



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Across Borders: Routes to safety for refugees

Executive Summary

Comic Relief is seeking a consultant/team to act as a Learning Coordinator(s) on our new 'Across Borders' funding initiative over 40 months (between June 2020 and July 2023). The Learning Coordinator(s) will deliver a programme of cohort learning with the 19 organisations/partnerships funded under this initiative. The learning programme will support these funded partners to learn through delivery, collaborate, share learning across the cohort (and more widely to the sector, where appropriate) and adapt to changing contexts and needs. There are opportunities to advocate for wider change and influence policy through this learning piece, as well as to add to the existing evidence base. The learning programme should be engaging, participatory and delivered in close consultation and collaboration with the funded partners themselves.

Background

Worldwide there are over 70 million people who have been forcibly displaced from their homes as a result of war, conflict, persecution or human rights violation; that is 25 people every minute. This is double the level of 20 years ago. It is estimated that 25.9 million of them are refugees and 3.5 million are asylum seekers. More than half of all refugees are children, many of them are unaccompanied or have been separated from their families.

These figures are overwhelming and the British media has been guilty of de-humanising migrants; ignoring the harrowing personal stories behind these statistics. Comic Relief's funding initiative, *Across Borders: Routes to safety for refugees*, is about putting people first, hearing what they have to say and finding solutions to some of the devastating situations people on the move are experiencing. One example of this is that, too often, refugees bounce from one location-specific emergency response to the next on their already terrifying and confusing journey. At each stage, they have to repeat processes and provide the same information as different actors struggle to coordinate effectively in a very challenging environment. We sought to address this by adopting a 'route-based' approach: Investing in interventions along key migration routes; supporting joined-up working that can better provide for people on a *journey*, as opposed to a series of distinct locations.

In July 2019, we launched this initiative for organisations supporting refugees on the move along the key migration routes, from Middle East and North Africa (MENA) to Europe, including the UK. We recently confirmed 19 investments under this initiative, 13 of which are along these migration routes internationally and 6 are in the UK. A geographical map of these investments, along with a summary of each (split by UK and international), can be found at annexes A, B and C, respectively.



Our overall aim is to support refugees and people seeking asylum to safe, legal and dignified routes to fulfilling and happy settlement, whether that be in the country of destination, transition country or country of origin. Our mixed portfolio aims to achieve this through a combination of:

- Direct service delivery at grassroots level;
- Shifting public attitudes and countering negative narrative through campaigns, the arts, media and popular culture, both in the UK and internationally; and
- Changes to policy, practice and legislation.

The grants we have awarded range from 2-5 years in duration and from £150k to £800k in value. We have awarded both core funding (covering general running costs and continuation of existing work) and project funding. Successful applicants were able to demonstrate:

- That they are working in collaboration with other organisations, or through funded partnerships to achieve greatest impact; and
- That the work is informed by people with lived experience, aiming to shift the dial so that more people with lived experience can genuinely and tangibly shape the sector and systems impacting on their lives.

Comic Relief recognises the need to improve the provision of specialist immigration and asylum advice in the UK. However, we were not prioritising proposals with this focus through Across Borders. Instead, we are taking a collective approach to addressing that; collaborating with other funders to develop a pooled fund 'Justice Together', separate but aligned to this programme, which will aim to increase access to justice for people in the immigration and asylum system in the UK. This learning piece will not incorporate work funded through the pooled fund, but there may be aspects that can feed in.

Our learning ambitions

Whilst Comic Relief has invested in work supporting refugees and people seeking asylum for over 25 years, this route-based approach to funding is new for us. Therefore -and acknowledging the void between what support is available and what is needed in this area- this initiative provides many valuable learning opportunities. By funding along key migration routes, we believe the opportunities for learning, collaboration and storytelling are even greater. Learning ambitions for this piece of work should be guided somewhat by the funded partners themselves and their own learning focuses - consultation with them will be key. However, at this stage, we can loosely identify some *potential* focus areas for learning:

- What are the needs and experiences of people on the move and their journey to settlement? How can their stories be told and what is the impact of doing so?

- How can the sector better maximise the participation of people with lived/worked experience, so that refugees and people seeking asylum have greater agency over their lives and the systems that impact upon them?
- How can the approaches being funded help to shift attitudes and behaviours and influence wider change in systems, policy and practice?
- What are the risks associated with this work? For example, the risks to volunteers caught in complex and compromising situations and how this can be managed effectively.
- How can more money be leveraged into the sector with particular consideration given to strengthening grassroots responses?

