



Kent
Refugee
Help

Charity no. 1120185

Patron: Professor John Fitzpatrick OBE, Kent Law Clinic

Annual Report 2017-2018

Kent Refugee Help is a small user-led charity, now in its eleventh year. Our initial remit was in supporting men held in the DIRC (Dover Immigration Removal Centre) particularly in providing Sureties for bail hearings. Men on bail, waiting for their asylum case to be resolved, are forbidden to work, must conform to reporting restrictions, and are frequently tagged. This is akin to ‘prison in the community’.

This situation continues. KRH believes that indefinite detention of any person for administrative purpose is discriminatory and should be challenged.

Since the closure of the DIRC in October 2015, our main focus has been working with foreign national prisoners in London and Kent prison establishments. Some of our clients are in prison under immigration regulations, being deemed too high-risk to be placed in a removal centre. Others may be refugees, former unaccompanied minors, EU migrants, those with long residence who came to the UK fleeing human rights violations with their parents when very young, people who are undocumented or stateless. All are trying to navigate the complex legal system they are caught up in, with very little help or advice available. Many are facing deportation at the end of their sentence. We are there to listen and take forward in whatever way is appropriate for each client.

During the years 2017-2018 we have maintained a regular presence for foreign national prisoners at a workshop at HMP Pentonville and started an additional 2-monthly surgery at HMP Rochester. In addition, we receive referrals for individual prisoners from HMP Maidstone and HMP Elmley. This is partly thanks to support and encouragement from the Diversity and Equalities officer at Pentonville and Rochester. Despite cuts and huge pressures on the staff, a dedicated officer can make an observable difference to the men for whom they are responsible.

There is complex ongoing work with several former detainees from the DIRC done by the previous case worker on a voluntary basis. Social contact is maintained with the former detainees throughout the year, culminating in the Christmas party which is very well attended.

During this year we have also developed a small pilot project for support work by volunteers who have visited clients in prison.



Rosie Duffield, Labour MP of Canterbury, at the private view of the *Our Lives* Art Exhibition



KRH Personnel

Trustees: Pat Enfield, Bahriye Kemal, Chris Perks, Antti de Ruano

Caseworker: Kate Adams

Support caseworker: Raga Gibreel

Admin. support: Lesley Grove of Accuracy Accounts, Alexia Padgham of Your VA.

Website: Nick Tompsett

Volunteers: Hakki Aganoglu, Abbey Kiwunuka, Catherine Carpenter, Clare Griffiths, Pete Keenan, Maria Ruano, Liza Seed

Although we no longer find Sureties for bail, we acknowledge that some of our former Sureties are still in touch with and support the people they stood bail for, some of whom have to wait many years for the resolution of their case.

We continue to work with the **Kent Law Clinic**, and **BID (Bail for Immigration Detainees)**.

Finance and Funding

Our prison work this year has been funded by the **ARM Trust**, the **New Beginnings** fund administered through the **Kent Community Foundation**, and the **Huguenot Trust**.

Donations from individuals and church groups have continued to be generous. We see this as proof of a strong public desire to see more positive action to welcome and support refugees in the UK. Donations are treated as 'unrestricted' funds, which we use for the many individual needs of our clients. Because of this money we have been able to save a family from destitution by making a regular monthly payment to them. In addition to small amounts to cover emergency food, travel and phone top-ups, we have paid for gym membership (including use of pool and hot showers), warm clothing and footwear, and the purchase of second-hand television. The amounts are small, but each one makes a positive contribution to the lives of our clients.



Zana, a former detainee still awaiting the resolution of his case, pictured with Julia Seeth, a former Canterbury District councillor

Casework Report

Prison Project Report

In the midst of the political storm about the treatment of the Windrush migrants the journalist/activist and son of Windrush, Gary Younge spoke at a demonstration in Windrush Square, Brixton. Referring to the government's rapid climb down following the media exposure of the Hostile Environment policy, the detention and deportation of elderly Caribbean migrants who had lived here entirely legally for many years he said, "This was not a mistake, this was not a glitch in the system, this was the system.... this is what hostility looks like." He also said, "I don't want to live in a country that is hostile to immigrants and, even when they could not be me -even when they are not my own family." He added that we stand in solidarity with the Windrush with the caveat "No one is under any illusion that it stops with them."

