third sector organisation about awareness raising (Observation Journal, 20.02.09) and was keen to address some perceived problems. The external evaluator for the evaluation and planning document spoke with staff, service users and other volunteers about what EACO should do in the future and, “addressing wider issues such as sexism and gender discrimination (including domestic violence)” emerged as one of the priorities (Withheld reference no. 1, 2009:4). Domestic violence was recognised as an important issue by staff and trustees (Focus Group 7; Second Interview with Project Manager). A working group on domestic violence has been set up including a number of volunteers and links will be made with local women’s support agencies such as refugees (DVPAG Minutes, 2009). The aim is to get people in the community talking about domestic violence and dissemination of information to men and women about where to go for help.

*Project Manager: ... [ethnic Albanians] don't tend to talk about the domestic violence amongst themselves, so there is not the open dialogue, where if I don't know you, I don't talk. It means quite a lot – we have had users that have been with me for three years and I thought that they are the perfect couple but now she is suffering from depression and I get to know that she suffers from domestic violence... So, you know, people don't talk, they keep it inside and just when they are at breaking point or when they have broke, then you know they try to talk and then, you know, it sometimes is very late and, you know, you need to do something now.*

(Second interview with Project Manager)

As well as raising awareness about domestic violence, there is a planned awareness campaign about employment options, training and how to end dependency on benefits (Second Interview with Project Manager). Like the domestic violence campaign, this will involve articles in the community newspapers and discussion in support groups. In the case of employment special events will be held.

A final note on goal attainment is needed. From this discussion it can be seen that EACO was able to access new resources for its services users (and indeed all of the ethnic Albanian community in some cases) by campaigning to the relevant decision makers. It is important to be aware that such campaigns were not led from the top, but rather service users were involved in deciding which issues to tackle and whether to align with second-tier umbrella organisations that campaign around broad issues, such as poverty and citizenship (Focus Group 6).

#### **4.4 Affirmation of Cultural Beliefs and Values**

It is worth reviewing here what Rex says about this function, as the picture in EACO differs somewhat:

Faced with the welter of conflicting cultural meanings of the city, the immigrant, at least until he knows his way round, needs a cultural retreat, where he knows the rules, and knows that other people accept the rules (Rex, 1973:27)

Looking at the data from the case study it can be argued that the organisation does affirm Albanian cultural beliefs and values and that the services do offer a place for service users to go and speak their own language. However, analysis of the RCO does not confirm that certain rules are necessarily followed in the way that Rex perceived it. Instead, the staff of EACO consciously ensured that service users – particularly those in the parenting groups and Women’s Support Groups – were aware of other cultures and rules. This primarily means the culture of the UK, especially around different approaches and attitudes to child-raising, sexuality, multiculturalism and attitudes about gender and domestic violence. A number of policies and procedures designed to ensure an environment of equal opportunities and without discrimination were in place (Observation Journal, 23.10.08), and sessions

challenging beliefs were held – particularly in relation to parenting, as discussed above. The organisation also made attempts to get service users in contact with people of other cultures and a relatively strong theme throughout data collection was of interest in, and tolerance of, other communities<sup>30</sup>.

Despite the fact that service users were challenged in regards to certain topics or cultural assumptions, on the whole the impression of culture in EACO is of celebration of traditional Albanian culture – or at least aspects of it. Much of the affirmation of culture was via the language and dancing lessons for children and the showcasing of these talents in events to which service users were invited. By joining the organisation, children and young people were able to access a range of lessons and activities that were based in their cultural heritage, including Albanian language lessons, history, poems, musical instruments, drama and traditional dancing. This is a resource that most of them would not otherwise have been able to access<sup>31</sup>. Parents valued this service:

Facilitator: You all have children in EACO – what do they get out of it?

SU5 (Female, 30s): A range of activities.

SU6 (Female, 20s): Language is the most important – to speak our language.

SU12 (Female, age unknown): {I speak Albanian at home, so children speak good Albanian. Is also for other activities – learning of culture through poems and history}.

SU5: {Important that children can speak the same language and to their Grandparents}.

(Focus Group 4)

SU39 (Female, 40s) There are benefits for us...but also the family. My youngest child couldn't retain their culture and it was hard for them to communicate, now speaks Albanian very well because of the EACO classes. When a child is in nursery, they pick

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<sup>30</sup> This arose both in data collection and other reports (notably withheld reference no. 1, 2009). The possibility of EACO working with other ethnic communities was raised as a positive new direction by some, though not all, service users and was considered as a possible way to broaden the appeal of the charity to funders. This is discussed further in Chapter 6.

<sup>31</sup> A few organisations like EACO offer similar classes across London. Most, though not all, are not free as EACO's are. Location and accessibility are also important factors in whether young people can attend such classes. As the supplementary schooling and associated activities take place in schools with relatively high numbers of ethnic Albanian children they are easily accessible to them.

up English. Now can speak with grandparents in Albanian as well. You need to fit into society, but also retain your own culture. (Focus Group 7)

Children also said they enjoyed the classes and activities and when talking about their culture they were frequently proud. At no point did any child or young person say they did not value their culture or appear embarrassed, though some said they had been so before attending the project.

SU13 (Girl, aged 9): We learn Albanian, traditional costumes, dancing, numbers. History and stuff. I've been coming for two years, I knew a bit of Albanian before that. I hadn't met many Albanian children before. *Was a bit shy to say I was Albanian, but I came here and get confidence, and now I'm proud to say I'm Albanian.*

SU16 (Female, aged 15): People know of Albania now, it is important to us. The Albanian community is known. (Focus Group 5)

Facilitator: If someone knew nothing about Albania – what would you say to them about the culture?

SU50 (Male, aged 17): *Are a very civilized, strict culture, are very proud of who we are.* (Focus Group 8)

Data in other reports on EACO found that school staff also noticed an increase in children's pride in their cultural heritage. An Ethnic Minorities Achievement Co-ordinator in one of the primary schools in which the supplementary schooling is provided said:

I felt a great sense of achievement working with the group – they were so proud to put on the traditional costumes and perform. The children in school who watched the performance were also very impressed, and had more respect for those pupils after the event. I'm not sure about the effect it had on the children's work in class as I do not teach any of the older ones, but it has had a big impact on self esteem and pride in cultural



heritage. This year in Yr 1 several friends of the Albanian pupils have asked to join the club – it now has a higher status. The children are proud to be able to speak Albanian, which is great. So often peer pressure takes over and so many parents say their children will only speak to them in English once they start school... (Cited in withheld reference no. 3, 2008:29)

Supplementary schooling for bilingual children can help to affirm the child's cultural identity and lead to greater academic achievement more generally (Cummins et al, cited within withheld reference 6, forthcoming:1). EACO's programme for children has been evaluated as a successful model:

Providing Albanian language classes alongside enjoyable, culturally appropriate and physical activities is highly motivating for pupils. It leads to high levels of attendance, and provides a social environment in which children can use Albanian alongside English in leisure activities as well as in formal classes (Withheld reference no. 3, 2008:4).

The same report concluded that:

The Albanian School Project...is well conceived and grounded in research and good practice. By developing innovative ways of supporting the Albanian speaking community and its children, both to integrate into British society and to maintain their cultural heritage and language, EACO makes an important contribution to community cohesion. The project has high academic expectations of children. The community greatly value the educational opportunities offered by the ASP and appreciate the way in which the partnerships developed with mainstream schools enable them to get more involved in all aspects of their children's education. (Withheld reference no. 3, 2008:24)

As well as children learning about their culture, adult service users also had scope to partake in activities that affirmed their cultural values. Simply by having an organisation through which women could meet and speak in their own language was raised as important by the

women who were consulted as part of the Children's Congress consultation event (Withheld reference no. 2, 2009:7), and in some of the focus groups:

SU36 (Adult female, age unknown): Integration is a long process, it never finishes.

*You need your community next to you to remind you of your identity...when you are far away you are lost, need your community and children do too.*

(Focus Group 7)

SU30 (Female, 21) When I was younger I did feel proud to be Albanian but I wanted to fit in with what was going on, but if you have sense of your identity it is hard.

EACO gives you pride in Albania and you need that to integrate.

(Focus Group 7)

In Chapter 1 the idea of contingent communities being created in order to attract funding was introduced. From time spent with EACO and the obvious pleasure service users of all ages took in speaking their own language and celebrating their culture it is unlikely that EACO was formed where a community wouldn't otherwise have existed in order to secure funding. There was a sense that EACO had enabled people that are geographically spread or isolated in an unfamiliar city to communicate and meet up, but there was a strong sense that people would have wanted to do this regardless of their other needs and the services provided.

The researcher attended two cultural performances during the observation period. The first was part of the Annual General Meeting and involved traditional dancing (Observation Journal, 22.11.08). The second was a large performance featuring many children and young adults from the supplementary school and activities. The theatre was full and the mainly Albanian-speaking crowd (of both genders and all ages) was clearly appreciative of the dancing, drama, poems and fashion show that celebrated Albanian culture and the independence of Kosovo (Observation Journal, 22.02.09). There were around five or six chances for children to perform in public each year (Withheld reference no. 3, 2008:16). Culture in terms of dancing and language were 'affirmed' within EACO. Parents and children were pleased that children could learn to improve their language and learn about their

culture. For women, and some men, just visiting the centre and talking to people from the same background was appreciated and it is argued that this is a resource that allows people to affirm and celebrate their culture, as did the events held throughout the year.

The term 'values', however, is perhaps more difficult. As a non-Albanian the researcher was not aware of all of the nuances of culture and tradition that were present in the organisation and the services offered. What was clear, however, was that some cultural values around traditional gender roles were being actively challenged by the organisation. Therefore Rex's perception of straightforward and simple affirmation is too simplistic. It does, however, as with the other immigrant functions he described, offer an interesting theme around which to base the discussion of resources available via the case study RCO.

#### **4.5 Maintaining Links with the Homeland**

The final function of immigrant associations is that of maintaining links with the homeland, which was added to the previous four functions of *general* community associations when Rex wrote specifically about *immigrant* associations. Here, unlike with the previous categories, it appears there could be somewhat of a distinction between refugee community organisations and those catering for immigrants – though of course it is recognised that the distinction between the two is not clear cut.

With EACO the picture is somewhat complex. Ethnic Albanians may be refugees from Kosovo from the late 1990s, others were earlier refugees from Albania. There were also migrants from both countries and others from Macedonia and Montenegro. Immigrants are perhaps more likely to miss their homeland and plan to return, whereas refugees have fled the country often in traumatic circumstances and may not wish to keep in contact. Therefore, when undertaking the planning of this research it was assumed that, because the majority of service users had left Kosovo during the conflict, there would be a lack of formal links to organisations in the country of origin. The basis for the assumption was incorrect – the reality of the situation was more complex. It was true that there were practically no links or relationships with organisations at home, but connections to the country of origin were strongly evident as trips home to see relatives were quite common. However, these were not connections made or sustained via EACO, so the organisation itself did not tend to help service users to maintain their links with the homeland.

When asked about links with formal organisations in Kosovo or Albania, the Project Manager said that they did not have any such links. Apart from some training that their supplementary school teachers had received in schools in Kosovo or Albania, they did not have any connections (Second Interview with Project Manager). Therefore, EACO did not fulfil this function at an official inter-organisational level either – their resources did not extend to helping service users to maintain their links with the homeland, at least not via formal institutions.

In another way, however, the resources available to members of EACO did help to improve the *quality* of links to the homeland – at least for children for example with language and cultural lessons. At various points service users, volunteers and staff mentioned trips to what was often called ‘home’ (Observation Journal, various; Interviews with Education Worker; Focus Groups 2 & 7). However, families tended to go to Kosovo or Albania only for visits, not to return for good. The Project Manager said this was because so many children were born in the UK and are well settled into the education system that is better in the UK (Second Interview with Project Manager). Trips ‘home’ to Albania or Kosovo (service users tended to refer to Kosovo as ‘Albania’) were to see relatives, often during the school holidays. Parents were grateful that their children were learning to speak Albanian so that they could communicate with their relatives. In an evaluation of the EACO-run supplementary school it was found that:

Once families had received leave to remain in the UK and the political situation was safe, they were able to visit relatives in Albania or Kosovo. Maintaining this contact has been particularly important to families in England as many left reluctantly and in traumatic circumstances. All of the children have visited either Albania or Kosovo, some many times, during the summer holidays. All of the mothers and most of the children mention that one of the most important reasons for being able to speak Albanian is to be able to communicate with family in the home country. (Withheld reference no. 5, 2009b:14-15)

Therefore EACO’s supplementary schooling did help young service users that were learning their mother tongue to communicate more effectively with relatives at home, and also to

participate in traditional dancing, which was essential for weddings (Withheld reference no. 6, forthcoming:8).

#### **4.6 Inputs – Types of Social Capital**

‘Inputs’ is a term used here to refer to social capital that is present in the case study RCO, as opposed to what can be labelled ‘output’, which is the resources that have resulted from the existence of social capital and that have been discussed above. As explained in Chapter 2 social capital is an amorphous concept, used in a large number of different contexts and disciplines. As such there are multiple and overlapping classifications. When analysing the data it became apparent that social capital resources in the case study could be considered as one of two or three types of social capital as defined by theorists. The reason why it is ‘two or three’ types is because of the three types identified as relevant to this case study, one – bridging social capital – appears to be a theoretically weaker concept. Through discussion of its presence (or not) in the case study organisation this analysis, though not primarily concerned with an empirical testing of social capital theory, will highlight some areas for discussion about this classification. The classifications or types of social capital that were identified in the case study were bonding, bridging and linking social capital. The theory of each of these has been discussed in Chapter 2, here discussion will focus on the appearance of these types in the case study data.

##### **4.6.1. Bonding Social Capital**

In the Social Capital Theory chapter there was some discussion about different definitions of bonding social capital. In analysing the data, it became apparent that Woolcock’s definition of bonding social capital as “relations among family members, close friends and neighbours” (2001:13) was more convincing in comparison to Putnam, who describes bonding social capital as linkages between people who are alike in terms of class, ethnicity and gender (Putnam and Goss, 2002:11). This is because, although the RCO did tend to bring together people that were alike in terms of ethnicity, status and religion (most of the service users in the case study RCO were ethnic-Albanian, had some form of refugee status or leave to remain and most were Muslim), there were some differences even in these categories. A significant number of service users were alike in terms of ethnicity, but had a different

religion, or different nationality<sup>32</sup>. Similarly, there was a clear difference between those who had been living in rural or urban environments in their country of origin. Despite these differences, friendship ties (both those made prior to involvement in the RCO and those formed through it) and even family relationships could cut across these cleavages. Because of this, Woolcock's definition of bonding social capital is preferred to Putnam's as it allows recognition of the fact that close bonds can form across demographic divides.

In the case study data bonding social capital is in evidence in two ways. Firstly, pre-existing bonding social capital is a main way in which new service users are referred to the organisation – either via friends or family. Secondly, once service users have joined the organisation there is potential to form new friendships, which represents both a new bonding social capital link and a resource (friendship as a resulting resource of social capital as discussed above in Section 4.2 – Overcoming Social Isolation).

Pre-existing bonding social capital, between friends and family members was often the way in which service users came into contact with EACO for the first time. The below contributions are typical:

SU34 (Adult female, age unknown) I found out about EACO in 2004, I had trouble with travel documents, so my friend said I should come here.

(Focus Group 6)

SU5 (Female, 30s): In 2001 I met EACO when living in (place). I heard of it through friends.

(Focus Group 4)

In a review of EACO that the researcher was involved in during time volunteering with the organisation, a survey of members found that 56% of service users had one or more member of their family that also used EACO's services (Withheld reference no. 7, 2009:35). Such family ties were often cited by members as the reason they had got involved with

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<sup>32</sup> By this it is meant that many have different countries of origin – most were from Kosovo or Albania but others were from Macedonia, Montenegro or elsewhere.

EACO in the first place. Word of mouth between those with existing bonding social capital external to EACO was therefore important in gaining new members.

In the interviews with staff and volunteers, and the focus groups with service users, participants were asked if they would have been in contact with each other if they had not been involved with the RCO. Responses were mixed depending on how service users first accessed the RCO. In the focus group with a Women's Support Group based in a school, the participants were all mothers of children attending the supplementary school, and so had pre-existing social relationships (Focus Group 3). In other focus groups and in interviews with service users and volunteers it was evident that new friendships were formed amongst adult female service users. For some service users, particularly those women who attended support groups regularly or who volunteered for the organisation, the RCO was one of the most important networks in their life. Women frequently commented that for them it was like a family. The below samples of data from two focus groups and an interview are typical:

SU35 (Female, 40s): I got involved as an interpreter – I wanted to help with the community, but I learned a lot. *I am now addicted to EACO, I couldn't live without EACO.*

SU34 (Adult female, age unknown): *They are like my family.*

SU36 (Adult female, age unknown): I have been involved with EACO for five years, I am a Board Member. *Is becoming part of my life now.*

...

SU36: I look forward every week to catching up and seeing friends.

...

SU35: *It is the second family.* (Focus Group 6)

SU44 (Female, 40s): I made so many friends – I didn't have Albanian friends, I was very isolated, so now I have many friends. *It's great, I'm very happy.*

(Focus Group 7)

This theme is also present in an interview with a service user, who is also a volunteer:

Researcher (R): *So have you met most of your friends through EACO?*

SU5 (Female, 30s): *Yeah.*

R. *Oh really?*

SU5. *I made many friends here. I many made friends here and I need to have contact with them because if EACO not exist then friends are going.*<sup>33</sup> (Interview)

The friendship bonds created by the RCO are also evidenced by the way in which services were used. The Women's Support Groups and parenting sessions (mostly attended by mothers), which offered weekly sessions in a range of health, practical and social matters, were generally attended by women each week. The Women's Worker who runs the sessions said:

*[T]here are parents who come every week, very regularly, they don't miss a session unless they are ill. Then we get the odd ones who come, and depending on what needs they have or how they feel, but mostly...they come regularly every week.*

(Interview)

Another reason for believing that bonding social capital was created in the RCO was the fact that so many service users had been in contact with the organisation for long periods. Rather than just accessing services required and then ceasing contact, many service users had been involved with the organisation around once a week or more for years, often since it was established. The questionnaire administered as part of EACO's service review found that 38% of those asked visited EACO every week and that 41% had been in contact with the organisation for more than five years. An additional 37% had been in contact with EACO for three to five years (Withheld reference no. 7, 2009:34).

For children and young adults<sup>34</sup> too, the RCO's supplementary schooling and activities represented a chance to make new friends that were like them in terms of ethnicity and language. This was revealed in the report about the Children's Congress evaluation event,

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<sup>33</sup> This comment about losing friends if the programme were to end appears to be based on the isolation many women experience and their appreciation of the RCO as somewhere neutral that their husbands didn't mind them attending as discussed in Section 4.2.

<sup>34</sup> Young adults are defined here as sixteen to twenty-five years in line with EACO's Young Person's Project.



which was carried out by the researcher during her time volunteering for the organisation. Children and young adults said that they enjoyed learning Albanian and traditional dancing and that they appreciated the opportunity to make new friends (Withheld reference no. 2, 2008:5). In the focus group with children and young people several said they had not met many other Albanian children before joining the organisation, sometimes because they were the only Albanian child in their school (Focus Group 5). Existing friendships or family ties were also a route to joining the organisation, in the same way as with women service users.

SU17 (Female, 15): I got involved through Mum. I met Albanian friends, there are no other Albanians in my school. I changed my circle of friends. (Focus Group 5)

SU50 (Male, 17): Mum said I should come, I got involved in dancing and got my friends to come. I've got friends in the Youth Group, there are about eight to ten of them. (Focus Group 8)

As with most other aspects of EACO's services and social capital, men did not appear to be making new friendships via the RCO. Throughout the data collection period no men said that they had made friends or valued the organisation as a place to socialise<sup>35</sup>. However, several retirement-age men were regular visitors to the offices of the RCO. Though they were asking for advice on various issues it appeared that, like some of the younger women visitors, their advice visits were also opportunities to talk to the staff and other service users in Albanian over coffee as they visited fairly often and tended to stay and chat. One of these male visitors said:

SU7 (Male, 60s): {Because of my age I have had difficulties with learning English. I have needed help with translation and interpreting. A friend referred me to EACO for translating letters. I have been coming since EACO was in (previous location). Since then I feel at home, like it's my family. We can come any time any day and they respond...} (Focus Group 4)

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<sup>35</sup> As explained in the Methodology Chapter fewer men were involved in the collection of formal data.

From this selection of data it is clear that women and children certainly have potential to form new friendships within the organisation, thus creating new bonding social capital for them. However, whilst many of the service users I spoke to did form such friendships, this depended upon the way in which they engaged with EACO. When asked, some participants said that their family and friends who weren't members used the organisation either not at all, or just for advice when needed. Not every service user chose to make friends and be an active part of the organisation, but many did and returned to the organisation many times.

#### **4.6.2. Bridging Social Capital**

Analysing the data from the case study revealed two clear social capital findings. The first, which was discussed above in Section 4.6.1, shows that EACO represents bonding social capital to service users. Secondly, and as discussed above in Section 4.1, organisational social capital linkages enables service users to access a range of resources.

What was less clear was whether individual service users access bridging social capital via EACO. A review of the preferred definition is useful here. Woolcock asserts that bridging social capital refers to “more distant friends, associates and colleagues. Bridging is essentially a horizontal metaphor, however, implying connections between people who share broadly similar demographic characteristics” (Woolcock, 2001:13). This might mean that service users of EACO are able to make (distant) friends with, or other types of connection, to others like them, e.g. service users from other RCOs, or other migrants via their involvement in EACO. There was no evidence in the data collected that service users of EACO had formed these kinds of connections. Though service users did sometimes meet people from other RCOs or community organisations, for example during joint training with partnership agencies, there was no evidence that durable connections were made.

However, there was evidence of *staff* connections with other RCO staff or other RCO organisations. Whether this counts as individual or organisational social capital is debatable. For example, the Project Manager of EACO had a tendency to see relationship with other agencies as connections between *people* – between her and the staff members of other agencies:

Researcher: *Which partnerships...would [you] say have been the most...long-standing and useful?*

Project Manager: *What has been really good for me is not just the partnership with the institution or organisation but with individuals on those institutions. Like, you know, by working in partnership you identify people who work in the same way as you. So like... (individual from community agency where EACO started as a small project) has been a great supporter of EACO, (name) at (second tier capacity-building organisation) has been a great supporter...* (First Interview with Project Manager)

However, as this research is concerned primarily with how service users are able to access social capital via RCOs then it is more useful to consider staff as part of the organisation and therefore their connections as inter-organisational links or as organisational social capital. This contribution from the Project Manager does, however, remind us that personal connections are the basis of social capital, even in the relationships between organisations. Whilst the activities of EACO – for example holding occasional joint training sessions or joint cultural events with other community organisations – do offer potential for the formation of bridging social capital for its service users, the formation of bridges to “more distant friends, associates and colleagues” (Woolcock, 2001:13) did not tend to occur. It could be the case that other similar organisations may have far more evidence of bridging social capital. As a single-nationality RCO, however, it is not surprising that bonding social capital was much more in evidence.

If bridging social capital can be considered also as an organisational resource, and it is argued here that it is, then EACO’s connections to other RCOs or community organisations are relevant. It is argued that this kind of horizontal connection between staff and organisations should be categorised as bridging social capital. They are not linking social capital connections between organisations because they do not tend to result in the transfer of resources as linking social capital does (e.g. a service delivery relationship, whereby a large agency works with EACO to provide therapy, involves a clear exchange of resources).

Throughout the observation period four other Albanian-speaking refugee and migrant organisations in London were mentioned. One of these (called *Vend Takim* for this study) is a much smaller agency that the researcher was able to interview (Interview with *Vend Takim* Leader). They and EACO were loosely connected and occasionally offered each other help or were involved in performances of Albanian dancing together (Observation Journal, 28.10.08; First Interview with Project Manager). Relationships with the other three organisations appeared to be somewhat strained, or had been in the past, and so connections between the organisations were very distant and would not be classified as “friends, associates or colleagues” as Woolcock’s definition would suggest is necessary<sup>36</sup> (First Interview with Project Manager; Interview with Education Worker).

Connections to RCOs working with other ethnicities or nationalities were also present. In each case, however, EACO was the lead partner in the relationship, offering advice, support and help to smaller, less established RCOs (Second Interview with Project Manager). Though these linkages can be labelled ‘bridging’ social capital from EACO’s perspective, from the perspective of the other, smaller agency, the ‘linking social capital’ label would appear more appropriate because the smaller organisations were able to “lever resources” from EACO (Woolcock, 2001:13). It is because of this uncertainty in how to apply the ‘bridging’ social capital concept to the empirical observations, as well as the above mentioned confusion as to whether bridging social capital belongs to individuals or to organisations, that makes it appear less relevant than bonding and linking social capital. However, it could be the case that bridging social capital, though a viable concept in some research contexts, does not as usefully apply to this case study organisation.

#### **4.6.3. Linking Social Capital**

As revealed above service users of EACO are able to access a wide range of resources through the RCO partly because of its connections to other organisations. Here the discussion will focus on portraying the wide array of linkages that EACO has made that allow access to a range of “resources, ideas and information from formal institutions” (Woolcock, 2001:13) beyond EACO. It must be noted, however, that EACO appeared to be particularly

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<sup>36</sup> The possibility of competition for funding affecting relationships between RCOs will be discussed in Chapter 6.

skilful at both making such connections and maintaining them and, importantly, encouraging and supporting service users to take opportunities on offer. Therefore it can be argued that linking social capital alone – for example a partnership with an agency offering training – is not sufficient to ensure the transfer of resources to the service user. Other factors, such as a user-led service and bonding social capital (which are related) also appear to be important, at least based on the case study RCO. This section, however, will focus on the linking social capital in EACO.