Comic Relief as a learning-led organisation

We try to create an environment in which our funded partners feel able to test new ideas, make mistakes and learn through experience. We promote learning in a number of ways, as outlined below:

1. In our call for proposals for Across Borders, we stated that we will invest in organisations that can:
 - Be self-reflective;
 - Feed learning back into service delivery;
 - Respond to changing contexts and emerging needs;
 - Engage with other Comic Relief funded partners, where appropriate, practical and valuable;
 - Share learning externally, to support wider learning and coordination in the sector.
2. On 4th June 2020, we will bring funded partners together through a start-up webinar, delivering introductory sessions on: Managing the funding; monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL); safeguarding; advocacy; and comm's to get them off to the strongest possible start. There is also an opportunity to hold physical and/or remote convenings in future, facilitated by the Learning Coordinator(s) we appoint (with support from Comic Relief).
3. Our Start-up Form is an opportunity for funded partners to think again about their plans for MEL, ensuring that they have a realistic and practical framework in place that also supports learning. We input on these forms, helping individual funded partners to refine and articulate their plans for the funding period. They can make changes (where appropriate) throughout the funding period and our reporting places a strong emphasis on understanding what change is happening and why, rather than target-chasing and sticking to rigid outputs.
4. We have a strong MEL team, made up of eight experienced MEL professionals. We make ourselves available to funded partners for individualised advice and guidance, where appropriate, as well as managing broader cohort learning pieces like this.
5. We frame our funded partners as the experts by experience. They know their work, their context and their impact far better than we do. With that in mind, we encourage our funded

partners to share and learn from each other – we are not here to tell them how to deliver their intervention.

6. Our cohort learning pieces are not tokenistic exercises focussing solely on our/our funded partners' achievements – we truly want to promote utilisation-focussed learning internally, on the part of our funded partners and across the sector more widely.

The brief

We are seeking to commission a provider/team of providers (referred to as Learning Coordinator(s)) that is:

- Knowledgeable and experienced in capturing and disseminating learning from groups or cohorts of CSOs working towards a common goal;
- Able to demonstrate a strong track record of delivering similar work with organisations/partnerships supporting refugees/people on the move and asylum seekers, with some focus on organisations with a turnover of £100,000-£10million working at grassroots level.
- Committed to amplifying the voices of people with lived and worked experience of migration and asylum seeking, with expertise in influencing work/systems change.
- Passionate and knowledgeable about the issues being addressed through this funding initiative and the needs of people on these migration routes through -and into- Europe.
- Able to demonstrate the skills and experience to deliver every aspect of this contract, as outlined below.
- Clear on its role: The focus is not on managing grants or providing in-depth, technical M&E support to individual funded partners – we are seeking experts in encouraging, surfacing and applying learning.

To 31st July 2020, we can be quite prescriptive in terms of work to be delivered:

- **Familiarisation:** Desk review of the funded partners' applications for funding and supporting documentation, as well as Comic Relief's assessment papers where these can provide useful insights.
- **Inception meeting with Comic Relief staff,** via videocall.
- **Mapping the cohort:** Identifying common themes across this group of funded partners: Target beneficiary groups; approaches; shared outcomes; etc. We want our funded partners to understand where they and others fit into this cohort.
- **Identifying initial opportunities for learning:** Through the activities above, we believe that *initial* themes for learning can be developed/refined at this early stage. Please note that

funded partners will refine their own plans for learning by the end of 2020 and these -along with direct consultation with the cohort- should help to shape our wider learning focuses.

- **Facilitate a one-hour cohort-wide discussion around the impact of Covid-19 on the work that these organisations/partnerships are delivering:** On 4th June 2020, we will bring the entire cohort of funded partners together for the first time through a start-up webinar. On this webinar, we will provide introductions to managing the funding, MEL, safeguarding, influence/advocacy, comm's and site visits. We will also allow one hour at the end of the webinar to introduce the Learning Coordinators and run an open discussion around the impact of Covid-19 on this sector and how these organisations are affected by the current crisis. This is a brief but valuable learning opportunity and also allows our funded partners to provide mutual support and feel part of something bigger. We are asking the Learning Coordinators to plan and facilitate this short session – you would not need to have completed the familiarisation tasks by this point.
- **Capture and disseminate what comes out of the above discussion:** Broad themes, specific challenges and examples of adaptation should be captured, consolidated and presented (e.g. in an infographic) for sharing back with the cohort and potentially more widely. A blog post should also be developed, with input from key staff at Comic Relief, to be published on the Comic Relief website.

Beyond 31st July 2020, we are being less prescriptive and are open to a range of approaches. The approach that this learning piece adopts will depend, in part, on individual funded partners' learning ambitions and how they feel they can practically engage. Your approach should allow for consultation with the funded partners themselves on how they can realistically input to the learning piece.