These words resonated powerfully with me. They epitomised our struggle as a small charity to challenge the Hostile Environment by supporting foreign national prisoners; refugees and migrants held for deportation, a deeply discriminated group. Through casework we seek legal advice and representation for prisoners for asylum and deportation appeals, release on bail and criminal matters. Additionally, we reach out to our community through projects to raise awareness and increase understanding

of the situation for vulnerable migrants who are detained. This year we enlisted the support of Canterbury's newly elected Labour MP **Rosie Duffield** who met with us and solicitors **Sheona York and Richard Warren** from the Kent Law Clinic, to discuss the legal issues raised by the 2014 Immigration Act, the proponent of the Hostile Environment which we hope Labour will repeal if they form a government. Rosie also agreed to open the art exhibition, *Our Lives*, the most recent project, an exhibition of paintings, drawings and prints by foreign national prisoners which took place in the Fishslab Gallery, Whitstable in May 2018.

Casework

We have expanded casework with the initiation of a drop in/surgery at HMP Rochester in addition to our two-monthly workshop at HMP Pentonville; the casework team is myself and Raga Gibreel supported by two excellent volunteers, Antti Keskiisaari, an immigration lawyer, and Catherine Carpenter, a retired solicitor formerly of the Kent Law Clinic. We are lucky to have recruited new volunteers; Liza Seed, an experienced detention centre visitor, and Maria Cristina Ruano, a qualified counsellor, who are acting as casework assistants by visiting vulnerable clients needing extra support. Maria's evidence from her visits was crucial to the bail release of a man with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. The majority of our clients have mental health issues and many have made suicide attempts. Their welfare is of huge concern to us.

Cuts to legal aid mean that more work falls on charities and lawyers acting pro-bono. Catherine and I have been working closely with the legal charity, Bail for Immigration Detainees, (Bid) on two complex cases. Catherine's work in achieving an out of time appeal for the client was instrumental to his grant of bail which will mean he is reunited with his wife, although an address still has to be found. The Probation Service would not approve their marital home as a bail address. This is a frequent occurrence and barrier to release, now that Section 4 bail addresses, which were provided by the Home Office, have been abolished. In my case I am working closely with Bid and the client's sister to obtain his release on immigration bail from prison, oppose his deportation and access proper mental health treatment.

We were sad to say goodbye to Iqvinder Sokhal the manager of Bid's Prison Team who has left to take on a new post in another organization. Iqvinder messaged us shortly before her departure to say, "It has been a pleasure to work with you and it is invaluable that you are able to refer to Bid. We hope that you will continue to refer to Bid."

These thoughts were entirely reciprocated; we wish Iqvinder well and warmly welcome her successor **Clemence Aymon**.

Casework Statistics

In the year April 2017- 2018 we have seen 66 people, 22 of which are ongoing cases and 12 are intensive. Four people have been granted bail, two people were deported and two returned voluntarily. Sadly, one client died in prison. We have seen clients from Afghanistan, Algeria, Albania, Bangladesh, Chile, Eritrea, Ghana, India, Iran,

Italy, Jamaica, Nigeria, Portugal, Pakistan, Morocco, Romania, Russia, Turkey, Seychelles, Sri-Lanka, Sudan, Zambia

It is a huge privilege to work with so many nationalities.

Conclusion

I hope that the recent exposure of the inhuman treatment of the Windrush migrants will result in a shift in government policy in the treatment of all migrants. There is a movement to end the Hostile Environment which is receiving increased publicity and Kent Refugee Help can certainly be counted as part of that. The 2014 Immigration Act must be repealed.

Kate Adams, Caseworker

Having come full circle historically, from volunteer surety provider for KRH, to staff caseworker, I returned after closure of the Dover Detention centre, to voluntary case support for those formerly detained; mostly with long term clients and friends whose continued fight for justice in the increasingly bitter climate for refugees, often goes on and on for many years.

