



## Tamil Community Centre- collaboration

The Tamil Community Centre is mainly accessed by the Tamil Community but it is open to anyone who wishes to access our services. We do have clients from other communities such as Afghan, Burmese, Punjabi and Sinhalese communities accessing our services. We have been established for six years and have 10 volunteers and eight management committee members.

### Summary of activities

- Study support for children once a week all day Saturday
- Coffee morning for the elderly once a week 10am – 3pm
- Drop in service where we provide advice, signpost and refer as appropriate.
- Immigration advice once every two weeks
- Entry to English and ESOL Entry 1 and 2
- Referral to counselling (currently suspended due to there being no Tamil Counsellors in West London. Previously we had a Tamil speaking counsellor and Tamil speaking psychiatrist volunteering for us.)
- Support for victims of domestic violence, basic counselling for drugs and alcohol abuse and victims of DV.

### Briefly describe the experience you wish to focus on in this paper.

We wish to focus on the 'Refugee Week' event we organised in June. This was a collaborative effort and it would not have been possible without the support of Southall Community Alliance, the Gurdwara, and the West Ealing Hindu Temple, REAP, and Levenes Solicitors.

### Describe what your RCO did, and what came out of this.

The Tamil Community Centre was approached by the Ealing PCT to provide a drop in service for the Tamil speaking community in the borough of Ealing. The Ealing PCT provides the premises but the service is volunteer led. In order to publicise this service we decided to launch the service through organising a refugee week event in Ealing.

The aim of organising the refugee week event was to:

- make contact with key organisations in Ealing in the process of organising the event to let them know of the new service available for the Tamil speaking community in Ealing.
- make the Tamil speaking community in Ealing aware of the new drop in service.

- make contact with the Tamil speaking community in Ealing through a fun event.

To organise this event we approached Refugees in Effective and Active Partnership (REAP) for their support. REAP helped us make contact with and accompanied us to organisations and faith institutions in Ealing to engage their support with the event. As a result of this event many individuals and organisations became aware of the drop in service we provide for the Tamil speaking community in Ealing. We run this drop in service once a week on a Thursday for 3 hours. We have up to approximately 15 – 20 different individuals accessing the service each session.

**What problems and barriers did your RCO face in doing this, and how did you overcome or try to overcome these?**

When planning the event we had no funding to run the event and we had to come up with creative solutions to fund it. We were expecting to have an attendance of approximately 300 people. We needed a venue; we needed a way to pay for food and refreshments and for publicity.

We approached Southall Community Alliance for their support and they offered to pay the cost for the premises. We approached the Gurdwara for support and they said they couldn't support us financially as they are a charity themselves. As we were aware that the Gurdwara usually provides food for those who attend the Gurdwara we asked if they would provide food for about 150 people attending the event. They agreed. The West Ealing Hindu Temple offered to provide food for another 150 people. Levenes Solicitors offered to print the publicity. Entertainment which included traditional dance and music performances was provided by members of the Tamil Community Centre who are themselves refugees and asylum seekers.

**If your RCO accessed any support to help you with this area of work, describe this support and whether it was helpful to your organisation**

To organise this event we had the support of the Capacity Building Development Worker at REAP who helped us with communicating with various organisations and recruiting their help with this event.

**What are your tips for other RCOs considering doing something similar?**

If you have a good idea you do not have to feel restricted because you do not have any funding to run the event or service. One must be creative in finding ways of doing things. It is important to speak and collaborate with other people and organisations. You will be surprised at the amount of good will and support you find for a good cause!

© Tamil Community Centre 2010

This information has been produced by Tamil Community Centre, and was commissioned by the Basis Project, run in partnership by the Refugee Council and Refugee Action, supported by the Big Lottery Fund (BIG). It is not intended to be comprehensive or to provide legal advice. No legal responsibility is attached to the publisher. It can be reproduced free of charge for non-commercial use, but credit must be given to Tamil Community Centre, the Basis Project, Refugee Council and Refugee Action.