Your proposed approach *may* include the following but this should be carefully balanced with the available budget and the absolute necessity to minimise the burden on our funded partners, many of which are already very stretched:

- **Reviewing and synthesising key themes from grantees' reports** (submitted by grantees to Comic Relief every 6 months):
 - o 6-month reports provide a brief narrative update on progress;
 - o 12-month reports provide a more in-depth review of progress against their planned outputs, indicators, outcomes and learning ambitions;
- **Bringing grantees together** through physical convenings or remotely through webinars, to share progress, challenges, successes and other learnings;
- **Direct contact with individual funded partners** – e.g. telephone interviews/discussions and/or meetings/visits, for example, with a clear focus on learning;
- **Written briefing papers, reports or visual aids** (e.g. Infographics, guides/toolkits, etc), summarising key learnings/recommendations and with scope for dissemination to the cohort and the sector more widely;
- **Developing and reflecting on a cohort-wide Theory of Change**



- **Using output from the above activities as well as other means (e.g. story-telling) to influence public opinion and wider policy.** There may be some opportunity to work with Comic Relief’s small Influence team on advocacy-focussed work. Equally, Comic Relief’s teams in public fundraising, media and comm’s will also share/generate content relating to Across Borders.

Considerations in how you plan your approach:

- Our funded partners are reporting to us every six months and we must be careful not to place unnecessary additional burden on them. This learning piece should not distract from their own project delivery and should complement their reporting to us, rather than duplicating.
- Where we hold physical convenings at Comic Relief’s offices, we can keep costs relatively low (avoiding venue hire costs, etc). However, we will usually cover funded partners’ reasonable travel and overnight accommodation expenses, in our attempts to minimise the burden placed on them and encourage participation. Across the 19 organisations/partnerships, the cost to us can be significant, so we would expect to hold a maximum of two physical convenings between now and July 2023. We may look to hold one convening on the continent, to avoid too much London-centrism.
- Comic Relief will provide background materials and scoping reports and can facilitate direct contact between the Learning Coordinator(s) and individual funded partners, where appropriate.
- Given the geographical spread of the investments made under this initiative, some consideration will be given to tenderers’ in-country representation. We recommend that you consider the annexes in putting together a team for this learning piece.
- Tenderers must be available on 4th June 2020 to attend the start-up webinar (as outlined earlier in this document) and facilitate the final session on Covid-19.

Budget and Timing

The maximum budget for this piece of work is £91,750 over 38 months (to end July 2023) including all travel/expenses but excluding VAT.

Timeframe	Budget (inc. travel/expenses but excl. VAT)
01/06/2020 – 31/07/2020	£9,250
01/08/2020 - 31/07/2021	£27,500
01/08/2021 - 31/07/2022	£27,500
01/08/2022 – 31/07/2023	£27,500

Tender responses

Responses should cover the following in **up to five sides of A4**:

1. Background and relevant experience of the individual/organisation that would be leading the work.
 - Please also submit 1-page CVs for all individuals that would be involved in delivering the work (this is in addition to the five-page limit)
 - You may attach examples/include hyperlinks to examples of similar pieces of work that you have delivered (this is in addition to the five-page limit). Consider carefully which examples are most relevant to this work and keep it concise - we won't be able to read lots of additional material.
2. A summary of your understanding/experience of migration and asylum seeking, with particular reference to CSOs, European migration routes from MENA and the state of play for recent arrivals to the UK.
3. A full description of your proposed approach to delivering this work between June 2020 and July 2023.
4. A delivery timeline, to July 2023, in your preferred format.
5. A budget breakdown for this work, to July 2023 clearly showing taxes, expenses and day rates. You should also show how time will be allocated across your team, if applicable.
6. If tendering as a team, please make it clear who will be the lead contact, how expertise across the team is complementary, what your roles will be and how you will be able to coordinate effectively.
7. Details of two referees:
 - A brief description of your relationship with them/the work you carried out
 - Name, job title, organisation, email address and telephone number
 - Please request permission from your referees before you send us your proposal
 - We will not contact your referees unless we intend to contract you/your team
8. Details of any Professional Indemnity Insurance policy you hold.

