




NEWSLETTER/ WINTER
DECEMBER 2020/ ISSUE 4

WITH ALL GOOD WISHES FOR
CHRISTMAS & THE NEW YEAR

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Established in 2003  is a Charity that works with unemployed and underemployed **refugees** to reconnect to their professions by organising training courses, work experience and one-to-one guidance; also creating opportunities for refugees to contribute with their skills to development in developing countries; and drawing attention to forced displacement/ education. <https://reconnectonline.org.uk/>

UPDATE

Preparation for Higher Education Programme at UCL

In 2019/20 academic year (September to March 2020) – 40 Refugees and Asylum Seekers from 18 countries were supported on the programme. Since the start of the programme in September 2018, 92 Refugees and Asylum Seekers were supported from 29 countries, 43 female and 49 Male.

Because of COVID 19, the summer term 2020 module of the programme had been cancelled. Our partner, The UCL Institute of Education has now redesigned the programme in 2020/21 academic year, to be delivered as 'blended', face-to-face teaching and remote, to adhere to social distancing guidelines to protect participants.



Our thanks to the *Barrow Cadbury Trust/ The National Lottery Community Fund COVID Support Fund*, for providing the much-needed funding for the programme, until April 2021. Our thanks also to *Citizens UK* for donating 10 laptops for the programme.

Pathways into Teaching for Refugees, PGCE Post-Compulsory Education Programme

The three students (two female, one male), we are currently supporting at UCL Institute of Education, have successfully completed the 1st year, and are now attending the 2nd and final year of the programme.

Theodros Abraham
Director of Reconnect
0207 697 4065

REFLECTION

In Memory of Gezachew Alemayehu Keno

"Gezachew wrote this poem in our poetry workshop in which we used poems and dialogue to explore the theme 'Home: The Place I Come From: The Place I Go To.' We generated internal images to which we could return for solace in exile. The poem conveys not only Gezachew's love for his home and his pride in his heritage but I think the images in Gezachew's poem reflect the beauty of his soul and the richness of his character that was evident to all of us."

Aine McAllister, Course Leader, ReConnect - Preparation for Higher Education Programme, UCL Institute of Education

Lake Tana

Flawless Water
Lake Tana. Source of Blue Nile.

Full of historic churches, big trees and monasteries from Kebran Gabriel to Dega Estefanos.

It holds half the country's water.
Organic. Fresh. Clear.

The golden door of Bahir Dar.

Oh Lake Tana, the home of monks on 37 scattered islands, 37 monasteries and more.

Abundance. Richness. Culture.

Books in Geez, gold of kings, and their sleeping bodies.

Tana. The biggest lake in Ethiopia.
Organic water. The jewel of Abyssinia.

By Gezachew Alemayehu Keno
February 2020

A SUCCESS STORY

ReConnect creates opportunities for refugees to realise their potential

Yasmin (not her real name) is in her 30s, MA in Sociology, worked as a journalist and teacher in her country of origin, before she came to the UK in 2016. She was determined to find her way back into the classroom and to re-establish her career as a teacher.

ReConnect offered Yasmin the opportunity to undertake the *Preparation for Higher Education Programme*, followed by a place on the PGCE at University College London (UCL) Institute of Education (IOE) one year ago. She has studied part-time and has been successful with her coursework. Crucially, Yasmin is completing a work-placement as part of the PGCE as a teacher of sociology in an FE college.

Yasmin says "*Living in another country is not easy as you need to start from scratch, you need to prove yourself all the time and you need to change all stereotypes exist about your background and history. However, there are always great opportunities that give you a chance to feel success and efficiency*".

