

# North London *ASPIRATIONS*



*...Providing the bricks to help Asylum Seekers Rebuild their Lives*  
Issue no. 1 – August 2007

## Welcome to *ASPIRATIONS!*

*Welcome to the first edition of Aspirations, the newsletter that tells the story of the ongoing work of the ASPIRE Development Partnership in helping to improve the standard of living for Asylum Seekers in North London.*

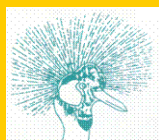
*The aims of the North London Aspire DP are to develop new services to address the negative impact of the asylum-seeking process upon peoples lives by empowering asylum seekers to contribute to their host community and reducing the negative effects of the asylum process regardless of whether an individual's application is successful or not.*

*We hope you will find reading the Aspire an educating and enjoyable experience with its insightful and colorful content.*

*...From the North London Aspire DP Team*

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## Who are the Beneficiaries?

The common bond between the beneficiaries of the Aspire project is their residential status in the UK. Some of them have allowed us to tell their stories to demonstrate the diversity of those seeking asylum in the UK and the problems they face.



Seycan is an ESOL student.



Papy Pila

“Yusuf’s father was arrested in 2001 and that was the last contact the family had with him.”

*...Asylum Seekers are people that have had to flee their homes because they were being persecuted.*

*I lived in Turkey and left because my brother was abducted. When I first came here three years ago my life was very different because I could not speak English.*

*Now I live in a room in Tottenham. Life is so difficult for me because the house is very old and there are cracks in the walls. I cannot do anything about this as I am living with my friend.*

*My mother cannot cope with this as she is suffering from stress and she always has to go for treatment.*

**Seycan Isbir**

*By law, adult asylum seekers are only allowed to participate in basic level education & learning activities.*

*I was born in Congo (DRC) in Africa.. When I was in Congo in 1977, I went to the primary, secondary school and the university. When I finished I worked in Office Congolese Poste Telecommunication (OCPT) for 6 months then I became a businessman.*

*I came to England in March 2005 and when I came I could not read write or understand English. But since joining UCR&A, I have learnt.*

*I would like to be able to study in a college so that I can improve my life.*

**Papy Pila**

**Yusuf Oktan**

*Yusuf Oktan is in his early 20’s, he is Kurdish, and was born in Kurdistan, part of Iraq. He has a brother, sister and mother still living in Iraq for whom he is very concerned. Yusuf’s father was arrested in 2001 and that was the last contact the family had with him.*

*He managed to escape from Iraq in 2002. On arrival in the UK he was arrested in Kent and taken to a detention camp. From there he was sent to Stockton on Tees where he was given a room and vouchers for food.*

*He experienced racism from the local community and said this was not what he expected from being in the UK. After a brief stay he was taken to Liverpool and interviewed on his claim for asylum. His case was heard in Bradford and the decision was made to refuse him entry and he was given 10 days to leave the country.*

*He then came to London, and found a new solicitor to work on an appeal against the decision.*

*Yusuf has managed to get documentary evidence required by the UK, to support his claim and hopes that his claim will be successful. While waiting for his appeal to be heard, he has completed Entry Level 1 ESOL and Computers For Beginners*  
**Aspirations:** *To work as a barber, driver or with computers.*

## Messages from the Beneficiaries...

### Mohammed Al-Mughrabi



*“ASPIRE has supported me with the free health service and a free education, but it's really unfair to not allow asylum seekers to work, especially when they need it and are willing to work hard.”*

*M. Al-Mughrabi*

*By law, asylum seekers arriving in the UK are banned from working.*

*And from 2007, the number of government-funded places for free English language lessons in colleges will fall dramatically.*

*When Mohammed Al-Mughrabi, an asylum seeker based in Tottenham, heard that the ASPIRATIONS newsletter was to be published he asked if he could contribute an article, this is what he has to say.*

“Hello everybody, I am a disabled person. I came to the UK about a year ago and I applied for asylum on my arrival but my application was refused. I’m 21 years old and I’m planning to be a sports journalist in the future if I get a suitable chance because I really believe in what I can do.

