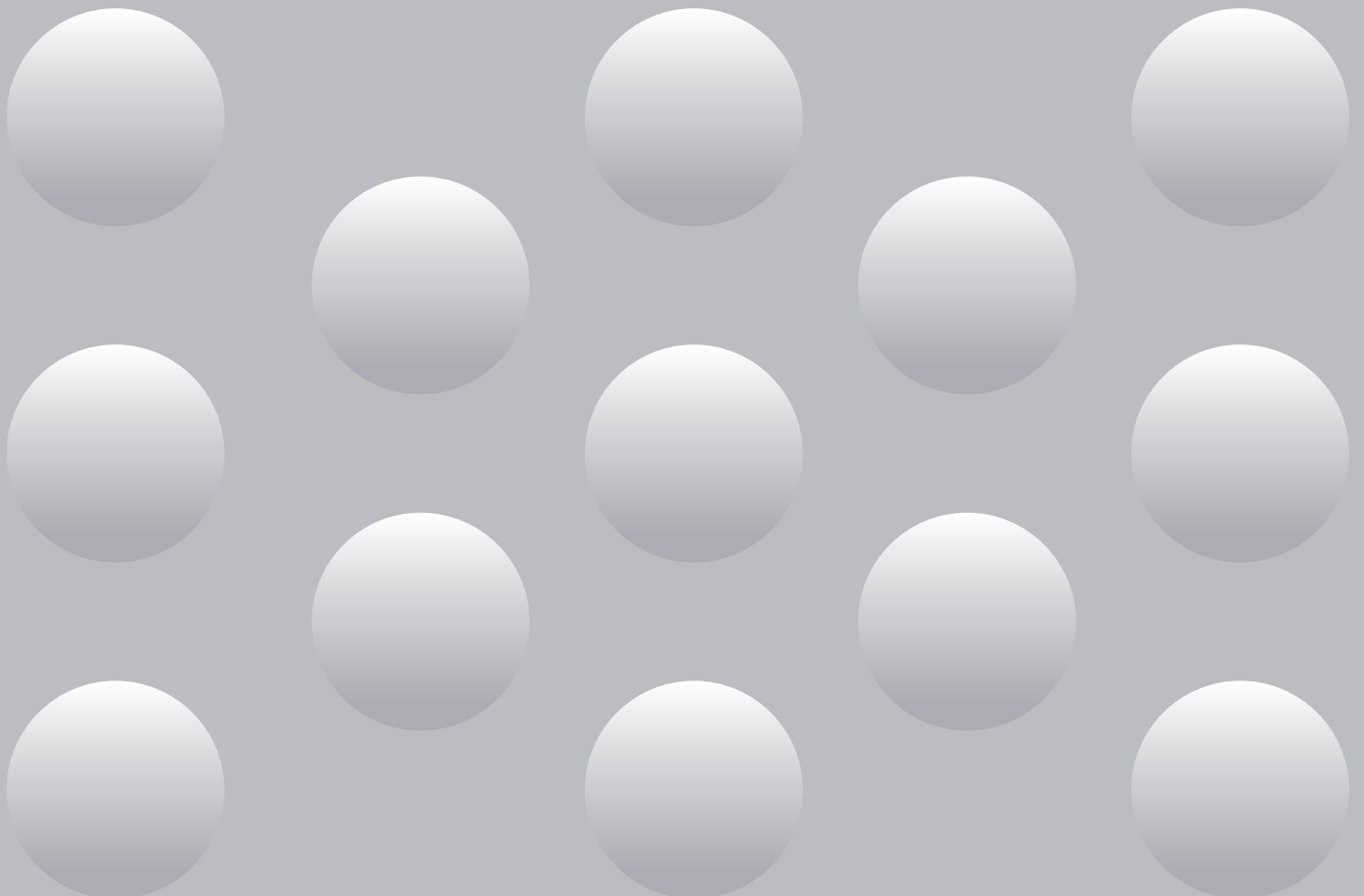




Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees  
**ANNUAL REPORT 2006-07**

MAKING INFORMATION COUNT



# ICAR staff, interns and researchers 2006-2007

## STAFF

Neil Amas, Consultant, Co-Director (Development)  
Sarah Eldridge, Media Officer  
Jake Lagnado, Information Officer  
Christopher McDowell, Director  
Gareth Morrell, Researcher  
Jonathan Price, RAL Researcher  
Bob Vinteller, Web Manager  
Sophie Wainwright, Information Manager  
Kim Ward, RAL Programme Manager

