



East of England Black & Minority Ethnic Network



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Partnership Development Project

Final Report 2006-2009



Multi Agency Partnership Work Around Refugee and Migrant Worker Issues

Published by MENTER February 2009

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- East of England Regional Assembly Strategic Migration Partnership (EERA-SMP)
- East of England Development Agency (EEDA)
- Voluntary Sector Refugee Network-East of England (VSRN-EE)
- Refugee Council
- MENTER (Minority Ethnic Network for the Eastern Region)

Message from MENTER's Chief Officer Ila Chandavarkar

At MENTER we have always felt that the variety of Black and Minority Ethnic Communities need a variety of mechanisms to deliver for all the range of specialist interests. This is a region that has seen a growing inward migration – one of the highest in the country. It is also a region that has seen many asylum seekers and refugees. Both these groups have specific needs and we have been delighted that funding from Connecting Communities Plus has allowed us to develop the Partnership Development Project (PDP) to help meet these needs.

There are many issues that are particular to the East of England. The region is an ageing one with a need for migration to join the workforce. Significantly, inward migration has increased diversity in a region that was largely mono-cultural, e.g. many people in rural areas are encountering people from a range of different cultures for the first time. In areas where poverty levels are high this has also acted to increase fears and hostility. New migrants and refugees not only have to cope with adapting to life in a different country but also to surviving race discrimination and violence. For refugees, it is even harder given the trauma and violence they have experienced in their home country and the fact that they are fleeing a situation rather than choosing to emigrate. There were, therefore, significant issues both for the new arrivals as well as for service providers who had to manage great changes in demand. For example, if the budget for providing support to students whose first language is not English has remained largely static, how can schools support a huge influx of these students as well as maintain standards for their existing students?

We recognise that one organisation alone cannot achieve significant change and the PDP has, at its heart, the development of partnerships between service providers and beneficiary communities through multi agency fora (MAFs). These MAFs have shared learning and good practice and developed effective, targeted and coordinated services. The PDP has developed its own unique way of fostering partnership working relationships between organisations around migrant and refugee issues which is today a model both in the region and outside. This project report details the significant achievements of the PDP partnerships.

The project has helped MENTER increase its understanding of migrant worker and refugee groups issues in the region. With the understanding we gain we are better placed to run programmes to raise awareness and help maximise community cohesion. We have always been able to work with both host and BME communities.



Often new arrivals are placed in the poorest areas of a town, where people feel there will be greater demand on already inadequate services. The PDP has been able to help address these fears as well as work with service providers both to communicate what services are available as well as enable better provision.

The PDP has also helped develop a range of tools on community engagement and empowerment that will help guide MENTER in other work. It has been invaluable in improving our formal understanding of partnership development work. While the project lists the key partnerships it has worked with, learning from the project will be communicated via a range of other MENTER partnerships with statutory and voluntary community sector (VCS) partners. For example, when we undertake work in improving access to skills, employment and enterprise services for BME communities (a project funded by the East of England Development Agency, EEDA) we can talk to service providers about migrant and refugee communities' views on services as well as BME community views. MENTER is an active partner of the Regional Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Consortium (RVIC) – a partnership of 19 regional networks and we can connect each regional network with communities so that the Children and Young People's network, for example, can help ensure their organisations reach out to diverse communities. Similarly we can increase the connections between local, regional and national tiers. An example of this is our involvement with the national BME partnership, Voice4Change England (V4CE). V4CE recently consulted its membership about involvement in the COMPACT, proposed changes to the COMPACT and on the BME Code. A highly successful consultation event was held in Cambridge in June 2008 and the PDP project was able to ensure the participation of many people from refugee and migrant communities.

The project has been successful because of the people behind it. I have been particularly impressed with the dedication, creativity and commitment from all the staff on the project. Anna Allen, the first Regional Partnership Development Officer helped transform a proposal to reality, giving the project a strong foundation and reach. This was continued and developed by Finbarr Carter and Pa Musa Jobarteh, who each brought individual strengths to add new dimensions. Béatrice Humarau, the Project Support Officer has built an excellent employment project. It is not easy delivering support services across a region as big as the East of England, to address the needs of a particularly disadvantaged group. Impressively, our staff have managed the challenges of development work with the rigours of almost continuous travel. My thanks are also due to the manager of the project, Liesbeth ten Ham for her overview and strategic management as well as to the administrative team at MENTER for their ability in juggling various demands to meet the needs of the project.

I would also like to thank all our partners in the project, particularly the steering group members like Ian Beattie, Senior Policy Office EERA-SMP and Mark Allison, EEDA Migrant Worker project manager, for the time and help they have given to the project. MENTER has been privileged to work with such a range of experience and interest. Lastly, I would like to register my appreciation of MENTER trustees who have been involved with the project from the beginning and contributed greatly through all the project reports at Board Meetings. Although this is the end of a particular phase of the project, we have gained so much from it that we hope to be able to continue aspects of the project and further develop provision for refugee and migrant communities in the East of England.



