

Refugees and asylum seekers: Health and Hope in a “Hostile Environment”

**Jon Beech, Director
Leeds Asylum Seekers Support Network**

What do we focus on?

**What's
strong?**



**What's
wrong?**

Connecting people, making allies

2009



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL



Leeds Community Healthcare



NHS Trust

Leeds Asylum Seekers' Support Network

Moving to the world of asylum seekers & refugees

A world where sometimes

- ALL that people have is their social capital (and the clothes they stand up in)



Leeds Refugee Forum

- Umbrella organisation with 30 different members
- Run by community members



Leeds Refugee Forum Activity Timetable

One Community Centre, Cromwell Street, Leeds LS9 7SG



For more information call: 01132449600 or 07733171290

All activities and classes are free

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Rainbow Hearts Women's group (Womens Health Matters) 10am- 12.30pm	LRF Advocacy Support Drop-in 10am- 12pm	ESOL Class Sunflower 10.00 – 1.00 pm	DWP Jobcentre Plus Drop-in 10am - 12pm	YOUTH GROUP Unaccompanied Minor 10am- 1.00pm
LRF Women Group 12.00pm – 2 pm	ESOL Class Women only 1 – 2.30 pm	English Conversation Class STAR 1.30 – 3.00 pm	LRF & Touchstone Women Group 1-2.30 pm		Arabic Language School 1-4.00 pm
Sunlight Men's Group (British Red Cross) 2.15pm – 5pm					French Language School 4.00-6.00 pm
Swahili Community Youth Group 5pm – 7pm	Homework Club 4.30 – 6.30 pm	ESOL Class 6.30-8.00pm	Mahber Salam (Eritrea) Youth Group 5pm – 7 pm	Swahili Women Group 5pm – 7 pm	

- Hosting 20 community groups a week
- Focal point for social & community activities

Women's Health Befriending

- Women helping women
- Drawing on own experiences
- Developing self- and peer-advocacy skills
- Mental health and perinatal focus
- Advising trainee Medics & others
- Contributing to research



Grace Hosting

- 50 households
- 100 destitute people a year
- 4,200 nights



Why weekly bus passes matter

Access to

- Accommodation
- Support
- Leisure
- Health care
- Green space
- Freedom



Common threads

- **Meet people where they are at**
- **Expect people to have ideas: ask, don't offer**
- **Trust that their priorities are relevant & important**
- **Create space & defend autonomous spaces**
- **Don't ignore racism & poverty**
- **Be a dependable ally**

So what's this about a hostile environment?

**“Inter-Ministerial
Group on
Migrants’ Access
to Benefits
& Public Services”**



How are you supporting what's strong?

Asset Based

Community focused

What would help?

What can we build on?

Ask what's important

What can we share?

Deficit based

Service focused

What's needed?

What's missing?

Offer help

What do you need?

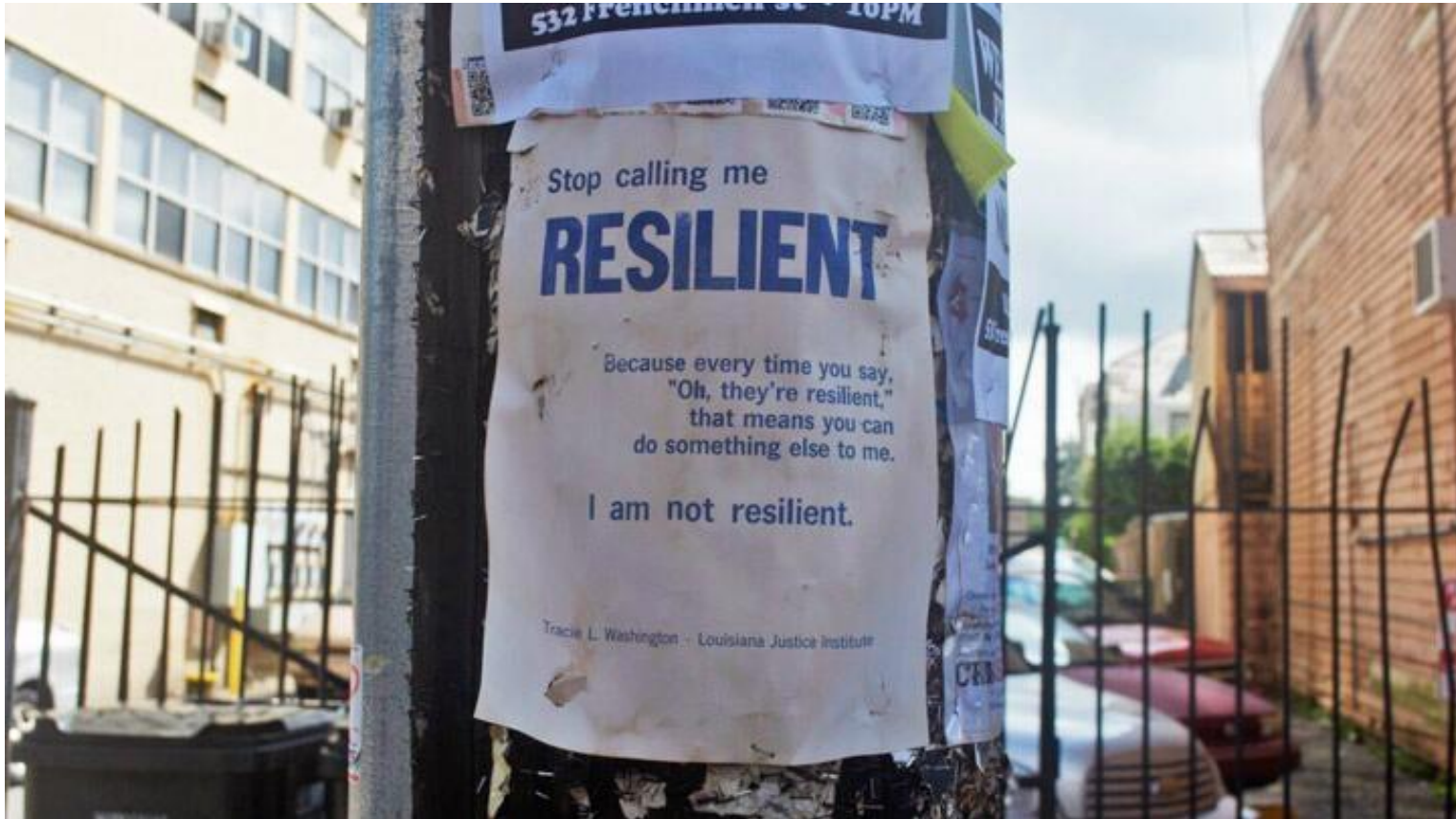
How are you addressing the institutional problems?

- GP registration
- NHS Charging
- Care Act
- NHS/Home Office Data sharing
- Interpreters
- Poverty: £5 per day
- Absent from JSNA or HWBB plans

Know the law
Gather evidence
Gather evidence
Protest

Gather evidence
Gather evidence
Ask why?

Asset-based approaches are not apolitical



Questions?

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