## INTERNS

### MA Refugee Studies:

Laura Hall  
Ben Harvey  
Shona Johnson  
John McGeachy

### RAL interns:

Rossella Lo Conte  
Natalie Ondiak  
Maria Patterson  
Sarah Walker

## RESEARCHERS/ADVISORS

Dr Roger Grimshaw, Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, King's College London  
Clare Dunne assisted us in preparing ICAR's briefing on women refugees and asylum seekers

## ADVISORY GROUP

Maknun Ashami, Independent Consultant  
Alice Bloch (to November 2007), City University  
Alison Harvey, Immigration Lawyers Practitioners' Association  
Roger Jowell, Centre for Comparative Social Surveys  
Khalid Koser, Brookings Institute, Washington, DC  
Shamil Sharshak Ulu, YMCA  
Kate Smart, Refugee Council  
Tony Woodiwiss, City University, School of Social Sciences

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## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The success of ICAR turns principally on the talents and commitment of its staff. But hinges also on the quality of the information we gather, analyse and disseminate; the efficiency of the organisation's internal information sharing and our website; the injection of knowledge from external organisations and supportive individuals; and the institutional support we receive from City University, and of course our donors.

Success depends also on our ability to use the information we gather in ways that are most likely to achieve our objectives. Those objectives are to improve public understanding of asylum (why do we have an asylum system, who seeks asylum in the UK and why, what are the policies and what impacts do they have on people 'in the system'), make available credible information on asylum to a broad range of users (policy makers, practitioners, researchers and the media), and provide objective analysis of current issues through applied research.

Over the past year the ICAR team has thought hard about what opportunities there are to make our information count and how those opportunities could be best exploited. Connecting research and evidence to policy making in asylum has proven a considerable challenge in part because of the 'heat' that permeates the debate about asylum, and the political reactive nature of many policy decisions. In recent years some of that heat has dissipated, declining numbers of new arrivals has alleviated pressure and there is cautious confidence on the part of those developing reform agendas.

For ICAR our position is a straightforward one: good research and reliable information, we believe, leads to better policy making. The challenge for ICAR is to think about how policy-makers can best use research, for objective rather than selective evidence-based policymaking; how researchers can best use their findings in order to influence policy; how we may improve the interaction between researchers and policymakers; and finally, how our forms of 'engagement' need to change to increase the effectiveness of our work. In the opening sections of this Annual Report we set out some of that adaptive engagement under the headings: *developing new methods of engagement, providing context for debate and making research accessible*.

Also in the report, Neil Amas sets out ICAR's workplan and priorities for the coming twelve months. A selection of ICAR's main outputs are listed on page 10, and the report concludes with a financial report on income and expenditure for 2006/2007.

**DR CHRISTOPHER McDOWELL**  
**DIRECTOR**

## DEVELOPING NEW METHODS OF ENGAGEMENT

Information, media and governmental organisations are increasingly turning to online mechanisms to engage with their users. In the past twelve months, ICAR has further developed methods of online interaction, using its website to improve engagement among different stakeholders in the asylum and refugee sector and beyond. A central feature of ICAR's *Refugee Rights and Responsibilities* project has been a series of online consultations. Each consultation has been launched by an expert commentary from ICAR staff or commissioned writers on a specific issue related to refugee rights and responsibilities, often touching also on wider issues of citizenship and multiculturalism. Users of the ICAR website were invited to comment on these pieces and submit their own commentary on the issues under discussion. The consultations, we believe, represent an innovative space for debate about asylum and refugee issues.

Comments and submissions to the consultations have been received from a wide range of individuals, including asylum seekers and refugees, academics, local and central government officials, refugee advocates and members of the general public. The value of the consultations can be seen in the generation of informed and accessible debate and particularly in influencing the research design for the *Refugee Rights and Responsibilities* project. ICAR has learned important lessons for the future development of interactive methods of engagement and will to replicate this approach in the coming year.