About MENTER

MENTER is a regional network

MENTER is a regional network for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) voluntary organisations and communities and has about 420 organisations on its mailing list. It is run by a voluntary management board of twenty trustees from member groups plus advisors from Race Equality Councils, GO-East, COVER (the generic voluntary sector regional network) and Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum. MENTER receives funding from, among others, the Office of the Third Sector, EEDA (East of England Development Agency) and the Big Lottery Fund. MENTER as a regional organisation aims to develop the BME sector, with a focus on infrastructure support, and access to services such as health, education, employment, training, arts, culture, and sport. MENTER promotes race equality and advocates for the sector with a view to building a strong and representative regional BME network.

MENTER has an organisational remit to ensure that the voice of the beneficiary communities is heard by service providers both in developing policy and services and in assessing satisfaction with services. To do this, MENTER offers capacity building support and signposting to BME community groups.

MENTER has also supported projects to promote community cohesion. For example, in 2008 a MENTER sports project officer worked in the region to ensure sports provision is accessible to migrant workers. In 2006 a MENTER cohesion project in Peterborough led to engagement with children and young people from the host communities to help dispel some of the myths around migrant workers and asylum seekers.

In recognition of MENTER's aim to develop the BME sector through a representative regional network, MENTER was asked to manage the Partnership Development Project by the steering group in 2004 after a successful application by EERA to the Home Office Connecting Communities programme.



The Partnership Development Project (PDP)

The Partnership Development Project (PDP) is a project managed by MENTER (Minority Ethnic Network for the East of England) which works to promote community integration and cohesion in the East of England. The project was initially funded in 2004 through the Home Office Connecting Communities programme to assist with the government's wider integration programme for refugees in the East of England. Since then, the project has been involved in developing and supporting multi-agency fora (MAF) to foster partnership work around community integration and cohesion particularly for new communities in the region.

In April 2006, and in recognition of the success of its first phase, the project was funded for three more years by the Communities and Local Government (CLG) Connecting Communities Plus programme to extend the success of its refugee multi agency partnership work to also benefit migrant worker communities.

The project has since been instrumental in building strong and sustainable partnership working relationships between the statutory, voluntary and community sectors around refugee and migrant community integration in the region. Our project objectives complement the regional and national objectives of promoting community cohesion and equality issues in the region.

Over the past 5 years, the project has provided practical support to the MAFs across the region. This has included disseminating information, providing resources, training and partnership building workshops, as well as practical advice and help on various matters, such as developing strategic plans, monitoring and evaluation of forum activities, and other forum development needs.

We realised that many issues faced by asylum seekers and refugees arriving in our region - such as lack of local knowledge, lack of awareness of rights, limited understanding of how local systems and structures work, need to access information and various services instantly, language issues, trauma, isolation and lack of social networks and community support - might be similar to the experiences of any newcomer including economic migrants and other BME residents. From our experience, addressing these multiple and concurrent issues requires a multi-agency approach. We believe that the knowledge developed by the MAF partnerships and the resources accumulated by the project and its regional network members will provide a valuable foundation for other organisations that work with diverse communities. In addition, the project looked into what good practice and expertise, as developed by the project and its partners, would be of benefit to Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Project Aim

The project's aim is to assist with the integration of refugees and migrant workers in the East of England by improving local community cohesion through partnerships working between statutory, voluntary and community organisations.

The Project Objectives

The project works in partnership with other organisations to:

- i. assist in setting up and supporting effective and sustainable MAF's around refugee and migrant worker issues
- ii. develop working relationships between local and regional networks on migration issues
- iii. increase the effectiveness of individual member organisations of the MAF network
- iv. raise awareness about the network amongst mainstream service providers and policy makers
- v. facilitate access to and promote the effective exchange of good practice and information exchange through our website and other means
- vi. develop processes for MAFs to identify, prioritise and implement actions to address racial harassment and cohesion issues
- vii. support refugee and migrant community participation in MAFs
- viii. develop and implement a model for migrant fora as and where appropriate
- ix. participate in the development of local integration strategies
- x. support the employment needs of immigrants seeking work in the health and social sector through the Pathways to Employment Project

The Project Steering Group

The PDP project is managed by a steering group comprising of EERA-SMP MENTER, the Refugee Council, EEDA, VSRN-EE and GO-East.

Geographical area of work

The East of England covers the counties of Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk and the unitary authorities of Luton, Peterborough, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock. The eastern region is predominantly rural with a number of significant urban areas. The project's work is focused in areas where there is evidence of a concentration of migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers.

Multi-Agency Fora (MAFs)

Back in 2004 when the Home Office dispersed asylum seekers to some parts of the region, there were few forums dedicated to discussing the integration needs of new immigrants in the East of England. As a result, the project steering group agreed that the best way to promote the integration needs of refugees in the region was to set up and develop multi-agency fora throughout the region.

