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**UNHR: Call for inputs for a report on cultural rights and migration**

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**Call for Evidence questions**

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| **Q1: What are the issues relating to cultural rights that you see in your country’s migration processes? Please provide relevant information concerning laws and regulations, programmes and measures, services and practices that seem relevant.** |
| * [New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy](https://www.gov.scot/publications/new-scots-refugee-integration-strategy-2018-2022/): First refugee integration strategy in the world, now contains sections and best practice based explicitly on cultural rights and language rights. In the devolved context of [Scotland](https://www.gov.scot/policies/refugees-and-asylum-seekers/). The UK meanwhile, whilst keen to enable cohesion, is not sufficiently investing in the learning of languages which support integration and does not take a multilingual approach to (A) the languages of migrants and (B) the indigenous languages of the UK.
* In terms of granting visas, the processes requiring English language certification from British embassies overseas, especially for refugee family reunification, are not fit for purpose, and visas are denied based on the denial of cultural rights, systematically, and according to certain key cultural contexts and countries where the UK has been found to be applying [algorithms which discriminate](https://www.foxglove.org.uk/2020/08/04/home-office-says-it-will-abandon-its-racist-visa-algorithm-after-we-sued-them/).
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| **Q2: Do migrants have access to the cultural services and institutions of the host society? How about undocumented migrants, asylum seekers and refugees? How is such access ensured?** |
| * In Scotland integration begins on day one for all migrants documented, undocumented, asylum seekers, and refugees as per Scots strategy. Access is ensured through local authorities, some cultural funding, and the [Scottish Refugee Council](https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/). More could be done, but the principle of cultural rights at the heart of New Scots gives leverage annually, [refugee festival Scotland](https://www.refugeefestivalscotland.co.uk/) is a forum for integration and access for the whole population of Scotland interculturally. However, of late the UK home office through its Homes For Ukraine Scheme, and its Nationality and Borders Act, have moved to housing asylum seekers and refugees and those requiring humanitarian protection into hotels, thus curtailing the ability of Scottish society both receiving and arriving populations to enable access to cultural services and cultural production. This is a matter of grave concern for the support of cultural rights to the [UNESCO RILA Chair at the University of Glasgow](https://www.gla.ac.uk/research/az/unesco/) where research is being conducted. An example of good practice can be found in the [Maryhill Integration Network](https://maryhillintegration.org.uk/) amongst many others ensuring cultural services are available at community level for all. Access is ensured here through outreach, drop-in, language classes, dance classes, child-friendly activities, community gardening, poetry sessions, kitting, and campaigning for greater access to be provided by the state. A report on the 20 year anniversary of the Maryhill Integration Network can [be found here](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yrEDFq2d0568hhTD-BRzAPztKWqelGsI/view).
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| **Q3: Are tangible artefacts belonging to migrants protected by the state? Does their use affect the cultural rights of migrants?** |
| * The UK is [not a signature for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark%3A/48223/pf0000378425_eng/PDF/378425eng.pdf.multi.page%3D11) and this would significantly impact the protection of rights of migrants, as artefacts cannot be detached from the living cultures of youth and knowledge in which they are embedded. However, the UK is embarking through its museums on careful consideration often contested relating to migrant artefacts and artefacts acquired during the colonial era, often to significant detriment to their origin countries. Intercultural work with artefacts is a key activity of [Open Museums Glasgow](https://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/venues/the-open-museum), and featured in the work of [Unsettled Objects](https://www.gla.ac.uk/research/az/unesco/events/pastevents/unsettledobjects/) within the UNESCO RILA Chair, where the question of the extent of the protection of tangible artefacts belonging to migrants and the difficult questions that pertain to protection have opened up important new vistas. In particular, the work of the Hunterian Museum, [Curating Discomfort](http://hunterian.academicblogs.co.uk/curating-discomfort/), is an example of best practice, as is the ongoing work looking at the repatriation of human remains as part of understanding migration after death.