In the eight months spent observing EACO the number of network connections displayed was at times overwhelming. Each time another agency was mentioned, the researcher attempted to make a note of it to be followed up. Later, discussions or interviews with staff were used to find out more about each agency and its role in helping EACO. In total 49 other agencies were mentioned<sup>37</sup>. This figure does not include funders or other RCO agencies. If funders were to be included for the years 2006-2011<sup>38</sup> then the total would be 74. Some of these connections are relatively weak– for example EACO is a local partner in the NHS Change for Life scheme, which is a source of information about health (Observation Journal, 19.03.09). Others, however, are robust and highly developed partnerships that result in obvious benefits either for the organisation, or for service users accessing the resources via EACO. Indirectly, of course, all partnerships that benefit the organisation also benefit the service users as they enable it to access funding, capacity-building, professional development, and other resources that keep EACO running and offering services of a good standard.

During time spent in the offices of the RCO it was observed that the staff, and in particular the Project Manager, was extremely pro-active in following up new connections to people and organisations. The following excerpts of data will attempt to demonstrate this.

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<sup>37</sup> This total number includes two local MPs. They are counted as ‘agencies’ here, as their offices have both been actively involved in supporting the organisation at various points.

<sup>38</sup> Some funders are supportive after a grant period ends, and grants are typically for three years, hence the timeframe selected.

In conversation in the office with the Project Manager, she reported that she had been to a conference the previous day. She was explicit about attendance at such events as a way to meet people, and therefore improve the chances of being known and receiving funding:

(The Project Manager) said she went to conference yesterday and one speaker was down on 'The Compact'...The Conference/training...was London Voluntary Services Council – of which EACO are a member... Also member of NCVO – as [she] believes it is important to be seen and meet people in networks. Then for funding, if well known, better chances. (Observation Journal, 13.11.08)

Other conversations during time spent volunteering and observing in the office returned to this theme. For example, the Project Manager said that she had political connections to the local authority in one borough, but not in others where services were also delivered. She felt that this needed to be worked on (Observation Journal, 20.11.08).

The Project Manager was keen to get new board members with particular skills and connections that could help EACO. She had, for example, a manager from a national refugee charity acting as her mentor, and she was keen to get him to agree to be on their board. She said:

*Being user-led and having an active board is, you know, something that we, that EACO needs to look at now, because the level it is, it needs more expertise and I need networks. I need to see them, offering me some more, to open some doors for me.*

(First Interview with Project Manager)

She clearly understood that the RCO did not have the skills to provide all the services that there was a need for. This, as well as funding, was one of the reasons why she was keen to pursue partnerships:

*Project Manager: ...You have got some skills in our group, but you have to find the things. You have to be really honest with yourself, where you are good at and where you are not. Like I'm not good at finance, so I made sure that I've got people and they are supported on the finance...So if you see me, (and the other staff members) we've*

*got totally different skills, none of us have skills that are similar or the way that we approach or solve a problem...And if you see partners that we have, one are people that are like the way we work, but have skills that can support us in the same way they benefit from our work as well.* (First Interview with Project Manager)

As well as working hard to make new connections, networks were maintained with care. An example of the attention given to keep up good relations with a whole range of partners occurred when the RCO staff were sending out Christmas cards:

They spend a great deal of time sending cards out each year to everyone who has been supportive – including individual (bank employee)<sup>39</sup> volunteers. This year's all personalized with photo of the relevant activity or person, including funders. (The Project Manager) thinks this is important way of ensuring [EACO] are seen, known and people know are appreciated. (Observation Journal, 18.12.08)

This personalised approach is also evident in their relationship with funders (See Chapter 6).

The fact that EACO is well networked has also been noted in various secondary data reports, and in interviews with funders. In an evaluation report of the organisations supplementary school project the author noted:

Networking: this is already a strength of EACO and the organisation would benefit from creating further links with similar organisations... (Withheld reference no. 3, 2008:25)

The partnerships identified are presented in Table 3 below, with some indication of the type of partner. Following the table are four case studies of partnership agencies involved with the RCO – one each from the voluntary sector, second tier voluntary sector, statutory and political spheres. EACO's relationship with funders will be discussed in Chapter 6.

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<sup>39</sup> Volunteer staff members from an investment bank visited EACO over two days to paint and refurbish parts of the property.

**Table 3. – Classifying EACO’s partnerships**

<b>Type of partner</b>	<b>Number</b>
Capacity-building organisations	5
Funders	25
Membership organisations	6
Partners in service delivery	15
Partners - general	8
Referral agencies	7
Political connections	3
Combination	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>

A note on the classifications:

- Capacity-building organisations – these are generally second-tier voluntary organisations that work to provide support to service delivery charities with training and advice that boosts their capacity – in terms of professional development and help in accessing resources such as funding, volunteers and other aspects of running a voluntary organisation. Some in contact with EACO work only with refugees, others support all voluntary organisations. Capacity-building might be only part of their work, other aspects could include campaigning and research.
- Funders – this category includes statutory, business and charitable sources of support. Funds may come in the form of grants, money linked to contracts or support in kind – for example, in the case study goods in kind included free legal advice to staff when negotiating a rental contract; free toys for children at Christmas and decorating materials (Observation Journal, 08.12.08; 28.10.08). The majority of EACO funding comes from grants made by charitable trusts and foundations (See Chapter 6). This tally does not include individual donors.
- Membership Organisations – this includes membership of a range of organisations such as local refugee forums and large national voluntary bodies.
- Partners in Service Delivery – These are the most pro-active of EACO’s partners – agencies including other charities, schools and businesses that work with them to



provide services. This includes sports provision, supplementary schooling and joint specialist projects, e.g. therapy or immigration advice.

- Partners – General – Agencies in this category cover a broad spectrum of organisation or types of engagement. Referrals are not made to these agencies, nor are services provided in partnership. However a relationship was evident. For example this category includes an Albanian newspaper, to which staff members occasionally contribute and in which advertising of events and projects are printed.
- Referral Agencies – these are either statutory or voluntary organisations that EACO refer clients to for specialist services – including immigration advice, training and material assistance.
- Political connections – these are national or local connections to individuals in political positions, or to political offices.
- Combination – those organisations that fall strongly into two or more of the above categories.

Via EACO's links to other statutory, voluntary and private organisations, service users are able to access: NVQ training, English language courses, a range of volunteering opportunities, campaigning resources, material support and so on. EACO's supplementary schooling and activities programme, and the Women's Support Groups are all provided in partnership with schools or educational bodies who offer their premises and associated resources for free. What service users gain from the resources available through these connections was discussed in Section 4.1-4.5. Here, however, focus is on EACO's ability to make and sustain professional partnerships in order that these resources can be accessed.

Below are some examples of the kind of work EACO provides to service users in partnership with other agencies. With the first example, as with other areas of work, EACO's partnership with a therapy provider is based on recognition of a need amongst service users that EACO does not itself have the expertise to meet.

### Voluntary Sector Partnership

A recent service delivery partnership that has been successful is between EACO and a charity that provides specialist therapy treatment in recognition of the needs of women service users related to their experience of sexual violence in conflict and domestic violence in exile. Staff were aware that women were experiencing problems, but that uptake or awareness of therapy opportunities was low due to negative attitudes about accessing such support and/or uncertainty about where to go for help (DVPAG Minutes, 2009). Because they don't have the specialist skills to offer therapy, EACO submitted a joint funding bid to a charitable trust for three years funding to jointly provide therapy taster sessions to boost uptake of therapy and identify women suitable for individual and group therapy.

Other partnerships involve EACO providing a service, but with the support and resources of other organisations. A typical example is the supplementary schooling for children that is offered in partnership with eight schools and one youth centre in multiple boroughs. The case study here is of one Primary School. This school has been selected because an external evaluation of this relationship has been carried out by an expert in supplementary schooling (Withheld reference no. 5, 2009b).

### Educational Partnership

A primary school with a relatively large number of ethnic-Albanian pupils has hosted EACO's supplementary schooling in the Albanian language and associated activities since 2007. Some of the children attending the school had been going to similar classes in a local youth centre and after parents asked that the lessons be hosted in the school, EACO staff met with the Headteacher and a trial period of three months was agreed. Children attending have an hour of Albanian language and literacy followed by an hour of traditional dancing and games. The Headteacher and the schools' Ethnic Minority Achievement worker meet regularly with the staff of EACO. EACO benefit from the use of the schools facilities. The school benefits from what the Headteacher has called "a very good model" of supplementary schooling (Withheld reference no. 5, 2009:29), in which children are encouraged to learn and parents are helped to engage with the school.

Other partnerships do not directly concern service delivery, but rather support the organisation in securing funding or, in the case of the next example, campaigning for changes that would benefit the Albanian-speaking community. EACO is well connected to two local MPs – both have been involved in campaigns organised by the RCO, and one has been involved in particular.

#### Political Partnership

The MP, who has a role in government, has been in contact with EACO since 2000 when it was still part of another voluntary project. He has been involved with the organisation since then and occasionally attends events (Observation Journal, 22.11.08). He is often used by the organisation as a referee on funding bids and wrote the foreword to EACO's 2007 Annual Report and the 2009 review report (Withheld reference no. 7, 2009). The Project Manager has also secured his help in various campaigns – including offering advice for getting an Albanian GCSE (Second Interview with Project Manager) and in helping Albanian-speakers from Kosovo to get travel documents (Interview with Education Worker).

Other links to organisations enable EACO to lever “resources, ideas and information” (Woolcock, 2001:13) from second tier voluntary agencies that help them with finding out about new funding, or developing the staff or organisational structures to be more professional and effective.

#### Second-Tier Voluntary Sector Partnership

EACO's Project Manager has good links with a national second tier organisation. One of its senior members of staff acts as her mentor via a scheme set up by another capacity-builder. This relationship proved useful as she got the chance to speak informally with him, and to learn more about how a larger charity was run. The organisation also runs a series of workshops and information gathering exercises that are beneficial in terms of finding out about funding. (Observation Journal, various; Second Interview with Project Manager).

This discussion has attempted to demonstrate the numerous and varied links made by EACO to other organisations – it's linking social capital – which secure resources, both for the organisation and for service users, collectively and individually. Although organisational

social capital is not directly connected to the users of the RCO, the *resources* that their (often bonding) connection to the RCO enables them to access are greatly enhanced by the organisation being well connected.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

It has been argued that a service user's connection to EACO represents social capital for that person. Connections between individuals within EACO represent bonding social capital and a means by which they can access resources of friendship and affirmation of cultural beliefs and values. Membership of the organisation enables service users to access a range of resources that they would not otherwise be able to access, or would not be able to access in the same way – in an environment which is understanding of their culture, well resourced and led by sympathetic and encouraging staff and volunteers. EACO is a well connected organisation and its linking social capital enables it to tap into a wide array of resources from partners that further open up opportunities to service users.

There was less evidence of bridging social capital, which may be in part because of a difficulty in operationalising the concept. However, it could simply be the case that this RCO was not the kind of organisation in which significant levels of individual bridging social capital is found. This could be because of its focus as a single-nationality organisation, although service users did meet with people from other communities via their involvement with EACO. Though there were some organisational level connections to other refugee and community organisations, these tended to be more like linking relationships.

Much of the discussion here has been about the resources available to service users in terms of advice and training, emotional support and friendship, and activities and groups in which cultural traditions and language can be maintained and taught to a new generation. However, as this discussion has tried to make distinct, these resources are not social capital. Their presence indicates the underlying social capital EACO makes available to service users. They are also indicative of what an organisation with strong bonding connections between members can achieve if it is *also* in possession of strong linking social capital.

Social capital is clearly generated in this RCO. However, as users all come to the organisation in different ways, at different points in their experience of exile and with different needs, each service user has different scope and ability to access new social capital and the resources that it enables them to reach. The typical picture of EACO is of women contacting the service via friends or through the involvement of their children and being able to access friendship, advice, emotional support and access to volunteering, or training, if they wish. At the other end of the usage scale it seems that some service users visit the RCO only when needed to receive practical advice. Though this linkage to the organisation does enable them to access pastoral and social work, that might be all they find on offer, or wish to use. As has been shown, men are more likely to be in this category in this RCO.

The success of the case study RCO appeared to be due to a combination of several factors. Firstly, linking social capital connections to institutions offer valuable and relevant resources. Secondly, service users were able to access these resources via an organisation with strong bonding social capital relationships between staff, volunteers and service users. Finally, the RCO was run professionally and in such a way that maintained both the relationships with service users and the partnership agencies over the long term. This would suggest that the *combination* of two types of social capital – bonding connections between service users, volunteers and staff – and linking – between the organisation and a range of other agencies – were vital to the success of the organisation. It must also be noted that the level of bonding social capital between service users and staff and volunteers was based on the fact that the organisation is led by people who are like the service users, who understand and value their culture and language.

## **Chapter 5: Social Capital and Resources – Questionnaire and Interview Data**

This chapter considers whether the findings of the case study organisation in relation to social capital and resulting resources are supported by the results of the questionnaire and interviews with professionals working in the field. This chapter is the opposite of the previous one – inputs are considered before outputs. Because of the length of time spent with EACO there was considerably more data collected in relation to that organisation, and some of it will also be used here if salient.

Overall, contributions from professionals and the picture drawn by the survey data is one that supports the findings of the case study that RCOs can generate social capital for service users and that this social capital enables them to access a range of resources. Also, as with EACO, it was argued by funding and capacity-building professionals that an RCO that is well connected with linking social capital to other organisations is best placed to offer a range of resources. Again, Rex's functions of immigration associations typology is used to structure the discussion of resulting resources. The professionals interviewed tended to focus on the practical pastoral and social work role of RCOs, with less of an emphasis on overcoming social isolation or affirmation of cultural beliefs and values, though some recognised these aspects. Goal attainment was viewed differently by professionals, who tended to see campaigning as a second tier activity. There was little evidence that many RCOs maintain links with the homeland for their service users.

### **5.1 Some Limitations of the Data**

As Chapter 4 revealed, EACO is a well networked RCO that has been viewed by some of the professionals interviewed as one of the most successful and well-run that they have encountered. EACO was selected partly because of this good reputation, and partly due to issues of access. This was because in order to see how an RCO generated social capital and resulting resources for refugees and asylum-seekers, it was logical to study an organisation that was deemed a success.

It must be repeated, as mentioned in the methodology chapter, that the data collected in the survey of RCOs cannot be considered as representative or therefore as clear proof of generalisations about trends emerging from the case study. This is because of the relatively

small sample size due to the selection criteria used<sup>40</sup>, and also the response rate which was 30%. Because of this, associations between RCO characteristics, like size of network and income levels, or nationality, which are no doubt interesting questions, are not made here. Interviews with the funders and capacity-builders were more general. They were not, for reasons of practicality, asked to limit their observations of RCOs to those that were of a particular size nor over a certain income, in order to gain a broader picture. Therefore it must be kept in mind that their contributions cover a wider spectrum of RCOs in terms of income and size characteristics than those that were surveyed. This is helpful, however, in developing the discussion beyond those larger RCOs.

The arguments and themes developed in this Chapter are made with recognition of these limitations of the data. It is not argued that the survey, nor the interview data, can be used to generalise confidently about whether what was found in the case study reflects the situation of the general RCO population of London. Instead, exploration of the data aims to add some context to the case study, and to develop further relevant avenues of enquiry about refugee community organisations, social capital and their service users.

## **5.2 Refugee Community Organisations and Inputs: Social Capital**

In regards to social capital the professionals interviewed tended to emphasise linking and bridging social capital characteristics. Social capital was only mentioned explicitly once, but other comments about RCO networks are informative in regards to what second-tier professionals value about RCOs. The survey of refugee community organisations aimed to examine each of these components systematically, and the results are presented below.

### **5.2.1 Bonding Social Capital**

The interviews revealed that funders and capacity-builders were particularly concerned with bridging and linking social capital. This is possibly because, from the viewpoint of those external to an organisation, these two types of social capital are more 'visible'. By being present in the case study organisation for some time the researcher was able to see clearly

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<sup>40</sup> Organisations selected for the survey were those in London that had an income of over £100k in 2008. This was in order to make comparisons with EACO meaningful.

and collect evidence of the friendships and support networks within that organisation. In contrast, funders in particular may deal with the organisation either via an application form, or by talking with the staff in a meeting or over the phone, though some do make visits. Because of the nature of application processes funders rarely speak directly with service users.

One interviewee did directly discuss the importance of bonding social capital in relation to the continued need for single-nationality refugee community groups:

*F3<sup>41</sup>: I think...we're very selective about those kinds of organisations [RCOs] that we chose to fund. But that isn't to say that we don't recognise the value of a lot of those organisations even though we wouldn't fund them and I think that...the argument about bonding as opposed to bridging or bridging as opposed to bonding is a bit of an unreal distinction. Because...how do you bridge before you have bonded? And I think I think (name of his organisation) probably recognises that access to any services depend on an organisation which is culturally appropriate and speaks the same language as the people they are trying to bring in.*

No other interviewees made specific reference to social capital, and no direct questions about it were asked because the researcher did not want to bias responses. Funders did often say, however, that if funding an RCO they expected it to be well-connected to the community, user-led and open to a wide number of people. Some examples:

F7: [When asked about what makes an RCO appealing]: We...consider the resilience of the organisation, whether they work closely with the community. There is not a specific funding programme for RCOs, but we are committed to this kind of organisation.

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<sup>41</sup> Here 'F' is for Funder. The following numbers are assigned in the order of data collection. Italic text, again, means a direct quote. Non-italic text is for paraphrased contributions from telephone interviews or because the interviewee did not wish to be recorded. All data (aside from questionnaire statistics) in this chapter is from a semi-structured interview unless otherwise stated. In the quotes from interviews (parentheses) indicates that a name or date has been removed for anonymity. Any text in [brackets] signifies a textual addition or change to the contribution to make it clearer to the reader, but where the original meaning is preserved.



F3: *[W]e would fund an organisation that has tried to look at its community and knows its community well. So not just list us a whole load of stats and say, you know, the Somali population is really deprived, but actually starts to say, there is an issue with, if it's the Somali community, there is a social issue with khat, the drug for example... so, we'd look for something that was a bit more specific than the general 'We're a very needy community'...and...we'd need to feel a connectedness between the organisation and its community and they can do that through their track record...*

F2: *[W]ell they say to me in their applications that they are part of the community, they've got the language, they know the culture, they know the desperation. And because they know the desperation they know how to directly deal with those needs. And I suppose the key things are language, cultural sensitivity and protecting those people.*

Though these traits of being connected to the community and user-led don't represent a direct preference for, or recognition of, bonding social capital links amongst the professionals (apart from the first quote above), if an RCO was shown to have an array of service users and was led by members of the community in an open way, bonding social capital is more likely to be present.

#### 5.2.1.1 Survey Data

The self-completion questionnaire is open to bias and so cannot conclusively prove that other RCOs work so effectively as EACO to help service users to form valuable relationships. However, the data does indicate that most of the RCOs feel that they do represent a place where service users can find such resources. Eighty-eight percent of respondents said that 'We give service users the chance to meet and socialise with each other regularly'. A further 94% agreed that 'We hold events – such as celebration days and cultural events'. Also significant, 69% said that they 'provide activities – such as dance, sports, cooking, etc'. Socialising opportunities clearly offer scope for the formation of relationships, as does the organisation of event celebrations and activity sessions.

Overcoming social isolation may also occur when meeting people from beyond their own refugee community. Thirty-eight percent of RCO respondents said they offered service users opportunities to meet refugees or migrants from other countries, and 50% said the same for meeting people from the UK. Though 'meeting' someone from another community might be interpreted in a number of ways – from holding a talk or advice session with a UK worker to holding regular joint activities with another nationality RCO group, this entire spectrum would arguably help refugees and asylum-seekers to experience, even briefly, a different culture and or language which could be a useful resource and at the very least offer some small insight into other communities or life in the UK which would aid integration, if just in a small way.

As well as asking about opportunities for socialising that RCOs provide, respondents were asked to consider more directly whether service users make friends within their RCO and the role of the organisation in their lives. The data is presented below.

Table 4. Survey Results – Role of RCO in Service Users’ Lives

Statement	% of RCOs that: <sup>42</sup>			
	Disagree <sup>43</sup>	Neither agree/ disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Service users meet each other and become friends via our organisation	0	13	25	63
If our organisation didn’t exist, most of our service users would probably not know each other	13	25	13	50
Our organisation is the first place our service users come to if they need help or advice	0	13	6	75
Our organisation is a big part of our service users’ day-to-day lives	0	0	31	63

Eighty-eight percent of RCOs in the survey agreed or strongly agreed that service users made friends via their organisation. As with EACO, the responses about whether service users would or would not know each other is a bit more mixed, with 63% agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement, but 25% neither agreeing nor disagreeing and 13% disagreeing. It is possible that different communities would have varying factors affecting their response to this question, e.g. the geographical spread of that community in London; the typical family group size; other community venues (like faith group) and so on, though this is just speculation and would make an interesting avenue of further enquiry.

EACO clearly represented a large part of service users’ lives and this also appeared to be the case with RCOs surveyed. Ninety-four percent of RCOs said that their organisation was a big part of service users’ lives. A large proportion (75%) strongly agreed that their organisation was the first place service users went to for help and advice, though 13% neither agreed nor

<sup>42</sup> Some questions were left blank by applicants, hence not all percentages total 100%. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

<sup>43</sup> The questionnaire also included the response ‘Strongly Disagree’. This is not presented here because none of respondents selected it.

disagreed. It must be noted that self reporting is not as reliable as direct observation, particularly with topics such as the importance of an organisation. However, the in-depth understanding of social capital within the EACO case study reveals *how* an RCO, led by the community and providing the same sort of services, *can* create bonding social capital for service users and be their primary network for advice and support, and to a slightly lesser extent, friendship. It is reasonable to assume that similar organisations have potential to do the same.

### 5.2.2 Bridging Social Capital

Three of the eleven funders<sup>44</sup> mentioned that they valued refugee community organisations that were well connected to other RCOs, particularly those serving the same nationality or ethnicity. This kind of connection would be defined as horizontal bridging social capital and was associated by these interviewees with an organisation being well connected to its community and to the wider voluntary and community sector. Though this research argues that RCO connections with the general voluntary and community sector often involve linking, rather than bridging social capital, these funders did not make the same distinction. Instead, contact with others serving the same nationality was often considered as a general indicator of their connectedness. These funders expressed this by explaining their negative experiences of RCOs who are close in proximity but do not, or at least in their application for funding, appear to be known to the applicant.

*F10: ...the proliferation of...Somali groups was just incredible. You know, you'd get applications from three or four that were literally a few metres away from each other, you know, because it was just completely different groups of people who had set up...the same organisation, essentially, just based on kind of different cultural groups... And whilst...we would never force people who were perhaps incompatible for whatever reason, particularly if they were coming from a country where that's been the reason that there was the conflict...to do anything together, I think there was also a really strong sense that the sector was very, kind of disjointed and that*

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<sup>44</sup> As explained in Chapter 3, professionals interviewed included staff from eleven funding organisations – a range of statutory and private sources, and four individuals working in some way to support capacity building in refugee community organisations.

*people didn't have a joined up way of thinking and operating and I think that really weakened the sector for a lot of funders because, you know, it just felt really unsustainable...*

This funder made it clear, however, that this proliferation and lack of communication was not limited to refugee community organisations:

*F10: We would be looking at how networks and organisation is...Like I said we do get applications in from the same geographical area and they don't even refer to each other so its, the kind of networks that they belong to, and the capacity to work in partnership with others I think... These are things that we would look for in every organisation...it's not something...specific to RCOs but I think...They are all good indicators of really how well they are going to deliver.*

Another funder said:

*F2: ...one of the things I was always anxious about when I started this job is the, that particularly with the Somalis is because of the tribal thing because I remember going up to Liverpool...to visit a Somali group and I interviewed them and they put an application in and I said to them 'Are there any other Somali groups in Liverpool?' And they said no, and I thought this was most odd because literally I had walked past another Somali group office five minutes before and, of course, I did some research and I found out that there were about another six and I've had that similar situation in London and I think whilst, I don't know, you can exaggerate this and there's a turnover of these groups, but someone said there is 135 Somali groups in Greater London.*

Another interviewee voiced similar concerns, and again Somali community organisations were mentioned:

*F4: [O]ur experience is often that there is enormous need, there are lots of people then who are concerned about the needs that they see around them. Lots of people live in quite small pockets of community, so people often don't know. You know, we*

*often go and visit and say 'do you work with that Somali group?' You know, on that side of the borough and they ...don't know that they exist. So I think there is also that element – it's a relatively large population migrant population in London, with significant problems unsurprisingly, you know, given what's happened in Somalia, so...I definitely think it's a mix of that really.*

Concerns about the proliferation of RCOs, and in particular Somali community organisations, is clear from a significant proportion of interviews with funders. Though many interviewees, as with Funders 4 and 10, above, note the tribal and religious reasons for divisions in the Somali community, nevertheless it was often raised as an issue that meant a shift in procedures, focus, and for one funder, the reason to stop funding RCOs altogether (Interview with Funder 1). This will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

It must be noted that some funders were explicit in their expectations that RCOs have bridging connections to other RCOs – particularly those serving the same community. From the analysis of EACO, however, it emerged that links to other Albanian RCOs were present, but that relationships were sometimes tense and that there had been significant disagreements in the past. There was a sense that competition for funding had been an element of this tension (First Interview with Project Director of EACO). Though EACO is just one organisation, it is worth noting that if an organisation that is very well connected to a range of other agencies and represents a generally homogenous cultural group finds relationships with other same-nationality RCOs difficult, then it is perhaps unsurprising that organisations representing a service user community as diverse as the Somali community might experience difficulties in working together. Competition for funds and the expectation of government and some funders that same nationality RCOs form partnerships is discussed further in Chapter 6, and the relevant statistics from the survey will be presented there.