A MAF partnership could simply be described as a round-table that brings together a variety of stakeholder organisations from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors to discuss refugee and migrant worker issues. As MAFs mainly focus on local issues, they essentially feature local representation. They may have no formal status, a relatively simple structure and little or no funding. MAF membership ranges from local council staff, refugee support groups, community groups, the UK Border Agency (UKBA), legal service providers, Citizen's Advice Bureaux (CAB), and other voluntary and statutory organisation members.

The project organised custom-made training seminars and workshops for several MAF areas, like Peterborough, Norwich, Cambridge, Luton, Bedford, King's Lynn, Wisbech and Ipswich, to help local organisations identify the benefits of working together. At the end of the training, the members had the opportunity to agree on identified actions and the way forward.

Since 2004 MAFs have developed effective structures and systems for achieving their aims, and all the MAFs now have terms of reference (ToR) in place while most have implemented action plans to drive the forum's activities.

As such the project has played a crucial role in the establishment of several of the MAFs in the region, and since their initiation it has continued its support. There are currently eleven active MAFs across the region.



Case Study: Community Participation within the MAFs

The Asylum Voice, Norwich model is a second tier community meeting group initiated by the Norwich MAF to specifically focus on helping identify the basic integration needs of asylum seekers and refugees. It started off as a pilot project meeting once a month to bring together the client groups with an opportunity for them to express their views and concerns which are then fed back to the main forum for action. The group meets monthly. The meetings encourage, through informal translation, both English and non-English speakers to take part. The Asylum Voice meetings have been an effective mechanism to keep the client group informed of what the MAF was doing and facilitated the reporting back of issues affecting the community to the main forum for action.



Essentials of Partnership Working

We have recognised through experience that working in partnership not only fosters more joined up thinking, but can provide more holistic and effective ways of bringing about change and improvement. The success of a MAF often depends on the strengths of its communication and it is therefore essential that a multi-agency network has suitable structures and systems in place, including communication via e-mail and internet. For this reason, our website provides members with a database of resources, with contacts of the MAF chairs, MAF meeting dates, funding and event news. We also produce a Weekly Newsflash in collaboration with EERA and EEDA which is circulated to network members. One of our biggest achievements is our role in helping to establish a regional network structure with reporting links to other national bodies.

We have also realised that the sustainability of a MAF depends a lot on it having a secured meeting venue, good administrative support, and a dedicated Chair. There is also evidence to support the view that the most successful MAFs are the ones that have a strong buy-in from the local authority and an established partnership working relationship with Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) and the Local Area Agreement (LAA) coordinators.



List of the Multi-agency Fora in the East of England:

1. **Bedfordshire-Multi-Agency Forum for Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Migrant Workers.**
Contact person: Sarah Hughes (Interim-Chair)
 01234276918
email: sarah.hughes@bedscc.gov.uk
 and Lindsay Mitton (rep). Tel: 01234276918.
Email: Lindsay.Mitton@bedscc.gov.uk
 Meets quarterly at Queens Court, Queen Street, Bedford, MK40 2JT
2. **Cambridgeshire-Migrant Workers & Asylum Seekers and Refugees Network.**
Contact person: Stephen Vartoukian
 Tel: 01223717031.
Email: Stephen.vartoukian@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
 Meets at Cambridgeshire County Council, Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge, CB3 0AP
3. **Fenland Diverse Communities Forum.**
Contact person: David Bailey
 Tel: 01354 622566.
Email: dbailey@fenland.gov.uk
 Meets at Fenland Council Chamber, Fenland Hall, County Road, March, PE15 8NQ
4. **GYROS-Great Yarmouth Multi-Agency Forum.**
Contact person: Des McKeating
 Tel: 01493745260.
Email: desmckeating@gyros.org.uk
 Meets at Friends Meeting House, Howard Street, Great Yarmouth, NR30 1LN
5. **Hertfordshire Migrant Worker Multi-Agency Forum.**
Contact person: Valdis Belinis
 Tel: 01992531605.
Email: Valdis.belinis@eastherts.gov.uk
 Hatfield Fire Station, Wellfield Road, Hatfield, AL10 0DA
6. **Luton Multi-Agency Asylum Forum.**
Contact person: Paul Wiltshire
 Tel: 01582 547188.
Email: Paul.Wiltshire@luton.gov.uk
 Luton Borough Council, George Street, Luton, LU1 2BQ
7. **Norwich Asylum-Seeker and Refugee Forum.**
Contact person: Sue Gee
 Tel: 01603729279
Email: Sue.Gee@norfolk.gov.uk
 Meets at City Hall, St. Peter's Street, Norwich, NR2 1NH
8. **Peterborough Multi-Agency Forum for Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Migrant Workers.**
Contact person: Andy Hewett
Email: ahewett@redcross.org.uk
 Tel: 01733557472.
 Meets at The New Link Centre, 439 Lincoln Road, PE1 2PE,
9. **Suffolk Forum for Refugees, Asylum-Seekers and New and Emerging Communities.**
 Chair: Julia Stephens-Row;
Contact person: Allison Coleman
 Tel: 01473 265160.
Email: Allison.coleman@csu.suffolkcc.gov.uk
 Meets at Suffolk County Council, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX
10. **West Norfolk Diverse Community Forum**
Contact person: Daisy Line
 Tel: 01553 760568.
Email: daisy@westnorfolkvca.org
 Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn
11. **Essex Migrant Worker Multi-agency Forum-**
Contact: Sandra Cullham (Interim-Chair)
Email: sandra.cullham@colchester.gov.uk
 Meets at Colchester Borough Council, Rowan House, Colchester, Co3 3WG
 - **Norfolk Migrant Worker Partnership**-this forum no longer meets, instead it has created reporting links with the other Norfolk based MAFs to feed in issues to the Norfolk County Council Cohesion Strategic group.
Contact person: Jo Richardson
 Tel: 01603 223 816.
Email: Jo.richardson@norfolk.gov.uk