Interview conducted by Stephen Desmond
A Trustee of ReConnect

Applicants invited for PhD programme: Refugee Narratives

ReConnect is a partner with Warwick University to examine the experience of refugees in training programmes in the 1970s – 1990s, and currently; how organisations respond, and how refugees make sense of their experiences, personally, professionally and culturally. See 2-page summary, 4 years funding for PhD confirmed through AHRC. Deadline 13.1.21

Contact: Professor Alison Ribeiro de Menezes.
alison.menezes@warwick.ac.uk

https://www.midlands4cities.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/Refugee-Narratives_-World-University-Service's-Ethiopian-and-Eritrean-Scholarship-Programmes-in-the-Light-of-Current-Practice.pdf



SUPPORTING REFUGEES INTO HIGHER EDUCATION/ TEACHING

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APPEAL BY SARAH BUXTON

Chair of Trustees of ReConnect

Among his many tasks, our director (and only employee) Theodoros Abraham, found time in 2020 to survey the 68 participants who completed the 30-hour course 'Preparation for Higher Education' in 2018 and 2019, to ask how their education and work lives have progressed since the course. Contact was made with 90%.

It's exciting for me to hear the detail of what the participants are doing now, as a result of the course. All faced challenges in re-entering professional work or training, since seeking asylum in UK, and are highly motivated. Some examples: 4 have now completed PGCE and are teaching in London schools or colleges (3 with ReConnect funding); 9 are doing PGCE full or part time, (3 with ReConnect funding); 4 are working as teaching assistants (2 are paid), hoping to do PGCE in future; 2 are doing placements; 9 are working, one in their region of origin; most of the others are studying, including 13 who have returned to English language studies.

ReConnect continues to apply to Trusts and Foundations for grants, but is very dependent on funds from individuals, like you! If you see the value of what ReConnect is doing, would you consider making a donation, of any size?

We believe that ReConnect is achieving a great deal, and meeting a real need, which enables participants to ReConnect with their skills and experience, to qualify, and go on work in UK or elsewhere. The recent grant from the Barrow Cadbury Trust/ The National Lottery Community Fund, who considered ReConnect thoroughly, is important validation for us

To make a donation see, 'How to Support us'.

With Gratitude
Sarah Buxton
sarahbuxton@reconnectonline.org.uk

MAKE A DIFFERENCE/ DONATE

- It costs £ 1,100 to enable A Refugee/ Asylum Seeker to undertake Reconnect - Preparation for Higher Education Programme. This includes guidance, course fees and cost of travel.
- It costs £ 10,700 to enable a refugee to undertake a teacher training course (PGCE Post Compulsory Education Programme), at UCL Institute of Education. This includes guidance, tuition fees, Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS), and Occupational Health Checks fees, and cost of travel.

HOW TO SUPPORT US

Choose one of the following:

1. **Donate via Just Giving**
through the following link:

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaigns/charity/reconnect/refugeeteacherpathways>
2. **Write to us**
Send us a cheque or CAF voucher (payable to Reconnect)
Charity No. 1105016
to: *Reconnect*
Resource for London
356 Holloway Road, London
N7 6PA, United Kingdom
3. **Donate using Gift Aid**
Gift Aid is a simple way to increase the value of your gift to ReConnect – at no extra cost to you. If you pay tax in the UK, ReConnect can claim an extra 25p for every £1 you donate. For example, if you donate £50, it is worth £62.50 to us.

To donate using Gift Aid we must receive the completed form, which you can find via the following link:

<https://reconnectonline.org.uk/gift-aid>

or by emailing
theodoros@reconnectonline.org.uk

Tel. 0207 697 4065

OUR THANKS

To all those who have supported us with grants and donations during the year. These include: The Equator Fund, the Barrow Cadbury Trust/ The National Lottery Community Fund COVID Support Fund, J H Levy Charitable Trust, Inchrye Trust, and our many individual donors. With this financial support the Charity has been able to implement its programme.

The Charity is also grateful for the dedicated teaching and pastoral support provided by staff at UCL Institute of Education, including for the mentoring scheme initiative.

Our thanks also to our volunteers and members of our Advisory Group for their immense contribution to support our work.

LINKS TO OUR WORK

A Guardian article on refugee teachers
<https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2017/jul/14/the-refugees-rebuilding-their-lives-as-teachers-in-british-schools>

UCL video on preparation for Higher Education Programme
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDi7-kdLuic>

UCL publicity video
<https://youtu.be/6DNZWezOXUU>

Awards Ceremony/ Refugee Week 2019 <http://youtu.be/TkriSEGiVzU>