### 5.2.3 Linking Social Capital

Four of the eleven funders stated, or implied, that they considered how well connected an RCO is to the general voluntary sector when deciding whether to support it. In the analysis of EACO it emerged that organisational linking social capital to service providers, third

sector groups and statutory agencies was a vital part of its diverse service provision. This is something that these funders also noted as a general theme of well networked RCOs.

*F3: I think RCOs can provide...[an] incredibly good service, by making contacts with the more specialist agencies on particular issues in their locality and support, provide that supportive role to the clients. Either in terms of interpretation, helping people ... get the evidence or get the information which will build [their asylum] case.. I can see this scope for providing a much more enhanced service through referrals and collaborations with other organisations and I think one of the other reasons is, are the other organisations really doing enough to actually meet the RCOs halfway?*

Another funder felt that a lack of basic connections to mainstream voluntary agencies or refugee community forums would be a concern:

*F2: [I] think that perhaps a test question should always be for a refugee group, allowing for how small they are, if they are completely new because you know you've got to get the learning curve in the first six months, is ...are they a member of the local CVS<sup>45</sup> or...refugee coordination groups.*

For another funder, an RCO being well connected to other agencies safeguarded against the organisation being too insular or dominated by key staff or volunteers, and also enabled them to broaden their funding base and chance of longevity:

*F10: I think you do become very, very isolated and insular...I think a strength of a lot of refugee groups is the people in them, but I think that can also be their biggest problem at times because those powerful personalities can control those groups and completely...dominate the direction that those organisation go in. I think that by being well networked, by accessing courses and, support from other organisations that build up skills bases and people's...understanding of relevant issues, and where people have a much more tunnel vision approach it is much more obvious in the way*

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<sup>45</sup> Community Service Volunteers

*that applications are written, in the way that work is proposed to be delivered. You know, in terms of sustainability as well, of broadening your funding base and stuff like that. I think one of the key weaknesses of RCOs is their ability to continue going and often needing to work with others to either share facilities of accommodation or, you know, stuff like that can, I think, really maximise their chances of longevity. I think when organisations are very polarised...it means they lose access to some of that.*

These comments are illustrative of those made by a number of funders. It appears that connections to other organisations, particularly horizontal connections that unlock the expertise and skills that they perceive RCOs as lacking.

#### 5.2.3.1 Survey Data

RCOs were asked whether they worked with other charities, business or groups to provide their services. Ninety-four percent said they did – only one organisation did not.

They were also asked whether anyone involved in running the organisation had ever taken part in training about running a voluntary community group. Seventy-five percent had, 6% (one organisation) was unsure. At this level of RCO size and income (all over £100k per year) this level of training is unsurprising. EACO staff members had all undertaken training of some sort, and two of them had been involved in the School for Social Entrepreneurs which gave in-depth training on running a small community organisation – including legal advice, fundraising, equal opportunities, health and safety requirements and a range of other voluntary and community sector subjects (Observation Journal, various; Interview with Education Development Worker; First Interview with Project Director).

In the examination of links between EACO and other organisations in the previous chapter, 74 were counted. However, this included a range of funders and membership organisations that do not represent partners in service delivery. Direct service delivery partners totalled 15. The survey of RCOs asked them to estimate how many organisations they worked in partnership to provide services (not including funders). The results are presented below.



**Table 5. Survey Results – Service Delivery Partnerships**

<b>Number of Partners</b>	<b>No. of RCOs</b>	<b>% of RCOs</b>
1 to 5	3	19
6 to 10	6	38
11 to 20	0	0
21 to 30	5	31
31 to 50	1	6
More than 50	0	0

EACO's 15 service delivery partnerships are slightly above average – the median answer is 6 to 10 partners. This would confirm that EACO is well networked. However, the EACO number may be slightly inflated because the researcher was able to note and document partnerships over a period of time. RCO survey respondents may have missed under or underestimated partnerships if just mentally tallying them. Also, EACO is a relatively large RCO in terms of income – which would mean more revenue with which to support projects and therefore partnerships, with more than twice the minimum £100k income inclusion criteria, though a minority of the surveyed RCOs had incomes of over £300k.

### **5.3. Resources Available to Service Users of Refugee Community Organisations**

In the case study chapter it was revealed that EACO represented a resource in service users' lives that enabled them to access a range of services and support. In this section data from the interviews with professionals and the statistics from the survey will be examined to see whether they lend support to this finding.

Professionals were asked about their perceptions of what single-nationality refugee-led community organisations did for their service users. This was an opened-ended question in order to allow their own thoughts to emerge, without influencing them to consider any particular themes e.g. practical services, support or socialising. The responses were, as with the social capital data, uneven. The sorts of things that are most visible to funders, again, were those most often mentioned. So advice and information were most commonly

discussed, though recognition of RCOs' role in helping refugees or asylum-seekers to overcome social isolation were also noted.

Interestingly, relatively little data collected from these interviews was coded under affirmation of cultural beliefs and values, and none related to maintaining links with the homeland. This will be discussed below with reference to the survey data, and funders' different perceptions of RCOs and goal attainment – which stands out as the finding most unlike that of the case study.

### 5.3.1 Pastoral and Social Work

Pastoral and social work in the form of advice and information and some training is the core of what RCOs do. Applications to funders are most likely to be for projects or ongoing work encompassing these activities and therefore it is unsurprising that this resource was that most mentioned by funders and to a lesser extent, capacity-builders. Discussion of interview and survey evidence is divided, as with the case study analysis chapter, into three areas, but first a few general points will be raised.

Firstly, as with EACO, referral to other agencies for services is common. All but one (94% of the RCOs who returned the questionnaire) said that they referred service users 'to other agencies that can also help them'. Direct provision of some types of service was generally low. For example, EACO did not directly provide in-kind essentials like food or clothes, and only 13% of RCO survey respondents did. One capacity-builder confirmed that RCOs tend to refer service users on for this kind of support:

Researcher: Do the RCOs you work with spend much time and/or energy on giving out food or helping with accommodation?

CB2<sup>46</sup>: No, they tend to refer people to churches or homelessness organisations. Sometimes they phone around to find a service provider and give them the exact name and details of who to speak to.

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<sup>46</sup> Here 'CB' is for Capacity-builder. The following numbers are assigned in the order of data collection.

Churches and organisations like the Red Cross are best placed to offer in kind essentials because of economies of scale and they can secure a level of charitable donations (again, often in kind, but also money) for individuals. Churches often have a supportive congregation who are perhaps in a more secure financial position and so able to make donations. The Red Cross, Salvation Army and other such groups are associated with this kind of support and are able to secure funds from trusts and foundations, and the public in a way that RCOs generally cannot.

The table below shows how commonly different types of pastoral and social work were provided by RCOs.

Table 6. Survey Results – Services Offered by RCOs

<b>Service Offered</b>	<b>Number of RCOs</b>	<b>% of RCOS</b>
Advice and information	15	94
Referral of service users to other agencies	15	94
Training – e.g. mother tongue classes, English classes	13	81
Activities – such as dancing, cooking, etc	11	69
Direct provision of food and/or other essentials	2	13

#### 5.3.1.1 Advice and Information

As Table 6 shows, the majority, 94%, of RCOs responding to the survey offer advice and information to their service users. This is not surprising as it is one of the main activities that RCOs are set up to provide. In the interviews funders tended to see this sort of work as the main function of RCOs. The below example is typical of the sentiment expressed, but rather more fully explained:

*CB1: I think it's important that people understand what kind of services are provided, why there is a need for their services. In general their core activities, with most of these refugee community organisations, is providing advice and information, in particular interpreting and translation and referring clients to the mainstream voluntary and statutory bodies. That's a very, very important role for them. So that's in relation to day-to-day supporting and referring them to other service providers.*

Both the survey and the data from funders and capacity-builders confirms what was found in the literature review and also in the case study. One of the primary roles of RCOs is to give refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants direct information and advice, as well as referral to other agencies.

One funder felt that RCOs should perhaps limit themselves to referring service users to other agencies and working to support that referral. He was talking in particular about legal work by RCOs, but seemed to possibly expand this statement to other services:

*F3: ...legal advice and representation is a very, very skilled occupation, and shouldn't be entered into lightly. ... Do you have people whose skills are up to that... confidentiality? Do you have the processes in place to ensure that cases are managed properly..?[T]he only way you're going to be of help to someone is knowing a lot more than they do about the particular issue that they've got. So what is your welfare benefits knowledge, you know, what is your employment experience? And I think that if I were to find fault in [RCOs] that I used to work with it would be not knowing what levels they need to be in order...to do what they want to do competently. Legal advice is probably the one that springs most to mind. I think there is less danger about getting out of your depth in other fields... I think if you take a legal problem on you've often only got one chance to crack it and if it lands in the lap of someone who is incompetent then it can really lead to serious issues. Especially with immigration...*

Researcher: *Is that something that you've seen? Problematic legal advice?*

*F3: Oh yeah, very much so, yeah...and I have to say that...you can understand why it happens because there is a reluctance, there's a suspicion on the part of the client of being referred elsewhere, where they don't feel comfortable. I think RCOs can provide incredibly good service by making contacts with the more specialist agencies on particular issues in their locality and provide that supportive role to the clients.*

Another funder felt that for specialist mental health projects it was important that RCOs work in partnership to ensure that their expertise of the community could be combined with mental health professionals to ensure good, well managed and appropriate work. At times “deeply inappropriate” applications for mental health work had been received from RCOs that did not have the specialist skills, and were not in partnerships able to deliver them (Interview with Funder 10).

These two contributions are revealing in two ways. Firstly, an insight is given into funders' experiences of refugee community organisations that are not as professional as EACO, and the difficulties for funders and service users that may result. Secondly, in Chapter 6 it will be argued that these kinds of concerns amongst funders appears to have led to a number of them revising their funding of RCOs, at least to some extent. Though, no doubt incompetency exists in the RCO sector, it is also worth stating that EACO offers a good model of how a refugee-led organisation can deliver work alone when appropriate and also in partnership when external expertise is needed.

#### 5.3.1.2 Personal Development

In the case study it was found that EACO had an explicit ethos encouraging service users to take up training, volunteering and employment opportunities to improve their situation. Staff were highly motivational role models to the women, and they used their contacts to help them to secure work experience, volunteering and employment.

Only one funder made a clear reference to what he called “quite focused pathways to employment” (I2, Interview with Funder 11<sup>47</sup>). A representative of a large capacity-building organisation also noted that RCOs create employment for refugees:

*CB1: ...there are two reasons these organisations are set up. One is definitely because there is a lack of support for these isolated groups. The second one is there is a process of, it is like a process of employment for these refugees as well. Initially they start as a volunteer and then they will be able to get some funding, and to recruit staff within the community.*

Another funder said RCOs should be empowering their communities by helping them to engage with external training and employment opportunities:

*F7: In general [RCOs] should be trying to empower beneficiaries, not make them dependent on them. In regards to users they should *strengthen them so they engage in wider society*. Otherwise is just continuous need. There are language support problems, but if they can help people to engage in education, employment or whatever, then this is successful.*

In the case study it was seen that service users had a variable degree of ability to learn English and take on employment. Though most women, even those that struggled with Albanian literacy, were still encouraged to take on volunteering of some kind, those that were able to progress to qualifications and employment tended to be from an urban background, confident in their English and often with prior employment skills. The varying degree of users’ skills meant that for some, access to external training or employment activities are unlikely. One funder recognised this type of limitation and argued that direct provision of training from RCOs was sometimes needed because service users couldn’t access mainstream services:

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<sup>47</sup> In two interviews the researcher spoke with two representatives of the organisation at the same time. When this occurs ‘I’ denotes Interviewee and the number indicates respondent 1 or 2.

*F2:...the classic sort of...grant of a few years ago, or even with the self-help grant was to set up...Somali, Bengali group, Congolese group, and they say we're going to get five computers because we must teach our community computer skills and you could say, 'Well, why is that necessary?' There is an issue – can they do it adequately or is it better that a college does it? Now what the message you get from now is that a lot of colleges can't offer these computer skills, so they can't get access so they are relying on the self-help...*

This funder felt that people may not be able to access mainstream college training either because they experienced racism when trying to engage with a service (from the public, not staff), or because it is taught in such a way that service users may be “out of their depth” at least in part due to language difference.

This contribution supports the notion found in the case study that RCO training provision may be necessary for some service users. However, EACO was also able to support service users with a range of abilities to access training from external providers.

#### 5.3.1.2.1 Survey Data

Surveyed RCOs were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements designed to find out whether they also offered similar opportunities to their service users. The statements and the results are presented in the table below.

**Table 7. Survey Results – Volunteering and Work Experience Opportunities**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>% of RCOs that:<sup>48</sup></b>			
	<b>Disagree<sup>49</sup></b>	<b>Neither agree/disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
Our organisation helps service users to gain new skills	0	0	31	63
Our organisation enables service users to gain work experience in our organisation	0	19	44	38
Our organisation helps service users to gain work experience in other organisations	6	25	38	25
Our staff and/or volunteers use contacts in other organisations to help service users to gain employment	0	31	19	44

From this data we can see that the majority of RCOs surveyed (94% agreed or strongly agreed, one non response) did offer chances for service users to gain new skills. Smaller majorities offered opportunities for people to gain work experience within their organisation (82% agreed or strongly agreed). In regards to work experience or employment with *other* organisations aside from the RCO, the picture was slightly different, though in both cases over half of those surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that they did offer service users these opportunities.

### 5.3.1.3 User-Led Support

As revealed in the analysis of the case study, service users valued the fact that EACO was led by people they could relate to culturally, and who shared their language. This was something that funders also appreciated about RCOs and looked for in those requesting funding:

<sup>48</sup> Some questions were left blank by applicants, hence not all percentages total 100%. Also number has been rounded to the nearest whole number.

<sup>49</sup> It must be noted that the questionnaire also included the response ‘Strongly Disagree’. This is not presented here because none of respondents selected it.



Researcher: In your opinion, what RCO characteristics appeal to a funder?

CB4: *Genuine engagement with the community... When they are user-led.*

However, as well as seeing the value of user-led support, some, as above in Section 5.2.3, warned that RCOs needed to be well networked to avoid isolation:

F10: *[Talking about EACO] I think their strength is the fact that they are an Albanian group... I think the difficulty is that, maybe it depends on the work that an organisation is doing, but I think sometimes when an organisation is rooted from a particular community [pause] the specialist understanding that they have about those issues can add, I think, to the work that they are able to do...I suppose it is important that they don't remain, they don't become too niche, that they don't become too isolated...*<sup>50</sup>

For funders, the user-led component was associated with their expectation that the organisation was inclusive of the whole community and several mentioned the importance of a representative board of trustees:

F2: *...so if you look at the list of trustees and everyone's related bar two trustees...and you think 'Wait a minute, this is dominated by four or five migrant families'... who are the trustees or whatever. So...this would come back to the single nationality, how inclusive or exclusive are they?*

Whether and how women were represented on the board of trustees was raised by both of these funders as important (Interview with Funder 2; Interview with Funder 10), and also in another interview:

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<sup>50</sup> The researcher did not ask any funders direct questions about EACO, though they were told about the case study (without naming EACO). However, in around half of the cases interviewees were aware of the connection because of the Project Manager's assistance in helping to secure interviews. This quote is shortened for reasons of space but it goes on to argue that EACO is an organisation that *is* good at networking – as discussed in Chapter 4.

*F4: Obviously [one of] the key things is that they have to be genuinely led by people in the community. We're particularly interested in groups that are led by women and also not entirely led by women – that there is at least a reasonable sort of gender balance...I suppose someone like EACO is in a league of its own really...there aren't very many groups that are like them really.*

Some funders expressed concerns that RCOs had a tendency to be perhaps *too* user-led – attempting to provide every service that service users seemed to need:

Researcher: Have you experienced any particular problems with applications or working with RAS groups?

F5: Not really, maybe a re-occurring issue is that refugee needs are so diverse, so they want to be able to deliver everything – advice, on health, housing, etc. – when they may not have the experience. Groups, though not just RCOs, are very protective of their clients. They could do more to refer them to better sources of support, but often they would rather learn the skills to service their own community. But time and money is often too limited to do this.

This assertion is relevant to what was observed in the case study. At EACO the researcher thought at times that the high level of dialogue (formal and informal) between service users and staff meant that staff were continually aware of new projects and work that could be offered. Though all work was professionally done and included partnerships where professional skills were needed, at times this meant that the staff workloads grew without extra staff members or pay, but were covered with increased informal hours on top of an already very busy schedule because the staff were passionate about what they were doing (Observation Journal, various). The author of an external report about EACO's future also said that the organisation had been perhaps too user-led at the expense of its structures and processes, which required further work (Withheld reference 1, 2009:9).

More generally, the provision of too many diverse services within an RCO could lead to problems of sustainability, as energies and funds are dispersed, possibly detracting from the core work of the organisation. It could also lead to a dependency of the users on that

organisation, preventing them from accessing mainstream services when they are able to do so because they have less of a need to do so.

### **5.3.2 Overcoming Social Isolation**

As was seen in the EACO case study, RCOs have potential to be a real focus of the community – a place where staff, volunteers and service users are friends. EACO was a primary support network for many users and frequently likened to family.

The potential for RCOs to provide opportunities for service users to overcome their social isolation were also mentioned by five funders and capacity-builders (of the fifteen funder and capacity-builder interviews). These examples are typical:

F11- I2: [In response to ‘What do you think it is that organisations that are led by people from the community can do for their service users?']...*what I would say and it maybe only partly answers your question, there is mixture of quite focused pathways to employment and volunteering...But also there's a social element as well, quite a strong one and about a safe haven if you like...and the supportive network one and the personal one and a lot of the staff are actually former refugees who want to give something back.*<sup>51</sup>

Another funder, and one who seemed, more than any other, to specialise in RCO work, felt that overcoming social isolation was the primary role of RCOs:

F4: *[O]n a philosophical level I think their probably key role is overcoming isolation and promoting a sense of belonging and safety. And then they also provide a whole range of practical services.*

One capacity-builder mentioned the scope of community events to help people to overcome isolation.

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<sup>51</sup> This comment was made about a particular organisation but was also understood by the researcher to be about RCOs in general.

CB1: [RCOs] *are... a focal point for the communities, they are the voice of the community. They also...organise cultural community development events which is quite useful for refugee communities who are sometimes quite isolated, so that kind of social resource is also important.*

Another capacity-builder felt that for refugees, personal contact and friendship between staff, volunteers and service users was not just of value as a resource but also that it facilitated engagement with the service for cultural reasons:

CB2: [In response to 'Do you perceive Refugee Community Organisations as important to the lives of asylum-seekers and refugees?'] *I think they are very important. There may be other places they can go for specific services...[but] RCOs can develop a relationship with people – first names. RCO staff remember their names and cases. It is personal. Here we are used to speaking with an officer, in other countries it may be more important to speak with a personal friend. Also they may know the person helping them also used to be a refugee and think 'Ah, you can understand, you've been there already'. It is the personal touch. This increases the confidence of the service user to approach people.*

This was also found in relation to EACO and lends weight to the importance of single-nationality led provision for refugees and asylum-seekers.

#### 5.3.2.1 Survey Data

As has already been seen in Section 5.2.1, the statistics emerging from the survey also indicate that RCOs tend, in most cases, to be a place where service users can socialise and make friends. Though this was not something that emerged strongly from the interviews, there is nothing amongst the contributions from professionals to suggest that RCOs are not social places. Therefore, as with the case study, the indication is that one of the resources available to service users via contact with RCOs is friendship, with the further access to supportive resources that this can entail. As discussed in relation to EACO in Chapter 4, the creation of new relationships within RCOs feeds into further creation of bonding social capital.

### **5.3.3 Goal Attainment**

Amongst the professionals interviewed, organisational goal attainment in terms of an RCO campaigning to meet a certain end was not something that was directly raised. Instead a number of interviewees raised the role of their own organisation as representing the voice of refugees, with the implication that single RCOs were too small and marginalised to campaign and reach group goals alone.

An interview with a worker based in a large capacity-building second-tier voluntary organisation that does a great deal around refugees and RCO campaigns is worth quoting at length. The interviewee revealed that their organisation represents RCOs views to central government:

*CB1: We...try to involve them in our policy development and campaigning. Voluntary opportunities, we try to represent their voices with the government, in terms of influencing the issues affecting them...*

As well as this they also try to empower RCOs to consult services users and engage with local authorities:

*CB1: [W]e try to create these kinds of opportunities for them, to influence other services, including policy, now we are trying to influence statutory providers including local authorities to ensure that the voices of refugees are heard...they are able to consult with refugees about the services which affects their clients. So it's the whole issue of empowerment, including political empowerment – making sure that refugees...can get involved with local politics, local councils, elections.*

He felt that issues affecting refugee and asylum-seekers were in danger of being overlooked in favour of more general BME issues:

*CB1: One of the issues for RCOs in London very often their issues are sort of hidden behind the issues of ethnic minority groups. And I think that's one of these reasons for lack of understanding about the role of RCOs... Because even with integration*

*issues, the integration of newly arrived people in the country is different from the integration of second or third generation migrants born in this country, educated in this country, understand the culture of the country to a certain degree and they have better access to people and relationships with people, understand their rights, whereas...for asylum-seekers and refugees this is a big issue... the specific issues related to asylum-seekers and refugees is marginalised in those kind of boroughs.*

He felt that some of the London borough authorities were good on issues of race in general, but that some blurred refugee and migrants' concerns together. This is something that will be discussed further in relation to funding in Chapter 6.

Only one interviewee mentioned that his organisation, a funder, would like to see RCOs attempting to campaign:

F6: The people involved in delivering the project work are important. As is the impact of the project on the organisation and on wider policy change. Though we realise is hard for RCOs to have an effect on the latter we have an interest in an aspiration around that.

The case study of EACO and the survey results, below, show that RCOs do sometimes work on campaigning.

#### 5.3.3.1 Survey Findings

In the survey RCOs were asked 'Does your organisation take part in any campaigning activities?' and if they answered 'yes', to explain what kind of campaigning that was. Sixty-three percent of RCOs who returned the survey said that they did take part in some kind of campaigning. This represents ten organisations. A breakdown of the kind of campaign undertaken is below.

Table 8. Survey Results – RCO Campaigning Issues

Issue	Number of RCOs	% of RCOs
Female Genital Mutilation	1	6
Anti-deportation campaigns	1	6
General rights issues	3	19
Children's issues	3	19
Unspecified	2	13

The idea of RCOs being too small and/or marginalised to campaign as raised by some professionals is correct in one way, but misleading in another. More than 60% of those in the survey did do some sort of campaigning, although it might be the case that these organisations are campaigning under an umbrella scheme organisation by a larger charity or capacity-builder. As the case study of EACO revealed, campaigning around poverty and refugee/migrant rights often occurs in this way. However, EACO also showed the extent to which an RCO can also campaign effectively about issues specific to that refugee community – like the work to secure travel documents for Kosovans – and which might be too small for larger organisations, or not relevant to enough people to warrant large scale general action. One large second-tier organisation summarised the distinction between what RCOs can, and do, campaign about, as well as what is beyond their scope:

*CB1: There are a lot of refugees and asylum-seekers who don't vote. Because of that they don't have the kind of political power than other communities have in this country. But in general locally, RCOs do work together and they do work with some of the mainstream providers. In particular local authorities, health providers, education providers. They do get involved in some of the issues affecting their communities in that particular part of London, in that particular part of the country, but less on the national issues, less on the European issues, because they don't really have the capacity to do that.*

Therefore, though the funders and capacity-builders were correct about their ability to provide a voice for refugees, the strength of small groups who really understand community

issues and can mobilise effectively should not be overlooked, even if they are campaigning around larger issues generally as part of a broader campaign orchestrated by a larger organisation.

In the review of the literature in Chapter 1 the possibility that RCOs are ‘outsiders’ in terms of policy networks was raised. Based on the case study and survey data it cannot be stated that this is the case. It is clear that, at times, RCOs do campaign effectively and that in doing this, they can use their connections to NGOs and politicians. However, there was not any evidence that individual RCOs are part of policy networks over the longer-term.

Engagement, though it does occur, appeared sporadic, and based around certain issues only. It does not appear that the RCOs have a role in the on-going dialogue around governance that was envisaged by the national and local Compacts. Data on this topic was limited, however, and further research is needed. Connections with statutory bodies tended to be via the holding of contracts. There was no evidence that holding of such contracts limited what RCOs felt they could campaign about, though this could be because RCOs were generally raising community specific issues (such as EACO’s travel document campaign) as opposed to broader asylum themes.

#### **5.3.4 Affirmation of Cultural Beliefs and Values**

In the case study the maintenance of cultural beliefs and values was one of the main things that service users appreciated about EACO. Events were valued, but in particular parents and children valued the Albanian language classes and traditional activity sessions for young people.

