ILG research Bursary Application - July 2016.

1. **Project Title (maximum 10 words)**

Lost in information? New Syrian Scots' information way-finding practices

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4. Partner(s)

The Scottish Refugee Council in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire has shown a lot of interest in this research. Although they could not be named as formal partners they have been very encouraging and supportive offering access to refugee families, documentation produced by the SRC and information on collaborations and current developments.

5. Summary of the project – If the project is funded, ILG will use this in any publicity material or announcements. (Maximum 300 words)

According to the International Organization for Migration (2015) the number of migrants, displaced persons and refugees who arrived in Europe in 2015 has been estimated to be above one million, which presents the highest migration flow since World War II. The conflict in Syria has been the biggest driver of migration. The UK via the 'Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement (VPR)

Programme' has committed to accepting 20,000 most vulnerable Syrian families from established refugee camps a proportion of which have been placed in Scotland. The Scottish Refugee Council (SRC) offers the 'refugee integration' (RIS) programme which helps address families' initial critical needs, such as housing, welfare rights, education and access to benefits. However, all the partners involved in implementation of the "New Scots strategy" "have been working under extreme pressure to ensure the smooth arrival and initial integration of large numbers of refugees in a short period of time" (Scottish Government, 2016). This has involved a number of challenges, such understanding how to best deal with the provision of effective information support at local level but also how to centralise services designed around families' different socio-cultural experiences and individual needs.

This research aims to explore the information services available to 'New Syrian Scots'* as well as their own information needs and their perceptions of the information services they consider important for their resettlement and adaptation, their habitual and adaptive information practices and the barriers and enablers they encounter within their new socio-cultural setting via their interaction with people, tools and processes. The research will be conducted via focus groups with New Syrian Scots and interviews with key SRC representatives. The outcomes of this research will help towards making recommendations on how to best aid the newcomers in their social inclusion and support their emerging information landscapes for their resettlement and adaptation.

*This is a preferred way of referring to the Syrian refugees in Scotland

6. **Risk assessment – Please state any risks you envisage on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being low and 5 being a high risk**

There are a number of significant ethical as well as practical issues that the researcher would need to address in preparation of researching the experiences of refugees. The main ethical concerns include maintaining the privacy and anonymity of the participants, ensuring that their identities are secure and that the research is guided by the principles of informed consent and the right to withdraw from the research. For this reason no real names will be used in the research.

(Low risk 1 as it is safeguarded by the researcher).

In addition, the researcher would need to ensure that she is at all times mindful of the previous experiences of the displaced families and consider all the questions carefully with a view to respecting the sensitivity and emotional distress that these may unintentionally cause. For example, a question centred on the experiences of refugees around the use of new technologies and mobile Apps may lead to evoking negative memories of misplacement, war and family separation. The researcher will also need to be aware of the cultural and religious differences and ways of expected communication or contact when approaching the participants. For example, currently Ramadan is an important religious period in the Islamic calendar which marks a period of prayer and fasting that may subject the participants to more tiredness and emotional sensitivity.

(Low risk 2. Ensuring that the questions do not directly ask about these experiences but the level of control is less as these experiences may come to the surface. The researcher should ensure that the participants have the right to withdraw or not answer particular questions. An informed consent form is handed out).

It is also important to note that the ethical aspects of the research have been critically appraised and

reviewed via the university Research Ethics Self-Assessment procedure (RESA) and it follows the University's Research Ethics Policy for establishing and promoting good ethical practice in the conduct of academic research. The researcher also holds a PVG membership for working with vulnerable people.

Finally, it is important to be mindful of the socio-cultural changes these families are going through and understand that individual family members may need to be approached differently depending on gender, seniority and other individual characteristics.

In relation to reporting data deriving from refugees support groups, the researcher should be equally careful in terms of the ways a balanced representation should be given of both the successes and the challenges encountered.

(Low risk 1 as the Scottish Refugee Council is supportive and encouraging).

There are also a number of other risks associated with the potential refusal of the families to take part in this research. This is due to the fact that these families have relocated to Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Glasgow in the last few months and they are still in their early phase of orientation and integration. For this reason a back-up plan will include approaching other geographical locations in Scotland if access is not permitted or is not possible. Offering financial incentives to the families will also deemed appropriate. The decision to offer them, however, is mainly driven by humanitarian purposes and not so much by the purposive to increase responses. So far experience has demonstrated that Syrian families have been very participatory and willing to discuss their experiences.