Within the last year, I have seen the media attention generated by the 'Windrush' scandal as an opportunity to challenge long term H.O. practice, in light of an on going case. To quote a prominent Human rights lawyer I have contacted: 'Looking at the outline (as sent by myself) it does seem to me that there may be a decent public law challenge to what is in effect a policy of constructive detention – i.e.: making the terms of TA so onerous that is impossible for individuals to comply.'

Another really positive case outcome has seen a client successfully overturn previous court rulings to be granted LTR (when eventually processed by H.O.!). The joy of coming before an open-minded judge, with client's friends and spouse's Spanish father (a high ranking policeman flown in specially) present, provides all the hours and years of battling an implicitly hostile system, with the necessary impetuous to return to the fray!

Pete Keenan, Volunteer Casework

RIP Marjan A Doud

Mr. Marjan, AKA JABAR HAMAD, sadly passed away in a tragic circumstance in prison early this year. He was found unresponsive in his cell room, and the causes reported are heart failure and possibly drug related. The event was predictable given his health circumstances; still I was personally not prepared at all.

I was not prepared when his brother phoned; I was not prepared when asked to help his family with issues following his death. Thus, I have gone through many emotions. Members of the Sudanese community kindly helped with the coroner's procedure for the burial. I wouldn't normally get involved, but his case was exceptional, he was not just a client; he was also a fellow countryman. I sincerely hoped to see a very different ending.

We have been supporting Marjan A Doud for almost three years. His case first came to our attention in 2015 through the Sudanese Visitors group, another support group I am involved with, and organized by Waging Peace, a London based charity supporting refugees. The Prison work was out of the scope of the group, therefore I referred him to KRH.

Kate and I paid him an initial visit in October 2015 at HMP Maidstone, Kent and we continued to assist him until his untimely death. On our first visit we learnt that he was a torture survivor and had numerous medical issues, including: depression, diabetes, high blood pressure and heart problems. He entered the UK via the Libyan route to Europe, claimed asylum several times in the UK, and returned to Italy at least twice. When living in the UK, he told us that he was couch-surfing with friends while working illegally (washing cars). He denied any wrong doing, and kept to his story, that he was stopped by the police randomly on the street, faced charges and was later convicted for a crime he had not committed. He served his time (5 years), and was subsequently held under immigration rules. While helping him we had to deal with many issues of neglect, reported abuses (whilst in H.M. custody), symptoms of depressions and other emotional difficulties.

I would like to highlight just one incident here that happened at the Verne IRC, shortly after his heart procedure. At around 8:00 pm on the 13/04/16 he requested urgent help. We got in touch with his solicitor who immediately responded. Here's her report following the visit: "I attended on Mr Marjan at around 12:30 yesterday, to check on how he was doing and noted that he was in low spirits. Through an interpreter, he instructed us that he was not getting his medicine. He had advised us previously that he had been self-administering his prescribed medication since his release from hospital, but had not been given his medication since he was placed in CSU isolation."

This is only one documented example of numerous instances of failure in the duty of care, whilst subsisting at H.M.'s pleasure that he reported.

After the solicitor's intervention on this matter, he was transferred immediately to another institution, a standard punitive method it might be said, for discouraging formal complaint, creating a sense of instability and insecurity in an already vulnerable individual – who in Marjan's case had only just had major heart surgery. It also crucially, threatened the capacity of his Legal representative's ability to continue with his case, the move rendered him geographically outside of the firm's area – so he lost his solicitor as a result.

He eventually with our support won his appeal and was bailed out in July 2017 but ironically at the point of freedom it all became too much; he absconded and got into trouble again.

Unfortunately, his traumatic death is not an isolated case.

We are sharing his story with hope to raise awareness about the impact of the overlooked trauma and the neglect inside these institutions.

Raga Gibreel caseworker



A photo of Muhammad who spoke at the private view of the *Our Lives* exhibition. Muhammad is one of our clients, former foreign national prisoner and an ex-detainee.