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| **Q4: Which institutions have been successful in respecting and protecting the cultural resources and assets of migrants? Please provide examples when possible, including on how this was achieved.** |
| * [Kelvingrove Museum and the World Cultures](http://collections.glasgowmuseums.com/mwebcgi/mweb?request=record;id=533656;type=801): Naa Densua Tordzro’s installation, [*Obaa Sima: Virtuous Woman Gown*](http://collections.glasgowmuseums.com/mwebcgi/mweb?request=record&id=726134&type=101)*,* and Tawona Sitholé and Tarneem al Mousawi-Sitholé’s poetry panel, [*Pasichigare: We are nature*](http://collections.glasgowmuseums.com/mwebcgi/mweb?request=record;id=728086;type=101)*,* commissioned following the inaugural lecture of the UNESCO Chair in RILA, where both artists performed.
* [Curating Discomfort](https://www.gla.ac.uk/hunterian/about/achangingmuseum/curatingdiscomfort/abouttheprocess/): arose as a result of many years of activism by migrants and people of colour in the city of Glasgow.
* [Podcasts for the UNESCO Chair in RILA](https://www.gla.ac.uk/research/az/unesco/resources/podcast/): especially looking at Hyab's blogs and work with the Crannog (separate link)
* British Museum Neil MacGregor, former curator of the British Museum, and his [purchase of the Lampedusa Cross](https://www.britishmuseum.org/our-work/national/uk-touring-exhibitions-and-loans/current-tours/crossings-community-and-refuge) as a sign of the importance of artefacts connected to the passage of people and their belongings and cultural resources across borders together with the creation of cultural resources out of migrant tragedy.
* Scottish Refugee Council and their [Cross Borders](https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/cross-borders-qa/) artist network: funding was made available from Scottish Government, under a careful process of consultation led to the establishment of the Network.
* UNESCO RILA affiliate artists [Colouring Outside the Lines](https://www.gla.ac.uk/research/az/unesco/events/colouringoutsidethelines/) exhibition : funds were made available for artists to work together to produce an exhibit, curated by a refugee artist, Iman Tajik.
* [GRAMNet film series](https://gramnet.wordpress.com/film-series-blog/): mother language films, free, childcare, and space for enabling people from migrant background to know their language and culture and stories are curated in film and available to them
* [*Share My Table*](http://www.scottishjournalofperformance.org/Evans_share_my_table_SJoP0601_DOI_10.14439sjop.2019.0601.03.html): a multi-artform PhD project by Catrin Evans between the Scottish Refugee Council and Tramway, bringing together a diverse group of people living in Glasgow looking to creatively respond to the recent media attention surrounding migration.
* [Our Chance of Becoming Human](https://www.stitcher.com/show/our-chance-of-becoming-human): an audio series by Dr Lucy Cathcart during her PhD journey of compositions made with and from migrant heritage.
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| **Q5: What are the steps that relevant local and national authorities take to ensure that the rights of migrants to access, practice, maintain and transmit living cultural resources are protected, especially forced migrants?** |
|  1. Establish a partnership.
2. Include people of migrant backgrounds.
3. Begin to work towards the establishment of a strategy on the rights of migrants to practice, maintain, and transmit living cultural resources.
4. Identify key principles founded on cultural rights to support and lead the strategy.
5. Host consultations and events which both present work towards a strategy and celebrate living cultural resources with migrants, and for migrants.
6. Do this at macro, meso and micro level, bearing in mind the importance of SDG16 to this work and that cultural work and the protection of cultural rights is a [fundamental right in peace building](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark%3A/48223/pf0000382874?posInSet=1&queryId=6aed109e-3f75-4a78-8f06-b73ed3b59bb1).
