

Bulletin 19 September 2008

SDV News and events

Fundraising

We have raised over **£75** through easyfundraising so far this quarter. If five more of you sign up for a month's free trial with blockbuster by the end of September, we will reach over £100 – that's more than three visits paid for.

Go to the "easyfundraising for SDV" page of the SDV website for a link to easyfundraising. You need to register first - but that is quick and easy! Then click on the "FREE funds" tab at the top of the easyfundraising page. There are also details of lots of other ways to get free funds.

Please also remember to go through this site if you are doing any online shopping. We can raise a lot of money from insurance companies if you buy contents, holiday and car insurance online through easyfundraising. Direct Line will make a donation of £50 if you buy home insurance online through easyfundraising

Please also remember easysearch – 10 searches a day can raise about £20 in a year. If all visitors did this, we could pay for over 15 visits

Find details of both easyfundraising and easysearch on the SDV website.

<http://www.sdv.org.uk/id15.html>

Immigration, asylum and detention news

Government to sign up fully to the UN convention on the rights of the child

The government is likely to sign the UN convention on the rights of the child in full, the BBC has learned. For the last 17 years the UK has kept an opt-out to allow them to lock up child migrants and asylum seekers. Children's Commissioner Sir Al Aynsley-Green and Jasmine Whitbread, of Save the Children, discussed on the Today programme this morning whether children seeking asylum should be treated just like all other children. Click on the link below to hear the discussion

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/default.stm>

More from the New Statesman's No Place for Children Campaign

Only Asylum-seekers' children can be locked up without committing a crime. Gillian Slovo visited two families at Yarl's Wood. What she heard made her feel "numb"

<http://www.newstatesman.com/uk-politics/2008/09/yarl-wood-children-mother>

The immigration minister defends the detention of children

<http://www.newstatesman.com/uk-politics/2008/09/children-families-immigration>

The government claims to be looking into alternatives to detention for minors - but so far its pilot schemes have been disastrously flawed. There are more humane and effective options, writes Lisa Nandy of the Children's Society

<http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2008/09/families-children-asylum>

'My classmates came to the rescue when I was threatened with deportation'

Children can be cruel, but when the Government tried to deport Lorin Sulaiman to the land that killed her father, she saw her classmates in a very different light...

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/my-classmates-came-to-the-rescue-when-i-was-threatened-with-deportation-926525.html>

Good bye XL, we won't miss you

XL airlines, the air company that spectacularly collapsed last week leaving thousands of holiday makers stranded around the world, was a nasty company, which was also involved in charter deportation flights of refused asylum seekers to some of the worst regimes in the world.

In February 2007 XL airlines was involved in forcibly removing 40 adults and children on one flight to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The flight was a cynical attempt by the Home Office to remove people just before a High Court ruling on the safety of returned asylum seekers in DRC. Evidence had been presented to the court showing that asylum seekers being returned to the DRC were routinely detained by Congolese security forces and tortured. Home Office immigration officials would knowingly hand returned asylum seekers to the Congolese authorities at the airport in Kinshasa.

One family from Glasgow, Eduard and Angelique Lukombo with their two small children, one aged four and one only 11 months old, managed to get taken off the flight just before the plane took off. On their return to Glasgow they described people being physically sick with fear and screaming and begging as they were being forced onto the plane. All four returned to Glasgow and were given indefinite leave to remain last year.

Foreigners 'should face NHS care ban'

Immigrants should be denied free NHS care until they have lived in UK for at least 10 years, the head of the body representing Scotland's patients has claimed.

Dr Jean Turner, chief executive of the Scotland Patients Association and a former independent MSP for Bearsden and Strathkelvin, believes many foreigners regard Britain as a "soft touch" and are moving here to take advantage of free medical treatment.

Currently, any person who has lived in the UK for longer than a year is entitled to free health care. However, Turner believes that those who plan to stay in the country, including refugees and asylum seekers, should expect to fund their own medical expenses for at least a decade.

The former anaesthetist and family doctor said visitors to this country who do not have valid medical insurance should be denied entry.

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/scotland/article4748886.ece>

London Detainee Support Group launch new project to highlight long term detention

Proposals to detain terrorist suspects for up to 42 days without charge have attracted widespread condemnation. But with far less publicity, in detention centres and prisons across the UK, asylum seekers and migrants are routinely being detained for periods ten times longer. They are charged with no offence, and have no idea when their indefinite detention will come to an end. Many fall into despair: official statistics show that self-harm in detention has increased by 70% in the last year.

A new project aims to shine a light on this large-scale and ignored phenomenon. Detained Lives, a new initiative of London Detainee Support Group, will gather evidence and testimony from detainees who have been held for periods of one to two years and longer. The project plans to trigger wider debate about the civil liberties implications of this policy.

Jerome Phelps, Director of LDSG, said "The human impact of long-term detention is severe. More than half of the people we know in Colnbrook Immigration Removal Centre have already been detained for more than a year. Many of the people we work with are terrified that they will never be released."

Many detainees cannot be deported, often because they are stateless as their country refuses to accept them back. Others cannot be returned because countries like Iraq and Zimbabwe are too dangerous. Still others have lived from many years or decades in the UK, often since they were small children, and can no longer prove their original nationality. People from outside the EU who finish prison sentences, often for minor offences, are detained indefinitely even if deportation is impossible.