[WWW.ICAR.ORG.UK/CONSULTATIONS](http://WWW.ICAR.ORG.UK/CONSULTATIONS)



## PROVIDING CONTEXT FOR DEBATE

ICAR is constantly trying to identify pathways by which information and research evidence can feed either directly, or indirectly through third parties, into wider policy debates. One such example is our work over the last twelve months with the Independent Asylum Commission (IAC). The IAC is in the process of conducting an in-depth investigation into the operation of the asylum system in the UK by gathering written evidence and oral testimony from a wide range of key organisations and individuals. Staff at ICAR have assisted the Commission by researching and writing a series of policy briefings on issues pertinent to the asylum system. The briefings are designed to inform and provide policy context for the Commissioners prior to the public hearings that have taken place across the UK over the last year.

*'ICAR has provided briefings for the Independent Asylum Commission on six aspects of the Asylum System: determinations; detention; vulnerable groups; removals; appeals; support and destitution. These have been invaluable for our work. They have been concise, focused and extremely well-informed. If, as all the Commissioners hope, the IAC is able to make telling recommendations that lead to positive changes in the Asylum System, it will be in no small part due to the excellent work done by ICAR.'*

**Canon Professor Nicholas Sagovsky**  
**IAC Commissioner**

Collaborative work with the IAC is currently taking place to compile the Commission's final report, due to be launched in Spring 2008. The report will combine the detailed policy analysis provided in the briefings with a wide range of supporting evidence and relevant case studies.

[WWW.ICAR.ORG.UK/BRIEFINGS](http://WWW.ICAR.ORG.UK/BRIEFINGS)



## MAKING RESEARCH ACCESSIBLE – RESEARCHING ASYLUM IN LONDON (RAL)

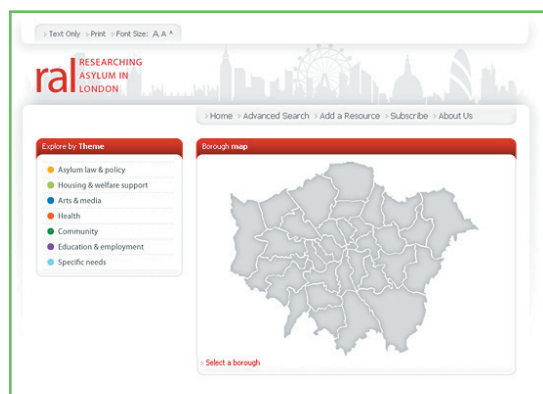
The principal aim of the Researching Asylum in London (RAL) database is to communicate research findings to policymakers and service providers working on refugee and asylum issues in London and beyond. Individuals working in the sector often have limited time to read research reports and extract key information relevant to their work. In light of this, the RAL database includes summaries of over 370 pieces of research highlighting their aims, methodology, key findings, conclusions and recommendations.

The database, the first of its kind in the UK, supports ICAR's broader aims of providing unbiased information and contributing to a broad evidence base for policymaking. Through RAL, ICAR actively seeks to engage with policymakers and service providers by providing e-bulletins with details of the latest research. A RAL Update service was launched in November 2007, which aims to keep relevant stakeholders up-to-date on the latest knowledge in the field.

Accessibility and ease of use are key priorities for the RAL database. The website has been designed for different types of users and to accommodate diverse needs. To this end, it is possible to search the database in several ways: by conducting a free text search; or browsing by theme, topic, refugee population and/or London borough.

The final project report, to be published in December 2007, details the findings of a small-scale research project looking at gaps in the research on refugees and asylum seekers in London.

[WWW.RESEARCHASYLUM.ORG.UK](http://WWW.RESEARCHASYLUM.ORG.UK)



## LOOKING FORWARD

As we find ourselves in the second year of our Three Year Strategic Plan (2006/9), a number of related factors pose important questions about the next two years and beyond: falling asylum application numbers; EU enlargement and the Government's policy focus on broader migration, integration and cohesion; and a reduction in asylum- and refugee-specific funding.

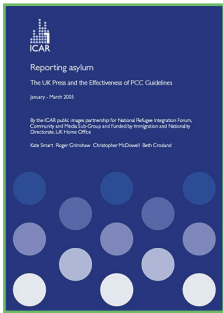
With these in mind, ICAR is looking to maintain its unique position, as an independent research and information centre about asylum and refugees in the UK, while adopting a more flexible approach towards international and wider migration dimensions. The UK refugee sector's current interest and knowledge of the refugee experience generally starts from the moment of arrival in Britain, with little consideration given to pre-arrival histories and ongoing transnational ties. ICAR will look to address these and other gaps in knowledge by broadening its research interests, whilst also taking greater consideration of international refugee issues, particularly as they impact on, or contrast with, the UK.