7. Institute a committee of accountability and require as an administrative duty local and national authorities, civil society cultural organisations to submit regular evidence as to the steps they are taking to ensure access, practice, maintenance and transmission of living cultural resources are protected, especially for forced migrants. Use kite marks for awards or good practice which designate organisations clearly respecting cultural rights and reward best practice and remove them if they are not, e.g., [City of Sanctuary UK](https://cityofsanctuary.org/).
8. Where an organisation is found to be underperforming, consider sanctions.
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| **Q6: What is the position of governmental authorities when cultural practices of migrants are not in line with those of the majority of the population?** |
|  * Creating a Scotland in which all can flourish regardless of diversity is the stated aim of the Scottish Government, understood as requiring the respective rights and the rule of law but also responsibilities on all members of society. At the time of writing, the New Scots Strategy is being refreshed and the intercultural nature is foremost; in other words, majority and minority rights must coexist and cultural integration occurs in many directions between receiving and arriving communities established diaspora and new diaspora, and between institutional cultures.
* In the UK, the integration and cohesion strategies tend more towards assimilation, e.g. requirements to learn English rather than enabling environments in which language learning is sustained and supported. And yet the UK remains a multicultural society with laws which protect migrants cultural rights. More can be done to tackle xenophobia and harmful stereotyping institutionally especially at the level of leadership. For example, contrast the UK Home Secretary’s ['dream and obsession'](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/suella-braverman-rwanda-dream-obsession-b2195296.html) to deport migrants to Rwanda and those of the Scottish and Welsh First Ministers affirming a welcoming environment at the level of discourse and rhetoric at least and setting the tone for governmental authority in support of migrant practices.
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| **Q7: Please provide examples of how the tensions have been handled in the past.** |
| * 2002 in Glasgow a Kurdish asylum seeker was murdered, and the murder attributed to tensions in the local community. As a result, a campaign organisation established itself called [Glasgow Campaign to Welcome Refugees](https://www.facebook.com/glasgowcampaign.welcomerefugees/). The local authority established integration networks across the city and these have been vital to diffusing and preventing tensions, and over 20 years building an environment where many best practices can be identified in the city and are acknowledged internationally. These have also been important for providing blueprints to the 32 local authorities in Scotland which have recently (the last 12 months) begun to host asylum seekers, and since 2016, have been hosting Syrian refugees.
* Statements by the First Minister in Scotland outlawing violence, refugee-led action, including the [Independent Commission of Inquiry into Asylum Provision in Scotland](https://www.asyluminquiryscotland.com/) - with particular reference to failings in the provision of care to New Scots during the Covid pandemic, presently in session and hosted (convened) by Baroness Helena Kennedy KC.
* [Cross-Party Group on Migration](https://www.parliament.scot/get-involved/cross-party-groups/current-and-previous-cross-party-groups/2021/migration) working actively with politicians and the New Scots Partnership approach, bringing together third-sector local government, government and academics as a unique partnership addressing cultural rights amongst others.
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| **Q8: How do the different sectors of the population learn about the cultures of the migrants, especially new and forced migrants? Please provide information about existing spaces, including media spaces, and opportunities for the host society to encounter and engage with cultural resources of migrants.** |
| * [Migrant Voice](https://www.migrantvoice.org/): set-up to train and enable migrants to engage positively with the hostile mainstream media in the UK and enable the population to gain a nuanced intercultural understanding of migration and migrant rights, including cultural rights.
* Educational curriculum in schools: for example, race education and history in Scotland.
* [Scottish refugee media awards](https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/media_awards/): where good practice in journalism is rewarded publicly and has evolved to include training of journalists to report well and effectively on issues impacting migrants.
* The cultivation of mainstream media and trusted journalists for reporting on migrant rights.
* Hate speech legislation: and reporting to the police of potential breaches in the law relating to migrants.
* Speeches of politicians, public intellectuals, and cultural workers who take it upon themselves to support migrant rights including the use of venues such as museums, festivals, etc.
