

## Leaders Event 2021

Host: GCP

The event was attended by around 80 people from across the UK, with partners from both England and Wales joining the call. This proves to show the appetite for discussion around Lived Experience involvement in the Refugee Rights sector, and within Refugee activism generally.

Speakers from organisations listed in the PPT shared their personal experiences in relation to this work and gave critical reflections on what they saw to be the main areas for development in furthering the voices of those with Lived Experience in our work.

Please see some of the feedback that was taken on the call, we hope this forms as wider evaluation on this work going forward.

- The approach of including the voices with Lived Experience in policy and strategy development should be something that is built into the process, and resourced, from the onset.
- We cannot be expected to fully understand the experience of being destitute if we do not work in collaboration with those who are at the forefront of this experience.
  
- Good examples: Right to Work / Right to Vote campaigns led by MIN, SRC & others.
- Education must be at the heart of this approach; one which is inclusive, democratic and critical of how power dynamics work. When people are able to understand their position in society, they can challenge it and work towards

constructive change. When this is done effectively and from a place of trust and understanding, we can work with activists, civil society and the government to have these conversations.

***Need for collaboration (between organisations), trust and focus on building relationships between the community and decision makers.***

- People with Lived Experience are often forgotten after they have given testimony or feedback to charities and public bodies on their lives. Ways for meaningful involvement must be developed; for example; more skills development programs for asylum seekers and refugees, more resources given to include those from BME backgrounds in government jobs and jobs at strategic levels.
- Leadership from the top must include people who have Lived Experience or the balance of power can never be shifted.
- There needs to be more recruitment opportunities for people from Refugee backgrounds.

***"It's a 2 way relationship; people feel relegated into the role of just supplying info and not being the person who can use it"***

#### **Questions for decision makers**

- What [are they doing for] support and roles for leadership, widening peoples network, -resources for people?
- How is mental health support for the people being addressed?
- How are we addressing discrimination? What are we doing about this? What is the government / policy makers doing about this?

- *"I want to ask policymakers why, if we can have a policy of 'all-in' during the pandemic, we can't always have a policy of all in ?"*
- How can Scotland create opportunities for those from asylum seeking and refugee backgrounds to ensure that they have the same opportunities to engage in public life as born citizens?
- What does citizenship mean in Scotland today?
- Are rights something that can be exercised or are they in name only?