During the case study the researcher spoke to children and young people who were proud of their cultural heritage and said they would want their own children to be able to learn about it in the way that they had (Focus Group 5). Thus it appears that although the need for advice and information may lessen over time as a refugee community becomes more integrated (and assuming that new arrivals are not continually present), RCOs will be valued by their communities in future in order to keep traditions going and to provide a focal point for the community. A capacity-builder summarised succinctly the need for RCO to exist in the longer term:



*CB1: [A] sense of belonging is a very important part of the refugee communities. They feel that these are the organisations who represent them. Even when they become British citizens they still need this kind of support...They need it for second generation and they want their children to learn their Mother Tongue. Or cultural activities. So there is a need for this kind of support, regardless of whether the numbers are here or there.*

He also argued that the need for single-nationality RCOs is because of these specific cultural services that only they can provide:

*CB1: Some NGOs do the kind of work that RCOs do. RCOs only do some cultural activities, educational activities like mother tongue classes.*

As seen with EACO, cultural activities and celebration days for service users can be large events bringing in more than 2000 people, some of whom then go on to become service users accessing a range of services and resources. Thus people may contact the organisation to celebrate their culture and then go on to access other resources that could benefit them.

That funders did not make more of the cultural role of RCO is perhaps unsurprising, as most funding from them tends to go to practical advice and information sessions, and events are harder to raise funds for. Some funders do support supplementary schooling, including mother tongue or traditional activities, however, but this might be viewed to those external to the organisation as a practical resource. From the case study data it can be argued that such activities are also culturally important to the refugee communities and that they offer opportunities for new service users to join the organisation, thereby accessing resources and potentially forming of new friendships, and so adding to the bonding social capital resources of the RCO.

In the survey 94% of RCOs said that they provided 'celebration days and cultural events' for their service users. For reasons of space they were not asked if they included mother tongue classes, though this was one of the activities listed in the statement about service provision.

Looking through the mission statements and descriptions of charities<sup>52</sup> three of the 15 organisations that responded explicitly state that they offer Mother tongue classes. This number is lower than expected, although a number offer 'classes for children' or other such activities which may include this kind of educational input.

### **5.3.5 Maintaining Links with Homeland**

None of the professionals mentioned the possible role of RCOs in maintaining links with the homeland.

In the survey data 25% of RCOs said that they 'Help service users to maintain contact with their country of origin'. This relatively low percentage, combined with the lack of comment on this from interviews adds weight to the argument made in relation to EACO. This is that refugees and asylum-seekers, unlike migrants which Rex's work was based on, do not tend to maintain links with their country of origin to the same extent.

### **5.4 Conclusion**

The result of both the interview data gathered from professionals working the field and from the survey of RCOs tend to support the observations made during the case study. There are some differences in the way that funders (and to a lesser extent capacity-builders) perceive both social capital and resources resulting from social capital compared to how RCOs in the survey perceive themselves (and the researcher's experience during the case study period). Different modes of data collection could explain these differences, at least partly. The case study was a long term interaction, yielding a large amount of varied data. The survey asked RCO respondents to rate their organisation in relation to certain traits in a way that was designed to cover each significant finding from the case study – that social capital is generated, that resources result from that social capital, that external networks were important to this process and finally that funding is a significant problem for RCOs. The questions asked of funders were more open-ended in order to understand how RCOs were perceived by external and second-tier organisations.

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<sup>52</sup> In the Charity Commission online directory.

However, even given these reasons for possible data discrepancies between funders and RCOs, such differences can still be informative. Most noticeable was the way in which funders (and to a lesser extent, capacity-builders) emphasised the importance of external social capital linkages to other agencies, whereas survey data and the case study presented a more balanced picture between bonding social capital and linking social capital. In regards to bridging social capital the case study presented an example of how creating links to other RCOs of the same nationality can be difficult and raised the possibility that this could be partly due to competition for funding. Funders, however, tended to expect such horizontal bridges to be in place.

In regards to the functions of RCOs there were similarities across the data in the categories of maintaining links with the homeland. Funders tended to emphasise the practical function of RCOs – pastoral and social work, whereas the survey data and the case study presented a more balanced picture of equal weight given to the functions of pastoral and social work, overcoming social isolation, and affirmation of cultural beliefs and values. The latter function, in particular, was not something raised by funders (though capacity-builders did). Another difference was the professionals' perception of campaigning as something generally limited to second tier organisations. The case study and the survey show that campaigning is something that RCOs do, though on a lesser scale compared to other functions. EACO's case study reveals the way in which an organisation can also lead small specific campaigns alone.

That RCOs tend to perceive themselves more holistically compared to the funders who regarded their role as primarily practical is not surprising, but it is relevant to Chapter 6, an examination of the funding situation for RCOs.

## **Chapter 6 – The Funding Situation of Refugee Community Organisations**

This chapter draws together the data collected from all the case study, interviews with professionals, and the survey of RCOs to consider the funding situation of refugee-led community organisations.

Section 6.1 will present a basic introduction to funding options for RCOs, including discussion about whether refugee community organisations can benefit from the new contracting arrangements and the government's Compact.

It will be asserted in Section 6.2 that RCOs have some particular barriers to effective engagement with funders and the general voluntary sector structure. Matters of language, staff background, knowledge of the voluntary sector and the unique situation of their user group mean that RCOs struggle more than comparable small community organisations to run effectively or to secure ongoing funding. It will be argued that EACO, for various reasons, is well placed to avoid, or has acted effectively to tackle and minimise, some of these barriers.

Although the researcher spoke to a range of funders who would clearly support single-nationality RCOs in the long-term, there was also some evidence that some sources have become less keen to support such organisations. This will be discussed, and also be touched upon in reference to the government's stance on single-nationality organisations in Section 6.3.1.

### **6.1 Funding for RCOs**

In order to present the funding situation of RCOs this section will present the funding situation of EACO, as well as the funding data from the survey. The primary importance of grants from trusts and foundations is revealed, though statutory funding is clearly also an important, but complex, source of income.

Table 9 shows the importance of *all* grants and contracts in general to the case study RCO. An average of 88% of EACO's funding 2006-08 came from grants and contracts, whereas other sources of income didn't reach an average of even 10%.

Table 9. EACO's Sources of Income by Percentage<sup>53</sup>

Source of Income	2006	2007	2008	Average %
Grants & contracts	91	92	80	88
All fees	6	4	8	6
Private donations	1	1	2	1
Rental income	-	3	10	4
Other	2	0	1	1

Within this category of 'grants and contracts' trusts and foundations were the most important, representing an average of 71% of income 2006-2011.<sup>54</sup>

Table 10. EACO's Grants and Contracts Income by Type of Funder 2006-2011

Type of Funder	Number of grants/contracts	% of number of grants/contracts	% of total grants and contracts income
Trusts & foundations	13	68	71
Central government	3	14	20
Local government	3	14	5
Other	3	14	4

In the survey to RCOs it was not possible to get as in-depth an understanding of their income. However, organisations were asked whether they had received certain kinds of income over the past three years. The results of this are in Table 11.

<sup>53</sup> Numbers have been rounded to the nearest whole number; hence the total in the 2008 column is 101%.

<sup>54</sup> Grants are typically for a three-year period, hence the figures for EACO running into 2011. Financial data was collected in 2008. Different kinds of funders are equally likely to offer three-year grants.

**Table 11. Surveyed RCOs and Funding**

<b>Type of Funder</b>	<b>No. receiving support</b>	<b>% receiving support</b>
Trusts & foundations	16	100
Local government	16	100
Membership fees	12	75
Central government	6	38
Other	6	38

This reveals that the typical funding situation of surveyed RCOs is similar to that of EACO. Trusts and foundations are the most important, with 100% of respondents having received funding from that source. There is some difference, however, in that whilst 100% had received local government funding, only 38% had received central government funding. This will be discussed further below.

### **6.1.1 Trusts and Foundations**

As said above, the majority of RCO funding tends to be from private trusts and foundations. Though the data from the survey didn't ascertain what kind of proportions of funding RCOs received, the fact that all of them received trust and foundation funding adds weight to this conclusion. EACO's income 2006-2011 shows that in terms of the number of grants and contracts, 68% were from trusts and foundations. This represented 71% of all value of their income from other organisations. In the years 2006-08 trusts and foundations represented 62% of *all* income.

Some, though not all, trusts and foundations are open to unsolicited applications. The application process varies by trust. Some are straightforward, and ask for applicants to submit a brief application form or letter. Others ask that organisations complete long forms, detailed budgetary projections, work targets and timetables. Once a grant is received organisations are generally required to monitor and evaluate the project. This may be a simple yearly report, though others ask for monitoring based on agreed or prescribed

targets. Monitoring often covers key demographic information about ethnicity, religion, immigration status, sexuality, etc.

What trusts and foundations will fund varies considerably. There are not a large number that support refugee work, and within that the number that support refugee-led organisations is smaller again. One capacity-builder estimated that there are approximately ten trusts and foundations in London that will support RCOs (Interview with Capacity-builder 1). Another capacity-builder also estimated around ten such organisations<sup>55</sup>, though this includes only the larger trusts and foundations. There are also small funds, often associated with local churches or religious groups that also donate a small amount of funds to refugee causes, including RCOs (Interview with CB3). Some of those interviewed fund a range of work or capital costs, others were looking for specific work on particular themes. Though most said that they fund core costs, from experience volunteering with EACO it was clear that for most trusts and foundations there is a need to present ongoing work (such as the provision of advice and information) as a new and complete 'project' or innovative work, though some were happy to make contributions to RCOs' overall costs. Priorities of trusts and foundations change occasionally, and one funder may take on other priorities, and stop funding refugee groups. One capacity-builder summarised this succinctly:

*CB1: Some of these trusts are more sympathetic to supporting RCOs, and most of these trusts don't really support organisations, they support activities...It's project funding. You know ten, fifteen years ago when I was working with RCOs there were more funding for core funding. In particular [from] local authorities... These days it's all project funding, whether it's statutory or trust. So RCOs have to prepare a kind of project within the kind of services they provide.*

Amongst the trusts and foundations interviewed the amount of funding given to refugee community organisations varied hugely. Data collection on grants varied considerably, for example one would code a grant to an RCO under 'minorities', whilst another would code it specifically as an organisation run by refugees for refugees. This means that a full

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<sup>55</sup> A conversation with this interviewee (capacity-builder 3) prior to interview contributed to the list of funders that were approached for interview (combined with funders that had supported EACO).

comparison of levels of support is not possible. However, broadly it can be said that amongst trusts and foundations interviewed, most gave grants over two or three years, and that their average RCO grant size ranged from £5,000 per year to around £25,000 per year. The percentage of funds spent by any one trust was hard to ascertain because of the differences in categories, but it seemed to range from 3% to around 20-30% of total grants made.

### **6.1.2 Statutory Sources**

Statutory funding is the second most valuable source of income to EACO, and to surveyed RCOs. Discussion here is divided into local authority funding, and central government funding, as there are important differences in terms of access to such funds and size of grants and contracts.

#### **6.1.2.1 National Government**

Any central government funds that are distributed regionally or by local partners (as is usually the case), such as Sure Start or Connecting Communities, are considered to be central government funds for the purposes of this discussion. One-hundred percent of respondents said they had received local government funding, whereas only 38% said they had received central government funding in the past three years (see Table 11). EACO received national government funding 2006-2009, but had not yet secured any for 2010-2011. For them, central government income accounted for 20% of the value of all grants and contracts 2006-2011 (see Table 10).

**Table 12. EACO's Average Grant/Contract Size by Source**

<b>Source of Income</b>	<b>Average Size</b>
Trusts and foundations	20,130
Central government	24,346
Local government	6,797
Other	13,181



In regards to the case study, central government funds are received less frequently, but are worth much more. As Table 12 shows, the average central government grant contract is worth around four times the average local government grant or contract, and is also worth more on average than contributions from trusts and foundations. One capacity-builder felt that only a few RCOs in London were eligible for this kind of support from central government:

*CB1: There are a small number of RCOs, only 21 that have more than £200,000 income...in London..[T]hese are the only RCOs who are well established who are able to compete against mainstream organisations for the mainstream funding...And these are the only RCOs who probably have some sort of funding from the Home Office. Or European funding, because it's more complex.*

This fits with the result of the survey. Of the RCOs that responded only 38% had received central government funding. If it is indeed the case that only some RCOs are large enough and with sufficient capacity to attract central government funding, EACO (with an annual income of over £200k compared to the average of £93,000<sup>56</sup>) is one of these.

#### 6.1.2.2 Local Authority and Contracts

As discussed in Chapter 1, interaction between statutory agencies and third sector organisations has increased, and is expected to become more common. Contracts, instead of grants, also appear to be more common. Two local authority funders within the same borough were interviewed. These representatives were from different departments, and involved with different funding streams, but both issue contracts for services. Capacity-builders were also asked about the position of RCOs in a funding climate where contracts are more common. However, it appears that some grants from local authorities do still exist. Contracts with central government for non-governmental organisations do exist, but go to much larger, normally second tier organisations, such as the Refugee Council (Griffiths et al, 2005:52).

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<sup>56</sup> This average is calculated using all of the registered charity refugee-led organisations found in London that were listed in order to select RCOs for the survey.

In the survey 75% of RCOs said that they had a contract to provide services. Contracts were most likely to be with local government, though the Learning and Skills Council and local health authorities were also mentioned, amongst a few others. It is important to keep in mind the selection criteria here. The RCOs chosen all had incomes of over £100k per year. If smaller RCOs (earning under £100,000 a year) were included it is likely that the percentage with contracts would be much smaller. As the discussion below will demonstrate, contracts tend to be for the most professional organisations.

The kinds of contracts available within local authorities are numerous, and multiple departments and funding pots can make the local authority contract (and grants) system very complex. A certain level of awareness and expertise would be needed simply to be informed about opportunities and to make applications to local authorities. Typically a local authority has a number of contracts available to provide services to groups or individuals. For EACO the picture was mixed. As they provided services in more than one borough they were able to apply to several local authorities for funds. EACO had received funding from two local authorities, some of which was grants funding. They also had a contract to provide mentoring support to young ethnic Albanian-speakers (Interview with Funder 8). There was a sense amongst the local authority funders that that they were keen to grant contracts to a range of new agencies. There were some contracts for lesser amounts available for smaller organisations. These had less strenuous monitoring requirements, and support and sessions about how to apply were offered to encourage more providers (Interview with Funder 8).

However, refugee-led organisations, as well as being small, may also be disadvantaged by their specialism. This could be the reason that of the two funders spoken with, one funded only one other refugee-led community organisation aside from EACO and one borough-wide second-tier organisation for refugees and migrants<sup>57</sup>. The other funded only the same second-tier organisation and did not currently fund any other organisations specifically concerned with refugees. This funder, who administered grants that supported the local

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<sup>57</sup> This didn't mean they were the only refugee-led organisations funded by that local authority. Other sources of funding in the council were also available. Unfortunately no overview of all organisations funded by the local authority was available.

authorities aims, said that single-nationality organisations would not generally be eligible to be strategic partners, as partners needed to be broadly representative (Interview with Funder 9). In addition, representatives of the contract funding stream said that not many refugee groups applied, despite the advert stating an interest in “small, emerging ethnic minority groups” (F8I2, Interview with Funder 8). One of these interviewees felt that small organisations did not tend to have the capacity to apply in the right way:

F8I2: Smaller organisations are not set up with the appropriate procedures for contract culture. For example, it is hard to do realistic costings.

They mentioned that the only other refugee-led single nationality group they had funded apart from EACO had had support in the application process from a second-tier borough-wide organisation for refugees and migrants. As she said, however, this may be as much about the size of organisations, than the type of organisations. However, as argued below in Section 6.2, RCOs do have a number of other barriers, beyond their typically small size, to overcome in reaching funding.

One capacity-builder felt that contracts, if secured, could create a difficult workload for RCOs:

CB4: Child Protection, Health and Safety, etcetera, all the contracting requirements are a hindrance. Organisations are unaware of what is needed, or when they are aware they are fearful of what is required. *There is endless paperwork to make a standard before they even do anything.*

Another capacity-builder said that of the groups she worked with only one had a contract, and she agreed that the level of work required was high:

CB2: Groups I work with don't tend to have contracts. Only one has, and from what they tell me, the amount of work it implies for the amount of money received is *ridiculous*...The local authority paperwork takes up one day a week. They took the money because they believe in the project, but seem to have regretted it...I do think

there is a difference [between] local authorities, however. There is another RCO receiving local authority money in [place] and they have very good relationship with the local authority.

One local authority interviewee described monitoring and evaluation for larger contracts, which does appear to be relatively onerous, as literature reviewed in Chapter 1, section 1.6.3.3 suggested:

F8I2: Larger contracts entail quarterly activity review with quantitative and qualitative information on services...We check policies and procedures in place. For example, we would check files for recruitment, CRBs<sup>58</sup>, health and safety procedures, complaints procedures, financial controls. *It is quite heavy.*

For smaller contracts, however, the approach is “lighter”, it is biannual, not quarterly and there is “not as much pressure” (I2, Interview with Funder 8).

Two other capacity-builders separately said that in their experience RCOs do not get contracts for work (Interview with Capacity-builders 1 and 3). One of them felt that refugee community organisations are too much outside of the mainstream to be involved in contracting arrangements with local authorities, and said that in his experience such funding tended to go to second-tier refugee forums or consortium that worked across the whole borough (Interview with Capacity-builder 1).

Despite the expected complications associated with contracts, EACO staff did not report any difficulties associated with procedures and monitoring for contracts (Second Interview with Project Manager). The survey results tended to confirm this finding. Respondents were asked to comment on, if they had contracts, whether they found the arrangements satisfactory. Of the seven agencies that did have contracts and made a comment, six found the arrangements to be satisfactory. The complaint from the one RCO that was not satisfied was to do with contract award amounts not being in line with the rate of inflation and the

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<sup>58</sup> Criminal Records Bureau checks.

difficulties that this caused in providing the service.

The picture in relation to contracts is therefore slightly unclear. Whilst EACO and most RCOs surveyed did receive some form of contract funding, it could be the case that in most instances these contracts are the 'lighter' contracts, like those offered by Funder 8. This could explain why EACO staff and survey respondents did not tend report the difficulties with contracts that had been heard of via capacity-builders or read about in the literature. This cannot be conclusively concluded, however, as each contracting authority operates differently.

## **6.2. Refugee Community Organisations and Difficulties with Fundraising**

As many of the contributors to this research noted, some of the barriers to accessing funding are experienced by small community organisations generally. In the interviews, two difficulties emerged as problematic for voluntary organisations generally. Firstly, new, smaller organisations may struggle to get funds or to work effectively with funding bodies, and there can be a high rate of group failure. Secondly, beyond that stage, there are difficulties in management and fundraising associated with becoming a larger organisation and having increased overheads.

It is argued here that despite the difficulties encountered by most community groups, the severity of various factors *do* tend to be more pronounced for refugee groups. This is because RCOs have some specific characteristics that tend to make fundraising more difficult. The findings from the data therefore reflect what was raised in Section 1.7.4 in Chapter One about the specific difficulties in fundraising experienced by RCOs.

The fact that an organisation is led by refugees from the community that they represent can be extremely beneficial to an organisation, as discussed in Chapter 4. Service users are keen to interact with people who understand them and their language. However, there are three aspects to an organisation being led by refugees that can create extra difficulties. The first is that as refugees, or especially if they are still asylum-seekers, staff and/or volunteers could be experiencing a range of problems of their own in relation to immigration status, have low income, concerns about relatives in their country of origin, or be suffering mental or physical health problems because of their experiences in conflict or in exile. Secondly many

refugees come from states that do not have a voluntary sector, or even a functioning state apparatus. As such they might have to work harder to operate within the processes of the voluntary sector than people born in the UK. The third, which links to the second, is the issue of language difference.

### 6.2.1 Staff Background

The fact that refugees or asylum-seekers leading community organisations may have difficult situations was recognised by some of the professionals, and particularly by those who provided capacity-building activities. When asked why she thought RCOs had a high rate of failure, other than funding difficulties, one capacity-builder said:

*CB3: I think because they're run by people who are experiencing the same problem as the people that they are serving and I think that makes it really, really hard. I think communities are really mobile and traumatised and you've got people from that community trying to help others in that community so it is not at all surprising that [there is a high rate of failure for RCOs]...I've had stuff to do with the Iraqi and Kurdish community in (town). There are hugely traumatised, damaged people trying to offer services to other hugely traumatised, damaged people and surprisingly enough it doesn't really pan out.*

She contrasted the isolation of staff working in RCOs with the line-management support and associated structures that are available to social workers employed by local authorities (Interview with CB3). Another interviewee said that though RCO staff she worked with differed in terms of support they needed in relation to processes in the voluntary sector, or help with language, they all shared the extra difficulties associated with being refugees themselves:

*CB4: A lot depends on language and who is running the organisation and what they were doing before...What's similar is that all people running such organisations share the experience of resettling, and the pressure of their own lives is hard enough on its own, without also running an organisation.*

She said that this meant that RCOs have greater difficulties to overcome in providing an effective organisation:

Researcher: What do you think the impact of running an RCO has on staff members?

Is this different from other community voluntary groups?

CB4: It is more difficult, if staff have got uncertain immigration status, or are also accessing lots of statutory services themselves, it is harder to be systematic in the running of their organisation. This takes time to work through. This is the case for all community groups, but for refugee groups it is exacerbated.

Funders were less likely than capacity-builders to discuss the difficulties associated with being a refugee, though some did. One funder contrasted the general picture of RCO staff with that of the Project Manager at EACO:

*F4: [The] thing that's different about EACO is there's such a...thirst to learn and to improve what they do, and I think that is unusual...and I would say a lot of that is down to (the Project Manager). I think it's sort of her personal drive and amazing positivity really that she has, she is just one of those people that believes that things are possible and therefore makes them happen really and I think a lot of people leading refugee organisations have been fairly...crushed by their experiences of life and don't have that sense of like 'well, of course we can do this' and 'that can be solved' and they are left just struggling with the everyday needs of the community that they are serving.*

This contribution also demonstrates the way in which EACO are perceived by some funders as exceptional. That the Project Manager is such an energetic and determined person was evidenced in Chapter 4. Not all RCO leaders are able to be such effective leaders in part because of the difficult life situations that refugees experience.

### 6.2.2 Lack of Knowledge About the Voluntary Sector

Though most refugees come from countries that don't have a voluntary sector that is similar to that in the UK, there is considerable variance in the systems and structures that they have

encountered. A capacity-builder who had worked with a range of different groups felt that the systems and apparatus in the country of origin was an important variable in how refugee community organisations worked within the voluntary sector in the UK. She had a great deal of experience in working in the voluntary sector and summarised how confusing the procedures could be, and is worth quoting at length:

*CB3: [T]he voluntary sector in the UK is bizarre...the fact that we have voluntary trustees who run agencies with almost no accountability other than filling in a form for the charities commission once a year...[T]he governance issues are all a bit bizarre. [I]t's just the voluntary sector doesn't make sense to me so how is it supposed to make sense to somebody coming from other countries?... [Y]ou know the way you have to play the game....*

She felt that the terminology and expertise required to make complete applications was often too complex even for people with English as a first language and that even small funding streams were not as accessible as they were designed to be:

*CB3: Even the ones that are supposed to be accessible really aren't for people who don't have an understanding or can pay somebody. And that is the other reason why those organisations that are quite small will realise that fundraising is a special skill and will pay....for some fundraiser's time...*

She contrasted the situation of the women in EACO with that of refugees from Somalia and Turkey:

*CB3: [W]omen from [the Albanian-speaking] community had had some experience of structure, social structures and not particularly the voluntary sector but of...former communist countries these people have come from so they had an understanding of structure...So if you contrast that with Somalia...and they are, they're very different and none of it makes sense but also they don't have any experience of working within these sorts of structures. They don't always send back their grant forms, [funders] get very annoyed...So it's again people's perceptions, their experience of working within those structures...And then you look at the Turkish community I think there are real*



*problems there because everybody is like ‘Turkey? We go on holiday there, what are you on about? [I]t’s not a dangerous place’. There is not loads of empathy, but they are a community who’ve got experience of trade unions in their country and just know how to work within structures and systems...*

Though this is just one contribution, what emerges is an interesting picture of how different refugee cultures interact more or less favourably with the bureaucratic funding structures in the UK. This professional felt that a lack of knowledge about the voluntary sector meant that at times RCO staff she worked with did not fully understand the need to be as rigorous with procedures as was necessary. She also said that founders of RCOs often had hugely unrealistic expectations about how much funding they could secure at first, and what they could achieve. Also raised are the different perception of different nationalities, which is discussed below in Section 6.3.3.

This perception of funding as difficult for RCOs is in contrast with what funders said about their processes. Most felt their applications processes were straightforward and when asked about language most said it did not tend to be a problem, or that only if it was entirely unintelligible would bad English on an application lead it to be rejected. These contributions are typical:

*F11-I1: I think the main thing is we can see what they are actually doing because if they get the message across and we make judgements on [that]...They’ve got to show need for the project, and they’ve got to show that they can deliver it, you know, so if they can actually prove that then it doesn’t matter if it’s not beautifully expressed.*

This sentiment, that presentation was not important, was found in most of the interviews with funders.