.... in Pentonville prison I had no clue what would happen to me next. I had no idea. Fortunately, I met Kate Adams from Kent Refugee Help, and for the first time I disclosed my personal matters. At that stage, I came to realise that being a foreign national, I am a human being. I am not just a foreign national, which has no regard for being human. I was never treated as human when I was in prison.

I came out of prison. After one month they put me in detention. I phoned Kate, and she was there for me. I was the one among all these detainees who found that I have got something, I have got support, there is someone behind me – this is Kent Refugee Help.

Now I am an asylum seeker, and again Kent Refugee Help is helping me. I am homeless, I have no accommodation, no money to feed myself; but whenever I contact Kate, I get advice all the time, I get referred to other charities and where I can get support. It feels like being human (speech at private view)

Events

I Live Here – Mixed Exhibition – in Canterbury / Whitstable



KATE ADAMS



CHRIS BIRD



HENRY COCKBURN

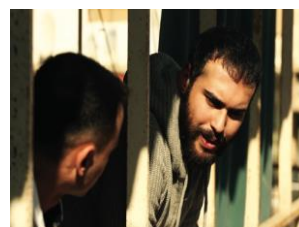
‘The Scene From the Bekaa’



SHAHD KHETO REUNION FILM



MOHAMMED SHURBAJI
I MAKE MY OWN FUTURE DOC.



HASSAN AKOUL
OPTIMISM VIDEO



MAHABBA GHARZEDDINE
MY CHILDHOOD IS MINE
21 ORIGINAL DRAWINGS AND
PAINTINGS BY CHILDREN



MOHAMED AL JUNDE
OUR DAILY LIFE
PHOTOESSAY BY YOUNG PEOPLE



ABDEL RAHMAN MORAD
I HAVE TO CHANGE MY ROUTE
SONG, 2'09"

I Live Here, a mixed exhibition, opened on July- August 2017 at Conquest House Gallery in Canterbury to coincide with Kent Refugee Help's 10th Anniversary. The exhibition was then transferred to the Beach Creative in Herne Bay.

I Live Here was co-organised by Bahriye Kemal and Kate Adams in dialogue with Seenaryo. The exhibition consisted of a selection of paintings, prints and drawings by artist – Kate Adams, Chris Bird and Henry Cockburn – from Kent and London in support of Kent Refugee Help. It also featured audio-visual artworks by emerging Syrian Artists living in Lebanon in a showcase called ‘The Scene From the Bekaa’ supported by Seenaryo and Women Now. Seenaryo is a non-profit arts and education organisation that works with Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, and Women Now is a Syrian grassroots civil society established by Samar Yazbek.

The exhibition was very well attended with over 70 people and many sales. The proceeds of sales went to Kent Refugee Help and refugee children in Lebanon.

Our Lives- An Exhibition of Art Work by Foreign National Prisoners



KENT REFUGEE HELP supporting refugees and migrants in prison

OUR LIVES

Exhibition of Art
by Foreign National Prisoners and former prisoners

Guest artist: Nasrin Parvaz - Painter and Writer
Nasrin is a political exile who spent 8 years in prison in Iran.

The Fishslab Gallery
11 Oxford Street
Whitstable CT5 1DB

May 1-8th 2018
10am-5pm
Private View:
Friday May 4th 6.30- 8.30 pm

The exhibition will be opened at the preview by our
MP Rosie Duffield

"By telling our hidden stories through art this exhibition brings light
in the darkness to those of us buried in the prison system.
It is important for everyone." - Comment from a former prisoner
and contributor to the show.