The Regional Multi-Agency Chairs' Forum (MACF)

The impact of the MAFs was increased by the establishment of the regional Multi-agency Chairs' Forum (MACF). The purpose of the MACF is to bring together local MAF chairs and relevant regional stakeholders to inform and influence the region's migration policy and strategy development, to share practice and information and to ensure that local issues are brought to the attention of the relevant regional and national government bodies.

The PDP co-ordinates the MACF meetings. The current chair is the Senior Policy Officer of EERA's Strategic Migration Partnership, Ian Beattie. The regional meetings are theme focused to be relevant to the issues discussed at the national level. The 2009 meetings will be hosted by EEDA at its offices in Thetford. The aims of the regional Multi-Agency Chairs Forum are:

- To share information to improve local practice
- To develop and support solutions to problems
- To feedback and influence regional and local policies

Key partners involved in the MACF include:

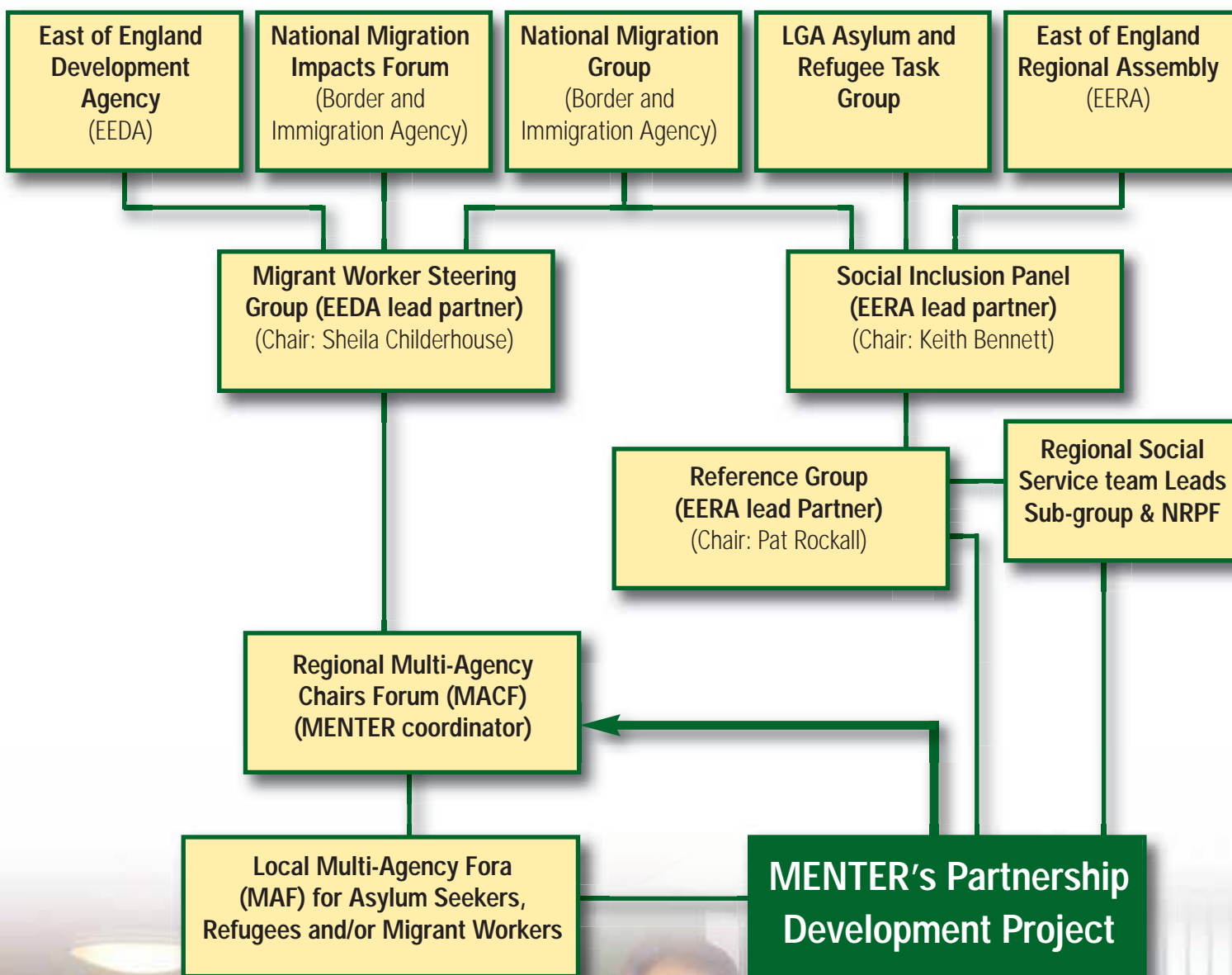
- Chairs and designated representatives of Multi-Agency Fora
- The UK Border Agency (UKBA)
- GO-East
- East of England Regional Assembly Strategic Migration Partnership (EERA-SMP)
- East of England Development Agency (EEDA)
- Voluntary Sector Refugee Network-East of England (VSRN-EE)
- Refugee Council
- MENTER (Minority Ethnic Network for the Eastern Region)