*F4: I think there probably were challenges around the quality of people’s written applications, but the approach that we’ve always taken is to then work with people on that and not let that get in their way.*

Another funder agreed with this, but also said that a level of English was required in order to demonstrate that the RCO staff were able to work within the UK voluntary sector:

*F3: [I]f an application comes in and...the English is really poor we have to ask ourselves the question 'In order to provide any service at all, the people writing this application need to engage in English'...And so...it's not going to invalidate an application but we'd ask questions about, about their wider ability to represent their clients to the best of their ability. Or to a standard which is going to get the assistance that the community needs.*

There was clearly some leeway in regards to language, and there was some support available from some funding organisations. Some funders, depending on their size and resources, had some scope to translate material or offer language support if needed, but most said this was not frequently used (Interview with Funders 4 and 11). Some said that if a bid was poorly written but seemed to contain a good idea they would call the applicant, or would be happy to discuss drafts with them (Interviews with Funders 2, 3 and 4).

Nonetheless, even for RCO staff who speak fluent English, the forms and procedures associated with fundraising can require a degree of specialist understanding and skill. It is revealing that one capacity-builder reported that the two RCOs she supports with the largest income (over £100k) both have paid British fundraisers (Interview with Capacity-builder 2). This interviewee felt that employing a paid fundraiser had a considerable effect on the outcomes of funding applications. She also said that RCO staff she works with lack confidence in their English language when contacting funders:

*CB2: Understanding long guidance notes [for application forms] is an issue. They are difficult to understand or too general. It is difficult to understand the fundraising jargon – for example 'outcomes, outputs, milestones'. This presents itself as a barrier to RCOs.*

Another interviewee from a local capacity-building and funding organisation felt that though monitoring and evaluation processes for groups were necessary, groups (and not just RCOs) need to be taught about the terminology and what is being asked for:

F5: It is about educating the groups, they don't tend to factor monitoring and evaluation in. They don't understand what funders really mean by things like 'collect evidence'. Nine out of ten funders are not asking for anything unrealistic, but sometimes a lack of preparation mean groups have to work backwards to gather what is needed. We try to prompt earlier consideration.

The use of paid external fundraisers was not something that trusts and foundations seemed to think was common, and some said they did not approve of this practice. The staff of one funding agency were concerned that use of external fundraisers detracted from the applicant agencies 'ownership' of the project:

F11-12: *I think sometimes there is a perception that we are looking for beautifully written things and this sometimes leads groups to quite erroneously get consultants to write it.*

F11-11: *And that has more alarm bells for us because what we really want is really ownership and the groups deciding what they want to do and it's not a consultant saying 'oh, yes (name of their agency want) you to say this, that and the other'. I think it's the ownership that is the important thing and...you want it to be them really to be driving it. You know if you get consultant it's always a danger that they put what they think we want and then the actual project may not actually deliver it.*

Another funder agreed, saying:

F7: If an application was badly written it would not rule them out. It would be more about capacity – if it is appropriate for them to approach us anyway. Sometimes you get professional fundraisers and you are not hearing the organisation's own voice and we are not keen on that.

The survey of RCOs, however, revealed that paid external fundraisers were used by 25% of RCOs surveyed, see Table 13, below.

**Table 13. Survey Results – Writing Funding Applications**

<b>Who writes applications</b>	<b>Number of RCOs</b>	<b>% of RCOs<sup>59</sup></b>
Head of organisation	7	44
Head of organisation & paid external fundraiser	4	25
Head of organisation & another member of staff	2	13
Head of organisation & volunteer or trustee	1	6
Another member of staff	2	13

Though the majority of surveyed RCOs did not use a paid fundraiser, a significant proportion did, which enforces what some capacity-builders said about the need for specialist skills in fundraising. That 75% appeared not to, however, is positive in terms of the accessibility of applications procedures, at least for these larger London RCOs.

### 6.2.3 Meeting the Needs of an Isolated Client Group

One of the main differences between refugee community organisations and other comparable community organisations is the level of need amongst refugees and asylum-seekers. One contribution highlighted succinctly how both the background of RCO staff, combined with differential access to benefits and other entitlements, means that RCOs are working with clients that are generally far more destitute:

*CB3: [I]f you're not a refugee community organisation, even if, you know, you're working on a really [deprived] estate...you're working with some staff and volunteers*

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<sup>59</sup> Numbers have been rounded to the nearest whole number; hence the percentage totals 101%.

*and with some structures. So you're bound to have somebody who did a course somewhere locally or in Child Protection issues or something like that...[T]hey'll be some structure there and also everybody that you are working with will be entitled to benefit and housing in some format so that's very, very different to refugee community organisations, where you might have organisations run by people, none of whom have been educated and trained in this country...*

This interviewee felt that the government policy changes in relation to asylum had made asylum-seekers more vulnerable and destitute, and that, in turn, this had had an impact on RCOs. Because asylum-seekers benefits have been reduced in value and there is more scope for entitlements to be lost than previously, there are higher levels of destitution amongst this client group, as discussed in Chapter 1. She described the impact of this on RCOs she works with:

*CB3: [S]o these refugee community groups, whereas in the past they might 'just' have been offering...support to people who, you know, survived torture and lost all their relatives, and whatever, now they are also offering very, very basic food...[I]t seems unbelievable now that refugees and asylum-seekers used to get benefits like everybody else. They used to be part of the mainstream, you used to be able to get housing benefits and they could get supported housing...and that's changed so dramatically...so I think that the same organisations are coping with people who are more socially excluded in every sense, both economically and socially excluded. They are more on the edge. Sometimes...you see people who, their levels of desperation are so huge that it's painful...but if you couple that with not having anywhere to eat or sleep it's off the scale and [RCOs] are dealing with that all the time... I just think that people in refugee community organisations are now working with individuals who are much more marginalised than used to be the case.*

The extra difficulties experienced by asylum-seekers means that RCOs are often working with what one funder called 'a hidden caseload':

F6: When groups are well resourced they can do a lot around support for integration, and pathways into civil society. However, the odds are against them, they are forced into a defensive posture by lack of funding. Most [migrant and refugee community organisations] have large and complex caseloads. There is a high volume of work, and there are some issues around undocumented migrants. Lots of [migrant and refugee community organisations] are doing work on the needs of refugees and asylum-seekers, often with government funding, but they also have a *hidden caseload* of people that they can't turn away. When funders ask about social cohesion, they can't react to that because of this. Canny organisations chase funding for cohesion work but use it to meet some of this need.

This interviewee highlighted the way in which government funds may be available to organisations working with refugees and asylum-seekers with on-going cases, but not destitute rejected asylum-seekers and undocumented migrants, hence these groups form a 'hidden caseload'. Though some trusts and foundations will support this kind of work, there are fewer potential sources of funding for it. This means RCOs are working to meet a need unfunded, or underfunded – by stretching their income for other types of work. EACO staff frequently put in long overtime and worked at weekends when they did not have the funding to pay sessional workers (Observation Journal, various) and this is one way in which refugee-led organisations maximise their income.<sup>60</sup>

Another capacity-builder agreed that RCOs are working to meet a somewhat 'hidden' need and that service users of RCOs are more destitute than previously.

*CB1: But when you go to some of these organisations you can see that they are dealing with some very vulnerable people. And some of the issues that they are dealing with, again, it's the hidden kind of issues, because it's not a service – these people are no longer eligible, they don't have access to services, but RCOs are involved in terms of asking community members to look after them...When I used to*

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<sup>60</sup> It is recognised that voluntary groups of all types may be over-stretched. The key point here is that some RCOs are working with an especially deprived community, which is under-estimated for reasons of immigration status.

*work with communities, I used to do a lot of forms, you know, housing benefit, and welfare benefits.... These days you don't have to do that, because they don't exist. But instead of that, you are powerless. You have to phone the solicitors, you have to phone the Home Office. It's very complex, it's very difficult, it's a very stressful job to do...the '99 legislation and '96 legislation had a huge impact, because it was '96 legislation which denied asylum-seekers access to benefits. And it was '99 legislation which created vouchers.*

This contribution, again, highlights the way in which working or volunteering for an RCO can be a stressful occupation because of the sometimes extreme needs of the clients and the way that asylum legislation has changed the context in which RCOs are operating.

The constant demands of working for a highly vulnerable community in an uncertain funding situation can also make it hard for organisations to focus on improving their structures. A capacity-builder who had been involved with EACO since it started recalled that the constant demands of service users and the wider community meant that, at first, there was no time for staff to do any capacity-building:

*CB3: I certainly remember in the early days and when (the Project Manager) would get called, you know, somebody would be in hospital, in labour without a word of English, with nothing, no nightdress, nothing and she'd get called out to translate for them and stuff and when you're doing that you can't do a strategic plan. Funders love [it when] you have a business plan, a business model and you have your outcomes and outputs...[But] you're dealing with a crisis [and] also there's the impact on staff.*

This kind of situation, in which RCO staff are mostly reacting to the immediate needs as they rise mean that there is less time to improve the organisation or to generate a stable funding base.

In the survey of RCOs respondents were asked to estimate how many hours a week the whole organisation spent on fundraising. Estimates ranged from two hours to 48 hours per week. The average mean across all respondents that answered the question was 13.6 hours

a week. Most felt that the amount of time that they spent was 'too little' (44%), 25% said it was 'about right'. People might interpret this question differently, however. For example, the person who estimated that their organisation spends 48 hours a week on fundraising felt that this was 'too little'.

### **6.3 The Perspective of Funders and Capacity-builders**

This section focuses on how the professionals interviewed perceived refugee community organisations. Overall, it appears that funders agree that RCO staff lack understanding of the voluntary sector, as discussed above in Section 6.2. However, there is also evidence that there is a lack of knowledge amongst some funders about RCOs. The interviews with funders also highlighted the way in which some, though not all, viewed different refugee communities differently. The number of RCOs was often cited as a problem, and this was raised frequently in relation to Somali organisations. Finally, and perhaps because of the perceived lack of professionalism, funders were often keen for RCOs to work in partnership either with each other or with other voluntary groups.

#### **6.3.1 Lack of Understanding about RCOs**

The researcher spoke with four capacity-builders. Three of these felt that there was a lack of understanding in general, and amongst some funders, about the role of RCOs and their importance to the communities they serve:

*CB3: Well [names of two funding agencies] have told me they won't fund single nationality [organisations]...and I think that's the real problem...I think that really indicates a lack of understanding of refugee community organisations...[T]here's a sense that people just don't understand...the overwhelmingness of what those [refugee] women are coping with it makes perfect sense that they are not going to come along to the family centre and say 'Hi, can I come and join your parenting classes?'...There is a real need for refugee community organisations that are single communities and there is a real lack of understanding, everyone is like 'oh, they're all refugees, can't they just get on?'...[T]here is a real lack of understanding about why it is needed and it's desperately needed.*



This interviewee felt that funders did not comprehend the barriers to joining mainstream services that many refugees and asylum-seekers experience. Another capacity-builder felt that funding bodies lacked understanding of the complexity of refugee communities:

CB4: There is not the understanding that the different parts of a community are not homogenous – people don't understand why there are five community organisations in one borough. Though there is more supportive atmosphere in some [local authorities]...But there are definitely experiences of racism on top of what they are dealing with.

One capacity-builder said in the interview several times that he had spoken to influential and official representatives of government agencies who did not understand the sector clearly:

CB1: *I could see in the meeting that a very, very senior official... was very confused about RCOs. [I]n my opinion they use the word RCO for everything. So there's a confusion about individuals, communities and the infrastructure...He talks about individuals in the community, or he talks about issues affecting the community as a community of people, but the RCO is an infrastructure, it is an organisation that supports the community. So there is a lot of misunderstanding about what this term RCO means.*

In contrast to this, however, some of the funders interviewed were obviously highly knowledgeable about refugee and asylum issues and were committed to supporting RCOs. For example, in Chapter 2 the DCLG's *Cohesion Guidance for Funders: Consultation* (2008a) was introduced. This document argued, in reference to the importance of bridging social capital for cohesion, that funders should prioritise funding activities which brought people from different communities together. In interviews several funders raised this consultation. The consensus amongst the funders interviewed (especially amongst, but not limited to, trust and foundation representatives) was that the plans were ill conceived. A number of funders had worked together to respond to the consultation, and felt that they had been successful in having the advice dropped. Interviewees discussed the consultation exercise:

F6: Our view as an organisation was that the government's move was *wrong-headed and there clearly is a need for organisations to focus on single issues, single communities*. Though work is need on integration, this can't be done without this sort of support first.

Another said:

F4: *[T]here was some pressure from government around this whole idea of single group funding. Now the guidance that they were going to issue on that, they have not issued, partly in response to funders like us who expressed very strong opposition to it and met with them and wrote to them... It contains some absolutely astonishingly naive things, like if a council made a grant to a single group, undefined but largely we're only interested in ethnicity, that they would have to publicise that particular grant and explain why. Can you imagine how that would contribute to community cohesion if only the grants given to single groups?*

This interviewee added "I think there's been a lot of damage done, even by the draft guidance" (Interview with Funder 4), even though the guidance had since been somewhat amended in tone (DCLG, 2008b:8). Despite this amendment, however, the DCLG's report *Cohesion Delivery Framework* of March 2010 included in a list of things to avoid:

Funding of organisations, activities or facilities for one group only or which are seen in this way, e.g. they are given an "ethnic" name (DCLG, 2010:20)

This shows that government is still keen to minimise funding for single-nationality groups where possible. This report is intended to be about "national and local governments' commitment to build cohesion" (DCLG, 2010:5). This means that there may be less statutory funding available to RCOs in the future. Because the funders contacted were on the whole those who had shown support to RCOs, it is not surprising that these are the organisations that are prepared to defend the rights of single-nationality groups. It could be the case, however, that the government's advice is influential with other private funders. The funders

spoken with, even those with broad funding aims and objectives, such as Funder 11, were clear that they would not be changing their priorities, at least in the foreseeable future:

*F11-12: I think ...our approach basically is we are looking at need and that's where we want to be flexible. And our broad, our sort of broad principle is that we like projects to be inclusive if possible....We would normally expect a project to reflect the composition of the local area, but we know that in some circumstances it is more sensible to support one group...[I]f there are sufficient of particular community and they make a case and say 'look, well our needs can't be met in the mainstream', you know, people from the community are only going to talk to someone from the same community or whatever and it's really the case that they make....So...that is still something we would look at, we are not changing our view.*

These responses from some of the funders show the extent to which some of the key trusts and foundations not only fully comprehend the work of RCOs, and also that such funders can, and have, acted as a voice to safeguard the interests of RCOs.

### 6.3.2 Refugee Community Organisations Lack of Knowledge about the VCS

As discussed above in Section 6.2.2 refugee community organisation staff can be at a disadvantage in terms of the knowledge of procedures and processes associated with fundraising. This was noted by funders, but often it was recognised that this was a problem affecting a wide range of small community organisations, not just those that are refugee-led. Some examples:

*F1: It is a problem, not just with refugee organisations or BME organisations – small organisations lack of expertise in terms of governance and trustee-ship. Training organisations need to lead on that. There is a lack of knowledge amongst a lot of BME organisations.*

However, it was also clear that some funders felt that RCOs *more* than other small groups did not always have the level of skills that they were looking for in order to offer any, or many, RCOs funds. This was particularly the case amongst funders offering larger value

grants. For example:

*F3: I think my experience from working in the capacity-building field suggests that not enough RCOs are prepared to identify exactly what they are good at and what they should be doing and I think that...understandably the demands of their community start to drag them into directions that they neither have the money or the skills for. So it isn't as simple as saying we recognise...single nationality groups as being the best way to deal with the problems of their community...I think the situation is a lot more complicated than that..I'm not one of those people who feel that RCOs ought to be placed in a category which says that all you do is access, referral and basic information, but I think that when RCOs try to do some other things they ought to ensure that they've got skills to be able to do that.*

Later on this interviewee expanded on this, airing concerns that those leading RCOs may not have the specialist skills needed:

*F3: [C]ertainly what I've found when working in the refugee field, or in the capacity-building field with a lot of refugee organisations, was you would have usually a man, who was the Coordinator had never really been through a recruitment process but was a kind of a leader in the community. And there may be very good reasons why that person has got the job, but we wondered exactly what their special skills, what their talents were to occupy that position.*

A lack of knowledge about the voluntary and community sector meant that a significant number of funders felt that some RCOs tended to submit applications for work that was not properly planned, or inappropriate (Interviews with Funders 3, 4 and 10). For example:

*F4: I do think that there can be a tendency in the sector amongst groups who aren't funded to just blame funders for not funding them and to not see that there may be issues about sort of the quality of the work that they are delivering...Our job in short-listing is not always that difficult because a lot of what we get is just not very good... I mean that people mean well but they haven't necessarily thought about how they*

*deliver it. So we do have a lot of RCOs who really aren't big enough...who apply under our employment aim and say, you know, they're going to help people back into employment through helping them write CVs. Now the people writing that application know nothing about employment...they haven't recognised that there are even skills needed to do that work.*

From experience of fundraising with EACO the researcher had some insight into why RCOs might apply for sources of funding which are perhaps too large, or for very specialist work which was not an exact fit with their priorities. It is because there is limited funding available just for refugee community (and other general community) organisations to provide their basic services, such as advice, information and cultural activities. Though some streams do support this, more often the search for funding requires some creativity in seeing what is offered and presenting a project that fits in with this. At times this means RCOs may apply to streams where their specialist skills are not developed, as with the employment example above. One of EACO strengths appears to be their ability to work in effective partnerships with agencies that have specialist skills. This provides a wider range of services, and enables access to a greater range of funding streams.

### 6.3.3 Perceptions of Different Nationalities and the Number of RCOs

Some of the interviews with professionals gave the impression that they perceived some nationalities differently, or that they thought that other professionals and/or the public perceived certain nationalities differently and that this would possibly have an impact upon their success with fundraising.

A capacity-builder that worked with EACO felt that refugees from Kosovo had been as well-perceived as is possible in the current climate and that this had meant that EACO's experience of setting up and applying for funding had been more positive than the average RCO experience (Interview with CB3). In Chapter 1 the idea of two kinds of RCO was introduced. Though EACO represents ethnic Albanians, from states without a developed voluntary sector, with few prior links to the UK and insignificant numbers of co-nationals, it nonetheless is a well developed and professional organisation. This research, with one developed case study and a survey of the most professional RCOs, cannot comment on this

assertion, but this interviewee certainly felt that prior experience of state structures and a sympathetic reaction at the time of the conflict in Kosovo meant ethnic-Albanians were well received in comparison with other refugee groups (Interview with CB3). This would be an interesting area of further research.

More than any other nationality, Somali groups were specifically mentioned by funders, most often with regards to the fact that some felt that there were too many RCOs.

*F10: [T]he proliferation of...Somali groups was just incredible. You know, you'd get applications from three or four that were literally a few metres away from each other, you know, because it was just completely different groups of people who had set up...the same organisation...based on kind of different cultural groups... And whilst...we would never force people who were perhaps incompatible for whatever reason, particularly if they were coming from a country where that's been the reason that there was the conflict...to do anything together, I think there was also a really strong sense that the sector was very disjointed and that people didn't have a joined up way of thinking and operating and I think that really weakened the sector for a lot of funders because it just felt really unsustainable...<sup>61</sup>*

This funder made it clear, however, that this proliferation and lack of communication was not limited to refugee community organisations (Interview with F10). This contribution implies that there needs to be a reduction in the number of RCOs so that they can function more effectively. Another funder said this more explicitly:

*F3: It may be...that there is a degree of rationalisation that is needed anyway. I think at the last count there were something like sixteen to twenty Congolese organisations in London, for a population of about 16,000. Which is ridiculous, you know...if half of them were cut out, there is no other section of the community would have that level of...dedicated resource. Now it could be that fifteen of those are useless and there's only one good one or it could be fifteen are excellent, but that*

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<sup>61</sup> This quote from Funder 10 was used earlier in the discussion of Bridging Social Capital in Chapter 5. It is included again here as a particularly relevant example of concern about Somali organisations.

*picture is probably not going to survive.*

There was a sense that the number of RCOs and the lack of partnerships between them meant that it was difficult for funders to know which of the RCOs were good and deserving of financial support:

F6: It is hard to make judgments about which RCOs to support and there can be a great number, e.g. of Somali groups. It is hard to decide which ones to fund.

In the case of one funder this problem was severe enough to prompt a change of grant-making policy. This small organisation had previously funded refugee community organisations, but had decided to stop. The interviewee explained why:

F1: The sheer number of groups, especially of Somali organisations, is one of the reasons why we stopped. If you go to the Charity Commission website and put in 'Somali' you get a long list of organisations. I counted around 65 in London alone. We felt that this was possibly not the best use of resources, to be funding tiny groups. I know that there are tribal and ethnic sensibilities that mean a high number of Somali organisations, but *it seems a little daft there are so many small organisations all with their own board*. Some are well run, some we have doubts about. Larger trusts...can assist in helping such organisations with capacity-building, but we are too small to do that sort of hand-holding with organisations. So a lot of them are doing excellent work, but it is too time consuming for us to assess their applications and to support them. Assessing applications can take extra time because quality of English language is not always there.

There was a sense amongst funders interviewed that RCOs should form partnerships, perhaps in order to tackle some of the perceived problems of RCOs, including proliferation of small groups, and concerns over professionalism. These would be with either refugee organisation serving the same community, with other refugee groups or with mainstream or specific service providers, for example with specialist skills in an area of service delivery.

However, this may not always be possible or appropriate. Competition for funding is one thing that might make it difficult for organisations to become partners, see Section 6.4.1.

Other factors include diverse locations and the need for different parts of a refugee community to be recognised. Some organisations, like EACO, are led by, and predominantly serve, women. Others do the same for men. Some, notably Somali groups, may cater for people with different tribal or religious backgrounds. The picture is complex, and whilst funders are understandably frustrated, RCOs partnerships are not always possible or desirable. This is something that capacity-builders raised:

Researcher: What would you like to see in terms of policy changes for RCOs?

CB2: ...At the organisational level probably not to put any ties around whether an organisation is single nationality or not. *Not to push for community cohesion.* Funders should not assume that RCOs should be working cohesively – for example with the host population. The host population may not be open to this...I have seen funders demanding this sort of thing, where they expect services to involve everyone, which may not be appropriate – for example...if a Chinese organisation were to host an event, people attending from the host community may feel isolated due to language barriers.

Most of the funders interviewed, however, were supportive of single nationality RCOs, again this is due to the research selection process used, as those that supported RCOs were approached. This was shown in their reaction to the government's consultation about cohesion and single-issue funding. Though they felt that partnerships could be beneficial, it was clear that these should emerge naturally, and that partnership for its own sake was not worth pursuing. This contribution is typical:

F10: *I think the thing to be conscious of with single nationality groups is...making sure that they are networked, that they are linked in with other organisations [and] that they are able to build on their assets. I think so long as they are doing that then I don't think that, you know, an Albanian project would be any stronger if they also*



*started also working with [pause], you know, I think there would some inherent difficulties if they were forced to work with...Bosnian or Chechen people as well, you know. Sometimes a group is a single identity group because of a very good reason.*

From the analysis in Chapter 4 it was clear that EACO benefitted a great deal from their partnerships with organisations. They worked with specialist agencies to expand what they were able to provide to service users. Links to other RCOs were present, but there had been problems with other Albanian RCOs in the past and partnership with them was not seen as necessarily desirable. In regards to working with RCOs serving other nationalities, schemes for mentoring and working with other groups were raised, but generally in the context of how to expand their funding base. There were some concerns amongst service users that this would affect the service (Focus Groups 6 & 8), though it was clear that some members were keen to interact with people from other communities (Withheld reference 1:4).

#### **6.4 Competition**

There are a considerable number of refugee and community organisations in the UK, and most of these are in London. RCOs are, like all third sector organisations, in competition for limited funds both with each other, and with larger second-tier or national-level organisations.

Evidence from the interviews with professionals suggested that there was a slight trend for some funders to move away from work funding small local RCOs towards supporting larger second-tier organisations either working in partnership with them, carrying out capacity-building work with RCOs, or directly providing services themselves.

Because of some of the drawbacks that funders felt they had experienced in working with RCOs some had decided to target their work more specifically to meet certain needs, or to support larger second tier organisations.

##### **6.4.1 Competition Between Refugee Community Organisations**

As RCOs have a limited number of sources of funding available to them, they must compete for funds, as most voluntary and community organisations do. One funder said that competition for funds between RCOs was less or more intense depending on the number

serving a particular refugee population:

*F4: We...bear in mind...which different communities have we funded? Are we being proportionate around that, and which different client groups...[W]e're trying to balance all those things all the time, so we've definitely visited groups who have put in pretty terrible applications but we've said, for example, 'ok, we haven't funded any Iraqi groups but we know there is a big Iraqi refugee population'. So we would visit them and see whether or not they are actually doing the work. So it kind of depends – if you put in a terrible application and you're one of seventeen Somali groups that we've got a bid from, unless you're doing something that sounds very interesting in the middle of a bad application you're unlikely to be shortlisted because it is that much more competitive.*

Though this funder was positive about funding Somali organisations, she acknowledged here that the high number of Somali-led RCOs meant competition for funds amongst them was more intense in comparison with other nationalities.

*F4: It's less of an issue I would say outside of the Somali community...but...having said that it is also about making a judgment about where the need is, because we know that the Somali communities have particular need and lots of barriers to overcome so we fund more Somali groups than we fund other nationality groups I would say...Because we recognise that there is a need there...but it's still very, very competitive.*

As this shows, however, it is not a straightforward issue of numbers, because the need of the Somali community is considered greater, so more funds are likely to be allocated to Somali groups.