A number of organisations have commissioned ICAR to conduct consultancy work in the last 12 months due to our standing as a trustworthy source of independent and high quality information and research, including the Independent Asylum Commission, the Media Trust, Hammersmith and Fulham Refugee Forum and London Refugee Voice. Over the next 12 months we will respond to this demand by formally launching 'ICAR Consult', to exploit our expertise and knowledge base that will also help to diversify our funding base.

In setting priorities for next year, we have ensured that information remains at the heart of ICAR's work, that our capacity to undertake high quality research will be improved, enhanced by a new consultancy arm, and that we should build on the potential of both of these to inform and influence policy. ICAR's four key strategic objectives for 2007-2008 are:

- 1. Increase ICAR's long term funding to ensure the sustainability and security of staff and the organisation, prioritising organisational management, innovative projects and flagship programmes**
- 2. Promote public debate and influence policy through increasing outputs in relation to the ICAR website, publications and events**
- 3. Formally establish a recognised consultancy service to heighten profile, increase funding options, develop expertise and build knowledge**
- 4. Increase the capacity to produce high quality, applied research that supports ICAR's information and policy work**

# ICAR PUBLICATIONS AUGUST 2006 – SEPTEMBER 2007



Reporting Asylum: The UK Press and the Effectiveness of PCC Guidelines (March 2007)

## BRIEFING PAPERS

Asylum and security (December 2006)

Women refugees and asylum seekers in the UK (July 2007)

The Somali refugee community in the UK (July 2007)



## IAC BRIEFINGS

The operation of the asylum determination process (February 2007)

Detention of asylum seekers (March 2007)

Vulnerable groups in the asylum and determination process (May 2007)

Removals (June 2007)

The appeals process (September 2007)

Asylum support and destitution (October 2007)



## ARTICLES

'Beyond 'Do No Harm': The Challenge of Constructing Ethical Relationships in Refugee Research', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, September 2007, Catriona Mackenzie, Christopher McDowell, and Eileen Pittaway

'Mediterranean Solution? Chances of Success', International *Journal of Refugee Law*, September 2007, Susan Kneebone, Christopher McDowell and Gareth Morrell

## ICAR account statement 2006-2007

<b>total income 2006/2007</b>	<b>£225,950.00</b>
<b>balance carried over from 2005/2006</b>	<b>£233,530.71</b>
<b>total expenditure 2006/2007</b>	<b>£281,802.23</b>
<b>balance beginning 2007/2008</b>	<b>£177,678.48</b>

## Income

<b>total annual income</b>	<b>£225,950.00</b>
The Sigrid Rausing Trust - core salaries	£70,000.00
Esmee Fairbairn Foundation - Director salary	£43,450.00
New Philanthropy Capital - Anonymous Donation	£20,000.00
London Refugee Voice	£8,000.00
Other Consultancy work	£1,500.00
City Centre for London Research	£15,000.00
Services to City University	£68,000.00

## Expenditure

<b>total annual expenditure</b>	<b>£281,802.23</b>
Salaries	£238,004.49
Consultancy	£22,597.02
Staff Recruitment and Training	£703.13
Seminars and Conferences	£2,286.00
Books, Publications and Newspapers	£176.03
Information Technology	£1,408.00
Travel	£2,069.49
Hospitality and Subsistence	£1,709.16
Stationary and Postage	£0.00
Telephone	£1,223.00
Printing	£9,921.57
Art and Web Design	£7,273.29
Room Hire	£1,500.00
Overheads	£0.00
Miscellaneous	£220.00

## FUNDERS

The following organisation's provided funding for ICAR's core and research and consultancy activities in 2006-2007.

ICAR is very grateful for the continued support of:

**City Centre for London Research**

**Esmee Fairbairn Foundation**

**London Refugee Voice**

**New Philanthropy Captial**

**School of Social Sciences, City University**

**The Sigrid Rausing Trust**



## **CONTACT US**

**Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees (ICAR)**

**School of Social Sciences**

**City University**

**Northampton Square**

**London EC1V 0HB**

**E: [icar@city.ac.uk](mailto:icar@city.ac.uk)**

**Tel: 44 (0)20 7040 4596**

**[www.icar.org.uk](http://www.icar.org.uk)**