Tender responses should be submitted by email by **5pm (BST) on Thursday 21st May 2020**. Please include 'Across Borders' in the subject line of any correspondence, directing your tender response (and any queries) to:

Oscar Bingham, Evaluation and Learning Manager | O.Bingham@comicrelief.com

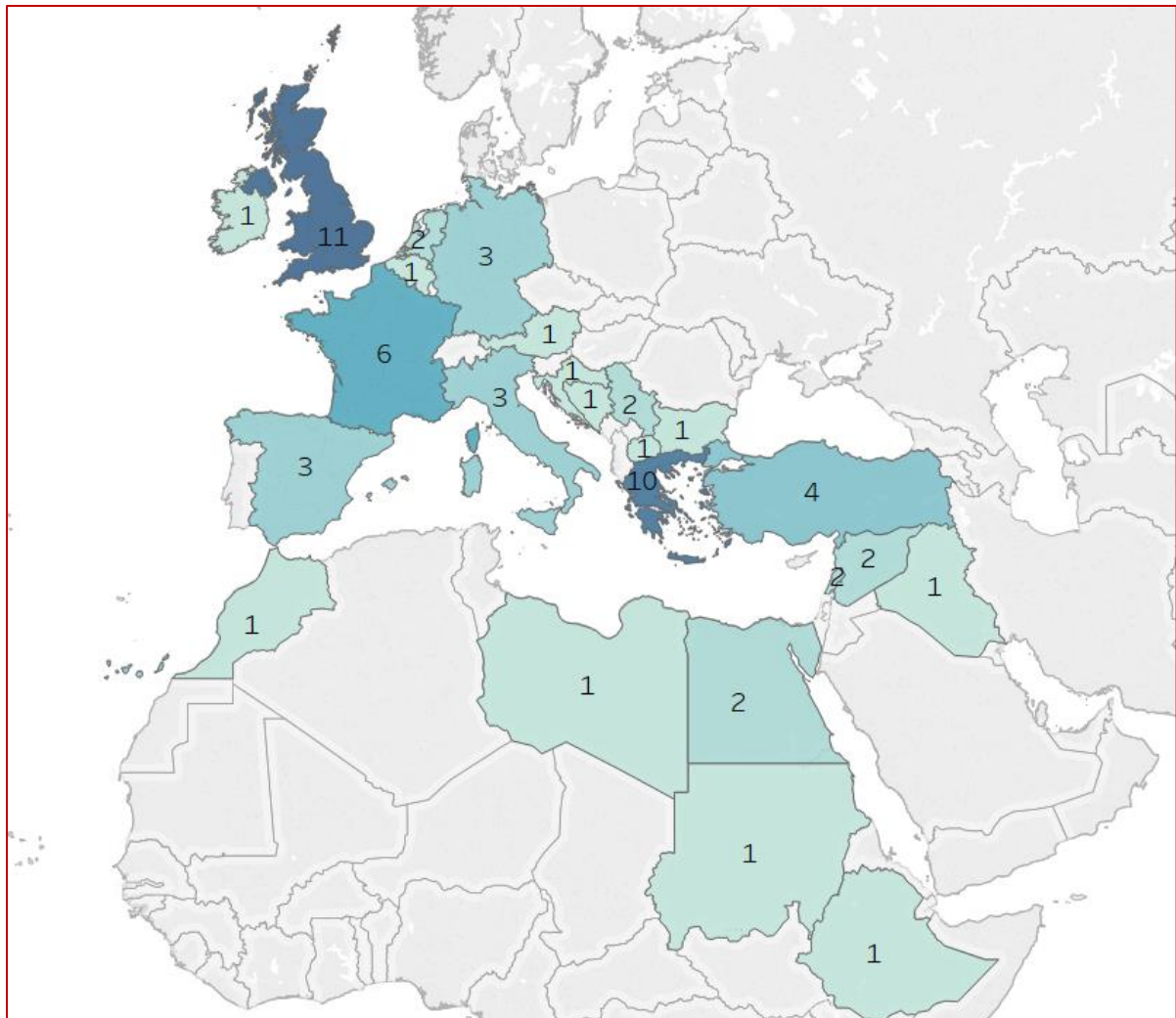


Next steps

Proposals will be scored and shortlisted by key staff at Comic Relief. We will be inviting shortlisted tenderers to discuss their proposal with us within a week after the deadline. If you foresee any issues with availability, please let us know in your cover email when you submit your proposal. We are keen to make the appointment soon after interview, including an exchange of contracts and a first payment. Therefore, we ask tenderers to be prepared for this and flag any potential issues as early as possible.

Annex A. A map of investments made under Across Borders.

The figures indicate the number of investments made in each country. Note that some investments cover multiple countries and are counted in all of the countries in which they will deliver work.



Annex B. A full list of UK investments made under Across Borders.