In the survey to RCOs, 88% said that they had links to other RCOs serving the same ethnicity or nationality. They were asked whether competition for funding affected their relationship with these other organisations. The experience of EACO was that competition had adversely affected the relationships with other organisations, though other factors also seemed

relevant to this as discussed in Chapter 4. In the survey 50% of respondents said they did not think competition affected such relationships, 25% agreed that it did and 19% were unsure.<sup>62</sup> Contributions from funders and capacity-builders were also mixed:

Researcher: Is competition between RCOs for funds damaging to their relationships?

F5: It depends on the groups. The French-speaking organisations I support are enthusiastic about working together. They realise the strength of working together. Smaller, inexperienced groups maybe don't want to work with others. It doesn't damage their relationships, but their relationships are less robust.

A capacity-builder within a large second-tier organisation supporting RCOs felt that there was a lot of competition between RCOs. As this excerpt shows, when asked, he said he felt this meant they could not work together in the way government appears to expect.

Researcher: *I went to (a conference) and (the government representative) appeared [to be] saying there is going to be less funding for RCOs, unless they worked together and submit joint bids. And I got the impression from people I've spoken to that there are barriers to working together, partly because RCOs are competing for the same funds. Would you say that that is what you've experienced?*

CB1: Yes.

R: *Even in the same sort of community?*

RC: Yes.

This interviewee later said:

CB1: *I think the issue for all of us, including RCOs, is really the fact that we have got too many RCOs, even within one particular community....you can see nowadays with Kurdish community, Tamil community, Somali community, lots of community*

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<sup>62</sup> Figures don't total 100% because of non-response.

*organisations and...unfortunately there are not enough resources to support all these groups...they are competing against each other because of that.*

This supports the arguments made by some of the funders that whatever good work RCOs might be doing for their communities, there are too many. This contribution highlights succinctly that this has the affect of dividing the resources available. Unfortunately, as the EACO case study demonstrated, competition over funding is one reason why RCOs may choose not to work in partnership with each other, or be unable to work in partnership, although reasons of location and the different sections of the community that they serve are also relevant. The extent to which RCOs can form beneficial partnerships with each other would be an interesting area of further research.

#### 6.4.2 Competition with NGOs and Mainstream Organisations

There was a tendency, in interviews, for funders to list all organisations that they had funded that had any element of refugee service, though many also spoke about RCOs distinctly. Some of the organisations they mentioned were larger agencies serving a range of people, including refugees of all nationalities. Others listed projects they supported that worked with RCOs to provide second-tier capacity-building work. Though there was a sense that they were simply talking about projects that might be of relevance to the research, it is possible that for some funders, the distinction between funding refugee-led organisations and organisations who worked *with* refugees or RCOs as client, was somewhat blurred. Others, meanwhile, were very aware of the distinction, and articulated clearly the difficulty in attempting to balance funds supporting both:

*F11I1: I think sometimes for a funder there is...this sort of tension about whether you fund the small community group that is right into the community or whether you fund the big organisation.*

...

*F11I2: Yes, on a very occasional basis I will get the comment back...‘you don’t fund us, but we’re the guys that do all the work and then the big fish come along and scoop up your money’...But to be honest the small and medium organisation issue is beyond the refugee sector. [I]t’s the wider voluntary sector.*

As these two participants were keen to point out, their organisation does in fact fund a range of smaller and larger organisation, both refugee-led and mainstream.

A capacity-builder felt that funding sometimes went to mainstream or second-tier organisations because funders, and in particular statutory funders, tended to target funding at the 'community' without considering whether it was actually that community that was involved in running the project at hand:

*CB1: [T]here is a lack of understanding, even in local authorities...about the difference between community as a group of people, and RCOs as an organisation...And because of that most of the support is targeted towards the community as a group, rather infrastructure as an organisation...There is a lot of other funding that goes to all kind of organisations. For example there is a lot of mainstream British and voluntary sector and BME organisations who also claim that they support refugees and asylum-seekers and in their applications, you know they put all these details in their applications – we have refugees, we have migrants... And then they get funding because they are very good, sophisticated, English is their first language, the organisations are well-known and they have funding from their local authority, they have good links with the policy makers locally or whatever. And they also get money on the basis that they support refugees and asylum-seekers...[I]n my view, [that] will deny funding for the kind of support that RCOs used to get before. Because like ten years it was recognised that RCOs are the only people who support refugees and asylum-seekers.*

It appears that in working with refugees and asylum-seekers, larger and more professional organisations not led by refugees are able to secure funding that might previously have gone to RCOs, a possibility that was raised in the literature reviewed in Section 1.7.4.2 in Chapter One. This contribution from CB1 compares the size and professionalism of RCOs and their experience levels and language ability with mainstream organisations, that tend to be larger and have a prior record of service delivery that funders, and in particular statutory funders, find reassuring.

## **6.5 The Future of RCOs**

This section will consider the likely future funding situation of refugee community organisations. Though the funders spoken with have not been much affected by the recession, they had expectations that it will lead to an increased demand amongst VCS organisations. Contributors expected that the recession, combined with anticipated public sector spending cuts, would make the funding situation more difficult. This section also considers what the professionals interviewed felt could be done to improve the refugee-led part of the sector, with a focus on capacity-building and training.

EACO, though a relatively large and successful RCO, was not financially secure. The end of a grant period could be a difficult time as it was not always the case that replacement funds could be found. Because of this, staff hours were sometimes cut from full- to part-time, or redundancy notices had to be served in case funding was not received in time. The staff were committed enough that they had a tendency to work full-time even when they didn't receive full-time wages. Understandably not everyone would want to, or be able to, demonstrate this level of commitment and staff retention difficulties could be a factor in the high rate of failure for RCOs.

In the RCO survey staff were asked about whether they felt confident that they could continue to raise funds to support their organisations over the next three years. Fifty percent said that they were confident, 25% were not confident and 25% said they were unsure. This is a more positive picture than had been anticipated.

### **6.5.1 The Recession**

Most of the professionals interviewed said they thought the recession had had, or would have, an effect on the amount that trusts and foundations would be able to spend on organisations due to lower-than-expected returns on investments, although for most concerns were not immediate. These contributions are demonstrative of the responses:

*F4: I think that without exception [trusts and foundations] have taken a knock in their income and they'll have to make choices about how they respond to that.*

Other said that their endowments had been affected, but they weren't overly concerned (Interview with Funder 4). More of a concern was the impact that anticipated public spending cuts would have on voluntary organisations:

F1: *[T]he only concern we've got is the increase in demand as money dries up in the public sector with cuts coming whatever the party assumes power next year, there are going to be people who are going to be affected by not just cuts from central government but also local authorities are going to have a lot less money to spend as well. So, we're thinking about how we will actually deal with the spike in demand which we're expecting at least next year and possibly for a couple of years after that.*

This funder, and others, anticipated funding cuts after the 2010 general election. This, combined with the recession, was expected to create funding difficulties across the voluntary and community sector.

CB4: The future for RCOs will be *uncertainty, more stress, less access to money. Most worrying will be cuts in public sector money.* The situation likely to be worse under the Conservatives if they win at the next election. *It is about survival,* groups need to be clear on their objectives. *People are less and less interested in those, the funders...all the talk about taking on the host culture and stuff.* They could link up with other groups, but it is tricky if single nationality service is their mission, and it can be argued that there is a need for group-specific services. There is a need to look for opportunities that don't harm what you do in terms of mission drift and to continue to make the case for ethnic-specific services. There are some issues around people benefitting with working with different community groups, but this kind of work is hard to deliver.

This capacity-builder felt that for RCOs there would be an extra difficulty associated with a decline in the level of funds available for single-nationality organisations. It appears that the funding situation has potential to change what service RCOs provide, and their mission. As mentioned above, concerns about income had prompted EACO staff and their trustees to consider widening their services to other ethnic groups, or providing mentoring services to

smaller RCOs. This trend is also shown in the survey. Fifty per cent of the refugee community organisations that responded to the survey said that they had changed their activities in order to attract more funding and a further 25% said that they had considered it. This demonstrates the difficulties RCOs have in finding funding that is suitable for their activities, and raises the possibility that 'mission drift' could occur, and affect service provision.

#### 6.5.2 Capacity-Building

The funders spoken to in this research varied a great deal in size, and the scope of their organisation. Some of the larger organisations offered a range of training in-house about how to make applications, about monitoring and evaluation, financial issues or other training about building capacity (Interviews with Funders 4, 5, 7 and 8). At times some gave specific funds to provide RCO staff with training or consultancy (Interviews with Funder 4 and 7). Whether funders were trusts and foundations, or statutory sources, did not seem to make them more or less likely to offer training or support. Size was a factor, however. Local authorities and large trusts were more likely to have the resources to offer training, though not all large trusts did. Even some of the small trusts and foundations offered informal advice to groups that approached them for funds or referred them to places that could help like the local Community Service Volunteers (Interview with Funder 2).

The capacity-builders that took part were either individuals working to support agencies, or employed as part of a larger organisation that did capacity-building and performed a range of other functions. They were asked about what could be done to support RCOs. They generally felt that capacity needed to be improved, with training for RCO staff to better equip them to apply for funds and function efficiently in the voluntary sector:

CB4: It would be good if funders could find a way of referring organisations in partnership – to help them improve. Training for the organisation and also personal development work with the leaders or founders of RCOs is needed. It is partly knowledge and partly the person.

This interviewee felt that some RCOs could benefit from partnerships, but did not always



know how to get involved in productive and useful partnerships. She also highlighted the need for training of RCO staff. Another capacity-builder agreed with this, but also said that funders themselves could benefit from training *from* refugees, and from a higher level of consultation with refugees:

*CB3: I think they [funders] should have both training of the experiences of refugees and asylum-seekers in the country, the needs of refugee and community organisations and the barriers to developing social capital and networks. I think they should have refugee community groups represented on their board. I think they should have people from refugee and community groups, not as representatives but ... on their board of trustees. I think that they should have refugee and community groups come and train them in terms of understanding the needs and I think they should rather than make the kind of judgement that they make [about the Somali community] they should get members of the Somali community to come and talk to them about how they should fund in that community...And I think they should provide training, not that really patronising 'governance', 'monitoring', but I think they should provide training by refugee groups for refugee groups on how to manage that... I think funders should be offering capacity-building days for refugee community groups across London where they can learn how to make applications to them and they could learn what structures they need to have in place and to make them eligible for funding.*

This interviewee felt strongly that engagement between refugees and asylum-seekers should go beyond tokenistic representation and general training. She felt that if refugees were on the board of trustees for funders, that funders would have greater understanding of their needs. Training on both sides was recommended, but again in a way that was accessible and relevant to both groups. She felt that generic training in procedures, though useful, would not be appropriate to some RCOs and that a more tailored approach and open dialogue was needed (Interview with CB3).

## **6.6 Conclusion**

Overall, the picture presented by the capacity-builders and some of the funders depicts RCOs as having considerable difficulties in terms of a lack of voluntary sector knowledge and a particularly vulnerable user group. The time spent with EACO reinforced this perception, although there was a sense that EACO staff and service users had moved on from the most chaotic point after arrival and had been able to improve their procedures and structures sufficiently that they were not simply reacting to crises. This appeared to be, in part, because of the work of the key staff, and also because the Albanian community had been in the UK for a longer time than some refugee communities who have to continually deal with new arrivals. Refugees from Kosovo have had relative success in getting refugee status or exceptional leave to remain, and many were eligible to get status under the October 2003 amnesty for asylum-seekers from Kosovo, Yugoslavia and Turkey (Balicki and Wells, 2006:33). An interesting comparison would be with an organisation that represented a community that differed in terms of experience of structures, and rate of success in being granted asylum. These are clearly important factors affecting the needs of a community and the ability of RCOs to respond to that need.

In Chapter 1 the idea of a divide in the voluntary sector in terms of professionalism was discussed. This review of funding has highlighted the way that this divide is manifested in relation to RCOs. Funders had a slight tendency to see RCOs as less professional than other community groups. There was a sense that their disadvantage in terms of their own background, a lack of experience of the voluntary sector, and some language difficulties meant that they were at a disadvantage in competition for funding. The survey was of the largest and most professional RCOs in London. Despite this, a significant proportion, like EACO, had concerns about their future funding. Therefore, it appears that there are two divides. The first is within the specific RCO sector, as discussed in the literature review and the methodology chapter. Many RCOs are not charities, and most that are do not earn over £100,000 a year. There are many organisations without charitable status, or smaller charities that don't tend to have staff, earn under £100,000 a year and who struggle to survive. The larger RCOs that earn more tend to have staff and attract a greater range of funding, but as the case study and the survey have shown, they still have a relatively insecure financial situation.

The second divide is between RCOs, even successful ones like EACO, and much larger, mainstream and more professional NGOs. The latter have a greater pool of resources (including professional fundraisers), the track record and strategic ability that is likely to appeal more to larger and statutory funders in a climate that is moving away from grant funding for single-nationalities towards partnership, prioritising community cohesion and contractual funding. Despite this, there remains a core of mainly trust and foundation funders that have a stated commitment to funding refugee-led organisations. Competition for this funding is intense, however and is likely to become more pronounced if statutory funding is cut and/or diverted towards cohesion-based projects.

## **7. Conclusion**

This thesis aimed to investigate how refugee-led community organisations generate social capital for their service users. Social capital had been attributed to community organisations in general, and in relation to refugee community organisations specifically. The concept has also proved to be a popular one in recent government texts and is often linked to the voluntary and community sector, although its use is often simplistic and normative. How social capital was created and what its presence actually meant for service users, in terms of resources, were key questions for this research. The important contextual background of the research includes the present political and economic climate in which RCOs as organisations, and refugees and asylum-seekers as individuals, are situated; and the way in which asylum has become politicised. Though many policy areas affecting the context in which RCOs are operating were beyond the scope of this study, there was a focus on the funding situation of RCOs.

The research was centred on an eight-month case study with an RCO serving ethnic Albanians in London – referred to here as EACO. This enabled in-depth observation of the organisation and its service users. It also enabled the researcher to gain considerable insight into the procedures of fundraising in such an organisation, and a real sense of the reasons and frustrations associated with financial uncertainty, despite comprehensive and well-received provision of services.

As well as the case study, data was also collected from interviews with funders and capacity-builders that work with, or have worked with, refugee community organisations. This data tended to confirm the findings of the case study, and added a broader understanding of the context in which EACO, and other RCOs, are operating.

### **7.1. Findings**

#### **7.1.1 The Case Study**

Three main findings arose from the case study with EACO. Firstly, EACO created social capital resources for members and these connections enabled service users to benefit from a range of resources they would not otherwise have had access to. Secondly, connections between EACO and other agencies were found to be important elements in the ability of the

staff to offer such a wide range of professional and specialist services. Finally, the financial situation of the organisation was generally uncertain, despite the success of EACO and its high reputation amongst relevant professionals, funders and service users.

It was found that the case study RCO did represent social capital connections for its service users. Family and friendship connections, to use Woolcock's definition, were both reasons for people to join EACO in the first place, and further bonding social capital connections were also generated via membership of the organisation. Service users spoke frequently, and clearly, about EACO as a place where they came to make and socialise with friends. This bonding social capital, which was also present between staff, volunteers and service users, signified a social capital connection, and was also a resource in its own right.

Bonding social capital was important in enabling service users to overcome social isolation in terms of providing a network of friendship or even a surrogate family in an unfamiliar country. Bonding connections also appeared highly important in the development of what has been referred to here as a self development ethos. This referred to an often-observed pattern of engagement with EACO whereby service users, in particular women and young people, were encouraged to access services, develop skills, volunteer and get work experience and to eventually access further training and employment opportunities.

The application of the theory of bridging social capital to the data collected in this case study was less straightforward. It was found that, in reference to individuals accessing EACO services, they did not tend to form bridges with what Woolcock called "more distant friends, associates and colleagues" (2001:13). It is likely that this is because of the nature of refugee community organisations, and also because people do not tend to talk about the importance of distant relationships, but instead focus upon those nearest at hand, or most important to them. Though service users had the chance to meet people of other nationalities via EACO, this was not raised as frequently as their interaction with other services users, or their use of activities.

Considering *organisational* bridging social capital, however, the picture is somewhat different. It was clear that EACO staff were in contact with staff and volunteers from other

organisations. These relationships could be referred to as being with “more distant friends, associates and colleges” (Woolcock, 2001:13) and these connections were an important part of the success of the organisation. However, though such links are necessarily made by individual staff, this kind of relationship could be considered as linking social capital. The difference between linking and bridging social capital is discussed further in Section 7.2.

As expected based on the literature review, linking social capital was shown to be an important element in the ability of an RCO to provide services and resources. Linking social capital connections were a key part of EACO’s success, both in terms of access to funding, and connections to other agencies through which resources for service users could be accessed. It was clear that EACO staff, and in particular the Project Manager, worked hard to make and maintain useful network connections. Via partnerships with other agencies EACO was able to provide a wide range of additional services that would have been unavailable or less robust and specialist if they had been working alone. An important example of this was their partnership work with nine schools. This meant high numbers of children were able to learn the Albanian language and take part in traditional dancing and other activities in well resourced and accessible locations, whilst the costs for EACO were low. Similarly, EACO was able to offer service users professional therapy input via partnership with an external therapy charity.

Rex’s functions of immigrant associations typology was used to consider the kinds of resources that were available via social capital connections in EACO. There was evidence of EACO providing resources in each of Rex’s categories, though in some far more than others. There was strong evidence of EACO helping services users in terms of pastoral and social work type services and in affirmation of cultural beliefs and values, particularly amongst children and young people. There was some evidence that EACO supported service users in overcoming social isolation and that they carried out goal attainment activities for the community. There was some indirect evidence that service users maintained links with their homeland via use of EACO.

It was apparent that membership of EACO offered several distinct benefits. Regular attendance in women’s groups, children’s supplementary schooling or sports activities,

meant that members had the chance to make and form friendships with others sharing similar cultural backgrounds. Though women and young people were far more likely to make friendships in this way, some men attending advice sessions also visited regularly, and felt that EACO offered them a family-like structure. Thus, via opportunities to make friends, service users were able to overcome social isolation.

EACO fulfilled what Rex called a 'pastoral and social work' function. This included advice and information services, provision of language sessions and emphasis on personal achievement. This enabled service users, to a variable extent, to gain skills, such as language or transferable skills for employment to make it easier for them to access mainstream services or outside training and employment opportunities.

EACO also offered service users the chance for ethnic-Albanians to celebrate their culture and to spend time with others sharing similar cultural beliefs and values. Events, which could attract a high number of ethnic-Albanians from across London, and dancing and language lessons for children, were key parts of this function, though the opportunity to simply speak the same language with other ethnic-Albanians also appeared to be of value. The idea that the viewpoints of refugee community organisations and the Government are so different that it would exclude RCOs from official policy networks was raised in Chapter 1, Section 1.7.4.3. There was indeed no evidence of EACO, or the RCOs surveyed, being involved in governance networks, either locally or nationally. However, this could be related to their relatively small size. Second tier capacity-builders interviewed tended to believe that their own organisations represented the 'voice' of RCOs, and on general asylum policy this may indeed be the case. It is wrong to assume, however, that RCOs are not interested in or capable of campaigning. There was evidence of 'goal attainment' activities by EACO. They were able to organise and campaign effectively on some issues of specific concern to the ethnic-Albanian community. They had had some significant successes, though these were limited to localised or niche issues, as opposed to more general asylum themes. EACO was as well-connected to official bodies as RCOs are likely to be. It was in receipt of local authority funding, and had political connections to MPs. These connections did not affect the ability of EACO to campaign around these select issues, and in fact these local level connections proved useful in goal attainment activities. In Chapter 2 the possibility that

involvement with official bodies could curtail the ability of RCOs to campaign effectively was raised. With EACO, and the case study RCOs, this did not appear to be the case, though this could be because RCOs were generally campaigning about smaller and specific issues, as opposed to broader asylum themes.

The only one of Rex's functions that was not strongly in evidence was that of maintaining links with the homeland. This was because, as an organisation, EACO did not have a programme of engagement with people or agencies in Albania or Kosovo. Services did facilitate engagement, however, though somewhat loosely. Children and young people, and their parents, valued their knowledge of Albanian culture and language when communicating with relatives in their country of origin.

Overall, it was clear that the case study organisation represented a range of social capital connections, and resulting resources, that services users would not have been able to access without the existence of a specific, tailored and approachable service for ethnic-Albanian speakers. The combination of a community of co-nationals, with shared language and cultural understanding, with opportunities for support, advice and services in an encouraging and friendly atmosphere had done much to improve the lives of a significant number of people. Though each service user's experience differed, a number of women had been able to overcome poverty, isolation and traditional cultural limitations to make the most of services available to them. Via EACO they had been able to reinforce their cultural identity, and that of their children, and also to gain skills that enabled them to integrate with mainstream services, and frequently mainstream training and employment opportunities too.

#### 7.1.2 The Survey of Refugee Community Organisations and Interview with Professionals

The survey data and contributions from funding and capacity-building professionals showed that the findings from the case study could be considered a fair representation of the wider situation in which RCOs are operating.

There were some small, but revealing, differences in the way that funders (and to a lesser extent capacity-building professionals) perceived both social capital and resources relating



to RCOs, and the way that RCOs in the survey presented themselves and the researcher's experience of EACO. Data collection methods for each group differed. The case study of EACO was long-term and revealed a great deal of complex and in-depth information, whereas the survey collected data based on staff perceptions of their organisation and work. The interviews with funding and capacity-building professionals were semi-structured and open-ended in order to understand how RCOs were perceived by these external professionals. However, even given these reasons for possible data discrepancies between funders and RCOs, the different ways that each group seemed to perceive RCOs and their role is interesting and especially relevant to consideration of funding difficulties for RCOs.

The staff of local authority funders and representatives of charitable trusts and foundations made up most of the eleven funders interviewed. Perceptions amongst these funders varied, but on the whole they tended to be less aware of the social capital connections and resulting resources that RCOs make available to service users, and more likely to raise concerns about the proliferation of refugee community organisations serving the same community. Some, though by no means all, saw RCOs primarily as sign-posting organisations that would support members of their community in accessing mainstream services. Some explicitly felt it was a mistake for them to offer specialist services themselves.

Capacity-building professionals were more likely to have a more nuanced understanding of both funders and RCOs, with an awareness both of the limitations of refugee community organisations *and* funders. Some agreed, as a significant proportion of funders did, that there was sometimes a lack of understanding amongst refugees about the voluntary sector. They were more likely to contextualise this, however, by referring to the difficult experiences of individual staff and their lack of experience of English and of how to operate within the voluntary sector. They also spoke about the frustrations of a competitive funding situation for RCOs and the lack of understanding amongst some (and particularly statutory) funders. They also had a greater understanding of the situations in which RCOs were operating, for example the difficulties that RCOs experience in completing complex fundraising procedures and working in partnership. As raised in Chapter 6, the extent to which RCOs are able to form mutually beneficial partnerships with other RCOs, or even other kinds of community group, would be an interesting area for further research.

The findings from the survey of RCOs in London of the same sort of size as EACO revealed that they tended to operate in a similar sort of way. They overwhelmingly appeared to provide the same kind of services as EACO. Levels of agreement from RCO staff about the way in which their services offered chances for service users to socialise, to access advice and to gain transferable skills reveals the extent to which, even if they are not as effective in practice as EACO, they are using the same sort of language and attempting to make the same sort of difference to the lives of their service users. Therefore it can be concluded that these RCOs are, like EACO, providing services in such a way to their service users that social capital is likely to be created. As with EACO data, findings pertaining to bonding social capital are most clear. Asylum-seekers and refugees have the potential to make friendships and to build supportive and familial-type relationships via a central organisation.

The survey data also revealed the extent to which the larger RCOs included in the sample are well connected to a range of other voluntary, statutory and private agencies. Though the survey was not able to examine the value of these connections, it is fair to assume that in many cases linking social capital connections at the staff and/or organisational level enable RCOs to provide a wider and richer range of services to their members, as EACO does, and that significant resources are accessible via these connections.

What emerges from this research is the sense that small, community-led and single-nationality organisations, if well run, can offer a great deal to refugees and asylum-seekers that, as often vulnerable and isolated members of society, they would not otherwise be able to access. This goes some way to confirm government's assertions that the voluntary sector can do a great deal to work more effectively and in a relevant and responsive way to excluded sections of society in a way that mainstream and state provided services cannot. RCOs being led by people from the same culture, who speak the same language and who understand the situation of service users, appears to mean a great deal to those who access the services. As well as that, they are able to offer tailored, specialist responses to needs of particular communities that are beyond the scope of mainstream universal services. Therefore stories emerged from EACO of individual journeys in which isolated women (and some men) gradually, and over time, were supported in accessing their entitlements, to

work towards citizenship and to gain skills in order to eventually engage with the wider society. At the same time, the appeal of such a service is cemented in the offering of traditional and fun activities both for them and their children which attract interest in the first place and secure long-term commitment to the organisation long after the original presenting problems have been dealt with. EACO appears, then, as a powerful combination of social club and highly tailored support system that depends a great deal on the trust and friendship built up between members, volunteers and staff.

