RCO Self-Assessment Tool

A Self-Assessment tool for Refugee Community Organisations

Refugee Council

Introduction

This self-assessment tool is a quality assurance resource for leaders of refugee community organisations that want to make sure that their organisations are developing and operating according to best practice.   This tool will be especially helpful for organisations that are developing or struggling to sustain their programme activities, and are facing a more competitive and demanding funding environment.

The RCO Self-Assessment tool has been developed with issues facing refugee community organisations in mind and it will help you identify where your RCO is doing well and areas where you need to focus more to develop your organisation and to strengthen its capacity, to enhance its resilience to social and economic risks, and to improvement its sustainability. The results of the self-assessment will then inform a quality action plan; this will set out what improvements are necessary, and when these will be achieved. A development plan template has been inserted at the end of this tool.

 The self-assessment tool is structured around standards in four quality areas:

- • Governance and planning
- • Fundraising and income Generation
- • Finance management
- • Staff and Volunteers
- • Monitoring and Evaluation

Governing body (Board of trustees/Directors):				
Indicators	**Fully met**	**Partly met**	**Not met**	**Evidence**
• Board of trustees/directors is in place according to the governing document (constitution; articles of association).	☐	☐	☐	All responsibilities are filled including Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and other roles defined by the governing document
• Trustees have been properly inducted/trained on their roles and responsibilities	☐	☐	☐	Induction pack, trustees have been inducted and they have been trained about their roles and responsibilities
• Trustees are familiar with the current mission statement, aims and objectives	☐	☐	☐	All trustees are clear about what the organisation is trying to achieve and the difference it is trying to make.
Useful training				**Resources available**
• Training on Roles and Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees.	☐	☐	☐	A variety of resources available on https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/information/resources/

Management:
The organisation has clearly defined mission and value propositions; the board of trustees has right skills and ensures accountability, effective leadership, robust planning and sound management of resources to achieve the organisation's mission.

Indicators	Fully met	Partly met	Not met	Evidence
• The Board ensures the organisation meets all legal and constitutional requirements; it manages financial and other risks, and any conflict of interest	☐	☐	☐	Reports to the Board, Board minutes and planning meeting minutes illustrate how the Board's responsibly in setting the vision and strategic priorities, tracks implementation's progress, all compliance with the governing document.
• The Board takes responsibility for resourcing and achieving quality plans and service improvement.	☐	☐	☐	It is good practice to have your service users represented at Board level. Board ensure user involvement in planning processes and reviews.
• The Board draws on its collective skills and experience to set strategic priorities for the organisation.	☐	☐	☐	Organisation has a strategic plan, business plan, Development plan and fundraising strategy. Please refer to Qasro for guidance.
• The Board holds regular Management committee meetings as directed by the governing document.	☐	☐	☐	The secretary keeps minutes of all management committee meeting and minutes are filed properly.
• The board has been trained about their roles and responsibilities, Leadership, Conflict Resolution, Managing meetings, Minute taking, Recruitment, Equality and diversity	☐	☐	☐	It is good practice to train new members of the board to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities as trustees.
Useful training				**Resources available**
• Training on Leadership skills	☐	☐	☐	A variety of resources available on https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/information/resources/
• Training on Good Governance	☐	☐	☐	
• Training on managing meeting and minutes taking	☐	☐	☐	

Planning:
Medium to long term strategies are defined and planning takes into account the needs of the community, available resources, and local or regional strategies.

Indicators	Fully met	Partly met	Not met	Evidence
• The organisation has a business plan (values, priorities, services) for 2 to 3 years.	☐	☐	☐	Records to show that the business plan was informed by the specific needs of the target group - identified through inclusive needs assessment; and by available resources.
• Aims and desired outcomes are agreed in consultation with staff, volunteers and service users.	☐	☐	☐	Evidence of staff, volunteer and user involvement such as consultation report, surveys, meeting minutes and record of collected data (in different forms video, text) such as registers, feedback, case studies, etc..
• Realistic targets are set and reviewed to help manage performance.	☐	☐	☐	Keep record of risk assessment files and copy of risk register.
• The organisation understands local strategic priorities and is aware of other service provision in the area (to avoid duplication)	☐	☐	☐	
• Where appropriate, the organisation is a member of local or regional strategic bodies or consults with them.	☐	☐	☐	
Useful training				**Available resources**
• Training on Business planning	☐	☐	☐	A variety of resources available on www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/supportingrcos/resources.
• Training on Performance management	☐	☐	☐	

Finance management:
FM is robust, legally compliant, and takes into account the current service provision and the longer term financial sustainability of the organisation.