The Regional Structure with Reporting Links to National Fora

By developing a regional structure with national links, the region now has clear reporting and communication systems between local fora and other regional and national bodies. This means that the MAFs have considerably improved their capacity to address issues at a

local level. The MAFs continue to participate in mapping exercises and to collaborate on matters of regional interest such as increasing ESOL provision, improving access to legal provision, reducing destitution, and increasing racism awareness among its network members.



A description of the key organs of the structure

The Asylum and Refugee Reference Group of EERA-Strategic Migration Partnership is a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary body that draws together a wide range of stakeholders to take a strategic lead in addressing issues facing asylum seekers, unsuccessful asylum seekers and refugees in the region.

The Migrant Worker Steering Group of EEDA leads on migrant worker issues within the partnership, and provides strategic leadership for interagency co-operation in addressing issues facing migrant workers, existing communities and businesses in the region as a whole.

The Social Inclusion Panel is an EERA led group which consists of both stakeholder members and councillors, appointed by the Regional Assembly. This Panel fulfils the Assembly's role and interests by providing strategic leadership to tackle social exclusion in the East of England and feeds directly into the EERA Executive Committee.

The National Migration Group, the **Local Government Association (LGA) Asylum and Refugee Task Group** and the **National Migration Impacts Forum** all provide a national platform to engage with central Government on policy and operational issues relating to asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers. The EERA Strategic Migration Partnership is currently represented at each of these meetings.

The National Migration Impacts Forum is jointly chaired by the Immigration Minister and the Minister for Local Government and Community Cohesion. Its aim is to bring together interested parties from outside government to consider the wider impacts of migration so that information and stakeholder concerns can inform government thinking, both on migration and on community cohesion.



Case Studies

Case study: Legal services provision in the region

Following repeated queries from MAF chairs' about the lack of sufficient legal service provision in the region, the regional MACF tasked a sub group comprising the Red Cross, Refugee Council, MENTER and EERA to look into the matter. The sub-group collected data from six MAF areas - Norwich, Peterborough, Ipswich, Great Yarmouth, Luton, and Bedford. They found that the main issue in all areas was the lack of quality legal advice provision under Legal Aid. Many clients found it difficult to access a solicitor locally. Some clients indicated that they could not access local legal advice mainly due to limited opening hours or the lack of legal service providers in some areas. With this evidence base, we were able to make a case to the Legal Service Commission to improve the legal service provision in the region. As a result two new offices of the Refugee Legal Centre opened in 2007 in Bedford and Ipswich.



Case Study: Cuts in ESOL funding

In June 2007 we coordinated a regional ESOL stakeholder meeting to review the effects of the government's announced cuts in ESOL funding. The meeting involved key stakeholders such as the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), National Institute for Adult Continued Education (NIACE), East of England Skills and Competitive Partnership (EESCP), EERA, EEDA and other local education leads. The group agreed that there should be a regional response to the problem to be taken forward by the regional MAF chairs. In July 2007 we invited the LSC and NIACE to brief the regional MACF on the issue. As a result, EEDA and LSC teamed up to provide match funding and successfully bid for an European Social Funding which provided additional ESOL and English Language training in the region. EEDA's Migrant Worker Steering Group also produced a regional ESOL strategy.