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| **Q9: What challenges do migrants face currently in practicing, maintaining and transmitting their culture, especially when they are new and/or forced migrants?** |
| * The United Kingdom stated goal of providing a hostile environment does not create enabling conditions for the maintenance and transmission of culture. Fear is not a provider of the resource required to maintain culture, but can stifle both language and culture practice.
* Trauma-informed approaches are required for an understanding of the importance for creating home anew and in exile and for enabling stability cultural and linguistic from which intercultural practices can grow.
* There are very few resources available for the maintenance and teaching of migrant culture and language outwith world languages and yet, the vital place of mother language to the education of children is widely recognised in the academic literature. Setting up supports in education for newly arrived migrant groups should be a priority but is often a late afterthought.
* Sourcing appropriate ingredients or resources allows for continuity of culture e.g. appropriate food, spices, music, musicians, fabric, especially for those outwith cosmopolitan urban centres, enabling networks for distribution especially from longer term migrant communities in country and from back home.
* Concern for the immediate family back home and situation, especially war/oppression can be mitigated as research has shown, through cultural practice, but space and time needs to be made available, and publicly, for this to occur. A good example has been the many public events supporting Ukrainian culture and language, but resentment is felt in other migrant cultures where there has not been such celebration and has often been greeted with hostility/fear and without resource being forthcoming.
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| **Q10: Please share good practices in protecting the cultural rights of migrants to access cultural resources and services, to enjoy their heritage and that of others, to use their language in private and in public, to participate in cultural life, to freedom of artistic expression and to take part in decisions that impact their cultural life. Please focus more on new and/or forced migrants.** |
| 1. [Sharing Lives Sharing Languages Scotland Project](https://www.weascotland.org.uk/Project/sharing-lives-sharing-languages): aimed to increase the social connections and opportunities for non-native English speakers - in this instance Syrian New Scots - to use their English outside the classroom, using a peer education approach to encourage participation in collective actions to the benefit of the group and the local community.
2. Forthcoming report (December) from the [Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-asylum-migration-and-integration-fund-activities/asylum-migration-and-integration-fund-list-of-actions-allocated-funding-august-2022-accessible) (AMIF) Projects by Professor Alison Phipps, Dr Dan Fisher, and Dr Esa Aldegheri
3. [Scottish Refugee Council](https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/) and [Maryhill Integration Network](https://maryhillintegration.org.uk/)
4. [The Little Amal Project](https://walkwithamal.org/about-us/little-amal/)
5. [UNESCO Chair in RILA](https://www.gla.ac.uk/research/az/unesco/)
6. [Seeds of Thought](https://www.cca-glasgow.com/programme/seeds-of-thought-writing-sessions): held at the CCA by Tawona Sitholé. Poetry and song from migrant and indigenous communities.
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| **\*Q11: Please advise how cultural rights of vulnerable and marginalised sections of migrants are protected.** |
| * At present, the Scottish Government is investigating legislation to bring forward the incorporation of human rights (ECHR) into Scots Law as a way of ensuring the protection of cultural rights for all groups. This is a major piece of work and will ensure that there is legal remedy clearly available under Scots Law.
* [Just Right Scotland](https://www.justrightscotland.org.uk/): working to protect migrant rights in Scotland.
* [Maryhill Integration Network Voices](http://maryhillintegration.org.uk/min-voices-asylum-seeker-refugee-support-group/): refugee-led campaign group advising and using cultural approaches to migration justice.
* [Eritrean Community in UK](http://www.ericomuk.org.uk/) (ECUK): supporting the most excluded and disadvantaged groups of the Eritrean community to improve the conditions of life and encourage successful integration through advancing education, and access to main-stream services in the interest of social welfare.
* [Glasgow Afghan United](https://glasgowafghanunited.co.uk/): supporting the Afghan community and other diverse ethnic minority groups.
* The support of the above groups, and more, during the [Refugee Festival Scotland](https://www.refugeefestivalscotland.co.uk/).
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