The RCOs surveyed present a similar picture of activity and though the degree of success of each RCO cannot be gauged, it presents a small sample of refugee-led organisations across London, each responding to the particular needs of their community, and even to the particular needs of individual members. This is indeed something which the state, without a great deal of investment and consultation with members of the community, probably could not provide alone. Even if it were possible, it seems that unless services are offered by people who are like the refugees and asylum-seekers, initial engagement in the services would be lower and long-term involvement is less likely.

## **7.2 The Use of Social Capital**

Academic work on social capital and government reflections relating to the concept have tended to use the term as shorthand for referring to the fact that various kinds of links between people can be beneficial. Some research, however, such as that of Zetter et al (2006) considers the concept in relation to refugee community organisations and applies it more comprehensively, including a discussion of the types of social capital found. This thesis has attempted to find out, *if* social capital is created by RCOs for service users, *how* this process occurs and *what* this means in terms of resources.

Applying the concept of social capital was not straightforward. The term ‘social capital’ has been employed by numerous contributors in diverse ways. Some are more relevant to organisations, some to individuals. Some relate to micro processes, others to macro societal factors. Though Putnam is the name most associated with social capital in contemporary debates, in considering how to apply the concept in the research the work of Woolcock was more usefully operationalisable. Woolcock’s definitions proved more relevant when working

with the data collected, for example on the difference between bonding and bridging types of social capital. This was because in Putnam's work (2000; with Goss, 2002) there is some confusion over how to apply bridging or bonding definitions to people that are alike in some ways, and not in others. Woolcock's definition, centering around 'close' or 'remote' connections, to some extent avoided this problem (2001:13). Further, by including the notion of linking social capital, his work also enabled the labeling of key connections to other organisations that were found to be so important to EACO. This section will consider some of the difficulties found in using social capital to study an RCO, especially in relation to bridging social capital, and suggests the best way to deal with these difficulties in future work.

Firstly, to summarise the findings in relation to social capital. Bridging social capital was not clearly present in the case study RCO. Individual service users did not tend to demonstrate 'bridges' to other, more 'distant' people (Woolcock, 2001:13). That this was lacking may be due to the fact that it was not a process found in EACO because it is a service for a particular group of people.

The main problem with using social capital in this study related to a lack of definitional clarity between bridging and linking social capital. This is a complex issue for three reasons, the first relates to the case study itself, the other two to the definition of social capital used here. Firstly, it is possible that as bridging social capital was not found in the case study, it has not revealed the full extent of the usefulness of the theory. Secondly, it was unclear whether 'bridging' social capital concepts could be applied to staff of an organisation when considered as individuals, or whether they are part of the organisation. The third point is related to this – Woolcock's ideas of 'bridging' and 'linking' social capital can appear indistinct when attempting to apply them to the data. Each of these issues will now be examined, alongside suggestions for the use of the concepts in the future study of RCOs and other organisations.

The research with EACO found a great deal of evidence for bonding social capital. Friendship and family links were a key avenue of referral into the organisation, and ongoing friendship and associated resources were a demonstrable reason for service users to keep attending

EACO sessions and events long after their initial need for services had passed. This presence, and the friendship and trust built, led many service users (especially women) to access personal development opportunities on offer. Linking social capital between EACO and other agencies was also clear, and resulted in a range of resources being available to service users (linking social capital will be returned to below).

What was not found was evidence of bridging social capital, or what Woolcock referred to as connections to “more distant friends, associates and colleagues”. He calls it “a horizontal metaphor, however, implying connections between people who share broadly similar demographic characteristics” (2001:13). It was expected that connections to “more distant friends, associates and colleagues” amongst service users of EACO would be found – for example in friendships with refugees from other community organisations, with whom English language sessions had been held. However, there was no evidence of service users forming such links. That it was not found relating to service users in this study does not mean, however, that it may not be found in studies of other RCO groups, or of other communities groups serving the wider community. By its very nature, a single nationality group is perhaps less likely to display evidence of this sort of connection being forged. It would be of great interest to see if, in other community group studies conducted in the same way, whether such evidence would be found – for example in a community centre or local charity with a mixture of nationalities present. Before social capital can be applied in other research studies however, there are some problems with definitions that need to be addressed.

A key issue that was raised in Section 4.6.2 was whether staff connections to associates and colleagues in other agencies could be referred to as bridging social capital and therefore as evidence of EACO creating bridging social capital. This also relates to the issue of separating out bridging and linking social capital, so both concerns will be dealt with here. Staff within EACO did display connections to other organisations. They had friendships and professional relationship with a range of people that were from either other refugee communities, general community services, politicians and representatives of funding organisations. The reason for not simply labeling such connections as linking social capital was because of the often personal nature of the relationship. Often an organisation did not offer a service or a

resource to EACO service users because of a formal arrangement, but because an EACO staff member, most frequently the dynamic Project Manager, had called a friend and persuaded them of the need for the service, or the benefit of partnership to both organisations. The issue here is whether this sort of occurrence is a bridge or a link.

It is useful to review the idea of 'linking', described by Woolcock as the "vertical dimension...the capacity to leverage resources, ideas and information from formal institutions beyond the community" (2001:13). The key word here is 'vertical' but it is an idea that is open to challenge based on the EACO case study. It suggests a hierarchical arrangement with one organisation always getting something from another, and that this exchanges flows only in one direction. This may be reading too much into Woolcock's phrase – he does not comment on what the 'formal institution' may gain. If this is the correct reading, however, it is questionable based on the findings of the case study. This is because EACO benefited from organisations that might be perceived as both 'above' and 'below' it in a hierarchical sense. Indeed the way in which both partners tended to benefit from a link suggests that the hierarchical idea may not be the most useful one in considering social capital. Because social capital is not a finite material resource it is not 'used up' in the transaction between two agents. As Haynes comments, "social capital is depleted by *not* being utilised" (2009:7). Both sides will benefit from the social capital being used – for example in dealing with a large second-tier refugee NGO, EACO have received free training, advice and mentoring services. At the same time, however, the larger organisation benefits from the input of EACO in its internal affairs. Connections to small organisations enable it to seek funding and to appear to speak legitimately for refugee groups. Similarly, EACO supports smaller community organisations that are starting out by mentoring leaders in their attempts to create similar successes. In return they create network of professional associates with the sector who may be called on for support, or to lend resources when needed. Though in both of these examples the relationships may be uneven, with one giving more than the other, they both highlight the way in which notions of hierarchy within Woolcock's definition of linking social capital are questionable, in the same way that ideas about people being either 'alike' or 'unlike' in Putnam's work are overly simplistic (Putnam and Goss, 2002:11).

A different conception of the difference between linking and bridging types of social capital is tentatively suggested. It is that staff connections to distant associates or colleagues be seen as bridging social capital, and may also be indicative of linking social capital (which could be ascertained by evaluating the kind of relationship in place). Here, linking social capital would be evidenced by more robust formal connections between organisations – perhaps with a contract or service agreement in place. In this case, some relationships between agencies, especially informal relationships without official partnership agreements, may be reliant on what is in fact bridging social capital between staff members and their distant associates in other organisations. In the case of the latter, it might be that the connection would cease if the relevant personnel left the organisation.

As to whether bridging social capital for staff represents bridging social capital in general for EACO the response is necessarily negative in order to avoid ascribing attributes of social capital and related resources to the service users which are really only displayed by the staff. This study aimed to understand social capital within RCOs, but focuses primarily on how service users benefit from membership in a way that they would not have done otherwise. However, it enhances this analysis to also say that staff of such organisations benefit in other, diverse, ways as it comments on what service users may themselves be able to achieve in similar roles, and because it adds to an overall understanding of the role of RCOs within the communities they represent.

It would be interesting to apply these slightly altered definitions of social capital to other RCOs, other community groups and formal institutions in order to fully test the way in which social capital, and in particular, bridging and linking social capital are found in different contexts. This would be of particular relevance in understanding the types and robustness of connections between different organisations and different sections of society in reference to the current policy focus on community cohesion, as discussed in Section 2.2 and 6.3.1.

#### 7.2.1 Other Studies on Social Capital, Gender and Ethnicity

The findings of this research project are interesting in the light of recent social capital research on gender and/or ethnicity. As seen in Section 2.4 Putnam, and others in the Putnam school, have focused on aggregate measures of social capital in a way that has been

perceived as lacking context and detail. This study of refugee community organisations aimed to address the issue on a micro level by considering the process by which social capital was created within an RCO and what this meant for service users in terms of resources.

One study by Ryan et al (2008) considered social capital in relation to formal and informal networks of recent Polish immigrants in London. They found that close social networks such as family and friends were valued because they allowed access to employment, information and emotional support. The authors also found a clear theme of distrust. People tended to value close informal networks highly, but displayed mistrust towards the wider Polish community (2008:679). This is an interesting study with which to compare the experience of the ethnic-Albanian community in EACO. Further research into how the community perceives others from the same ethnic background would be of interest. It may be that the Polish experience, with an older, established community of co-nationals in the UK and arrival due to migration (not seeking asylum), may have created differences in the needs of the community, and the way that social capital has evolved compared with other communities.

The ability of different ethnic or culturally-defined groups to access social capital is also raised in an article by Cheong et al (2007). They also question the way in which bonding social capital is portrayed as negative and bridging social capital as positive in policy agendas that prioritise social cohesion (2007:36). Though this research on EACO cannot comment confidently about refugee organisations serving other communities, data gathered from interviews with professionals working with refugee organisations suggested that groups serving other ethnicities were not perceived in the same way as EACO or ethnic-Albanians more generally. Because of this, other refugee groups may have greater difficulty in creating successful formal networks and accessing resources in comparison with EACO. This supports the assertion by Cheong et al that social capital does not start from an even point, and it is only one aspect of the situation affecting different factions of society (2007:36).

Though both men and women accessed the services of EACO, the study found that women were far more likely to form bonding relationships within the organisation, and to access



resources of friendship and emotional support that helped them to overcome social isolation. Healy et al (2007) consider Lowndes' question: "Are men and women involved in different, gender-specific 'circuits' of social capital?" (Lowndes, 2000:534). Healy et al considered difference in volunteering and civic involvement in a range of locations (urban to rural) amongst men and women of different ages and with different income levels. They found that women undertake more "community service activities" such as health, social and education activities, in comparison with men, who tend to volunteer for civic administration or sports and recreation roles (Healy et al, 2007:117). In the original article Lowndes, too, emphasises the role of women in informal networks, especially around childcare, that have often been excluded from studies of societal social capital measures (Lowndes, 2000:535). The results of this research on RCOs is supportive of these findings. Women volunteering with EACO often took a role in childcare provision, whereas the men who had volunteered did so as trustees, or as dancing teachers or sports coaches. This research also raises the question of differential access to social capital from another angle. If informal childcare creates networks by which people join organised networks, then those not caring for children may not have the same opportunity to join formal networks. As such they are less likely to be in the position to access social capital and will miss out on a range of resources. In the case study with EACO many women only joined the organisation initially because of their children, other benefits of membership came later. The fact that there were fewer men involved may have been in part due to mother's being primary care-givers who came into contact with EACO more regularly. This is another way in which access to social capital can differ in reference to a number of individual and at time gender-specific characteristics.

Finally, and though the research is not recent, it is worth considering the findings in the literature in relation to gender and political participation. Schlozman et al (1994) considered the differences between men and women in taking part in political activity. They found that women were at a disadvantage in terms of engaging in political activity, though differences were not as great as they had anticipated, and that the comparative economic disadvantage of women was a large factor in this (1994:986). Verba et al (1997) also found that women tended to engage less with politics. This was perceived as being related to a general lack of interest in politics, which the authors ascribed, tentatively, to different social cues about politics by gender (1997:1070). Though there is not scope to fully review this literature here,

it is worth noting that women involved in EACO became involved in political participation via the group – as discussed in relation to Goal Attainment in Section 4.3. This is even clearer if political participation is perceived in a broader sense, including campaigning to raise awareness amongst the community and small scale local actions (for example with the securing of travel documentation, as discussed in Section 4.3), as well as more traditional engagement such as encouraging voting and meeting with political representatives – all of which were present in the case study. Lowndes writes that political engagement routes are often different for women – citing the example of wives of miners striking in the 1980s (Lowndes, 2000:536). Involvement with EACO, with its local (and national) campaigning activities, petitions, letter writing and connections to local politicians also represented a chance for women to engage with politics around issues particularly relevant to them and their families.

Overall, more recent research on social capital has highlighted differential access to, and use of, social capital in regards to race, nationality, age, location and gender. The case study of EACO supports this by depicting the different forms of engagement with the organisation by women compared to men, the prevalence of mothers in the organisation, and the different resources accessed by women from rural or urban backgrounds.

### **7.3 Funding For RCOs**

Despite all the positives that EACO and other RCOs are able to offer to their own communities, many exist in a precarious funding environment and are uncertain of their ability to pay for staff and provide services from month to month. RCOs, or at least those of larger incomes surveyed here, appear able to access a small range of contracts from local authorities and other statutory bodies. However, this source of income appears to be under threat both from the community cohesion agenda that favours cross-nationality activities, and from widely anticipated public funding cuts after the 2010 general election. As well as this, statutory income does not make up the majority of RCO funding, rather RCOs are reliant on charitable support from a relatively small number of trusts and foundations. Though most of the trusts and foundation staff interviewed said that their organisations were committed to supporting RCOs, a small number had stopped funding them or were targeting their support to very specific types of project. RCOs therefore find it hard to get

ongoing funding for their core work of advice, information and activities for refugees and asylum-seekers. From experience in volunteering with EACO the researcher became aware of the difficult task RCOs have in trying to find new potential funders and to present their core activities as new and distinct projects that fit in with the specific funding streams on offer.

Therefore, if RCOs are to continue to provide what this research found was a valuable range of services that support refugees and asylum-seekers, and help them to integrate with wider society, more sustainable and long-term funding solutions need to be found. Research highlighted the need for trusts and foundations, as well as statutory funders, to develop their understanding of refugee and asylum-seeker needs and to offer long-term funding that can be used more flexibly in order to fund key services. At the same time there is a need for tailored and responsive training for the staff of RCOs to enable them to operate more efficiently in the voluntary sector and to help them make the most of opportunities for voluntary organisations to benefit from the new governance context despite their small size, the particular needs of their clients, and without compromising their core service delivery.

#### **7.4 Directions for Future Research**

Two aspects arising from the literature review that were expected in the data were not found. In Chapter 2 the possibility that refugee community organisations would have had to respond to the destitution of their communities by offering support in kind such as food and informal accommodation was raised. This was not found to be the case for EACO, or for most of the surveyed RCOs. This might be for several reasons. RCOs do not have the same ability of large NGOs or small faith-based organisations to provide in-kind support. They do not have large income and patterns of distribution that NGOs, for example the Red Cross, have. At the same time they do not have members from whom donations of in-kind support can be collected in the same way as faith groups – as their client group is more likely to be destitute or on low incomes. EACO, therefore, did not provide accommodation and food directly, but referred people in need of such support to the Red Cross or other relevant agencies. Another consideration here is that the need amongst more established refugee communities is different. By surveying RCOs with an income over £100,000 it is more likely that the sample included refugee communities that are more established. It is likely that

RCOs with smaller income may be serving more newly arrived communities, and they are more likely to need material support. This is not straightforward, however, as the sample included both long-standing refugee communities, such as those working with Vietnamese refugees, as well as those from countries from which new arrivals are being made all the time, like Afghani refugees. An interesting area of research would be a consideration of the size of and services offered by different RCOs and how this related to the refugee community in terms of length of time in the country, numbers of new arrivals and the number of established refugees already in the UK.

The second aspect arising from the review of the literature was that RCOs, as generally small local organisations, would not be well placed to make the most of the new opportunities made available by the shift in local authorities leading partnerships in governance. However, a considerable proportion of the RCOs surveyed (75%), as well as EACO, did hold contracts with local authorities and with other statutory providers to provide some services under contract. It is unclear whether these contracts are the 'lighter' and less onerous type that local government interviewees spoke about. It is also likely that as organisations with an income above £100,000, and representing the largest and most successful RCOs in London, that the experiences of this sample in relation to contracts with local authorities and other agencies are not the norm across the range of different sized refugee community organisations. Further useful research would involve a more precise mapping of all kinds of RCO in London, not just charities, which tend to be larger, and a comparison of participation in governance networks and holding of contracts as related to size and experience.

One unexpected finding of this research was the extent to which most funders, and some capacity-building professionals, raised the issue of proliferation of RCOs and the long-term sustainability of a large number of RCOs catering for the same community. It was particularly interesting that a significant proportion of funders specifically mentioned Somali-led refugee organisations as those that they were most concerned about in this regard. Further research that mapped RCOs in London would be able to comment on whether this perception of proliferation amongst Somali RCOs is indeed particularly pronounced. An in-depth case study of a Somali RCO or a number of different sized Somali RCOs would form an interesting counterpoint to the case study of EACO. This work may also

have scope to comment further on whether RCOs led by different nationalities experience particular differences in relation to their experiences in the country of origin, the situation of refugees in the UK, and how different nationalities are perceived by funders and local authorities.

More generally, in-depth research with a higher number of different types of RCO would be useful in determining, with a greater degree of confidence, that the social capital findings from the case study are indeed processes that can be perceived in other organisations. The wider implications for statutory and private funders may be that different types of RCO, or those serving different nationalities, may require different types of input, support and even funding strategies.

Another useful avenue of enquiry would be to see how far the finding that voluntary organisations have scope to offer service users social capital connections is true across different voluntary organisations serving non-refugee communities. For example, does a community organisation on a deprived estate serving the whole community offer similar benefits to members of bonding and linking social capital, and how similar or diverse are the resulting resources?

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 6, the government has prioritised funding organisations that boost bridging social capital over bonding social capital. This means single-nationality groups, such as RCOs, may have to deal with a future reduction in government funding. However, as this research has shown, high levels of bonding social capital in refugee community organisations appears to be the starting point for wider integration. It may be that only after people are drawn into an organisation and supported by staff that they trust are they able, and willing, to access activities that could be perceived as more integrative and bridging. Therefore, there is a particular need for further research into the long-term effectiveness for individuals in accessing activities that primarily offer bridging activities between different groups, however defined. This research could offer an interesting point of comparison. For example, do bridging projects create the same sort of long-term engagement and significant outcomes for individuals in the same way? Will people be

attracted to bridging activities without the pull of bonding relationships and activities that proved so important in the recruitment of service users to EACO in the first place?

Another final area of interest has been raised by this research, but not fully answered. As said in Chapter 2, Putnam raises the need for further research into the impact of the state on social capital. The literature review suggested that state policies of deterrence of asylum-seekers had led to increasing demands on RCOs to fill in the gaps in provision. It has been beyond the scope of this work to comment on whether this was indeed the case. More quantitative work could gauge if there was a rise in the number of RCOs as policy became more restrictive and entitlements for asylum-seekers were reduced, although data on numbers is hard to find as discussed in Section 1.7.1. The move towards primarily funding community cohesion activities could mean an increasingly difficult funding situation for RCOs. Analysis of how this policy impacts upon RCOs would require a long-term review of funding to RCOs and research into whether support from local authorities, and trusts and foundations, is declining in response to this recent government funding guidance. Such guidance is one way in which state policy has scope to impact upon social capital for this section of society.

## **7.5 Summary**

EACO represented a successful RCO in terms of income, services offered, and feedback from service users, volunteers and fundraisers. This success was due to a combination of several key factors. Firstly, linking social capital meant the creation of partnership connections to institutions through which service users could access valuable and relevant resources. Secondly, service users were attracted to the organisation by the strong bonding social capital element, which was manifested in the relationships between staff, volunteers and service users. Finally, the RCO was run informally in a way that allowed it to be both responsive to the needs of services users, and also professional in the way that both the relationships with service users and the partnership agencies were maintained over the long-term. This suggests that it is the *combination* of two types of social capital – bonding connections between service users, volunteers and staff – and linking – between the organisation and a range of other agencies – that were vital to the success of EACO.

From the data collected in observing EACO (as well as from the interviews and focus groups with staff, volunteers and service users) it was also apparent that the high level of bonding social capital present was based on the fact that the organisation is led by people who are like the service users, who understand and value their culture and language. This picture was something that the survey suggested is replicated in similar organisations run by and for refugees and asylum-seekers across London. However, securing funding presents an ongoing challenge for refugee led organisations. Funding sources for RCOs are generally limited to statutory provision, which is potentially under threat from the community-cohesion agenda, and grants from a small number of committed charitable trusts and foundations. Ultimately, the precarious funding situation is a drain on staff time, RCO resources, and is a potential threat to the social capital that such organisations are able to create for their often isolated and vulnerable service users.

Many of these findings are relevant to the wider debate about the voluntary sector and social capital, though the experience of RCOs may be more pronounced because of the particular barriers experienced by staff in engaging within the voluntary sector and the often difficult position of their service users. If the voluntary sector is to be expected to fill the gap created by the rolling back of the provision of state services, then voluntary organisations cannot be expected to perform well and to survive in the long-term without being well trained and well resourced in a sustainable way. However, funding structures that focus only on enabling second-tier agencies to build the capacity of smaller local-level organisations, or on supporting specific single-instance project work, can only do so much. Funds for the running of these organisations still needs to be made available, as even the most well-developed and professional organisation requires income for overheads and core work, even if it is run entirely by volunteers.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1 – Service Users and Non-Service Users Interviewed for EACO**

#### **Key**

<b>Type of Service User</b>	
<b>Code</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
EV	Ex-Volunteer
SU	Service User
Tr	Trustee
V	Volunteer
<b>Type of service</b>	
<b>Code</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
A	Advice
NA	Not applicable
SS	Supplementary School
T	Training
WSG	Women's Support Group

<b>Assigned number</b>	<b>Focus Group</b>	<b>Interviewed</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Role</b>
1	FG2		F	30s	SU
2	FG2		F	30s	SU
3	FG2		F	30s	SU
4	FG2		F	40s	SU
5	FG4	Yes	F	30s	SU, V
6	FG4		F	20s	SU - WSG
7	FG4		M	60s	SU - A
8	FG4		M	30s	SU
9	FG4		F	?	SU - A, T
10	FG4		F	30s	SU - A
11	FG4		F	?	SU - A
12	FG4		F	?	SU
13	FG5		F	9	SU - SS
14	FG5		M	14	SU - SS, V
15	FG5		M	20	V
16	FG5		F	15	SU - SS
17	FG5		F	15	SU - SS
18	FG5		M	7	SU - SS
19	FG5		M	8	SU - SS
20	FG5		M	10	SU - SS
21	FG5		F	10	SU - SS
22	FG5		F	6	SU - SS
23	FG5		M	12	SU - SS
24	FG5		M	9	SU
25	FG5		M	11	SU



26	FG5		F	13	SU - SS
27	FG5		F	9	SU
28	FG5		F	11	SU - SS
29	FG6		F	40s	EV
30	FG6		F	21	V, Tr
31	FG6		F	50s	V
32	FG6	Yes	F	30s	V
33	FG6		F	?	V
34	FG6		F	?	SU - A, V
35	FG6		F	40s	V
36	FG6		F	?	Tr
37	FG6		F	20	V, T
38	FG6		F	?	SU
39	FG7		F	40s	EV
40	FG7		M	40s	EV
41	FG7		M	30s	V, T
42	FG7		F	?	T
43	FG7		F	30s	EV
44	FG7		F	40s	SU - A, V
45	FG7		M	20s	V
46	FG7		F	20s	SU - A, V
47	FG8		F	18	V
48	FG8		F	18	V
49	FG8		M	17	SU - SS
50	FG8		M	17	SU - SS
51		Yes	F	19	V
52		Yes	F	40s	SU - A
53		Yes	F	30s	SU - A, V
Not in contact with EACO before (Non Service Users)					
NSU1	FG2		F	30s	NA
NSU2	FG2		F	40s	NA

## **Appendix 2 – Information Sheets**

### **Appendix 2a – Information Sheet for Service Users of EACO - Focus Groups & Interviews** **(Available in English and Albanian)**

I am a PhD student from the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Southampton. I am **not** connected with the Government, NASS, the local Council or any other official authorities.

I am volunteering at EACO for a couple of months in order to understand the running of the organisation. I will be observing what goes on and taking notes. I am keen to speak with people using EACO's services about how they got involved, what role EACO has in their life, and any other organisations they might be involved with.

EACO will not be named in my report. The names of people using EACO will not be in my report. Your name and contact details are confidential. I will not record any of your personal details.

I am looking for 6-8 people who agree to be in a focus group lasting one hour. You are not obliged to take part, but if you agree to take part in a focus group the discussion will be tape recorded. Everything you say will be anonymous. What you say will not affect your use of the services at EACO.

I am also looking for two or three people from each focus group to take part in a one-to-one interview lasting around 20 minutes. This will take place after the focus group and will ask for a bit more information about the same things. If it is ok with you I would also like to record this interview.

If at any stage you decide you do not wish to take part in this study you may withdraw without needing to give me a reason, including up to two weeks after the focus group/interview has been held. My contact details are below, or you can ask [The Project Manager] or [the Women's Worker] to contact me.

If you would like to receive a brief summary report of my research findings please let me know.

Many thanks for giving me your time and please ask me any questions you have about what I am doing.

How you can contact me:

Alexa Kellow  
**[Postal address]**

**[Email]**

**[Telephone]**

## **Appendix 2b – Information Sheet For Refugee Community Organisation Staff**

I am a PhD student from the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Southampton.

