

*the* INFORMATION CENTRE *about* asylum *and* refugees IN THE UK

**KING'S**  
*College*  
**LONDON**

**University of London**



**ICAR**

**Second Year Report**

**March 1<sup>st</sup> 2002 – July 31<sup>st</sup> 2003**

## About ICAR

The Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees (ICAR) is an independent centre set up to collect, record, compile and disseminate up to date, comprehensive and academically credible information about asylum and refugees in the UK. It aims to raise the level of public debate and to promote better understanding of the issues. It responds to the need for authoritative, independently generated information about complex and controversial issues, and presents this information without fear or favour. It does not advocate, except for the production and dissemination of more and better quality information.



ICAR was established in 2001. It has charitable objectives and is based in the School of Social Science and Public Policy at King's College London.

## What ICAR does

- ICAR identifies and records information, research and data on asylum and refugees in the UK from all available sources
- ICAR seeks out new, untapped sources in an effort to capture information that might otherwise be lost or remain isolated from other relevant or complementary work
- ICAR digests, analyses, reconfigures and synthesises information in order to increase its relevancy and widen its dissemination
- ICAR actively responds to enquiries and disseminates and presents best available information to a wide range of audiences and users
- ICAR develops and undertakes projects which enhance and extend its information activities and develop new opportunities and sources of information

These activities inform and are informed by five main bodies of evidence:

- Academic research, including postgraduate research
- Asylum seekers' and refugees' experiences of asylum and settlement in the UK
- The experiences of the general public regarding asylum seekers and refugees
- Local, regional and national government information and data
- Refugee agency and other voluntary sector information and data

## Staff

Kirsteen Tait (Director)  
Beth Crosland (Project Development Officer)  
Felicity Heyworth (Information Manager)  
Esme Peach (Researcher and website content manager).

ICAR contact details :  
[www.icar.org.uk](http://www.icar.org.uk) t: 020 7848 2103 e: [icar@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:icar@kcl.ac.uk)

## ICAR online

[www.icar.org.uk](http://www.icar.org.uk)  
pilot site launched in April 2002  
site redesigned in October 2002  
site relaunched in June 2003

As the internet is becoming central to communicating information to a wide range of organisations and individuals interested in asylum and refugees, ICAR has been refining its website to meet the needs of diverse users. Since early 2003, ICAR has allocated increased resources to developing its website and new products for the internet. In June 2003, we relaunched the website with new content and improved functionality and are now well on our way to meeting our goal of hosting a site that will serve as a first-stop-shop for information on the sector in all its guises and of interest to all its participants.

The site includes:

- A feature called Mapping the UK which aims to provide information about asylum and refugee issues as they relate to specific cities and towns in the UK. An interactive map allows the user to select a city or town of interest, and then links to historical, statistical, resource, project, real lives and contact information about that place
- An exhaustive summary of the research sector, which seeks to explain how research is commissioned, conducted and disseminated in the academic, government and ngo sectors. This service is accompanied by two searchable databases of research project and contact information
- A series of navigation guides, which are commissioned from experts and which aim to introduce the reader to particular asylum and refugee issues and populations in an approachable and comprehensive manner
- A separate section for information about the postgraduate network that ICAR hosts in partnership with UNHCR's UK office. It provides general information about the network, information on past and future events, an electronic registration page, back issues of the network newsletter, and a fully searchable database of network members
- A statistics section, where the first in a series of papers presenting the best available data on asylum seekers and refugees is available, as are statistical snapshots of applications from particular populations in the UK
- Digests of relevant publications, written to a standard format and intended to summarise and provide ordering information on reports of interest and importance to the sector
- Over 350 links to websites offering national, regional and local coverage, organised by type of information provider, subject and geographical coverage

For more information please contact:

Felicity Heyworth  
t: 020 7848 2103  
e: [felicity.heyworth@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:felicity.heyworth@kcl.ac.uk)