D, a detainee from Iraq, said "You cannot imagine what it is like to be locked up for two years. People like myself have agreed to go back to their own country, but the Home Office can't send us back. We don't know how long we are going to be locked up."

www.ldsg.org.uk

UK Asylum system condemned by Thomas Hammarberg, Commissioner for Human Rights for the Council of Europe

Among the points made in a memorandum based on visits he made to the UK in February and April 2008 are:

- Improvements must be introduced to strengthen effective respect for the rights of asylum-seekers and immigrants in the United Kingdom.
- The UK authorities should consider regulating the so-called 'Detained Fast Track' by introducing special legislation fully in compliance with the standards laid down by the European Convention on Human Rights,

- This type of detention should in particular be forbidden for vulnerable persons, such as unaccompanied minors, for whom alternative measures should be provided
- Asylum seekers should be kept in reception centres, not detention or removal premises.
- Action should be taken to limit drastically the use of administrative detention of migrants and recommended that a maximum time limit for such detention be introduced into domestic law.
- Further efforts are also needed to provide alternative solutions to detention for families and children

Read the full memorandum at:

<http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1339037&Site=CommDH&BackColorInternet=FEC65B&BackColorIntranet=FEC65B&BackColorLogged=FFC679>

Other news and events

The Chronicles of Irania, The Arches, Thursday 18 September 2008-Sat 20 Sep 2008

"Welcome. I am happy for you being here. I am from Irania, a country of happy people. I will be your host for the evening talking about this history. I know you've heard lots of stories about Irania but what I am about to tell you is the truth so forget everything else. Let us see the magic of the land, let us touch the wonder of this delight. Let me take you. You will learn. Let us not be strange."

This intimate one woman performance (directed by SDV chair, Catrin Evans) invites its audience on a journey into a land that is almost recognisable; into a land that you know but you do not know. Irania is a mystical place where truths, half-truths and un-truths circulate sometimes it's just easier to believe everything.

The Chronicles of Irania takes a playful and celebratory approach to exploring cultural misrepresentation. Through rich and provocative story-telling this performance explores the West's relationship with an almost mythical Eastern world. By blending fact and fiction into warped and twisted portrayals of Irania it examines the very real construction of the Middle-East and the West through screen flickers, world service crackles and the international pages of your newspaper. What impact does this complicated cultural folklore have upon a nation and its people?

Tickets have just gone on sale and the capacity is limited so please do contact the Arches to book your ticket as soon as possible.

Email: info@thearches.co.uk,

Box Office: 0141 565 1000 (Open 9am-8pm Mon-Sat / 12-6pm Sun)

www.thearches.co.uk/ChroniclesofIrania

What are we doing here? GFT Sunday 28 September 7.00pm

A special screening at the Glasgow Film Theatre examines the pros and cons of Western efforts to help poor countries.

Followed in the cinema by discussion between the audience and international development experts and a gathering in the bar afterwards.

What are we doing here?

Director Daniel Klein | Documentary | USA 2008 | 1h22m

At once brave and unassuming, *What Are We Doing Here?* follows three American brothers and their cousin as they travel from Cairo to Cape Town asking what happens to the money we give to charity? Why does so little seem to be changing? And could our so-called "humanitarian" interventions be doing more harm than good? An important and timely film that will change the way you think about Africa. *Followed by an audience-panel discussion asking "Where do we go from here?"*

To book tickets, call the GFT on 141 332 6535 or visit www.gft.org.uk

Supported by the World Development Movement Scotland

Campaigning to change the policies which keep people poor

www.wdmscotland.org.uk

www.takeoneaction.org.uk

Volunteer Induction Day, Saturday 4th October, 11am – 4pm UNITY Centre

The Unity Centre has played a crucial and unique role in providing solidarity to asylum seeker families in Glasgow over the last two and a half years. We provide friendly and desperately needed support for families when they face detention or being forcibly removed from the UK. The centre is independently run by a collective of volunteers and we share the responsibility of running the centre between us.

New volunteers are always welcome at the Unity Centre – you do not need to be an expert on asylum matters to be a volunteer. All you need is to be able to commit to at least half a day a week helping at the centre.

We will be holding an induction day / open day for new volunteers on Saturday 4th October at the Unity Centre.

The day will run through the different ways in which we try to help asylum seekers when they have been detained as well as looking at the previous ways we have helped people with housing, benefits and other legal issues.

It will be a good opportunity to find out what we do and how we organise things at the Unity Centre. It'll also be a good time to meet some of the members of the volunteer collective or if you are just interested in visiting the centre then please come along!

You can find out more information from our website at www.unitycentreglasgow.org or phone 0141 427 7992

Bring food to share - there are shops nearby.

The Great Trade Robbery: Tuesday 7th October, 7:00pm

How the EU Trade Strategy is Affecting Poor Countries.
The World Development Movement invites you to an evening of
TALKS, DEBATE AND FILM
SCIAF Offices, 19 Park Circus, G3 6BE
Come along and find out what you can do!
FREE ENTRY & FREE WINE!
For more information, contact
Kate Robinson on 0777 5653 467

www.wdm.org.uk/trade

Jobs you might be interested in

Positive Action in Housing is recruiting for the following vacancies:

- **Project Coordinator** – Working with New Migrants, £22,672 per annum+ 5% contributory pension scheme, 30 days annual leave + 15 days public holidays
- **Outreach Worker (Part Time) – Working with New Migrants**, 21 Hours per week/3 Days, £ 18,290 per annum (pro rata) + 5% contributory pension scheme 30 days annual leave (pro rata) + relevant public holidays
- **Project Officer (Casework & Outreach) Part Time**, 14 Hours per week/2 Days £ 21,251.41 per annum (pro rata) + 5% contributory pension scheme, 30 days annual leave (pro rata) + relevant public holidays
- **Administrative Officer**, £16,097 per annum + 5% contributory pension scheme, 30 days annual leave + 15 days public holidays

Closing date for all posts: 12 noon, Friday, 3rd October 2008

Full details available at:

<http://www.paih.org/Latest-News-Appeals/September-2008.html>

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<http://www.guardianmarketing.co.uk/vouchers.html>