

# Diversity House Limited Communication on Engagement

Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2018

This report summaries some of the activities undertaken by Diversity House limited in its sphere of operation to communicate to local organisations its actions in support of the UN Global Compact and its Ten Principles on Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-corruption. In doing this, we create the awareness of the necessity for local businesses and organisation to follow suite.

## **06.01.2016 – Syrian Refugee Scheme**

Diversity House represented the Swale District Council in a countrywide round table talks to identify ways to support the vulnerable Syrian refugees and to integrate them into the UK society on arrival. Below is the memoire which was shared with all organisations in the district after the round table.

Dear Colleagues

Just to bring you up to date concerning the above mentioned as agreed last year on 21st December 2015 at the Local Government House , Smith Square London SW1P 3HZ. I am happy to share with you and CVS as the consortium lead of third sectors in Swale, concerning information received during the above mentioned event. Numerous presentations were given by representatives from various agencies during which they shared good practice in regards to the migration and resettlement of migrants and refugees.

### **Feedback:**

There were various agencies in attendance on the date in question, a total of 90 representatives. A ministerial address was given by Richard Harrington MP.

### **Presented by Leonard Zulu, Senior Legal Officer, UNHCR**

This organisation has been mandated to protect and support refugees at the request of a government or the UN itself and assists in their voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement to a third country. Its headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland and is a member of the United Nations Development Group. The UNHCR has won two Nobel Peace Prizes, once in 1954 and again in 1981. The representative shared what their agency has been doing since its inception and more recently on the resettlement of refugees and migrants. Some resettlement practicalities being carried out by this agency includes:

1. Bio-metrics system - identification of refugees for security purposes.
2. Exploration of reasons for flight and vulnerability.
3. Counselling put in place and guidelines respected to ensure that Post Traumatic Distress Syndrome is captured and addressed.
4. Identification of those most in need in order to identify support.
5. The eligibility criteria includes women and children at risk.

More than 50 countries are involved in the resettlement programs and prominently USA and the United Kingdom.

Another agency presented IOM (International Organisation for Migration), presented by Bindu Isaac - project Co-ordinator. IOM, was established in 1951, the international Organisation for Migration is the leading intergovernmental organisation in the field of migration and is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. IOM works with its partners in the international community to assist in meeting the growing operational challenges of migration, advance understanding of migration issues, encourage social and economic development through migration and uphold the well-being and human rights of migrants.

They have a mandate of 150 countries to ensure dignified and orderly safe migration for the benefit of all people. Their work within the current Syrian refugee scheme are:

1. To identify the groups to be resettled.
2. Conduct health assessment.
3. Migrants are provided cultural orientation from their country of origin before they leave to another country. The orientation carried out is for both those leaving and host country receiving them, to ensure smooth community integration for both migrant and host community.
4. They also provide assistance with travel documents and other processes.

The representative shared six components for good resettlement:

1. Resettlement towards independence.
2. Help people to have access to employment.
3. Ensure funding for integration support, geared towards assessing mainstream services.
4. Resources available to undertake community development.
5. Resources should be co-ordinated and not patchy.
6. Refugees are to receive impartial advice and guidance.

### **Refugee Action:**

Presented by Jeremy Bernhaut, Resettlement Lead, Refugee Action.

He spoke about what the agency had been doing and the support that they provide in order to resettle refugees within the United Kingdom. Explaining that the core purposes of their resettlement is to ensure the following:

1. Should foster independence and not dependency.
2. Support being sustainable and be consistent.
3. Both refugees and host community to understand cultural differences.
4. Build rapport.

5. Refugees should be listened to and granted a voice.
6. Services should not be replicated but enhanced.
7. The importance of integration and community development.
8. Case work is vital.
9. As much as possible, use volunteers e.g. use other refugees who have settled as champions and provide support services such as ESOL and other community services.

This was followed by a further explanatory into the importance and need to reassure people and demystify refugee and resettlement views, key people from organisations shared their experiences of resettlement. Amongst which Derek Mitchell, the Chief Executive Officer of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) shared positive experiences of recent resettlement of refugees in Scotland.

Tracey Kelly, the Head of Community and Housing, in Ashford Borough Council, shared their experiences as their phase one resettlement of Syrian refugees. She shared how their local authority worked collaboratively with the media to ensure that all ears were calmed to give bad vibes about the Syrians incoming from Syrian. This ensured that the transition was not received negatively, people were not carrying placards against their arrivals.