## Information enquiries

Answering enquiries is a key ICAR function. As a centre whose aim is to inform public opinion and encourage debate, ICAR strongly believes that individual enquiries are the building blocks to large scale change, and views the dissemination of credible, varied and contextualised information as a fundamental and unique feature of its role within the asylum and refugee sector. ICAR has not yet felt in a position to solicit enquiries or advertise its willingness and ability to answer them, and yet we are approached with ever increasing regularity by a range of individuals, referred to us from a variety of sources and looking for information on an innumerable selection of topics. ICAR's information collection and general in-house knowledge have grown considerably in the last year, and we feel increasingly confident about our ability to respond to these enquiries in an authoritative, organised and timely manner. It is our hope that, as staffing numbers and capacity increase, we will be able to advertise the service, invite enquiries and answer them even more promptly and in more detail.

ICAR started recording enquiries in June 2002, when it became apparent that they were becoming a core feature of our work. ICAR has logged enquiries which are fascinating in their range and diversity, and informative about people's needs and interests, current issues of concern, and the gaps and volume of information available on any given subject. Information requests come from, among others, researchers looking to identify previous work and/or contacts on a particular issue; colleagues looking for guidance or advice on a subject they feel they need to know more about; journalists researching a story; students looking for advice on and materials for their dissertations; and representatives from other sectors entirely who want or need to include asylum and refugee issues in their work.

A small sample of logged enquiries provides a sense of the scope and scale of the interests and needs of ICAR's user group. This list does not detail the response provided, as these are so varied, specific and often lengthy.

- A community liaison officer from Kent Police contacted ICAR in search of information on faith groups who provide sanctuary to asylum seekers.
- An independent researcher conducting research into drug abuse among refugee and asylum seeker populations, with a particular emphasis on the use of opium by the Somali population, wanted demographic data on refugees in London and recent research on the Somali population.
- A BBC researcher working on a series on racial harassment wanted suggestions of towns and contacts in them to look at this from the perspective of asylum seekers
- An associate professor from an American university writing a book on the scapegoating of immigrants post '9.11' asked ICAR to point him to possible UK contacts.
- A theatre production company organising a national tour of a refugee-themed play wanted suggestions of local agencies who might attend performances in their area.
- A local authority needed suggestions of speakers for a conference on community safety and racism
- A university tutor enquired about films on migration that he could use as course materials.
- A national radio station contacted us in search of a refugee and asylum seeker drop-in centre from which they could broadcast a live weekend programme.
- The Royal College of Nurses wanted contact details of organisations that might know of refugee nurses for a survey
- A teacher putting together a school conference on the relative merits of dispersal versus accommodation centres needed background information
- A funder requested contextual information on the refugee sector and current policies and practices to help formulate funding priorities

For more information please contact: t: 0207848 2103 e: [icar@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:icar@kcl.ac.uk)

## ICAR projects and publications

ICAR is involved in a number of projects that seek to organise and increase the body of available information and research on asylum and refugee issues in the UK. They are all concerned with identifying information sources and needs, collecting, recording, reconfiguring and disseminating information, expanding and boosting existing sources of good quality information and evidence, and gaining recognition for ICAR as the single most authoritative source of information about asylum and refugees in the UK.

- The **Making Better Use of Information and Data** project funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation is about providing tools and training to help build the research capacity of the refugee sector. Led by ICAR in partnership with Refugee Action, Refugee Council and a number of other agencies across the UK, the project is setting up a common system for sharing data and is developing a training pack to assist with designing a research agenda, a client casework database and collecting and using case studies.

For more information please contact: Beth Crosland t: 020 7848 2731 e: [beth.crosland@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:beth.crosland@kcl.ac.uk)

- The **Patterns of Refugee Settlement** project explores the potential of refugees' own accounts of settlement in the UK as a source of information and evidence for service and policy development by collating, analysing, and synthesising information and data on patterns and experiences of refugee settlement. It aims to increase understanding of the settlement process by identifying the existing knowledge base on where people of refugee origin have settled, the experiences of particular refugee communities in the UK and the ways in which research has involved refugees themselves. A report on the settlement patterns of Somalis in the UK will be available in the autumn.