About 20 years ago all people say that the right of asylum was easy and simple all you have to do is come to the UK and submit your asylum request and, in general, you will be accepted due to the Britain's need for a greater population density and a cheap labor hand. The UK was inviting the commonwealth countries to come here. This is the proof.

Nowadays the asylum right has become harder and Britain deports people to unsafe countries because they “don't believe” what those people have said. Some people were deported to the wrong countries if you can believe that!

People should be offered asylum if - they have a fear of persecution on account of race, religion, membership of a particular social group or political opinion and I understand that the old need for population density is not a satisfactory reason to believe everybody today, but we are not guilty because we came here in 2007 and not 1987.

Another point I need to make about asylum claims is that everyone who's been granted asylum is not allowed to go back to his own country at all.

I know several people who come and go back to their homelands, I cannot do this. This is a proof that Britain was accepting some liars to remain in this country and this is really unfair.

The last part I want to tell you about is asylum seekers rights in the UK. ASPIRE has supported me with the free health service and a free education, but it's really unfair to not allow asylum Seekers to work especially when they need it and are willing to work hard.

I ask why we are not allowed to work? And many of us are not getting any benefit to live on!

I do hope you enjoyed my first article and I will be very pleased to correspond with anyone. My email is:

[i\\_need\\_a\\_chance@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:i_need_a_chance@hotmail.co.uk)

Thank you for reading and thank you for this opportunity to ASPIRE!”

## North London Aspire Development Partnership (NLADP)

- Improving the Lives of Asylum Seekers!

NLADP is a partnership of Uganda Community Relief Association (UCRA) - the lead partner, Haringey Council, the College of North East London (CoNEL), London North Learning Skills Council, North London Partnership Consortium and Positive Care Link. Thus it is diverse in its makeup and includes organisations that have a long history of working with some of the most excluded communities in London.

It is funded by the EQUAL stream of the European Social Fund (ESF) and has been valued at over £0.75m. It has been running from October 2004 until December 2007.

So far, NLADP has developed and delivered innovative services to support asylum seekers in the North London Boroughs of Barnet, Enfield, Haringey, and Waltham Forest.

And through demonstrating the success of pilot projects and services, the partnership's aim is to leave a legacy of best practice through influencing local, regional, and national policy makers.



The ASPIRE Development Partnership have regular meetings to discuss innovations in empowering asylum seekers

Asylum seekers face barriers to participating in society that include poor English language skills, a lack of knowledge about the UK welfare system, discrimination, no right to work, and isolation from their peer groups. For some there is the combined stigma of asylum immigration status and being HIV+. Recent months have seen significant changes in national policy that will affect the support arrangements for asylum seekers in the UK. These changes may have a negative impact on the individual lives of some asylum seekers.

The following services have been made available to asylum seekers in the North London boroughs covered:

- ◆ Information, advice and guidance  
Including support for those living with HIV+/AIDS
- ◆ ESOL
- ◆ Basic Skills and IT Training
- ◆ Multimedia Skills Training
- ◆ Empowerment & Community Leadership Training
- ◆ Enterprise & Business Skills for Personal Development Training
- ◆ Community Volunteering
- ◆ Social Events, Information Sessions, and Consultations



CoNEL's Orbit Bus is an innovative mobile IT suite that takes learning into the community

...Empowering Asylum Seekers through Innovative services



A cross section of ESOL Students at Selby Centre

**Radio Training during the Refugee Week!**

As part of the Refugee Week, The DP organised workshops, which were delivered by the **London Link Radio**. As part of these workshops, students made voice recordings (interviews and songs) and these were aired at the **School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)** during the Refugee Week. Photos and Videos made by beneficiaries during these sessions were also exhibited at the **'Represent'** Exhibition, which was held at Marcus Garvey Library, Tottenham Green Haringey.