Summary of our achievements: Outcomes and Outcome indicators

- We set up and supported 11 local multi-agency partnership fora (MAF) to identify, prioritise and implement actions to address BME issues, in particular refugee and migrant worker issues
- We set up a regional MAF forum to establish a sustainable regional link between the MAFs and regional and national strategic bodies
- We facilitated access to and the effective dissemination of successful practice through our website and other means
- We continue to assist setting up new multi-agency fora as and where needed e.g. Essex Migrant Worker Forum was set up in November 2008
- We support refugee and migrant community participation in multi-agency fora so that their voices and issues are heard
- We participate in the development of local and regional (integration) strategies to influence regional policies affecting BME issues eg local action plans and regional ESOL strategy
- We work in partnership with regional stakeholders like the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) and the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) e.g. joint E-bulletin
- As a result of our work we have gained the recognition as the lead partner agency on BME issues in the region. Our expertise in forming multi-agency partnership fora around refugee and migrant worker issues was the reason why EEDA recommended us to Essex to help set up a forum.
- We also sit on the Regional Migrant Worker Steering Group, the Regional Social Services and the regional No Recourse to Public Funding (NRPF) Steering Group.

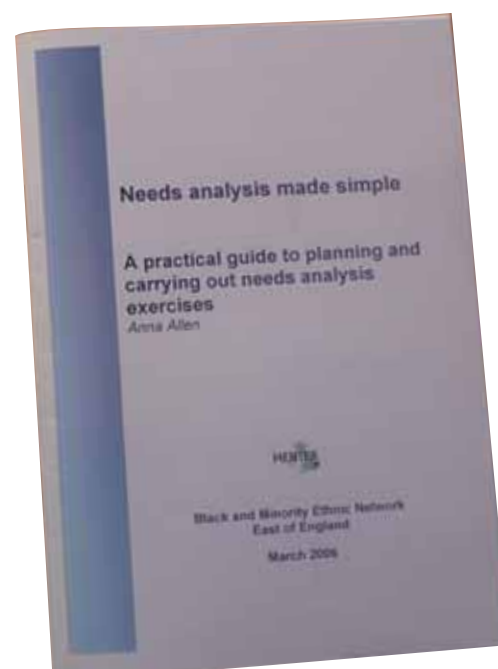
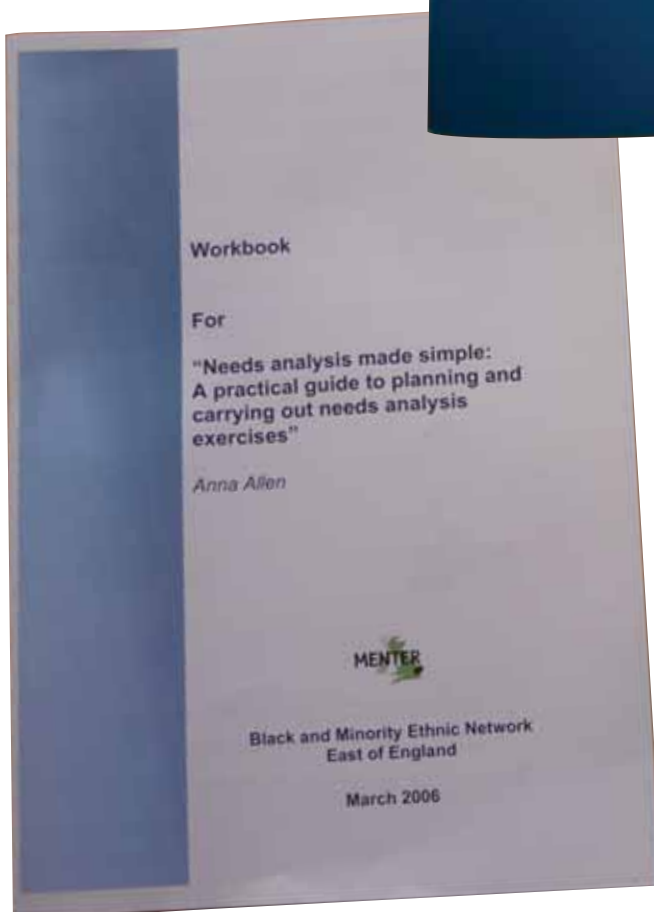
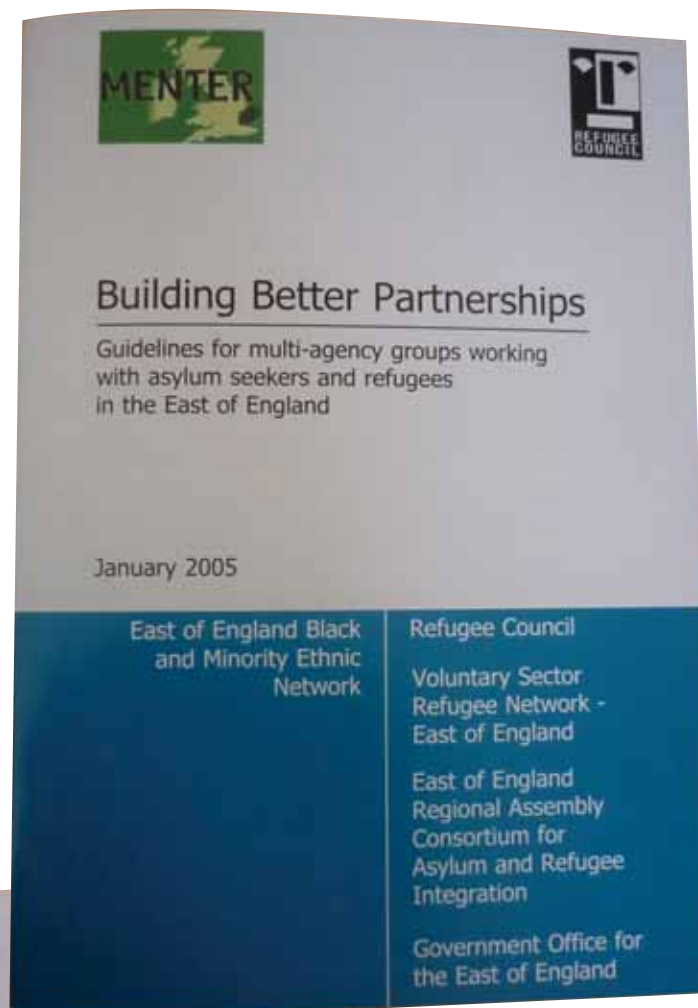


