



29 September 2009

SMILE Project Update

To date the SMILE Project has mentored 38 children into education, befriended 27 children enabling them to start a 12 month programme of outings, educational sessions and recreational activities. We have also delivered 37 talks and teachers training hence raising awareness of the needs of refugee and asylum seeking children. We now have 100+ volunteers recruited and trained. We have organised 60 activities for young people, including ESOL classes, confidence building workshops, football, boxing, cricket, visits to library, museums, zoo. We have also organised arts workshops and have accompanied young people to 3 residential weekends in the countryside.

New SMILE Team Member

Abdullahi Hussein, SMILE Research Assistant since the inception of the project, has moved on to new pastures in the Middle East. Abdullahi did tremendous work for the project, not least setting up robust processes and strategies and collecting data and information which will greatly inform our research findings.

We have now recruited a new Research Assistant, Sarah Walker. Sarah has a very solid background in research and operation related to asylum seekers and refugees. Sarah is to start with us within the next few weeks and we are very much looking forward to welcoming her into the team.

Research Dissemination Events

SMILE is organising research dissemination seminars across the 3 regions in February 2010. The aims of the seminars is to share our research findings, open discussions on potential recommendations related to the education of refugee children, and generally promote and showcase our work and aims to practitioners and policy makers involved with our client group.

The dates and locations are as follows:

- Birmingham** – Birmingham and Midlands Institute (BMI) – Tue 2 Feb 10, 2:00-5:00
- London** – The Bridge, DCSF, Westminster – Tue 9 Feb 10, 1:00-4:00
- Leeds** – Leeds Town Hall – Tue 23 Feb 10, 2:00 – 5:00

For more information and to book a place please contact us at:
smile@refugeecouncil.org.uk

SMILE Film Project



The SMILE film project is now well under way. The 6 London workshops and the 6 Birmingham workshops are now over and the result will be 9 short films made by young refugees about the issues they have experienced at home and in the UK.

The film project is moving on to Leeds for its final stages, the first workshop planned for Friday 16 Oct. We very much look forward



to screening the films in public venues across the 3 regions during the next few months. Check [our website](#) and [blog](#) regularly for more information.

Yorkshire and Humberside Homework Club

The homework club has been running since mid July with the aim of providing young people to have a quiet place to do homework and to have an opportunity to learn some English, and has so far proved a great success.

"I'll do my best" a volunteer smiles bravely as two young women arrive with an overwhelming list of requests for help with homework - science, geography, Shakespeare. The club is run by volunteers with support from paid staff from SMILE and the Children's Society LEAP project.

The club has also given isolated young people the chance to socialise with others in similar circumstances. One young man has no friends of his age and was very pleased to bump into another Iranian boy whom he had met in initial accommodation and had since lost contact with.

[For more on the homework club visit our blog](#)

SMILE helps child refugees to enjoy and achieve in education through mentoring, befriending and school talks.

SMILE is a Refugee Council project, funded by the Department of Children, Families and Schools.

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[Read more on the SMILE blog](#)