(Medium risk 3 depending on the circumstances of the families and the support of the Glasgow office as formal arrangements for Glasgow are not in place yet. However, initial contact has been made).

In addition, it has been found that it is quite uncommon for the refugee families to speak English and this is a barrier to both conducting the focus groups and also documenting their experiences with information. The focus groups take longer to conduct and are more difficult to coordinate. To address this issue, the research team has the support of one of the SRC interpreter (Arabic speaker) who has already been involved in phase 1 of the research project. The project team has also ensured that both researchers are present during data collection and all focus groups are conducted in the local council locations were RSC employees provide support and services to Syrian families. However, it is inevitable that some last minute adjustments to the research data collection plan may be inevitable because of the vulnerability and accessibility of the researched group. For example, the initial two focus groups in Aberdeen were planned with 4-6 participants in each group but due to increased interest they were raised to 9 and 10 participants in each group. The focus group discussions can be intense with family dynamics in place and hierarchy plays a role as younger members may be more reluctant to speak in front of other family members so this will inform the focus group composition in the second phase of the project.

(Low risk 2 as the Scottish Refugee Council is supportive and encouraging but small unpredictable changes to the plan may be made).

7. **Stakeholders**

This research project will enable to share perspectives and it will be of relevance for both the Scottish migration services and the Syrian refugee community. It will add to evaluative outcomes that have been captured using group and individual feedback sessions organised by the SRC that

included partners, staff, families and volunteers. The outcomes of this research are also expected to be valuable and beneficial to all Scottish refugee services and to other humanitarian agencies, local communities as well the refugee communities themselves, the key support mechanisms, community volunteers, government policy bodies and key humanitarian agencies. The following websites provide a preliminary indication of possible organisations interested in refugee and Asylum seekers information in the United Kingdom:

• http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/how_can_we_help_you

• http://www.redcross.org.uk/What-we-do/Refugee-support

• http://www.refugee-action.org.uk/

• http://www.asylumaid.org.uk/

• http://www.unhcr.org.uk/what-we-do-in-the-uk.html

• https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/

• http://youngroots.org.uk/

• http://www.refugee.org.uk/

• http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/get_help/community_support

• http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/128135/0030620.pdf

• http://www.transitions-london.co.uk/

The proposed project presents a scoping study and short primary data collection research project that will act as a platform for developing further research and establishing collaboration between the academic, the humanitarian and government policy sectors. It is designed to have tangible and practical benefits (i.e. it will offer the added value of creating an online platform/blog with the aim to provide a clear communication point for the Syrian refugee communities. The research project will also help explore the information needs, the sources used and the barriers encountered by refugees to increase understanding of the nature of information provision and support required informing support organisations and acting as a means for engaging them in better communication with these communities. It will also offer an opportunity to refugees who have arrived earlier to be engaged more effectively by providing support to new refugee families and help them also understand the cultural differences and expectations of their new country. Finally it is envisaged (depending on the data of the study) that there may be issues raised around digital inclusion, as both English language competencies and demographic based differences may be presented as barriers to using technology as a means for communication and adaptation.

The applicant is also interested in the value of this research to library and information services. The research will be of interest to public libraries in particular who would like to offer support to newly arrived refugee families, help them overcome information related barriers and ensure that a safe and supportive environment is available for them. Public libraries can become centres for educational and cultural orientation sessions for newly settled refugees as well for their communities that welcome them. The European Bureau of Library, Information, and Documentation Associations (EBLIDA), for example, which is an independent umbrella association of library, information, documentation, and archive associations and institutions in Europe, highlights via a press release on "Public Libraries in Europe Welcome Refugees" how public libraries could act "as a platform for democratic and open-minded values, and be a safe place where social inclusiveness for all is a priority." In addition to providing basic survival resources (e.g. food and shelter) to refugees, EBLIDA argues that public libraries could offer education and cultural programming to promote

integration.

