

Pathfinder University Grantees: 2008 Project Summaries

The following nine universities were awarded Pathfinder University Grants by the CARA/SAR UK Universities Network in February 2008 with the financial support of the Sigrid Rausing Trust. The objective of these grants was to provide selected UK universities with seed funding to assist efforts in identifying, coordinating and developing internal and external capacities, mechanisms and infrastructures to support refugee and other threatened academics in the UK into appropriate employment or engagement.

1. The Central School of Speech and Drama

The School of Professional and Community Development (SPCD) within the Central School of Speech and Drama (CSSD) will use the grant to improve the spoken English language and communication skills of refugee academics aiming to work in academic job roles. The teaching will be delivered through a series of workshops and will target two small groups of refugee academics. Part of the project will be run nationally for which CSSD are seeking a partner. The project will develop a model of teaching, based on the sound level rather than the word level, that could be used across the HE sector.

2. Chichester University

University of Chichester's project, the South of England Enabling Displaced Scholars (SEEDS) project, will identify and support displaced scholars (both asylum seekers and academic refugees) based in the South of England. Through collaboration primarily with the University of Winchester, the project aims to:

- identify displaced scholars in the South of England;
- audit their needs;
- develop a support programme for refugee academics including access to University language support; careers advice; peer mentoring and professional development;
- develop regional partnerships between HEI and other organisations across the South to raise awareness of and support refugee academics.

3. Glasgow Caledonian University

Glasgow Caledonian University's (GCU) grant will be used to develop GCU's 2007 pathfinder project by aiming to build capacity within GCU, and other HEIs, to offer wider opportunities for refugee academic mentoring and work experience programmes. The project time will be used to set up relevant infrastructure, with actual support activities (e.g. mentoring support) starting the academic year 2008/9. Project activities will include firstly developing a refugee academic mentoring and work shadowing scheme in GCU. Incentives for staff to act as mentors will include linking this to continuing professional development and accreditation. The mentoring will be developed in collaboration with the Glasgow Mentoring Network and the Bridges programme. This will also inform the internationalisation of GCU's curriculum. The second main activity will be the development of a Resource Pack for mentors to support a professional development and work shadowing programme for refugee academics, which will be integrated in the Manual of Good Practice to be developed by CARA. The resource pack would be developed through collaboration with other universities in the West of Scotland, to encourage greater opportunities for similar schemes in the wider university community.

4. Leeds Metropolitan University

Leeds Metropolitan's grant will be used to recruit a regional support worker, tasked with establishing a support network for academically qualified refugees residing in the Yorkshire and the Humber (Y&H) region. The project aims to:

- guide the 14 Universities in the Y&H region in establishing support mechanisms for refugee academics (e.g. mentoring, courses, employment advice);
- support at least half the Universities in establishing a designated Refugee Academic Regional Support Worker to mobilise University resources to support refugee academics;
- to procure funds to enable a regional co-ordinator for Universities to sustain this work in the long term.

The project will be supported by the Yorkshire & Humber Regional Migration Partnership and Yorkshire Universities.

5. Roehampton University

Roehampton University's grant will be used to develop an individualised support programme for refugee academics including academic needs assessment; training of existing University service providers and academic mentors; developing advice manuals for refugee academics and staff; supporting refugee academics to contribute to the University through teaching and research; access to the PG Cert. in Higher Education; and development of a web portal access point for refugee academics. Roehampton's project will be overseen by a team led by the Pro Vice-Chancellor, including both academic and administrative staff and

Crucible, the University's Centre for human rights and social justice, will manage the core support programme.

6. The School of Oriental & African Studies (SOAS), University of London

SOAS' grant will be used to establish a special programme for female academic refugees, including those with refugee status, asylum seekers and those who have fled to other countries as a result of persecution (particularly Iraqis who have fled to the surrounding region). The programme will be managed by the Centre for Gender Studies at SOAS. Activities will include: a. a short research project, including a literature review and interviews with female refugee academics to identify needs, challenges and gaps in existing provision; b. mapping out existing systems within SOAS; c. engaging in staff development, particularly mentoring skills for staff who volunteer to get involved in the programme and; d. fund-raising. Concurrently the programme aims to support three affiliated female academics through: mentoring (support and guidance on academic skill development and re-entry into the labour market as well as more personal support); skill development (English language training, work-shadowing, research skills and generic and transferable skills); and possibly paid sessional part-time lecturing to gain experience. Finally, the programme will aim to share learning through a resource package for other universities as well as a dedicated Virtual Learning Environment site.

7. Sunderland University

Sunderland's grant will be used to further embed the support service for refugee scholars established through the pathfinder first round; to liaise with other North East (NE) Universities and enable them to learn from Sunderland's experiences; as well as to produce a resource pack for Universities, especially those in the North East, capturing lessons learnt. Specific project activities will include delivering a seminar and networking event to five regional Universities, to disseminate information about Sunderland University's policies and CARA and share good practice in relation to refugee academics, aiming to create a forum for future work. Meetings will also be held with other Universities in the NE region to discuss future collaborations for supporting refugee academics. The project will continue to provide direct assistance to refugee academics and will work across a number of different schools within the University.

8. University of East London

The grant will be used to establish a Transitional Professional Development Scheme for Refugee Academics/Scholars at Risk (TPDS). The scheme will be underpinned by three sets of activities: a. intra-University networking, advocacy and co-ordination across services and centres, identifying relevant services and raising awareness of UEL's responsibilities to refugee academics; b. development of a policy document outlining the TPDS; c. working with refugee communities to consolidate UEL's role in supporting refugee academic activities, through the provision of internships for instance with organisations that UEL have existing ties with. The scheme will be co-ordinated by the Refugee Research Centre at UEL. The TPDS will be fully rolled out in the 2008/9 academic year, enabling five refugee academics initially to participate in the scheme, through mentoring and other relevant support.

9. University of the West of England

The pathfinder project of the University of the West of England Network of Academic Support for the Advancement of Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrant Workers (NASARMW) seeks to create a sustainable structure within the University and its federation where scholars at risk can find support such as training, mentoring, work placement, professional development, and work shadowing. The project aims to identify support as well teaching and research opportunities for scholars at risk; build links with refugee organisations; identify the needs of scholars at risk; source funding for the continuation of the project and; compile of a report on the findings. The project will further aim to make contact with regional universities, encouraging CARA Network membership; develop structures of support for scholars at risk; as well as develop a web page accessible to relevant regional institutions.

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