For more information please contact: Kirsteen Tait t: 020 7848 2730 e: [kirsteen.tait@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:kirsteen.tait@kcl.ac.uk)

- The **Understanding the Stranger** project is about promoting understanding between local people and asylum seekers by identifying and meeting the information needs that arise when a significant number of asylum seekers are moved into a local area. The project has two stages. The first phase examines what has worked and what has not worked in terms of promoting understanding between local people and asylum seekers in several areas of the UK. This phase is funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and is currently underway: interim case study findings have been published and a final report is due in October 2003. The second phase will look at ways of providing the information that can help promote understanding to the people and organisations that need it.

For more information please contact: Beth Crosland t: 020 7848 2731 e: [beth.crosland@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:beth.crosland@kcl.ac.uk)

- the **Media Image, Community Impact** project is a short partnership research project about exploring the link between media and political coverage of asylum issues; patterns of racial incidents; and increased community tensions in London. This is an issue of immediate and growing concern to asylum seekers and refugees and to all those involved in community safety, including the Mayor of London, who has commissioned the research. ICAR is leading the research partnership.

For more information please contact: Kirsteen Tait t: 020 7848 2730 e: [kirsteen.tait@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:kirsteen.tait@kcl.ac.uk)

- In conjunction with UNHCR, ICAR has established a **Postgraduate Network** that aims to encourage networking and information sharing amongst postgraduates and other researchers studying refugee issues, and to raise the profile of postgraduate research within the refugee sector. This network was created to capture the explosion of interest in asylum and refugee issues at postgraduate level. It aims to increase the evidence based on the subject, and to give postgraduates a platform from which to present their work, share their experiences and meet their colleagues.

For more information please contact: Esme Peach t: 020 7848 2691 e: [esme.peach@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:esme.peach@kcl.ac.uk)

- Through its involvement as a partner to the **Forced Migration Online** project at the University of Oxford's Refugee Studies Centre, ICAR is facilitating access to and knowledge of electronic resources about forced migration to the UK and worldwide. FMO is a project of international scope which makes a wide selection of information resources on all issues of human displacement available online, including grey literature provided by FMO partner organisations, libraries, agencies, institutions and organisations around the world, digitised back issues of key sectoral journals, detailed catalogue records of resources currently available via the internet, contact information for relevant agencies and organisations worldwide, academic, peer-reviewed subject and regional guides, and freely available images ([www.forcedmigration.org](http://www.forcedmigration.org)).

For more information please contact: Felicity Heyworth t: 020 7848 2103 e: [felicity.heyworth@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:felicity.heyworth@kcl.ac.uk)

## ICAR Publications

**The challenge of reporting refugees and asylum seekers.** ICAR report on regional media events organised by the PressWise Refugees, Asylum-seekers and the Media (RAM) Project. Nissa Finney. April 2003

**Understanding the Stranger:** Interim case study findings. Lisa D'Onofrio and Karen Munk. Commissioned and published by ICAR. July 2003.

Available free of charge from:

[www.icar.org.uk](http://www.icar.org.uk) t : 020 7848 2103 e: [icar@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:icar@kcl.ac.uk)

## Acknowledgements: Consultative Committee, consultants and interns

### Consultative Committee

ICAR would especially like to thank the members of its **Consultative Committee** for their help, advice and guidance. By guarding ICAR's commitment to independence and by acting as a rigorous sounding board, they play a vital part in ICAR's development and progress:

Lord Browne-Wilkinson, Chairman, retired Law Lord

Professor Alastair Ager, Professor of Applied Psychology, Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh and Research Associate Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford

Professor Michael Clarke, Director of the International Policy Institute, King's College, London

Sir Jack Hibbert, former Director of the Central Statistical Office

Professor Roger Jowell, International Director of the National Centre for Social Research

Dr Khalid Koser, Lecturer in Human Geography, University College London

Lord Moser, former Director of the Central Statistical Office, Chairman of the British Museum Development Trust