This research focuses on voluntary organisations run by and for refugees. I am interested in:

- funding options open to Refugee Community Organisations
- the range of services provided by Refugee Community Organisations
- what other organisations Refugee Community Organisations are in contact with
- how people get in contact with Refugee Community Organisations and what services they use most

Alongside observing the work of (ORGANISATION), I am also hoping to conduct some interviews with individuals in the organization and would like to invite you to take part in this. The names of all individuals and organisations will be anonymised. Participants' names and contacts details are confidential.

If you agree to participate in this research I would like, with your permission, to tape record your interview. If you would prefer me not to do this, please let me know.

If at any stage you decide you do not wish to take part in this study you may withdraw without needing to give me a reason. My contact details are below.

I will ask you to sign a consent form in order to show that you understand the above and that you agree to take part in this study.

Please ask if you have any questions.

Many thanks for giving me your time.

### **Contact details:**

Alexa Kellow

**[Postal address]**

**[Email]**

**[Telephone]**

## **Appendix 2c - Information Sheet for Staff of Funding and Capacity-Building Organisations**

I am a PhD student from the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Southampton.

The research I am carrying out looks at voluntary organisations run by and for refugees. I am interested in:

- funding options open to Refugee Community Organisations.
- the range of services provided by Refugee Community Organisations
- what other organisations Refugee Community Organisations are in contact with.
- how people get in contact with Refugee Community Organisations and what services they use most.

Having carried out interviews, focus groups and volunteer-observation with a case study Refugee Community Organisation I am now interested in speaking with representatives of trusts, foundations and local government funders and capacity builders about their perceptions of Refugee Community Organisations, and their policies and work with them.

**The names of all individuals and organisations will be anonymised. Participants' names and contacts details are confidential.**

If possible I would like to tape record this interview, with your permission. If you would prefer, however, notes will be taken.

Interviewees may withdraw without needing to give me a reason at any stage – including after the interview has been held. My contact details are below.

If you agree to take part in this research I will ask you to sign a consent form in order to show that you understand the above and that you agree to take part in this study.

Please ask if you have any questions.

Many thanks for giving me your time.

### **Contact details:**

Alexa Kellow

**[Postal address]**

**[Email]**

**[Telephone]**

**Appendix 3 – Consent Form for RCO Staff, Staff of Funding and/or Capacity Building Organisations**

**Please read the below and if you agree, tick against each statement and write your name, signature and date this form below.**

	<b>Please tick</b>
I have read and understood the information sheet provided	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary and I can withdraw at any time, without giving reason, and without consequence	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that my name and contact details are confidential and the names of all individuals and organisations will be anonymised	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have had the opportunity to ask questions and they have been answered to my satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to take part in this research	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name..... Date.....

Signature.....

## **Appendix 4 – Interview and Focus Group Schedules**

### **Appendix 4a – Interview Schedule for Staff of Refugee Community Organisations**

These questions were used in the initial face-to-face interviews with Refugee Community Organisation leaders. Follow-up interviews, or interviews with particular staff were based on this basic template, but adjusted with prior knowledge gained during the observation period.

- 1) Can you please tell me about the history of (ORGANISATION)? (Prompt to cover when started; by whom; why)
- 2) What are the aims and objectives of (ORGANISATION)? Have these changed over time?
- 3) Please talk me through the running of your organisation – what is your management structure and how are decisions made? (Prompt to cover, legal/charitable status of the organisation; involvement of service users).
- 3) Who works within (ORGANISATION) in terms of staff and volunteers? (In terms of numbers and characteristics).
- 4) How is your organisation funded? (Prompt to cover local authorities; trusts and foundations; national government funding; whether under contract to provide any specific services; grant funding)
- 5) Do you have any contact with the official bodies beyond funding (if received), for example, with local authorities or National Asylum Support Service?
- 6) Does the organisation have any contact with larger charities working in the refugee field, for example Refugee Action and the Refugee Council?
- 7) Are you a member of, or in contact with any umbrella organisations? (Prompt: clarify definition if appropriate).
- 8) Does (ORGANISATION) have any contact with other refugee led organisations?
- 9) Does (ORGANISATION) have contact links with any organisations in Kosova?
- 10) Is (ORGANISATION) in contact with any other community organisations or faith groups?
- 11) Please tell me about the range of services that (ORGANISATION) has provided, and that are provided now.
- 12) Which services are most popular or most in demand? (Prompt to cover why they think that is the case).
- 13) What changes would you make to the organisation if you could? (Prompt to consider why).

14) (If there has been a change in service provision over time) Why do you believe that changes in service provision have occurred?

15) Tell me about your service users generally. (Prompt to cover: how many service users are regular; how services users hear about their organisation; any referral procedures in place)

16) Do you feel that (ORGANISATION) is an important part of service users' lives? (Prompt to consider if any other important organisations or networks that appear important to service users).

17) Does your organisation take part in any campaigning or awareness raising activities? For example, in anti-deportation campaigns, contact with local MP, with national politicians, with local council).

18) Is there anything you would like to tell me that we haven't discussed?

Many thanks for your time, your input is very much appreciated. If you are interested I can email you a summary of the research findings.

#### **Appendix 4b – Interview and Focus Group Discussion Points for RCO Service Users**

Interviews and focus groups with service users were informal and covered the following points depending on what was known about the person, or group of people taking part.

- Their use of the RCO in question.
- What services they use and how they have been of use.
- Which services they didn't use and why.
- What changes they would like to see – in terms of services, staff, building, location, or any other aspect.
- If they participate in any decision-making processes, or would like the chance to do so.
- Whether they volunteer for the RCO, or would like to do so in the future.
- How well the RCO in question meets their needs.
- Other social networks that they may use and value, i.e. any faith groups they attend. If friendship and family networks are in place.
- Regularity of their contact with other networks will be ascertained, as will the depth of the tie.
- Anything else they would like to add about the RCO and their use of it.



#### **Appendix 4c – Semi Structured Interview Schedule for Interviews with Fundraisers**

I am researching for a PhD in politics at Southampton University. I am interested in Refugee Community Organisations and how they help their service users. I am also interested in the current funding situation of RCOs and would value your opinion on this.

You will not be named in this research, your organisation will not be named in this research. You can withdraw at any time, even after the interview.

- 1) Can you tell me a bit about your role in [name of trust]?
- 2) Do you think that trusts and foundations have been affected by the economic downturn? Will this impact upon voluntary organisations?
- 3) From my experience with the case study organisation I know that [name of trust] has funded refugee organisations – is this a specific funding stream? (How much do they distinguish between BME and RCO streams/organisations?)
- 4) Fund work with asylum seekers and undocumented migrants too? Is hard to tell who a project is targeting? Does [name of organisation] have a policy on this?
- 5) If yes, why? If no, why?
- 6) Could you estimate the proportion of grants you make that support refugee organisations?
- 7) Does [name of organisation] prefer to fund core work or new projects? (Attitudes to salaries and to % of them for projects?)
- 8) Do you think that how [name of organisation] approaches refugee organisations has changed? And why is this?
- 9) Do you think single nationality organisations can have a long-term future?
- 10) Have you experienced any particular problems with applications or working with RAS groups?
- 11) What makes an RCO good to work with and more likely to be funded? What needs to be in place?
- 12) Are there any measures to get around language or cultural differences - i.e. if forms not perfect or visits as main factor?
- 13) Can refugee organisations access support from you apart from grants – for example help with capacity building, or with monitoring/evaluation?

14) Do you deliberately address things that government don't (e.g. funding single nationality groups when government focus is on getting people into work?)

15) Some workers from this part of the voluntary sector have told me that they think there are trends in what funders want to support. Do you think that this is the case?

16) What do you think the future holds for single-nationality refugee organisations?

17) Do you think that there are concerns amongst trusts and foundations about bogus organisations?

18) What do you think refugee community organisations can do for their service users? Are they important to their lives?

19) Is there anything you would like to add?

Many thanks for giving me your time. Your input is very much appreciated. Would you like to receive a summary of the research?

#### **Appendix 4d – Semi Structured Interview Schedule for Local Authority Funders**

I am researching for a PhD in politics at Southampton University. I am interested in Refugee Community Organisations and how they help their service users. I am also interested in the current funding situation of RCOs and would value your opinion on this.

You will not be named in this research, your organisation will not be named in this research. You can withdraw at any time, even after the interview.

- 1) Please tell me a little bit about your role within the local authority. (Prompt to cover position, time in post, duties of post)
- 2) Please tell me about your department's work with any Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic groups that you are in contact with. (Prompt to discuss nature of work; frequency of contact; how contacted)
- 3) Please tell me about your department's work with Refugee Community Organisations. (Prompt to discuss nature of work; frequency of contact; how contacted).
- 4) How do you perceive current situation of Refugee Community Organisations? (Prompt to cover legislative change; political and popular climate).
- 5) How do you perceive the current financial situation of Refugee Community Organisations?
- 6) Does the local authority fund any Refugee Community groups or project? Either by grant, or contracting arrangements?
- 7) I am interested to hear whether you think the potential for community groups to be involved in formal contracting arrangements with local authorities has affected the way you engage with them?
- 8) I am interested to hear whether you think the involvement of RCOs in formal contracting arrangements has affected their work in anyway?
- 9) Are any RCO staff or representatives involved in consultation, policy planning and implementation with your local authority? (Prompt to discuss on what basis involvement is negotiated).
- 10) Does the local authority work with RCOs in terms of capacity building and support? Or support any agencies that do?
- 11) Do you perceive Refugee Community Organisations as important to the lives of asylum seekers and refugees? (Prompt to discuss why).
- 12) I am interested to hear about whether you perceive the functions and workload of RCOs to have changed over time and why you think that may be.

13) Is there anything you wish to add?

Many thanks for your time, your input is very much appreciated. If you are interested I can email you a summary of the research findings.

#### **Appendix 4e – Semi Structured Interview Schedule for Interviews with Capacity Builders**

I am researching for a PhD in politics at Southampton University. I am interested in Refugee Community Organisations and how they help their service users. I am also interested in the current funding situation of RCOs and would value your opinion on this.

You will not be named in this research. You can withdraw at any time, even after the interview.

- 1) Could you tell me a bit about your background in the voluntary sector, and about work with RCOs in particular?
- 2) What is your perception of the current funding situation for refugee led organisations?
- 3) How does this compare to the past situation?
- 4) Do you think there are particular fundraising challenges/opportunities for RAS groups?
- 5) Do you think single nationality RCOs are less able to raise funds than comparable organisations that work with all refugees regardless of origin? Why might that be?
- 6) Do you think single nationality RCOs are less able to raise funds than comparable organisations that work with British service users? Why might that be?
- 7) What sort of problems have you experienced in working with RAS groups? Is there a difference in terms of country of origin or cultural background?
- 8) Do you think refugees can be 'flavour of the month' amongst trusts or statutory bodies – because they are a recent arrived group or politically appealing?
- 9) There appears to be a high failure rate for RCOs – why do you think this is?
- 10) In your opinion, what RCO characteristics appeal to a funder? What is off-putting?
- 11) Do you think there is an awkward stage for RCOs – where they are too large for some trusts, but do not have the capacity for contracts?
- 12) Where, in your experience, do RCOs tend to get the majority of their funding from? Or does it depend on the group?
- 13) Do you think that local government contracting (service level agreements) represent an opportunity for RCOs?
- 14) Do you know of any groups with such arrangements? And how they went?
- 15) What do you think trusts and foundations could improve on?

- 16) Which trusts and foundations appear the most useful and supportive to RCOs?
- 17) How much do you think funders are concerned about disreputable organisations – charities that don't do what they say they are, or who do nothing?
- 18) Do you think that RCOs can successfully generate other forms of income in order to not be dependent on grants?
- 19) What do you think the future holds for this part of the voluntary sector?
- 20) Do you think single-nationality RCOs can expect to survive long term?
- 21) Do you think the requirements of fundraising and monitoring (such as forms and interviews) are unnecessarily time consuming? And are they particularly challenging to RCOs? If so, why is this?
- 22) What do you think the impact of running an RCO has on staff members? Is this different from other community voluntary groups?
- 23) Finally, is there anything you would like to add that I have not covered?

Many thanks for your time, your input is very much appreciated. If you are interested I can email you a summary of the research findings.

## **Appendix 5 – Sources of Support if Needed/Requested by RCO Service Users of Staff**

### **Where You Can Get Extra Help and Support**

#### **The Refugee Therapy Centre**

This charity provides free mental health support, for example with anxiety or depression. Men, women and people of all ages can contact them for help.

You can phone them: 020 7272 2565

Or write to: The Refugee Therapy Centre, Della Clyne House, 40 St John's Way, London, N19 3RR

Their website: <http://www.refugeetherapy.org.uk/index.htm>

#### **The Women's Therapy Centre**

This charity provides free mental health services for women, for example, women with depression or anxiety.

You can phone them: 020 7263 6200

Or visit their website: <http://www.womenstherapycentre.co.uk/>

#### **The Refugee Council**

This charity provides free advice. You can ask them for help with many problems including:

- health problems and illness
- money and finance
- training and education
- how to claim for asylum
- domestic violence
- the law and legal assistance

You can go and see them at their One Stop Service. Just turn up, no appointment needed. Their address: 240-250 Ferndale Road, London, SW9 8BB

Opening hours:

- Monday 9am-5.30pm
- Tuesday 9am-5.30pm
- Wednesday 2-5.30pm
- Thursday 9am-5.30pm
- Friday 9am-5.30pm
- Saturday CLOSED
- Sunday CLOSED

OR you can phone them for advice: 020 7346 6777. Call between 10am-1pm on Monday to Friday.

They have information online (in English and Albanian). Go to

<http://languages.refugeecouncil.org.uk/albanian/index.htm>

Their home page is <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/>

### **Refugee Action**

This charity offer free advice and information. You can ask them for help about many problems, including:

- finding somewhere to live
- money and finance
- getting a job
- returning home/voluntary returns.

You can phone them: 020 7654 7700

You can go and see them, but phone first for an appointment. Their address: Refugee Action, The 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, The Old Fire Station, 150 Waterloo Road, London, SE1 8SB

You can also see their website for information: <http://www.refugee-action.org.uk/ourwork/adviceforclients.aspx>

Their home page: <http://www.refugee-action.org.uk/>

### **Refugee Legal Centre**

This charity offer free legal advice, for example about claiming asylum, or appealing if the government have turned you down.

You can go and visit them at: Nelson House, 153-157 Commercial Road, London, E1 2DA.

Opening hours:

- Monday 9.30am-4pm
- Tuesday - CLOSED
- Wednesday 9.30am-4pm
- Thursday - CLOSED
- Friday 9.30am 4pm
- Saturday – CLOSED
- Sunday – CLOSED

Their telephone number is 020 7780 3200 – note that they don't give advice on the phone.

They have legal information online (in English only). Go to [http://www.refugee-legal-centre.org.uk/C2B/document\\_tree/ViewACategory.asp?CategoryID=148](http://www.refugee-legal-centre.org.uk/C2B/document_tree/ViewACategory.asp?CategoryID=148)

Their home page is <http://www.refugee-legal-centre.org.uk/>

### **Medical Foundation for Care of the Victims of Torture**

This charity cares for victims of torture and other forms of organised violence.

You can phone them: 020 7697 7777

Or see more information online: [http://www.torturecare.org.uk/about\\_us/34](http://www.torturecare.org.uk/about_us/34)

Their home page: <http://www.torturecare.org.uk/>

### **British Red Cross Society**

This international charity provides a free service to trace relatives that have been separated from their family by war or disaster. You can phone them: 0845 053 2004

Or see further information online: <http://www.redcross.org.uk/standard.asp?id=3514>

Their home page is: <http://www.redcross.org.uk/>



## **Appendix 6 – Survey of Refugee Community Organisations**

**N.B. This was also sent via Survey Monkey with the same questions and ordering.**

Please complete the following questions about your organisation. Your involvement in this research is anonymous. Your name and the name of your organisation will not be mentioned in the resulting research. If you do not want to answer a question, or do not know the answer, please leave it blank. In order to take part in the funding seminar mentioned in the letter please tick the box on the last page.

### **About Your Services and Service Users**

1. How many people use your services per year (if known) \_\_\_\_\_
2. **Most** of your members are (*Please tick **only one** box*)
- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Refugees (or with leave to remain) | <input type="checkbox"/>                                 |
| Asylum seekers                     | <input type="checkbox"/>                                 |
| Migrants                           | <input type="checkbox"/>                                 |
| Other                              | <input type="checkbox"/> ( <i>please specify</i> ) _____ |
3. Please estimate what percentage of your service users are:    Male \_\_\_\_\_%                  Female \_\_\_\_\_%
4. What services do you provide to service users? (*Please tick **all** that apply*)
- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| We provide advice and information   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| We provide training – e.g. mother tongue classes, English, or other courses               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| We give service users the chance to meet and socialise with each other regularly          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| We hold events – such as celebration days & cultural events                               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| We directly provide food and/or other essentials like clothing                            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| We provide activities – such as dancing, sports, cooking, etc.                            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| We refer service users to other agencies that can also help them                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| We provide opportunities for service users to meet refugees/migrants from other countries | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| We provide opportunities for service users to meet people from the UK                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| We help service users to maintain contact with their country of origin                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. Do you agree with the following statements about your service users? (*Please tick for each statement*)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Service users meet each other and become friends via our organisation.					
If our organisation did not exist, most of our service users would probably not know each other.					
Our organisation is the first place our service users come to if they need help or advice.					
Our organisation is a big part of our service users' day-to-day lives.					

6. Do you agree with the following statements about your organisation? *(Please tick for each statement)*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Our organisation helps service users to gain new skills.					
Our organisation enables service users to gain work experience within our own organisation.					
Our organisation helps service users to gain work experience within other organisations.					
Our staff and/or volunteers use their contacts in other organisations to help service users to gain employment.					

### About Fundraising

7. Please estimate how many hours per week the whole organisation spends on fundraising: \_\_\_\_\_ hours

8. Do you think this amount of time is: *(Please tick **one**)*

Far too much	<input type="checkbox"/>
Too much	<input type="checkbox"/>
About right	<input type="checkbox"/>
Too little	<input type="checkbox"/>
Far too little	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Who completes your funding applications? *(Please tick **all that apply**)*

The Manager/Project Director/Head of the Organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Another member of staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
A paid external fundraiser	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer or trustee	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. In the last three years have you received grant funding from any of the following? *(Please tick **all that apply**)*.

	Yes	No
Trusts and/or Foundations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Lottery (any streams, including 'Awards for All' & 'Big Lottery')	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local government – e.g. Borough Funding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Central government funding – e.g. Home Office	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local initiative funding e.g. Sure Start, Connecting Communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Membership fees/donations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other <i>(please specify below)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. Do you currently have any contracts to provide services? *(For example to the local government)*.  
*(Please tick)* Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, who is it with and is the arrangement satisfactory?

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12. Do you have links to other organisations working with people from the same refugee and migrant communities? *(Please tick)* Yes ☐ No ☐

13. Do you feel that competition for funding affects the relationship your organisation has with other similar organisations? *(Please tick)* Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐

Please explain your answer:

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14. Do you feel confident that you can continue to raise funds for your organisation over the next three years? *(Please tick)* Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐

15. Has your organisation changed its activities in order to attract more funding?  
*(Please tick)* Yes ☐ No ☐ No, but have considered it ☐

Please explain your answer:

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16. Do you agree with the following statements about fundraising? *(Please tick for each statement)*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
It is difficult for our organisation to raise funds for our work.					
It is easier for organisations representing newly arrived refugee & migrant communities to raise funds compared with those that have been present for a longer time.					
The current recession has made it harder for our organisation to raise funds.					
It is easier to fund 'new projects' compared to ongoing 'core' work.					

17. Considering the following aspects of fundraising, please tick one box to show how complicated or simple you find them to be.

	Too complicated	Complicated	About right	Simple	Too simple
Fundraising forms are:					
Monitoring processes associated with fundraising are:					
Evaluation processes associated with fundraising are:					

18. If you could ask funders to change their application procedures, or monitoring and evaluation procedures, what would you ask for?

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### About Your Networks

19.a) Do you work with other charities, businesses, or groups to provide your services? *(Please tick)*

Yes ☐ No ☐ *(If no please go to question 20)*

19.b) Please estimate how many organisations (**not including funders**) you work in partnership with to provide your services: 1-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-20 ☐ 21-30 ☐ 31-50 ☐  
More than 50 ☐

20. Has anyone involved in running your organisation ever taken part in training about running a voluntary community group? *(Please tick)* Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐

If yes, which organisation(s) provided this training: \_\_\_\_\_

21. Does your organisation take part in any campaigning activities? *(For example: petitions to government; anti-deportation campaigns)* *(Please tick)* Yes ☐ No ☐  
*If yes, please explain your answer – what kind of campaigning are you involved with?*

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22. Are you in contact with or work with any of the following organisations? *(Please tick **all** that apply)*

Refugee Council	<input type="checkbox"/>
National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your local MP or MEP	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your local Borough Council	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Office of the Mayor of London ☐
- National Asylum Support Service ☐
- Your local Primary Care Trust or other Health Provider ☐
- Any faith-based organisations (e.g. places of worship) ☐
- Any trade union organisations ☐
- Any local schools ☐
- Refugee forums in your borough ☐
- Community forums in your borough ☐
- Local drug and alcohol services ☐
- Local voluntary services (e.g. Community Service Volunteers) ☐
- Other community groups for refugees/asylum seekers/migrants ☐
- Other community organisations for the whole population ☐
- Any organisations in the home country or countries of service users ☐
- Any other organisations you are in contact with that you would like to mention: ☐

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### About your organisation

23. In what year did your organisation start providing services? \_\_\_\_\_

24. In what year was your organisation registered as a charity? \_\_\_\_\_

25. How many of the following do you have:

Full time staff \_\_\_\_\_ Part time staff \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteers \_\_\_\_\_ Sessional staff \_\_\_\_\_

26. Is your organisation run mainly by refugees/asylum seekers and/or migrants from the community that you work with? (Please tick) Yes ☐ No ☐

27. Is there anything you would like to add?

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Please return this survey in the stamped addressed envelope provided to the address below. Many thanks for taking part – your contribution to this research is very much appreciated.

Alexa Kellow [Address]

Please tick here if you would like to be given details about the dissemination/fundraising workshop arising from this work (for further details see the cover letter that came with this questionnaire) ☐

Please tick here if you would like to receive a summary of the research findings resulting from this work ☐

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[A6380A311159&mode=link&guid=58737ff796474a1b87657fc5370787e4](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk:81/OneStopCMS/Core/CrawlerResourceServer.aspx?resource=71DF4FF4-9ADE-4A71-91F7-A6380A311159&mode=link&guid=58737ff796474a1b87657fc5370787e4) Accessed 26

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## **Online Directories Used**

The Charity Commission: <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/>

Guidestar: <http://www.guidestar.org.uk/Default.aspx>

## **Primary Data – Case Study**

Focus Group 2 with Female Service Users and Non-Service Users – 26<sup>th</sup> February 2009

Focus Group 3 with Women's Support Group attached to a primary school – 6<sup>th</sup> March 2009

Focus Group 4 with Mixed Gender Service Users – 4<sup>th</sup> April 2009

Focus Group 5 with Children and Young Adults aged 7 – 21 Years – 4<sup>th</sup> April 2009

Focus Group 6 with Women Volunteers – 4<sup>th</sup> April 2009

Focus Group 7 with Mixed Gender Volunteers and Ex-Volunteers – 4<sup>th</sup> April 2009

Focus Group 8 with Mixed Gender Young People Aged 17-21 – 4<sup>th</sup> April 2009

Interview with Education Worker No. 1 – 30<sup>th</sup> December 2008

Interview with Project Manager (First) – 18<sup>th</sup> December 2008

Interview with Project Manager (Second) – 28<sup>th</sup> August 2009

Interview with Service User 5 (also a volunteer) – 30<sup>th</sup> January 2009

Interview with Service User 32 (also a volunteer) – 30<sup>th</sup> January 2009

Interview with Service User 51 (also a volunteer) – 30<sup>th</sup> January 2009

Interview with Service User 52 – 30<sup>th</sup> January 2009

Interview with Vend Takim Leader – 28<sup>th</sup> February 2009

Interview with Women's Worker – 25<sup>th</sup> November 2008

Observation Journal – 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2008 – 10<sup>th</sup> July 2009

### **Primary Data – Professionals**

Interview with Capacity-builder 1, in person – 13<sup>th</sup> October 2008

Interview with Capacity-builder 2, in person – 27<sup>th</sup> October 2008

Interview with Capacity-builder 3, in person – 7<sup>th</sup> September 2009

Interview with Capacity-builder 4, via telephone – 8<sup>th</sup> September 2009

Interview with Funder 1, via telephone – 18<sup>th</sup> September 2009

Interview with Funder 2, in person – 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2009

Interview with Funder 3, in person – 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2009

Interview with Funder 4, in person – 25<sup>th</sup> October 2009

Interview with Funder 5, via telephone – 6<sup>th</sup> October 2009

Interview with Funder 6, via telephone – 16<sup>th</sup> October 2009

Interview with Funder 7, via telephone – 26<sup>th</sup> October 2009

Interview with Funder 8, in person (2 interviewees) – 19<sup>th</sup> October 2009

Interview with Funder 9, via telephone – November 2009

Interview with Funder 10, in person – 26<sup>th</sup> November 2009

Interview with Funder 11, in person (2 interviewees) – 10<sup>th</sup> December 2009

### **Other Reports and Data**

Domestic Violence Project Advisory Group (DVPAG) (2009) Minutes from Meeting 4<sup>th</sup> July 2009 (Unpublished)

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