

# Annual Report 2011-12

Between June 2011 and May 2012, although limited by reduced funding, we continued our progress in advocating the rights of migrants in Scotland in three key areas:

## 1. POLICY ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY

- We held a successful information and discussion event *Migrants' Voices, Migrants' Lives* in Inverness in June 2011, when migrants from across Highlands area were able to find out more about recent immigration changes and they were able to share their experience of the impact on their lives.
- Our Working/Action Groups met for a Central Belt meeting to decide how to take their thoughts and efforts forward; several small projects were considered, with some funding obstacles noted.
- Through the summer period, we engaged with the consultation process of the UK Home Office and Border Agency over their proposals for new settlement and family migration policies, attending their various meetings in Glasgow.
- We sought opinions from migrants across Scotland and put them together in a short video with the media support of the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC).
- This accompanied our submissions to the UKBA consultations and all were featured on our website for wider circulation.
- The website was a key area in promoting greater understanding of the issues. It has grown in content and impact, incorporating our social media output on Twitter and Facebook.
- **Cross-Sector Roundtable on the Impact of Immigration Policy on Scotland**  
A significant culmination of our activities was held in March 2012 when we arranged a cross-sector roundtable on the impact of immigration policy on Scotland. Attended by migrants and other leading voices in Scottish civil society (with the National Union of Students and Unison's Black Workers Committee), academia, law, business and politics, including cross-party MSPs Sandra White, Humza Yousaf and Patrick Harvie, and a representative from the Liberal Party in Scotland.

The meeting was conducted under Chatham House rules which fostered an open debate and ended with a serious commitment from attendees for further and more in-depth follow-up discussions. A collaborative platform was suggested and later set in place on our website, with only roundtable participants having access to the confidential, closed forum. It was felt this would be conducive to continuing a frank and progressive dialogue; a more open membership would be discussed at a later time.

- **Creative opportunities to highlight and celebrate migration and immigration issues.**

We hosted a film and discussion on the movie *Caught Between Two Worlds* during Document 9 International Human Rights Film Festival in Glasgow in October. Then for International Migrants Day, we gathered on December 14 for a screening of *The Deported/The Returnee*, a Bangladeshi/South Korean collaboration and part of the GRAMNet/BEMIS film programme.

## 2. PARTNERSHIPS

We are grateful for the friendship and support of our partners throughout the year: Ethnic Minority Law Centre, CEMVO Scotland, Multicultural Centre Inverness, UNISON, GRAMNet. BEMIS (the Black and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure in Scotland), Migrant Voice and Migrants Rights Network in London.

We continued our close relationship with the STUC and the Coalition for Race Equality and Rights who have both allowed us the use of their meeting or office facilities through the year.

In the buildup to the Cross-Sector Roundtable in March, we were encouraged by the positive responses from business and the professional bodies in Scotland, notably the Confederation of British Industry, Institute of Directors and Federation of Small Businesses. Particularly, Price Waterhouse Cooper (London) attended the Roundtable and made important contribution of their industry-wide observations on how immigration changes are affecting Scotland.

## 3. COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES PROJECT

The vision of this project is the core of our programme of work:

- Developing a network of migrants across Scotland,
- Growing awareness and encouraging debate on migration issues,
- Building capacity of migrant volunteers to engage with and influence policymakers,
- Offering training and opportunities to challenge, using blogs and creative media skills
- Utilising the internet and social media to establish an information/discussion hub on migration issues/experience

Our website [www.migrantsrightsscotland.org.uk](http://www.migrantsrightsscotland.org.uk), Facebook (<http://tinyurl.com/34eq65x>) and Twitter (<http://twitter.com/#!/migrightsscot>) pages are the significant visible outcome of our efforts.

To sustain the work, an Advocacy Masterclass was arranged in November 2011 and was well received by activists and migrant/refugee community organizations. Co-organised with MRN and CRER, the intensive day was led by trainer Simon Bucknall of The Art of Connection who took participants through the skills needed to influence policymaking processes. Leading influencers who were on hand to give their expertise were Lily Greenan (Scottish Women's Aid), Mike Kaye (Still Human Still Here) Hugh O'Donnell (MSP, 2007-2011) and John MacGill (Morhamburn, public affairs specialists).

## FUNDING SOURCE

A second year grant of £9500 from Migrants' Rights Network was our income to achieve the goals of the Communications Strategy project. Small donations totalling £143 were also received during the year.

**Our sincere thanks to MRN, donors and all who supported us, including migrants themselves, in bringing us closer to an open, rights-based debate on migration and immigration in Scotland.**