Please contact info@kentrefugeehelp.org.uk
Mobile: 07703788773
www.kentrefugeehelp.org.uk



Building on the success of *I Live Here*, the art exhibition which coincided with our 10th Anniversary AGM, I co-curated with Bahriye Kemal KRH Trustee, *Our Lives*, an exhibition of art work by foreign national prisoners which was displayed at the Fishslab Gallery from May 1 -8 in Whitstable. *I Live Here* explored issues of both belonging and displacement in multiple landscapes which are relevant to the experience of migration. *Our Lives* was specifically about giving a voice to foreign prisoners through art. It was an opportunity to showcase their considerable talent while also challenging negative stereotypes which abound in the media and are promoted by politicians for electoral gain. I met with Paul Fry, Deputy Head of Education at HMP Maidstone and Kirkland Lawrence the art teacher at HMP Maidstone. Paul was keen to work with KRH on this project as he hoped to initiate art as therapy for foreign nationals in Maidstone, particularly those suffering from trauma and related mental health issues. A goal which has since been achieved much to his credit.

A workshop, The Village, for ex -prisoners and former immigration detainees led by Gary Studley, a local poet, produced a series of individual “maps” which referenced significant landmarks such as a house, school or Mosque in real or imaginary landscapes. These simple, elegant drawings were exhibited next to the powerful abstract paintings by Kadour Milnyali derived from memories of North Africa and compelling portraits from black history by Windrush artist Everal Hall who has now been released from HMP Maidstone. Many complex and beautiful drawings were submitted by prisoners from HMP Pentonville which had to be shown anonymously due to their prisoner status. Nasrin Parvaz, an Iranian exile, was our guest artist. She exhibited paintings which document her eight years detention and torture in various prisons in Iran, alongside her poetry. Nasrin’s novel, *The Secret Letters from X to A* is to be published shortly by Victorina Press.

Our Lives proved to be a very popular exhibition; about 70 people attended the Private View. The Fishslab Gallery overflowed with friends and supporters as well as our MP Rosie Duffield who opened the show, local councillors, prison officers and staff, including Paul Fry who contributed to the speeches, and Muhammad, one of our clients who travelled from London to be with us. Through the duration of the exhibition people who came to the gallery wanted to discuss both the artwork and the issues behind it. As well as raising awareness and the profile of KRH, *Our Lives* has inspired others to collaborate with us. Author and journalist Chris Stone favourably reviewed the exhibition for the Whitstable Gazette and an online version of this with images of the art work was posted on social media:

It Takes a Prisoner To Set Us Free. Jon Eldude filmed the exhibition and this has been edited and produced as a video by Tim Cronin, Tim Cronin Media, working with prisoners at HMP Maidstone. Tim has offered to make a film about our work for Prison TV. We have been approached by another artist who would like to work with us and plan to meet with her soon.

Kent Refugee Help is very grateful to everyone who helped to make *Our Lives* such a successful project; most of all the prisoners, refugees and migrants who shared their artwork and so their hidden stories.

Kate Adams
Caseworker

Training

Kent Refugee Help attended various training events this year, which enable us to improve skills and techniques towards generating a wider impact. The training also provides us with the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with other charities that work with refugees in the UK.

In June, one of trustees is due to attend the Ex-Detainee conference run by Samphire in London. In addition, one of trustees is due to attend **the New Beginnings Fund**, and a training day on Bail, Detention and the Abolition of Temporary Admission in London

KRH is in the final process of applying for registration by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) to provide legal advice and representation in immigration and asylum law matters, as a not-for-profit organization. The benefit for our clients would be considerable, since it is at present extremely difficult to secure such advice and representation. We hope it may also open fresh sources of funding.

Looking Forward...

As a result of the state of the world and hostile environment towards people seeking asylum, the need for our work increases all the time. We are very grateful to the support of our volunteers and friends upon whom we depend for so much.

Our work in supporting refugees and asylum seekers is more urgent than ever, and we will do our utmost to make their voices heard.



Unnamed Landscape by Kadour

The Gift

My name is Kadour – I was born to learn
I have a gift. Its best to start in the dark –
Where you are – you are going to be different.

[...]

I came from another country twenty-seven years ago
Now I look in the mirror and even my colour is different
I came and they put me in prison;

in prison the language was different

I am solo. I have been in adventures without limits.
I crossed borders, one after another
I saw trees one after another; each country has a family
tree,

[...]

I lost my colour, I lost my language;
I look in the mirror to see my reality.
When I dream it's in English

And sometimes – I dream in Algerian.