The Network (which is a network of public and national libraries, archives and museums in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, university departments, professional bodies, heritage organisations, charities, voluntary sector organisations and Individuals) and is committed to tackling social exclusion, similarly emphasises a number of areas in which libraries archives and museums can support refugee integration in the community via reviewing procedures to remove barriers in information services for refugees and providing information to both refugees and the wider community about the realities of refugees' lives and celebrating their achievements. The Network list a number of local services and initiatives, ranging from assisting refugees getting used to their new culture and society to helping them become more independent via finding information themselves on local services and activities. Libraries, archives and museums can also be at the forefront of organizing events, activities, language training groups for refugees as well as offering a space for socializing and connecting with their communities.

IFLA has provided a number of characteristic examples (http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/public-libraries/publications/library_service_to_refugees_0.pdf) that demonstrate the extent to which public libraries are already responding with a range of local services to help overcome this humanitarian crisis across Europe, aiding refugees' social integration.

This suggests that libraries can play a wider role in helping refugees to further develop and sustain their digital literacy competencies as well as help them keep digitally included and connected. Refugees have already developed complex information networks and strategies for the purposes of migration (e.g. to connect with their families, to navigate difficult migration routes on their journey to the host country, to deal with isolation from home). In addition, via their migration routes and inventive uses of technology they have created their own information paths which may present for them the most effective and easily navigated informational routes. In order to address their information needs that will ensure a smooth transition between cultures upon settlement to the country to which they immigrate the exploration of refugees' information paths may emerge as shortcuts that could further enable their smooth transition between cultures and their adaptation.

Information plays a fundamental role in refugees' resettlement and social inclusion process in their new host country. This is because there is a direct link between social inclusion and information as "social exclusion is conceptualized as an information disjuncture, where individuals new to the information landscapes of a new society – and therefore the established methods of information production, reproduction, circulation and modes of access — find that their previous information practices may no longer be adequate or appropriate in their new settings" (Lloyd et *al*, 2013).

Refugee groups are presented with a number of barriers to accessing needed information. For example, they have a need for accessing materials directly in their first language and require help with learning English. Language barriers are significant inhibitors in communication and prevent them from engaging fully in society. In addition, refugees' way of life and expectations are driven by a number of socio-cultural and religious differences that, if not fully understood, may become significant barriers in this process. Added to these are their experiences of misplacement, war and atrocities that have changed their outlook and perceptions. Furthermore, it is important to note that the current refugee crisis has created an emerging phenomenon of the "i-Refugee, the iAsylum seeker, the iMigrant" for whom information and its flow via modern information and communication technologies (smartphones, tablets, social media, global positioning services) has become an essential resource for action and decision-making in migration and essential tools for

survival, escaping war, conflict and persecution:

Basic needs have evolved to no longer included shelter, water and food, but also mobiles, SIM cards and charging stations (Kosciejew 2015).

For refugees seeking to reach Europe for example, the digital infrastructure has become as important as "the physical infrastructures of roads, railways, sea crossing and the borders controlling the free movement of people". A multitude of technologies and sources are used, accessible via smartphones - mobile apps, specific websites for migration information, social media, translation services - and all these are mainly linked to the migration experiences of refugees (Gillespie et al., 2016). The devices provide a lifeline for people to their families and friends - apps like WhatsApp, Viber, and Skype are all widely used, and they allow them to avoid the prohibitively high costs of making traditional phone calls across borders. Google Maps and online foreign-currency-conversion calculators are another popular choice, helping people find important information that will help them make decisions on migration routes. Similarly, Graham (2015) advises that "the majority of refugees are travelling with mobile phones, or at least one amongst families or groups". On crossing one national border their phones tell them in what country they are located and how close they are to their intended destination (Gill, 2015 p. 26).

These are all experienced that refugees carry with them in their new destinations and may become important means of communication, adjustment and social inclusion in their new country. However, Price (2015) found that it was nearly every young male refugee that had a smartphone devise). No direct references appear to be made to women using smartphones (despite women and girls are often the most vulnerable in conflict situations).

In addition, there may be other disparities of use that should be investigated, for example, related to urban and rural locations and age demographics.

8. Research Aims and Objectives

Research Aims

This research project aims to examine Syrian New Scots' information needs, their information seeking practices and their information related experiences during the process of their resettlement and integration in Scotland. In particular, the research aims to explore refugees' 'ways of knowing' for addressing critical social inclusion needs such as housing, welfare, education, benefits, employability, rights and entitlements within their new country of resettlement. It will also examine the difficulties and barriers that Syrian New Scots experience (e.g. English language, sociocultural differences) in locating useful information related to their key information needs as well as the information enablers that may help them to adapt to their local communities, feel a sense of belongingness and successfully establish their identity into the Scottish society.