Lead Organisation	Geography	Summary of investment
IMIX	UK & France	Using experiences on the ground and rooted in understanding of service delivery, IMIX will work with refugee organisations in the UK and Northern France, to change the narrative around refugees in the media
Govan Community Project	Glasgow, Scotland	Core funding to deliver anti-destitution and community development activities to support people seeking asylum
Helen Bamber Foundation	London & UK wide	Providing an integrated model of care and specialist trauma-informed therapy to refugees and people seeking asylum
The Boaz Trust	North West England	Providing accommodation and holistic support to prevent people seeking asylum from becoming homeless and destitute
Medical Justice Network Ltd	London, North West, East Midlands, Northern Ireland, Scotland, East of England	Core funding to provide direct support to immigration detainees to access their rights, advocate to end detention and sway public opinion through positive representation of immigrants in media
Refugee Action	London, North West, South West, West Midlands, Yorkshire and The Humber, Wales	Partnership with seven regional refugee support charities to roll out Asylum Guides programme, a structured legal literacy programme, and to campaign for a fairer and effective asylum system

Annex C. A full list of international investments made under Across Borders.

Lead Organisation	Geography	Summary of investment
European Lawyers in Lesvos	Greece, Samos	Providing free legal assistance for people seeking asylum and refugees on the Greek Island of Samos, and working in partnership with KIND to advocate for legal and policy reform at EU level
Stop the Traffik (STT)	Greece & Turkey	Using tested methodology STT will work with organisations in the Across Borders portfolio to influence a change in awareness, knowledge and behaviour to reduce trafficking among high risk Syrian refugees and asylum seekers
Prism the Gift Fund (Refugee Youth Service)	France, Calais & Dunkirk Greece, Athens	Core funding to strengthen coordination between key child protection actors to uphold children’s rights. Through its partnership with Velos Youth, providing long term holistic needs and accommodation for unaccompanied and separated young people
UNHCR	Egypt, Cairo Libya Ethiopia, Tigrai & Addis Ababa, Sudan, Kassala & Khartoum	Working in partnership with Legal organisation IRAP and Family Reunion experts, RefugePoint, providing legal pathways for children and youth to be reunited with their families and reduce the need for them to take dangerous onward journeys. Please note that only 6% of the budget will remain with UNHCR, the rest will be going to their partners. During assessment it was acknowledged that UNHR have access to YP in the target countries that other orgs don’t.
Good Chance Theatre	Italy, North Macedonia, Serbia, Syria, Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Turkey, UK wide	Core funding to continue their work to integrate refugee and host communities through the arts, as well as to continue their award-winning production ‘The Jungle’ and develop a new production ‘The Walk’. The Walk involves a 12-foot puppet little Amal, a 10yr old Syrian refugee taking the Western Balkan route to UK, and engaging local communities and refugee artists, and positively influencing public attitudes towards people on the move.
Saint Andrew’s Refugee Services	Egypt, Cairo	Providing education services to refugee C&YP, their families and UASC through a multi-disciplinary wrap around service including financial, legal, psychosocial, medical and mental health support. In addition, they advocate for and support the capacity of refugee-led community schools and services.

Lead Organisation	Geography	Summary of investment
Fund for Global Human Rights UK	Morocco, France, Spanish enclave of Melilla	Funding to sub-grant to migrants' rights groups and activists working at grassroots level and help to build their capacity, work collaboratively and share learning
Counterpoint Arts	England, Greece, Germany	Commissioning artists from refugee communities to produce works of art, spark interest and discussion and engage public about perceptions and realities of being a refugee in 2020 Europe
Prism the Gift Fund (Refugee Trauma Initiative)	Greece	Core funding to deliver community based early childhood development model and trauma informed support to youth using media and arts
Prism the Gift Fund (Help Refugees)	Greece, France, Spain, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Turkey, Syria	Building on existing advocacy work to impact wider systemic change refugee 'crisis' in Europe as well as shift negative public attitudes. Sub-grant emergency funds to grassroots organisations providing front line services
European Network on Statelessness	Netherlands, Greece, Germany, Spain, Bulgaria, Serbia, UK wide	Working with member organisations to gather evidence of impact of statelessness, build the capacity of civil society and relevant authorities and run a campaign to mobilise action
Safe Passage International	UK wide, Greece, France, Italy, Belgium, Ireland	Core funding for legal casework and strategic litigation to open up legal routes for unaccompanied and separated children to settle and integrate into welcoming communities in the UK and other European countries. Their work includes advocacy activities to influence wider systemic policy and legislative changes
Family for Every Child	Turkey, Lebanon, Greece, Netherlands (TBC)	Carry out research with unaccompanied refugee children, generate learning and develop tools for organisations to use to help children effectively integrate and reintegrate with their families in host countries or countries of origin.