Professor Phyllida Parsloe, Emeritus Professor of Social Work, Bristol, Chairman of the North Bristol NHS Trust, Trustee of the Sir Halley Stewart Trust

Professor Vaughan Robinson, Director of Migration Unit, University of Wales, Swansea

Sam Younger, Chairman of the Electoral Commission, former head of the British Red Cross & the BBC World Service

### Supporters and advisers

ICAR would also like to thank the following for their **advice, comments, and support** during the last year. They have made an enormous contribution to ICAR's achievements and boosted its capacity and range of expertise:

Professor Alastair Ager (Centre for International Health Studies, Queen Margaret University College), Zrinka Bralo (Migrant and Refugee Communities Forum), Mick Cronin (Community Liaison Officer, South East Kent Constabulary), Maknun Ashami Gamaludin (Evelyn Oldfield Unit and freelance consultant), Sandy Gourlay (International Policy Institute, King's College London), Dr Paul Gready (Institute of Commonwealth Studies), Sir Jack Hibbert (former Director of the Central Statistical Office), Dr Gaim Kibreab (South Bank University), Dr. Khalid Koser (Migration Research Unit, University College London), Denise Meredith (freelance press adviser), John Morrison (Business Leaders Initiative on Human Rights, Respect Europe), Peter Shore (independent financial adviser), Kate Smart (independent researcher), Professor Terry Threadgold (Cardiff School of Journalism), Dr. Joanne van Selm (Migration Policy Institute), Dr. Roger Zetter (School of Planning, Oxford Brookes University) and the entire team of the Centre for Computing in the Humanities (CCH) at King's College London.

### Paid consultants and volunteer interns

ICAR's work has been immeasurably enhanced by the following:

- Jeannine Brown, full-time Masters student in refugee studies at the University of East London and one-day-a-week **ICAR/UNHCR postgraduate network** intern
- Lisa D'Onofrio, researcher on the **Understanding the stranger** project
- Lea Estherhuizen, methodology consultant to ICAR's **Making better use of information and data** and **Patterns of refugee settlement** projects
- Nissa Finney, author of the ICAR report *The challenge of reporting refugees and asylum seekers*
- Hermione Harris, researcher on the **Patterns of refugee settlement** project
- Karen Munk, researcher on the **Understanding the stranger** project
- Barbara Nea, part-time Masters student in human rights at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies and two-day-a-week research intern
- Helen Precious, full-time Masters student in library studies at City University and one-day-a-week information assistant
- George Wright, full-time Masters student in human rights at the University of Essex and one-day-a-week research intern

## Financial details: March 1st 2002 - July 31st 2003

This annual report covers 17 months because ICAR is adopting the King's College London financial year which begins on 1st August

All ICAR's work has been made possible by grants received in the year 2002-2003 from the following funders to whom we are extremely grateful: Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, The Robert Gavron Charitable Trust, The Paul Hamlyn Foundation, The Joseph Rowntree

### ICAR account statement

1 March 2002- 31st July 2003- 17 months

	Total
EXPENDITURE	
Total staff costs	135,784.63
Consultancy payments	48,793.72
Technical fees	9,392.29
Books, reports, journals, subscriptions	998.91
Travelling costs total	3,367.32
Seminar	777.47
Conference fees and expenses	2,468.70
Hospitality	723.42
Staff recruitment	516.38
Staff training	164.50
Stationery	2,160.84
Printing	248.88
Telephone, postage, fax, photocopying	1,437.31
Rent, rates, heating, lighting, security, contribution to KCL indirect costs	24,595.61
Computer hardware and software, purchase and maintenance	2,569.36
Miscellaneous expenses	1,518.88
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>235,518.22</b>
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>261,944.28</b>
Income less Expenditure	26,426.06

### King's College London (KCL) and ICAR's accounts – additional information

ICAR income and expenditure cannot be identified from KCL annual accounts. Their financial year runs from August-July and their most recent published accounts go up to July 2002.

KCL administers its research/project grants through a central accounting system. Each ICAR research/project account is earmarked for specific purposes either by the terms of the grant, or by ICAR.