To achieve this the research will explore how information is accessed via a variety of formal and informal information sources (the internet, social media and mobile technologies, books, guides, non-textual/visual sources) and via interpersonal communication (with friends and family or other social connections) as well as community contacts and regional support organizations. It will also examine the availability, accessibility and usefulness of information during the initial months of refugees' transition and how to best support their emerging information needs for the purposes of resettlement and adaptation.

Research Objectives

• Examine the character, role and value of existing information services in supporting Syrian New Scots through their resettlement and adaptation process in the U.K. In particular, explore the SRC refugee integration plan, its implementation and subsequent changes after the first round of evaluation

• Explore Syrian New Scots' information needs and their perceptions of the information services they consider important for their resettlement and adaptation, their habitual and adaptive information literacy practices and the barriers and enablers they encounter within their new socio-cultural setting via their interaction with people, tools and processes.

• Make recommendations to support services on how to best aid the newcomers in their social inclusion, and how to best support their emerging information landscapes for the purposes of resettlement and adaptation.

9. **Milestones**

Progress so far

The research is currently led by the applicant with support provided by the Robert Gordon University to conduct the initial orientation study. The first visits verified the use of smartphone devises including WhatsApp, Viber, Messenger, Skype, Facebook that were used for communication with family members, and the importance of interpersonal sources. The Syrian New Scots group in Aberdeenshire have already a WhatsApp group set up by the SRC that was initiated as a language learning idea and it is now a way of communicating information, practicing English, providing Arabic translations, sharing photos and interacting socially.

Furthermore, the preliminary results from the interviews with Scottish Refugee Council (SRC) representatives indicate that there are differences in the provision of services based on different needs created within the rural and urban communities examined. In addition, the families in the two locations (Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire) are heterogeneous in terms of a number of characteristics, such as the extent of the family sizes, special learning needs and health literacy needs. There are challenges around the rurality/centralisation of services and requirements around good practice that is shared and there is need for building capacity.

Within Aberdeenshire which has formed the focal point of this research until now, a number of challenges have been visible even from the outset of the resettlement process. The Syrian New Scots' Partnership was formed in October 2016 in Aberdeenshire to ensure that Syrian refugee families arriving in local communities "would be welcomed with a full, well resourced, knowledgeable, effective and sustainable resettlement package". The partnership recently completed the first round of evaluation of their refugee integration plan that was developed as a foundation for welcoming and resettling the first nine Syrian families (35 people) who arrived in Aberdeenshire between February and April 2016. The report highlights clear evidence of successes and positive impacts underpinned by a strong and effective partnerships; however there are also a number of key challenges highlighted, for example, addressing English language needs and communication barriers between families and health staff, the need to personalise welcome packs (as families would not read the information potentially due to too much information or literacy issues), the need for more support for families in the first three months, for volunteer coordination and for maximising community support. There were also a number of cultural barriers encountered, such as understanding of rights & responsibilities, increasing young people's awareness of legal

differences between Syria and Scotland, making Young Scot information available in Arabic and offering additional cultural awareness sessions. Thus language provision, religious and social support networks, and other social concerns may be addressed through the development of a collective understanding of these communities.

Milestones related to the current research proposal

- **Milestone 1: Transcribing and analyzing current interview data - Sept 2016**

The researcher has already attended a number of events for Syrian refuges in Aberdeeshire, including a celebration for the beginning of Ramadan and an ESOL English language that was conducted with seven mature Syrian learners (four men and three women). These offered opportunities to meet up with some of the research participants and establish additional trust. Face-to-face interviews with Scottish Refugee Council (SRC) representatives have been already conducted in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire to explore their experiences after the first Syrian families arrived in February 2016. In addition, two focus groups with members of the refugee families have been carried out. This phase of the project therefore will focus on transcribing and analyzing these data. A second task that will be completed will be the preparation of the research blog for the purposes of dissemination.

Deliverables: End of September 2016 - Short report of key results of phase 1 to ILG group and blog URL.