**Quote from the public about the Refugee**

*'...an interesting range of personal testimonies...'*

*'...a good way of showing what Asylum Seekers can contribute to the society ...'*



Beneficiaries conducting interviews for the radio



Beneficiary taking photos

## Transnational Visit to Slovakia

In February this year The North London ASPIRE Development Partnership attended a transnational conference in Slovakia to continue the ongoing work with European partners which improves the lives of Europe's asylum seekers, as well as raising awareness of the work and services offered to asylum seekers and maintaining the strong partnership between the countries who have been involved in the partnership for the past two years.



Dutch partners deliver a presentation on e-learning as innovation in services available to asylum seekers.



*“The impetus was on overcoming the boundaries confronted by asylum seekers by allowing them to access learning in the heart of their communities.”*

*“The event has been a real success. Not only have we brought to the fore the British initiatives that we are most proud of, but we have also taken away new ideas and feel we can now push on to inform the policy makers in Britain.”*

...

*Sarah Nansukusa  
Director, UCR A*




Members of the North London Development Partnership arriving in Stary Smokovec to take part in the Slovakian leg of the EQUAL conference.

In attendance were representatives from Holland, Estonia, Great Britain and, of course, Slovakia. Alongside the continuing discussions on best policy and repeated efforts to learn from the various experiences of the partners there were also presentations from the Dutch and British delegates outlining pioneering methods of learning that heighten the empowerment of asylum seekers and underline the necessity to develop innovation within the fields of training and education.

The Dutch presentation heralded the success of online training and allowing full access to course materials, tutorials and seminars through one web service set up for education in one's own time.

The British presentation focused on reaching asylum seekers within their own community settings and lessening the formality of higher education settings. The impetus was on overcoming the boundaries confronted by asylum seekers by allowing them to access learning in the heart of their communities, but at the same time maintaining the official approach to education and highlighting the need for self-development and continuous improvement.

The conference was closed with the first viewing of a documentary focusing on the lives of existing asylum seekers in Slovakia, the plight that they have faced in coming to terms with their new surroundings and the accompanying stories of accomplishment and victory over adversity.

 To find out more about the European partners/ aims of the conference, please visit:  
[www.ludiaakomy.sk](http://www.ludiaakomy.sk)

## Celebrating Success!

*Clips from the graduation and mainstreaming event held on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July 2007*



*Councillor  
Brian Udell, the  
Deputy Mayor of  
Croydon and  
Sarah Nansukusa,  
director of UCRA*



*From the left...  
Susan Stopforth  
from ECOTEC,  
Sasha Rhoden from  
CSEP,  
Dr. Hans Meier  
from LSC,,  
Sarah Nansukusa  
from UCRA and  
Farook Murwanga  
from ILM*



*From the left –  
Dr. Nathan Williams  
From  
North London Aspire  
DP,  
Emma – a graduate,  
Charmaine Brouard  
from CONEL and  
Susan StoPforth  
From ECOTEC*

Award Presentations



*'We Aspire  
to Rebuild  
our World'*

.....

*Bilal Yunis, a  
graduate from the  
ESOL class.*

## *North London Aspire Development Partnership...*

*...Providing the bricks to help asylum seekers rebuild their lives*

### *To Contact us:*

#### *Lead Partner -*

#### **Uganda Community Relief Association (UCRA)**

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**Email** [ucra2000@hotmail.com](mailto:ucra2000@hotmail.com)

#### *Other Partners -*

- College of North East London (CONEL) [www.conel.ac.uk](http://www.conel.ac.uk)
- Haringey Adult Learning Services (HALS) [www.haringey.gov.uk](http://www.haringey.gov.uk)
- Haringey Council - Regeneration
- LSC London North [www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)
- North London Partnership Consortium Ltd. (NLPC)
- Positive Care Link (PCL)