Indicators	Fully met	Partly met	Not met	Evidence
• Our organisation has a bank account in its own name.	☐	☐	☐	Cheque books and other bank files safely kept by treasurer. Board of trustees ensures that cheques are signed buy authorised signatories.
• Finance policies and procedures are into place and the board of trustees (particularly the treasurer) ensures that every body adhere to them.	☐	☐	☐	The organisation has written policies on banking, expenses, petty cash, and salaries, monitoring cash flow, purchasing, invoicing, credit control and registration of assets.
• We implement all agreed financial policies and procedures, prepare and approve an annual budget by the board and clearly identify who is responsible for preparing and managing budgets	☐	☐	☐	We ensure financial projections are part of all plans, we keep full records of financial transactions, we use cash flow forecasts periodically, we present monthly/quarterly accounts to the board.
• Policies are in place to manage expenditure and cash reserves.				We ensure expenditure is within budget and reserves are achieved according to plan.
• We meet nationally recognised standards for financial practices.	☐	☐	☐	Annual financial reports, audited, if appropriate, in line with relevant financial guidelines (Charity Commission, Companies House, SORP)
Useful training				**Available resources**
• Training on Statements of Recommended Practice (SORP)	☐	☐	☐	The Charity Finance Group provides free resources on financial management and financial control within charities, including guidance on SORP.
• Training on finance management	☐	☐	☐	The Charities Commission provides excellent guidance on good financial management, identifying and managing risks and maintaining reserves.
• Training on Petty cash and book keeping	☐	☐	☐	A variety of resources are available at https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/information/resources/
• Training on Budgeting and Forecasting	☐	☐	☐	

Staff and Volunteers:
The organisation has the right mix of skills, qualifications and expertise to deliver its activities and to achieve its outcomes

Indicators	Fully met	Partly met	Not met	Evidence
• The organisation has policies and procedures (for recruiting, managing staff and volunteers) that comply with legal requirements and ensure the rights, entitlements and responsibilities as well as the expectations of the organisation.	☐	☐	☐	Our staff and volunteer management policy and procedure including on recruitment, selection, and management are followed and reviewed regularly. Refer to Qasro quality area 9 & 10 for details
• New staff and volunteers receive a proper induction, are supervised and supported in their work	☐	☐	☐	We have an induction policy and an induction plan which is regularly reviewed.
• Where possible staff and volunteers have access to training and other learning opportunities relevant to their work	☐	☐	☐	Staff are encouraged to attend free training, seminars and conferences; and supported to implement their learning in their work.
• The organisation provides opportunities for peer learning or peer mentoring	☐	☐	☐	Investors in People is the standard framework for managing and development staff, a range of tools to help organisations is available on its website at www.investorsinpeople.co.uk

Useful training				Available Resources
• Training on Volunteer recruitment and management.	☐	☐	☐	Tools to help organisations is available at www.investorsinpeople.co.uk
• Training on Line management.	☐	☐	☐	
• Training on Equalities or Equality and Diversity.	☐	☐	☐	Check NCVO's Tools and Resources- HR section https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/tools-resources/board-basics/tools-and-guidance. You need to be member to access these pages. Resource centre: Managing staff and volunteers https://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information-category/making-your-group-work-well/managing-staff-and-volunteers/

Service User involvement:
The organisation has arrangements to involve service users in its running as well as in the planning implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programme activities.

Indicators	Fully met	Partly met	Not met	Evidence
• Wherever possible and appropriate, service users are directly involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation of services.	☐	☐	☐	A range of processes are in place to encourage and support feedback from community members/service users (both formal and informal), and this information is used to make decisions about how services should be run. Service users get involved as volunteers.
• The organisation understands, and takes proactive steps to address, the barriers to participation for different groups of service users.	☐	☐	☐	We have a participation strategy to enable equality groups of service users who need more support to participate – for example children and young people, older people, disabled people, LGBT clients.
• The organisation ensures all community members are aware of services and programmes activities.	☐	☐	☐	Information about the service is publicised and is available in a range of formats.

Useful training				Resources available
• Training on User Involvement	☐	☐	☐	Check the "Participation Works" website at www.participationworks.org.uk
• Training on Evidencing Needs	☐	☐	☐	

Fundraising and income generation:
Trustees ensure that the organisation has enough resources to carry out its work and stays financially sustainable.