Main Outcomes	Outcome indicators
Improved partnership working between local, regional and national organisations on BME issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased regional network membership with reporting links to other national bodies around BME issues • Increased participation in MAF partnership networks • Regional strategies developed around migration issues • Increase in the diverse membership of the MAF partnerships • Increase in the number of local and regional meetings and conferences around migration issues • Better understanding of immigrant issues in the region, particularly refugees and migrant worker issues
Increased interest for a multi-agency approach with regards to issues around migrant workers and their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established a multi-agency point of contact on migrant issues in each local authority • All the local authorities in the region now have a MAF where migrant issues are championed

Resources and Support for the Network

Successful partnership work requires particular skills, knowledge and resources. Most of the region's MAFs operate with minimal support and without dedicated resources available to them. This is why the Partnership Development Project invested in the development of dedicated partnership resources which are shared with network members.

Since 2004, the project has worked closely with EERA-SMP policy team and other organisations to produce resources for network members which are accessible on our project website: www.partnershipdevelopmentproject.org.uk/html/resources_.html Resources include national and regional publications on migration as well as simple guides as to how to start a MAF, how to "Build Better Partnerships" and how to do a "Needs analysis". Our most recent materials include a Community Participation Guide produced in July 2008 which aims to help improve asylum seekers', refugees' and migrant workers' participation and engagement with MAFs. We also produced a "Racism Awareness Report", based on an informal assessment of the awareness amongst MAF members of the needs and problems associated with racism towards asylum seekers, refugee and migrant workers with recommended actions. We have also co-written a guide to and template for information packs for newcomers which has been published nationally by IDEA. All of these resources continued to be useful tools for our network members.



A short list of some resources

These resources developed and produced by the Partnership Development Project and its partners are available for use by anyone with an interest in dealing with asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers.

- i. **MAF Start up Pack** by MENTER is a simple guide for setting up multi-agency fora partnerships
- ii. **Building Better Partnerships** booklet by MENTER and Refugee Council provides guidelines for MAFs working with asylum-seekers and refugees in the East of England on how to establish successful partnerships.
- iii. **Needs Analysis Made Simple** booklet and **Workbook** by MENTER is a practical guide to planning and carrying out needs analysis exercises.
- iv. **Community Participation Guide** by MENTER helps to improve community participation for MAFs working with asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers in the East of England.
- v. **Racism Awareness Report** by MENTER is a short report aimed at informing network members about the level of awareness amongst MAF members around racism, hate crime and extremism towards new and emerging communities in the Eastern Region. It comes with a set of recommendations which MAFs can adopt. The report is based on the analysis of an informal needs & problem analysis questionnaire collected from MAF members.
- vi. **LAA Toolkit** produced by EERA provides organisations, MAFs and other regional partnerships that support migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees with a toolkit to assist in the process of developing Local Area Agreements (LAAs) that meet the needs of new communities and of host communities that support them.
- vii. **Refugee Integration Guide** by EERA is intended to provide guidance and a framework from which agencies working with asylum seekers and refugees can develop their own sub-regional integration strategies. The document is informed by some of the region's key practitioners.



Monitoring and evaluating progress

In order to monitor the impact of the project and its effect on the network, the project steering group recommended that an external evaluation be commissioned. The evaluation was carried out in June 2008, and its aim was to enable the project and MAF members to better develop strategies for the sustainability of the structures.

The evaluation exercise enabled the project to identify the gaps and support needs of the MAFs and draw conclusions about the benefits that this support brings, including reviewing different strategies and techniques to better focus its resources. The evaluators also designed a self assessment questionnaire which enabled MAFs to engage in self-evaluation as a way to identify better ways of working.



