

ReConnect makes a huge difference to people's lives. It enables refugees with often unrecognised talent and competence to find a way forward in higher education and teaching. Everyone benefits: the individuals, society and the education system itself." Professor Tom Schuller, former Dean, Birkbeck, University of London"

UPDATE

Preparation for Higher Education Programme at UCL

Our partner University College London (UCL) Institute of Education (IoE) has continued to deliver ReConnect's Preparation for Higher Education programme since 2018.

26 Refugees and asylum seekers from 11 countries, 14 females & 12 males, are currently attending the Summer 2024 Term.

Since the programme started in September 2018, a total of 324 refugees and asylum seekers, 174 females and 150 males, from 36 countries, have been supported on the programme.

Educational Counselling & Credit Transfer Information Services (ECCTIS)

Since the initiative started, in June 2021, we have supported 175 (78 females and 97 males) refugees and asylum seekers from 27 countries to secure authoritative Statements of Comparability of their overseas qualifications issued by ECCTIS on the behalf of the UK Government, enabling them to make an informed decision on their preferred options in higher education.

Pathways into Teaching for Refugees Programme at IOE

We are currently actively seeking to raise the required funds to restore the programme.

Since 2005, In partnership with Birkbeck and the Institute of Education, ReConnect has enabled 59 (33 males, 26 females) unemployed and underemployed refugees, from 20 countries to gain teaching qualifications.

An Impact Survey Report of the 59 refugees supported by ReConnect, undertaken by Zhen Yang, a PhD student at University of Warwick can be accessed at:

<https://reconnectonline.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Impact-Report-The-ReConnect-PGCE-Programme-2005-2021-March-2023.pdf>

Theodros Abraham
Director of ReConnect
theodros@reconnectonline.org.uk

SUPPORTING REFUGEES INTO HIGHER EDUCATION

Join Us at our Refugee Week Event



A Free Event

**Thursday 20 June,
5.30pm -8.30pm**

**In the Nunn Hall
UCL Institute Education
20 Bedford Way
London WC1H 0AL**

Key Themes

RECOGNISE

the achievements of students who completed the UCL IOE ReConnect - Preparation for Higher Education Programme for refugees

RAISE AWARENESS

about the barriers faced by refugees in accessing Higher Education, and the work of ReConnect

- Official Opening by **Jeff Bezemer**, Professor of Communication, University College London, IOE - Culture, Communication & Media
- Reflection by **Aine McAllister**, ReConnect Preparation for Higher Education Programme Leader. Launch on Promotional film on ReConnect's work.
- Reflection on the work of ReConnect by **Theodros Abraham**, Director/ founder of Reconnect
- **Students & alumni** from the programme, teachers with refugee background
- Presentation of **poetry** from Collaborative Autoethnographic Poetic Inquiry , carried out with ReConnect participants

Please confirm attendance on:
theodros@reconnectonline.org.uk

A SUCCESS STORY

ReConnect creates opportunities for refugees to realise their potential

Mr. John Morales was supported by ReConnect in partnership with Birkbeck, (2005-2007), under the "Passport to Teaching Plus Project, funded by the Home Office Refugee Challenge Fund and heavily subsidised by Birkbeck, that enabled 14 refugees to study the PGCE-teaching in Lifelong Learning at Birkbeck.

John is an actor, theatre director and broadcaster. He is from Colombia and previously worked in the Colombian government. He studied Drama and Social Communication in the National School of Drama in Bogota and in Cali Colombia. Once he came to the UK he studied a course entitled Arts in Education with the Lyric Theatre Hammersmith and Oval Theatre London.

While on the PGCE programme, John learnt about: Educational Theory and Pedagogy; Educational Policy and Practice; Curriculum and Assessment; Inclusion and Diversity; Teaching Planning, Classroom Skills; Observation and Evaluation.