- **Milestone 2: Desk-based research - Sept to October 2016** A literature search on bibliographic databases (within the last five years) and the Internet (e.g. professional organisations websites, online social media, fora) to explore available research around the provision of information to Syrian refugees. The exploration of the literature will target the following areas: information literacy, use of digital technologies, social integration, adaptation and inclusion in relation to refugees and asylum seekers and migrants in general and more specifically in connection to Syrian refugees.

Deliverables: End of October 2016 - Short report of key literature search results to ILG group.

- **Milestone 3: Second round of interview with the SRC representatives in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire and focus groups with refugee families in Aberdeen - October 2016**

The interviews will be based on a reflection of the first round of evaluation of their refugee integration plan that was developed as a foundation for welcoming and resettling the first nine Syrian families (35 people) who arrived in Aberdeenshire between February and April 2016.

It is expected that these will also provide opportunities for informal conversations with community groups and volunteers who plan and deliver services to refugees in specific areas. Services may include information and advice, English classes, and drop-in services. Where appropriate, data may be also collected by attending events organised by either the SRC or the other integration networks if permitted. These ad-hoc encounters with volunteers have so far provided a lot of interesting information around the refugees' integration and have led to discussions on creating the New Syrian Scots cookbook, an idea that is currently being explored.

One to two focus group interviews will be conducted (depending on access to the families) with 4-6 or 8-10 participants in each (one with women and one with men). Each focus group will last for approximately 1 hour and it will be recorded to allow the research team to analyze the data systematically. As part of the focus group, the *Critical Incident Technique* will be used which outlines procedures for collecting observed incidents having special significance for the participants (Flanagan, 1954 p.327). A drawing/mapping exercise that aims to enable creative communication

about the participants' information world will also be used following the *Information World Mapping (IWM)* approach (Greyson, 2013). The participants will be asked to put themselves on a piece of paper, and then draw in the people and places and things in their life that provide useful information and those who create difficulty for them in terms of their integration to their new communities. The drawing will be used to initiate conversations around information needs, sources, barriers, communication and sharing of information, socio-cultural integration and digital literacy skills. Some basic demographic characteristics (gender, age, previous education, family status) will also be collected.

Deliverables: End of October 2016 - Short report on progress regarding interviews in Aberdeen.

- Milestone 4: Focus groups with refugee families and SRC representatives in Glasgow – November 2016

Establishing further contact with the SRC in Glasgow via email and phone. Organize two visits. One as an initial orientation visit and the second one for the purposes of data collection. An additional visit may be required depending on the availability of the families.

One to two focus group interviews will be conducted (depending on access to the families) with 4-6 or 8-10 participants in each (one with women and one with men) following the same approach as above with the participants in Aberdeen.

Deliverables: End of November 2016 - Short report on progress regarding interviews in Glasgow.

-Milestone 5: Transcription and analysis of data / writing up research paper November to December 2016

Deliverables:

End of November 2016 - Short report on progress to ILG regarding the key themes emerging.

End of December 2016 A - short (1000 word summary) will be provided for the Information Literacy website and / or the Journal of Information Literacy in the project report section.

Middle of January 2017 - Paper to I3 conference.

Please note that as the deadline for I3 conference submissions is at the end of January; that month will also be used to compensate for the loss of a few days in December during the Christmas and New Year period. This has not been included in the time-plan which ends in December to avoid additional costs incurred for the expenses of the PI because the estimated costing did not exclude the normal period of two holiday weeks at the end of December and beginning of January.

10. **Description (Maximum 1,000 words)**

Introduction

According to the International Organization for Migration the number of migrants, displaced persons and refugees who arrived in Europe in 2015 has been estimated to be above one million, which presents the highest migration flow since World War II (2015). The main reasons that have led people to seek asylum to Europe has been the effort to escape conflict, violence, abuse and poverty. The conflict in Syria has been by far the biggest driver of migration. In 2015 alone it has been estimated that there were around 363,000 Syrian asylum seekers in the EU. The migration flow, that has often been a scene of human tragedy and loss of human life at sea at European external borders, has sparked a crisis and division in terms of how to deal with the resettlement process within the EU.

EU countries since 2015 have been struggling to cope with the influx of migrants and increasing numbers of asylum applications that have, in many cases, overstretched their national emergency response as well as their reception and resettlement capacity.

