

Engage to Change Question Time at MRCF

Future of Volunteering for Migrants and Refugees

Wednesday 3rd February at 1 p.m. at MRCF, 2 Thorpe Close, W10 5XL

Engage to Change is an MRCF initiative to provide our members and partners who work with migrants and refugees with an opportunity to get direct answers about issues relevant to their daily lives and engage directly with policy makers. In the past year hundreds of community leaders met with more than 50 MP's, councillors, executives of public bodies and other professionals who are involved in decision making, campaigning and research on issues of immigration and integration.

Our February 2010 meeting will focus on new government proposals for Active Citizenship and Volunteering.

Every year at least 200 migrants and refugees volunteer at the Migrant and Refugee Communities Forum and many thousands of them volunteer across London. They give their time, expertise and energy in good faith to their local communities, schools, churches and mosques. Volunteering helps them integrate and learn new skills. The Government is proposing to introduce a set of criteria for new citizens that will require them to volunteer in order to speed up their applications for permanent stay and nationality. The proposals are vague and there is still time to add our voice to this debate. It is not clear what kind of volunteering will be considered as valid and how the system will work in practice.

Should volunteering be turned into a currency for immigration status?

What will happen to those migrants who can't volunteer such as single mothers, domestic workers, the elderly and ill?

How about those new citizens who are active in employment and do not have any free time to volunteer?

Should they be disadvantaged for being economically active?

To inform us about the government's proposals and latest developments we have invited the experts:

Mike Locke

Director of Public Affairs at Volunteering England and a member of the government's Active Citizenship working group.

Steve Symonds

Legal Officer at the Immigration Law Practitioners' Association (ILPA).

Ruth Grove-White

Policy Officer at the Migrants' Rights Network (MRN)

We think **you** should have your say on this. So please come to MRCF on Wednesday 3rd of February 2010 at 1.30pm and contribute to the discussion. Lunch will be provided from 1pm. The debate at MRCF will feed into a report that will be distributed to all key stakeholders and the Government in order to ensure that your voice is heard and considered when important decisions are being made.

Places are limited so please book early via info@mrcf.org.uk or call 020 8964 4815. Lunch will be provided and travel expenses can be refunded. If you have members who need help with interpreting please let us know so we can make arrangements. Nearest tube station is Ladbroke Grove on Hammersmith and City line and buses 7, 23, 52 and 70 also stop on Ladbroke Grove.

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