

Established in 2003  is a Charity that works with unemployed and underemployed **refugees**

with a professional background by creating opportunities 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 students from 18 countries completed the programme.

Since the start of the programme in September 2018, we supported 92 Refugees and Asylum Seekers from 29 countries, 43 female and 49 Male.

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

In 2018/19 academic year we supported two refugees on this programme. Both are currently teaching in Further Education Colleges in London.

During 2019/20 we supported 3 refugees, 2 female and 1 male.

Transfer of teaching skills

As part of ReConnect's long-term goal to support higher education institutions in South Sudan and Ethiopia, Dr. Maknun Gemaledin Ashami, who is originally from Afar, visited Samara University in the summer of 2019. He consulted with senior staff, on key challenges and priorities facing the University. The key priorities the University identified included capacity building and training through the development of partnerships with UK universities, and facilitation of an external visitor programme.

Theodros Abraham
Director of ReConnect
0207697 4065

REFLECTION

Aine McAllister, Course Leader, ReConnect Preparation for Higher Education Programme



"voice-the capacity to make oneself understood in one's own terms, to produce meanings under conditions of empowerment. And in the present world, such conditions are wanting for more and more people." (Blommaert, 2006)

The teaching team on Reconnect – Preparation for Higher Education at UCL IOE recognise the abundant knowledge our students have to share. We work with them to increase the repertoires with which they communicate the skills, knowledge and expertise that we recognise already exists. Our aim is that by participating in the course our students develop the academic literacy and autonomous learning practices to facilitate their entry to the system at a level that adequately reflects their experience and competence. We are aware of the myriad of barriers our students face seeking access to Higher Education in accordance with their previous qualifications and development needs. We are acutely aware of the impact of those barriers. We are aware that the voice and experience of highly skilled refugees, asylum seekers and forced migrants is not heard enough. So, we strive to continually develop our offering and to innovate to create experiences in which our valued students are equipped to amplify their voices, to respond to their situations and to enter the gateway into Higher Education in the United Kingdom.

A SUCCESS STORY

'Opportunities are very important. ReConnect can be proud of creating opportunities.'

Petros (not his real name) is in his 50s, with varied paid and unpaid work behind him. In 2019 he completed the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Post-compulsory sector, with financial support from ReConnect.

Petros's subject area is Health and Social Care, teaching 6 units on Levels 3 and 4 of the Higher National Certificate (HNC). These courses lead to further training and work, e.g. in nursing, adult and child care and health technology. Teaching is his passion, and he praises the fantastic choices offered by colleges. Petros prepares carefully for each class, which contributes to his satisfaction and enjoyment, and his students' appreciation. No students have dropped out, as would be usual in an FE College.

A curriculum manager mentors Petros. Since teaching has moved on-line due to COVID 19, his work load is greater. There are some benefits: shy students are more engaged, and there is more flexibility. The class started later during Ramadan, to accommodate the needs of students. Providing 'scaffolding' to support less able students to complete the units draws on Petros' creativity, and commitment to see his student succeed in their aims.

Interview conducted by Sarah Buxton



SUPPORTING REFUGEES INTO HIGHER EDUCATION/ TEACHING

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APPEAL BY SARAH BUXTON

Chair of Trustees of ReConnect

ReConnect creates opportunities for people with a refugee background to gain a professional qualification, particularly in teaching. Our candidates are not eligible for government funds. ReConnect receives some regular funds from grant making trusts, but relies on donations from individuals who are inspired by ReConnect, to continue to support our participants. If you see the value of our work, could you make a contribution?

COVID 19 has had a significant impact on many asylum seekers and refugees who were dependent on informal and insecure work. This includes our participants, who must meet their own living expenses. The pandemic, and the lockdown which has been necessary, has increased the marginalisation of our client group, and there is increased deprivation. The closure of English language and other classes impacts on those committed to improve their long-term study and work chances.

During 2020 our 3 PGCE (Post Compulsory Sector) participants have continued with their training, although they have missed school placements due to the pandemic. In 2020/21 academic year we hope to support a further 40 people on Preparation for Higher Education, with a further 3 on PGCE. Additional funds are needed now, so we can begin the selection process.

Due to COVID 19, and the many needs it has created there is great competition for charitable funds. Therefore, we are appealing for your contribution to ReConnect's programme. Details of our costs (not including administration) are above, under 'Make a Difference'.

With Gratitude

Sarah Buxton
sarahbuxton@reconnectonline.org.uk

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- It costs £ 1,100 to enable A Refugee/ Asylum Seeker to undertake Reconnect - Preparation for Higher Education Programme. This include 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 include 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) 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 reclaim the basic rate tax (20%) on your gift. So, if you donate £50, it is worth £60.00 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
theodros@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, Network for Social Change Charitable Trust, J H Levy Charitable Trust, Hugh Fraser Foundation, 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, 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=IDj7-kdIuic>

UCL publicity video

<https://youtu.be/6DNZWezOXUU>

Awards Ceremony/ Refugee Week 2019

<http://youtu.be/TkriSEGiVzU>