In September 2015 the UK Prime Minister announced the 'Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement (VPR) Programme' committing to accepting 20,000 most vulnerable Syrians in the UK drawn from established refugee camps, granting them 5 years of humanitarian protection and support. In Scotland, a special taskforce was assembled to co-ordinate their humanitarian and practical response. The Scottish Refugee Council (SRC) offers the 'refugee integration' (RIS) programme which includes support in the form of advice and advocacy over a period of a 12month programme which aims to increase refugees' awareness of their rights and entitlements should they are granted Leave to Remain. The programme helps them to fulfil their initial critical needs, such as housing, welfare rights, education and access to benefits, employability options as well as their rights and entitlements.

However, "Scotland's response to the refugee crisis has represented both a challenge and an opportunity". All of the partners involved in implementation of the "New Scots strategy" (which is the strategy for all refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland) "have been working under extreme pressure to ensure the smooth arrival and initial integration of large numbers of refugees in a short period of time" (Scottish Government, 2016). The rapid influx of refugees meant that SRC and other support organization had to coordinate their responses to this humanitarian crisis by rapidly preparing for the arrival of families, often in areas on which they have had little or no prior experience. In addition, support required dealing with the social, emotional and political issues which accompany families with refugee status. As a result, the provision of information to refugees on their arrival in the UK has been largely ad-hoc, and driven by demand rather than through experiential understanding of the specific needs and cultural sensitivities of the refugees themselves. There are a number of difficulties and challenges encountered in this process, including understanding how to best deal with the provision of effective support to refugees at local level but also with the centralisation of resources and services that have to be designed around people's needs and their preferred ways of accessing them. For example although the use of digital technologies (e.g. the use of smart phones and apps) appears to be a preferable way of communication for misplaced refugee populations, there are important language and cultural barriers that would have to be addressed first for the support resources and services to be effective.

Methodology

The study will adopt Lloyd's sociocultural approach focusing on how refugees build an understanding about information landscape within their new country of resettlement and develop ways of knowing (Lloyd 2010). As this research explores the diversity and richness of refugees' information related experiences a qualitative approach is appropriate, focusing on the ways in which they build an understanding about their new information landscapes and how they develop essential knowledge for their effective transition to their new cultures.

Authorisation from the SRC in Aberdeenshire has been already granted to approach refugees. Interviews with SRC representatives have also been conducted in both Aberdeenshire and in Aberdeen as well as two focus groups interviews with refugee families in Aberdeenshire. This initial data collection has helped to draw some key ideas on the main areas of investigation in this research that will be further explored in the second round of the project that forms the basis of this research proposal.

However, during Phase 1, interviews with refugee families in Aberdeen were not yet possible due to the early phase of their resettlement. Furthermore, as the next Syrian families are due to arrive in Aberdeen in Autumn 2016 a second interview with Syrian new Scots' support team in Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen needs to be organised to discuss the changing priorities and strategies that will be implemented in view of supporting the second wave of refugees, as well as the lessons learnt from the initial issues encountered.

The research aims to continue collecting data that will enrich the initial findings, approaching refugees as a diverse group and considering that the experiences, expectations and needs of the families will be different depending on their demographic characteristics (e.g. age, gender) as well as other traits (e.g. existing competencies and experiences). In addition it is expected that services will be different depending on local issues, something that has been highlighted in the findings of the study so far. Therefore further interviews with refugee families and the SRC would be necessary and these have been planned to take place in a additional location (Glasgow).

This research is therefore part of an ongoing research project aiming to collect the second round of data by means of:

• Continuing desk-based research for materials on the adaptation and information experiences of Syrian refugees (websites, research publications)

• A second round of focus group interviews with refugee families in Aberdeen and a first round of focus group interviews in Glasgow (in both of these locations familiesare within the early stages of the resettlement process).

• A second round of formal face-to-face interviews with SRC representatives in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire and interviews with SRC representatives in Glasgow.
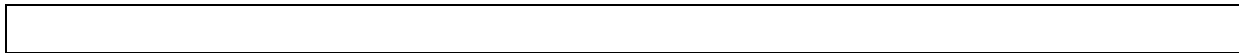
11. **Dissemination strategy (maximum 500 words)**

The project will be publicized from the outset on social media via a Syrian New Scots blog page. The blog will be used to promote the research via Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and via different mailing lists on jiscmail.ac.uk. It will also be promoted to humanitarian agencies and organisations as well as local library services. It is envisaged that the blog will develop beyond a dissemination tool after the end of the research project and will be maintained by already settled Syrian refugees as a means for establishing an informal network for connecting with the refugee community and supporting the new wave of refugees.