We have organised regional conferences around migration issues to better engage with network members and get their feedback. In 2006, we celebrated the success of our refugee integration programme where Andy Burnham, the then Minister of Immigration gave the keynote speech. In November 2007, we had a migrant worker focused conference with a special workshop around community cohesion and engagement. About 75 people attended with almost half of them from the migrant worker communities. Richard Hewitt, the Member of European Parliament (MEP) for the region, was the keynote speaker and both Sky News and Penny Shillito of BBC's Politics Show East were present. The overall feedback to the conference was positive.



Pathways to Employment Project

The aim of the Pathways to Employment Project

is to support refugees seeking employment within the health and social care sector. The project is funded by the Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales until September 2009. The project has four main objectives:

- To disseminate information about the project's objectives and activities to 500 individuals
- To enable at least 50 people to access appropriate information and guidance
- To support at least 20 people through the pre-employment stages with small grants
- To establish partnerships that will maintain appropriate arrangements for the beneficiary group

While some project activities have a regional dimension (e.g. dissemination of good practice, relationships with regional stakeholders), other "hands-on" activities are implemented locally, for example in Norwich. As a pilot project, Pathways to Employment does not have the capacity to address many of the barriers to employment that refugees may face. However, by focusing on a particular segment of the labour market (the health and social care sector), the project seeks to support interested individuals during their journey to employment in a targeted way through:

- Provision of and/or signposting to specialist advice, information and guidance (IAG) services
- Networking and engagement with other service providers and social care employers
- Financial help with study and training costs or job search related costs

Why the Health and Social Care sector?

The Pathways to Employment Project has its origins in a research project carried out in 2005/06 with funding from the Department of Health and the then Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Strategic Health Authority. The objective of this research was to formulate solutions to support the integration of refugees into the NHS workforce in the East of England. Although the number of refugee health professionals may be significantly lower in the East of England than in areas such as London or Manchester, refugee professionals living in this part of England still need to access services that meet their employment support needs.

Project activities and achievements

- **Information, advice and guidance for refugee health professionals:** The Pathways to Employment project is working in collaboration with the NHS East of England Deanery (http://www.eoedeanery.nhs.uk/page.php?page_id=827) to provide information and guidance as well as financial support to the East of England Refugee doctors' group members. The project has also facilitated contact between clients and specialist projects in other parts of the UK. As a result, clients have attended Personal Development Plans workshops and specialist IAG sessions. The project has also supported individuals to apply for grants to charitable trusts.
- **Information, advice and guidance for other refugee clients interested in health and social care work:** In Norwich, the project has engaged with 25 refugee clients. We facilitated three information workshops in October-December 2008. We have now started a 6-week programme with 12 clients to improve their job search skills.

For more information about the Pathways to Employment project, please contact Béatrice Humarau, Project Support Officer, on 01603 617 076 or by email beatrice@menter.org.uk

Asylum, Refugee and Migrant Worker Acronym Buster

AFL	Advice for Life
ASU	Asylum Seeker Unit
BERR	Department for Business, Employment and Regulatory Reform
BIA	Border and Immigration Agency
CLC	Children's Legal Centre
CLG	Communities and Local Government
DIUS	Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills
ECHR	European Convention for Human Rights
EEAST	East of England Asylum Support Team (Regional NASS)
EEDA	East of England Development Agency
EERA-SMP	East of England Regional Assembly Strategic Migration Partnership
EESCP	East of England Skills and Competitiveness Partnership
ELR	Exceptional Leave to Remain
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
GPP	Greater Peterborough Partnership
IAG	Information, Advice and Guidance
IAS	Immigration Advisory Service
iic	Investing in Communities
ILR	Indefinite Leave to Remain
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
ISP	Invest to Save Programme
JCP	Job Centre Plus
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LEO	Local Enforcement Office
LGA	Local Government Association
LSC	Legal Services Commission
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
MWSG	Migrant Worker Steering Group
MACF	Multi-Agency Chairs Forum
MAF	Multi-Agency Forum
NAM	New Asylum Model
NASS	National Asylum Support Service
NIACE	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
NRPF	No Recourse to Public Funds
NRUC	National Register of Unaccompanied Children
NSA	Non-Suspensive Appeal
OSS	One Stop Service
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PIP	Personal Integration Plan
RCO	Refugee Community Organisation
RSC	Regional Strategic Co-ordination Group
SEF	Statement of Evidence Form
STAR	Student Action for Refugees
TCU	Third Country Unit
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
UKBA	United Kingdom Border Agency
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees





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Partnership Development Project
Website: www.partnershipdevelopmentproject.org.uk



Communities and Local Government



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Regional Development Adviser: 01473 297905
Website: www.refugeecouncil.org.uk



East of England Regional Assembly – Strategic Migration Partnership

Tel: 01284 729413; Fax: 01284 729429
Website: www.eera.gov.uk



Voluntary Sector Refugee Network – East of England

Tel: 01473 406432; Fax: 01473 406431



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East of England Development Agency

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