John said: *"Recognizing the significant challenges that refugees face, Re-connect support our aspirations through structured programs, enabling us to rebuild our careers and contribute positively to the communities in the UK. Re-connect provides one-to-one guidance and collaboration with academic institutions to help refugees gain skills and qualifications. Additionally, Re-connect offers forums for refugees to engage with the media, policymakers, and the public, promoting understanding and positive images of their communities."*

John has been very successful in his teaching career following completion of the PGCE. His primary motivation in teaching is to help people. He says he derives immense satisfaction from guiding students through their educational journey, watching them grow, and helping them overcome challenges. He says he finds something incredibly rewarding about seeing the moment a concept clicks for a student or watching them gain confidence in their abilities. John continued: *"Beyond individual assistance, I am deeply committed to driving social change through education. I believe that education is a powerful force of transformation that can break down societal barriers and open doors to opportunities that would otherwise remain closed. By fostering an inclusive and supportive classroom environment, I aim to provide every student with the chance to succeed, regardless of their background."*

Interview conducted by Stephen Desmond, a Trustee of ReConnect

SUPPORTING REFUGEES INTO HIGHER EDUCATION/ TEACHING

Established in 2003 **RECONNECT** is a Charity that works with unemployed and underemployed **refugees** to reconnect them to their professions, especially teaching. We provide guidance and support; liaise with education providers to deliver relevant training including work experience; support transfer of skills to developing countries; and draw attention to forced displacement and education needs. <https://reconnectonline.org.uk/>

APPEAL BY SARAH BUXTON
Chair of Trustees of ReConnect

In February ReConnect marked its 20th anniversary, with a joyful and celebratory event attended by many current and former participants. Founder/Director Theodoros Abraham received much appreciative feedback: 'Its an honour to be part of ReConnects' 20th Anniversary celebration, which highlights the difference the ReConnect has made in the lives of refugees over the years'. 'Thanks for organising the event and bringing everyone together. Thank you again for your support and for giving us an opportunity to build our life.' 'Keep up the good work as you are making positive and precious changes in lives.' Some attendees had been in the first cohort to gain a post graduate teaching qualification. See 'A success story.' Jane Hoy, who led the first ReConnect course in Lifelong Learning at Birkbeck, wrote 'The first thing I remember about the PGCE programme is how amazing all the students were. Their strength and determination was extraordinary. Becoming a teacher in the UK education system in a professional capacity is not an easy journey. Everyone really deserved the qualification and teaching jobs they obtained.....without a doubt a groundbreaking programme and I feel very proud to have been part of it.'

We are grateful to the Department of Culture, Communication and Media for offering 3 fee waivers to ReConnect participants who have completed the Preparation for Higher Education course. Successful applicants will follow MA in TESOL (Teaching English as a Second Language), MA in Intercultural Communication, and MA in Digital Media.

ReConnect is delighted to have been given a small grant by Network for Social Change Charitable Trust, to fund a consultant to increase capacity to give 1:1 and group educational and career guidance. Dr Jay Derrick, formerly Programme Leader for our Preparation for Higher Education course, has been appointed as our consultant and has begun work. Jay will take some pressure off our Director, Theodoros, who accomplishes as huge amount.

As a small charity, ReConnect must work hard to raise funds for its new initiatives and continuing programmes. Contributions from individuals, one-off or regular, are so important. If you have benefited from higher education and the opportunities it has opened up for you, and if you see the value of our work, please consider making a donation of any size. If you know a Trust, organisation which might consider us, or an individual, please contact me.

With many thanks,

Sarah Buxton, Co-Chair with Dr Maknun Ashami
sarahbuxton@reconnectonline.org.uk

MAKE A DIFFERENCE/ DONATE

- It costs £ 1,200 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 £ 11,000 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://reconnectonline.org.uk/donate>

- 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 straightforward 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. The Equator Fund, Cockiolly Trust, Network for Social Change Charitable Trust News Corp Giving Fund, Awards for All/ National Lottery, J H Levy Charitable Trust, Inchrye Trust, MSN Fund, and our many individual donors.

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

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

Our thanks also to Mr. Mike Butler/ Resource for London, for his committed support to the Charity's fundraising initiatives.

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-kdIuic>

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