

# Metropolis Conference

## Workshop: Recognising Prior Learning in a Global Economy

### APEL for Refugees

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# Objectives

- **To familiarise the participants with APEL practice for refugee professionals**
- **To raise awareness about refugees' prior learning and importance of acknowledging it in the receiving societies**
- **To inspire participants to develop similar services**

## UK Context

- **Universities are autonomous institutions**
- **Role of the voluntary and community sector in delivery of services to refugees**
- **700+ refugee agencies and refugee community organisations in the UK**
- **In 2007, 23,430 asylum claims in UK**
- **Restrictive legislation: Asylum seekers are not allowed to work or train for work and are charged overseas fees for HE**

# Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit (1 )

- Established in 1995
- A unit within Dept. of Applied Social Sciences  
Specialises in services for refugee and  
asylum seeker professionals
- Fields: employment, training and education

# Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit (2)

## Services:

- Information, Advice and Guidance;
- University-accredited courses;
- Research and Evaluation;
- Online guides for advisers, refugees and asylum seekers;
- Higher Education for Refugees and Asylum seekers Network: <http://www.heran.org.uk/>

# What do refugees experience on arrival? (1 )

- Trauma and confusion
- Host society's suspicious attitude: 'bogus asylum seekers', 'benefit scroungers'
- Humiliation: economic, cultural, social, educational

## What do refugees experience on arrival? (2)

- Lack of knowledge about the education and employment culture in the receiving society
- Lack of recognition of their prior knowledge, skills and experience

# Why APEL for refugees? (1 )

- Reverse the ‘deficit’ model to an ‘empowering’ model
- Help them to manage the encounter with new educational and socio-cultural paradigms
- Portfolio as alternative evidence as most cannot bring certificates due to fleeing
- Offering a bridge to link the ‘past’ to the ‘future’

## Why APEL for refugees? (2)

- Self awareness as a result of reflective learning
- Ownership of learning process
- Higher Education recognition
- An environment of peer support and respect for prior learning
- Constructing a respectable 'home' in exile

# **The Assessment of Prior Experiential Learning Programme (APEL)**

## **Routes into Higher Education and Employment**

# Programme Outline

The programme is delivered as three modules:

- **Portfolio Building for the purposes of AP(E)L**
- **Essential Skills Development**
- **Orientation for Education and Employment**

# Portfolio Building for the purposes of AP(E)L

- In-depth reflection on educational and employment experience
- In-depth reflection on transferability of skills and processes of change
- Identification and description of learning outcomes
- Identification of long and short term aims

# Learning Outcomes (1)

- **Identification of skills, knowledge and understanding**
- **Description of personal and subject-based learning outcomes**
- **Development of professional and academic language**

# Learning Outcomes (2)

- **Increased understanding of UK education and employment systems and practices**
- **Identification of clear aims for personal and professional development**
- **Awareness of cross-cultural issues**

# A portfolio can be used:



- to gain exemption from university programmes
- for personal development
- when applying for jobs
- to help in identifying training or educational needs

**Thank you!**

**RAGU website**

[www.londonmet.ac.uk/ragu](http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/ragu)

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