Indicators	Fully met	Partly met	Not met	Evidence
• The board fulfils its responsibility to ensure that the organisation has sufficient funds to carry out its work and stays financially sustainable.	☐	☐	☐	The board of trustees include people with a range of skills, expertise and standpoints to lead on range of strategies including attracting financial support.
• The Board draws on its collective skills and experience to drive and lead on fundraising and income generation efforts.	☐	☐	☐	The organisation has an ambitious but realistic fundraising strategy that targets diverse sources of income and encompasses diverse fundraising techniques.
• The board ensures that the organisation is clear about its responsibilities towards its funders and commissioners, and its relationship with them is appropriately managed.	☐	☐	☐	Our organisation monitors its projects, provides report on time, respond to request of information on time and keeps record of communication with funders, their feedback.

Useful training				Available resources
• Wring Better and Effective funding applications	☐	☐	☐	A variety of resources is available on RC website at https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/information/resources/
• How to develop a fundraising strategy	☐	☐	☐	A variety of training are available on https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/latest/training-events/

	Fully met	Partly met	Not met	
• Training on Evidencing needs	☐	☐	☐	NCVO knowhow https://knowhownonprofit.org/tools-resources
• Training on Income generation and sustainability	☐	☐	☐	Raising money https://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information-category/raising-money/
• Training Online fundraising and/or digital marketing	☐	☐	☐	

Monitoring and Evaluation:
The organisation takes necessary steps to measure performance, monitor progress, evaluate achievements and demonstrate impact.

Indicators	Fully met	Partly met	Not met	Evidence
• Service user satisfaction and outcomes data are used to shape operation improvements.	☐	☐	☐	Organisation records information on inputs, outputs and outcomes of each project/service
• Our organisation welcomes and listens to feedback from all stakeholders including service users, partners, funders, commissioners and local authorities.	☐	☐	☐	Organisation keeps records of referrals to external organisations, formal and informal complaints and feedback is collected through different ways (stats, forms, suggestion box, anecdotal, interviews, etc..)
• Monitoring and evaluation information are used to inform strategic planning and performance management.	☐	☐	☐	Records are used by management to plan, review and improve service and organisational performance.
Useful training				**Available resources**
• Training on monitoring and evaluation or Understanding and assessing impact	☐	☐	☐	NCVO provides training on "Understanding and assessing impact". Check NCVO's studyzone at https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/studyzone/trustee-training-pack/what-difference-are-we-making-understanding-and-assessing-impact
• Training on risk management and benchmarking	☐	☐	☐	

Networking and Partnership working:
The organisation engages in collaboration to improve effectiveness and efficient use of resources, to improved services, amplify its voice and have greater influence locally and/or achieve organisational sustainability.

Indicators	Fully met	Partly met	Not met	Evidence
• Our organisation works proactively to develop and maintain working relationships with all stakeholders	☐	☐	☐	Accessible up-to-date list of stakeholders including organisations and agencies providing services to our community, particularly equality and vulnerable groups.
• Our organisation informs, consults and keeps communication channels with stakeholders.	☐	☐	☐	Organisation promotes its services within partner agencies and keep minutes and reports of consultation events and meetings with relevant organisations including public bodies and other civil society organisations.
• We use our networks to share information and best practice to keep abreast of any new initiatives useful for our clients and to the refugee sector.	☐	☐	☐	We use visits to and from other relevant organisations to promote partnerships which benefit our users.
Useful training				**Available resources**
• Training on Collaboration and Partnership development	☐	☐	☐	Community Planning Toolkit - Working Together https://www.communityplanningtoolkit.org/sites/default/files/WorkingTogether.pdf

Where to get advice, information and support:
Depending on your organisation structure, your geographical remit and other factors including where your clients are based – in one borough, cross borough or across multiple local authorities, depending also on the type of support your organisation needs, you may be eligible to a range of support services.

• Local Council of Voluntary Services (local CVS)	☐	Council of Voluntary Services (CVS) referred to as Voluntary Action in some boroughs provide valuable services to small and middle size voluntary and community organisations. Visit your local CVS and check whether you are eligible for their services.
• Local Refugee and Migrant Forum	☐	If there is a refugee forum in your area (there is currently one in the following boroughs: Islington, Hackney, and Southwark); they may help your organisation in many ways including through information, advice, support, networking, and representation in local area based issues.
• Refugee Council	☐	Refugee Council's Supporting RCOs project provides a range of services to RCOs in London. Please follow this link for details https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/get-support/support-for-rcos/

ORGANISATIONAL SELF ASSESSMENT: SIX MONTHS DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Organisation name			
Quality area			
Action			
Resources needed			
Identified Training courses			
Start date		**Finish date**	
Date action plan agreed		**Review date**	
Development plan approved by	**Name:**	**Position:**	**Date:**

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