The community development team put together for the arrival of the Syrians 'Welcome Packs' which included vital information about the town, G.P, schools, transport and how to access other community amenities

An important experience was shared by the Syrian Refugees Perspective, represented by Amaf Yousef, the Refugees Support Co-ordinator, Syrian Charities and Networks UK. He said that the Syrian refugees should not be feared and that they are human beings such as ourselves and that the only difference is that their country has unfortunately be torn apart by war. They love music and dance and they are very hardworking people and do not rely on the government or anyone to do things for them but rather depend on themselves. He also added that they do want to go back to their country after the war has subsided to rebuild it. Hence, whilst they are in transit in another country they do not want rely on 'Hand-outs' and they do not want their people to cultivate the culture of 'laziness'. He further urged everyone that they should be not make them to become reliant on benefits or 'hand-outs'. Whatever their situation.

He also added that Syrians are also very well skilled within the following:

1. Artisans and they have professional elites.

After the numerous presentations, there were was a break-out session where people were grouped into 4's, participants were required to discuss about:

1. Key issues such as governance, integration and community cohesion amongst the host of many other things.

## International Women's Day

Diversity House Limited celebrates International Women's Day yearly by holding conferences or seminars with topics on gender equality and the importance of leadership roles for women (in politic, workplace, etc.).

In 2016, International Women's Day was held in two Districts of Kent, South East England with women speakers from the political and public sector. Below is the speech from the Police Commissioner Mrs Anne Barnes encouraging women to take up key positions in the society, whilst reiterating that gender and age should be no barrier to what you can achieve.

*"Women in policing"*

15 years working in world of policing – over the years there has been huge progress in gender equality

Last year was 100th anniversary of first woman to become police officer – Edith Smith in 1915

Policing long seen as traditionally a male profession

Has come a long way since Edith Smith – particularly in Kent

Kent Police recognises value of women in workforce

Women in force offered every chance to succeed

Jo Shiner appointed ACC in 2014 – first female ACC in 24 years

Created Gender Strategy Group as Chair of Police Authority

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What does Kent Police do for its female workforce?

Kent Police huge organisation – employs thousands of women

Takes its responsibility to gender equality really seriously

Kent Network of Women:

- Running since 2004
- Support for female officers and staff
- More females at Supt rank than ever before
- 2 women commanders
- Encourage women to apply for promotions

- Holds conferences on relevant issues e.g. confidence in the workplace – such was the popularity that more confidence workshops are being planned

#### Circle of Parents:

- Set up to provide advice and guidance on maternity and paternity issues – before, during and after maternity leave
- HR reps are present at meetings to offer their expertise
- Children can attend meetings with their parents
- Confidential place to speak freely about concerns and meet colleagues going through similar experiences as working parents

#### Flexible working policy:

- Available for officers and staff and is accommodated wherever possible
- Can apply for flexible hours or flexible working locations
- Parents/carers/disabled or older employees can benefit – rigid work times and locations could otherwise prevent them from employment
- Examples: flexi-time contracts, part-time working, home-working, job-sharing
- Allows employees to balance work and family life
- Also beneficial to efficiency of the business

#### Pregnancy/maternity:

- Generous entitlement for female officers – max. 15 months which exceeds statutory provision of 52 weeks
- Mat. Leave can be taken in more than one block
- Paid time off to attend antenatal appointments
- Do not have to decide about returning to work until after baby is born
- Force offers Keeping in Touch Days to allow officers/staff who are on maternity leave to remain connected with the organisation

#### Also:

Mentor scheme: employees can be matched with a mentor when requested – assists with career progression and encourages gender representation in specialist roles.

Recently three events held on career progression aimed at female officers and staff – to identify issues which hold staff back and how to make improvements.

So as you can see, there really is a lot being done around gender equality to make sure female employees have same opportunities as male colleagues.

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Closing

Thank you for listening

Hope I have shown gender and age no barrier to what you can achieve

To employers in room – if a male-dominated profession like policing can make such huge strides then it can be done in any business.



International Women's Day in Swale District of Kent, UK

## March 2017 – UN Global Compact Network in Bonn Germany: Global Festival of Ideas

Diversity House Limited Chief Executive Officer travelled to Bonn Germany in March 2017 for the Global Festival of Ideas. Whilst at the festival she was livestreaming the proceedings, which she shared with NGO's and businesses in Kent, UK.



## 05.06 2017 – Mental Health Awareness

In 2017, Diversity House organised mental health awareness event and used the opportunity to engage organisations and individuals in the community and shared information on the SDGs with them.



## 05.06.2017 - Domestic Violence and Abuse





Domestic violence/abuse is a key issue in the Swale district, Kent, South East of England. The majority of victims are women. Diversity House work with civil society organisations that provide support for women to find ways of mitigating the problems. The above picture was taken on one of our events to promote gender equality in all its ramifications.

## Supporting Women and Girls (SWAG) Project

Diversity House in May 2017 continued its previous project on women empowerment (Swale Women Empowering Women). In its new form, girls are being supported to deal with four areas of – economic, education, psychological and physiological wellbeing, and engagement in social actions. Since commencing this project in May, 3982 women and girls have used the project's activities.