Further engagement with the media and presentations to the wider community is envisaged via hosting an awareness event with the purpose to increase understanding of refugees' community integration and social inclusion. Discussions have already taken place about developing a New Syrian Scot Recipe book (created by the families themselves) to share with the community and raise funds for the refugee families but also use it as a tool of integration with the community. Further ideas have included organizing a New Syrian Scot dinner to showcase the family recipes. The SRC is already planning a cooking training session for the families over the summer.

Any outputs of this research will be released using Creative Commons licences and will be through Jorum and the blog to ensure that the research results will be accessible by the widest possible audience).

A short (1000 word summary) will be provided for the Information Literacy website and / or the Journal of Information Literacy in the project report section.

12. Outputs

A conference paper which will be presented at the i3 conference
http://www.rgu.ac.uk/research/conferences/i-2015 The deadline for paper submissions will be at the end of January 2017 which coincides with the end of this project and allows time for writing up. This will also include the publication of a journal article in a special library issue (the specific journal the conference will collaborate for this purpose has not been announced yet but it is expected that it will be be a good quality academic journal).

This short research project will also be used as a basis for further international collaboration with the University of Borås for a research application that is currently under development. This is aimed at the Horizon 2020 EU framework project funding for research and innovation that will engage a number of other European partners.

A further application to ESRC/AHRC has also been planned by an interdisciplinary team at the Robert Gordon University (of which the applicant is a member) on the basis of an ESRC Call for Proposals on Forced Displacement. This application will be submitted with an emphasis on 'citizen journalism', offering refugees the opportunity to write/contribute to a blog as a means of keeping their cultural heritage alive, sharing their experiences and supporting each other during transition to new communities. This would be a distinct output of the project which could then be used to support individuals as they are repatriated when/if possible; and assist in the repair of their home countries – tying in with the need to demonstrate benefits to country of origin. It would provide the younger generation that has been displaced with a focal point of their cultural heritage and history that of which they may not have personal memories (steps in this process would include setting up and training a community editorial board who would eventually take ownership of the initiative.) This programme will also address the inclusion of digital literacy and use of social media training sessions.

13. Evaluation strategy

The research project brings forward a number of issues, surrounding the provision of information services and support to Syrian refugees. The importance of understanding socio-cultural differences, the approach to social integration as an information rich process, the role of information and communication technologies and social media during social adaptation and integration, the exploration of existing information and digital literacy skills and the need to foster a participatory learning culture and create opportunities for informal learning and connectivity with the community. For this reason this research would be of relevance to a number of stakeholders.

The research will be based on a systematic acquisition and assessment of information and there will be an ongoing evaluation strategy to monitor the project deliverables and ensure that the project is progressing well and that the aims and objectives are met.

At the end of each one of the project months, evaluation will focus on the following questions and a short reflective report submitted to the ILG group sponsors will be produced to clearly indicate progress and completed activities. The purpose of this activity will be to monitor the ongoing performance of the project and to identify deviations from the plan. It will answer the following questions:

• Have all the activities been completed according to the time-plan addressing the specific data collection stage and the anticipated deliverables (e.g. conference paper and journal article)?

• Have the activities been completed with the available resources?

• Has the implementation of the project created variances and changes in the research objectives or the data collection methodology?

Therefore progress will be systematically documented and there will be ongoing communication with the ILG group funding team.

14. Financial breakdown

Cost type (see appendix)	Description	Total
Salary for PI/ Academic staff	1 day per week (4 months September 2016 – December 2017)	4,255
Research Participants' Expenses	Participation Incentives to refugee families £10-£20 per participant depending on numbers	£500
Printing research promotional material	Leaflets, posters & blog promoting the research/cooking book	£200
Translation Services	Arabic (Levantine) interpreter (cost estimated £15 per hour). To cover focus groups translation and additional translation of Arabic words on the drawings.	£500
Travel	Travel expenses to Aberdeenshire and Glasgow. Up to two train tickets estimated cost of £70 and £30 for other travel costs in Aberdeen and to Aberdeenshire	£100
Total support	**Total requested from the ILG Group**	£ 5,555

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