

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 has continued to deliver ReConnect's Preparation for Higher Education programme since 2018.

Since the programme started, a total of 416 refugees and asylum seekers, 220 females and 196 males, from 40 countries, have been supported on the programme.

**Educational Counselling & Credit Transfer Information Services (ECTIS)**

Since the initiative started, in June 2021, we have supported 342 (150 females and 192 males) refugees and asylum seekers from 28 countries to secure authoritative Statements of Comparability of their overseas qualifications from UK ENIC/ ECCTIS (formerly NARIC), working under the Department of Education. The statement gives refugees and asylum seekers guidance about how their prior learning fits in the UK, 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, PhD, 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>

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**SUPPORTING REFUGEES INTO HIGHER EDUCATION**

Join Us at our  
Refugee Week Event



**A Free Event**

**Tuesday 16 June 2026  
5.30pm – 8.00pm**

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

**APPEAL by Sarh Buxton  
Chair of Trustees of ReConnect**

With our partners at UCL Institute of Education, ReConnect is creating opportunities, and making a difference for people who want to contribute their skills to the country they are now living in. By April 2026, 416 people with a refugee background, from 40 countries, have taken the opportunity of participating in the Preparation for Higher Education programme. The bedrock of the course is collaborative learning and the co-construction of knowledge, in preparation for study at UK Higher Education level.

ReConnect was the inspiration of its Founder/Director Theodros Abraham, who works so hard to keep responding to the needs of applicants, participants and colleagues, and delivering our objectives. Supporting the Director is a small group of Trustees, who have final responsibility for the organisation. We need two more Trustees to strengthen the group. If you or someone you know is inspired by what ReConnect is doing and have insight and experience to contribute to ReConnect's development, please get in touch with me for further information and how to apply.

ReConnect is funded by grants from a small group of organisations, and by donations from individuals. If you are able to contribute, of any size, we would be very grateful. Please see the column 'How to support us'.

[sarahbuxton@reconnectonline.org.uk](mailto:sarahbuxton@reconnectonline.org.uk)

**REFLECTION****ReConnect Volunteers With Refugee Background****Farzaneh Sedighpour Rayeni, from Iran**

*"When I arrived in the UK as an asylum seeker with a child, I knew nothing. I wasn't familiar with how to navigate the system and the procedures. It was almost like barefoot walking with the enormous, heavy burden of responsibility of a child. I felt completely alone. I was almost crushed by the weight of paperwork and loneliness*

*At colleges, one of my classmates was speaking about the ReConnect group. He said that while you are improving your English, you can convert your degree through ReConnect, and they completely support people who are asylum seekers and refugees. His words were like a lighthouse in the stormy sea. The ReConnect group has supported us in all ways, practical help, and above all, a sense of belonging, so we can focus on rebuilding.*

*As a refugee and adult learner, this was life changing. With their support, we should not start from scratch. This supportive organisation saves the time that we invested in our homeland for education and works to overcome the barriers and rebuild on our strengths.*

*I am grateful to have a volunteer job with ReConnect, which helps me to update my knowledge and puts me into action, so I can gain more experience. I am supporting students on the Preparation for Higher Education course. ReConnect helps us to feel more included in society. We all come from different educational systems and cultures, and the system in the host country is totally new. ReConnect values our identity while introducing us to the host culture and environment.*

*For me, it means I am existent, I am matter, I am belonging. Through this volunteer opportunity, I can rebuild my confidence, heal my broken "self" and use this as a powerful boost to believe in my "self" and take a step forward.*

**Yoseph Ashenafi, from Ethiopia**

*"I know Reconnect both as someone who has benefited from its services and as a volunteer. The organisation helped me train as a teacher at a time when I needed a change in my career. Like many other professionals, I reached a crucial point where I had lost my job, felt confused about my future, and needed guidance. Reconnect stepped in at exactly that moment.*

*As a volunteer, I support Reconnect as an IT support worker. What strikes me is the wide range of people the organisation helps—from medical doctors to journalists, and people from across Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. Many have lost everything: their homes, their possessions, and their professions. Reconnect has enabled me and many others to navigate the British system successfully, helping us find further study and suitable work.*

*Personally, I find it deeply satisfying to support an organisation that brings comfort to people during times of great turmoil—when they find themselves far from their country, having lost not only their belongings but also their careers. Reconnect offers a lifeline when it is needed most."*

**SUPPORTING REFUGEES INTO HIGHER EDUCATION/ TEACHING**

**REFLECTION**

**ReConnect volunteers with refugee background**

**Rahwa Ghebremichael, Eritrea**

"My journey with ReConnect began when I took part in one of its higher education training programmes. As someone with a refugee background, I understood the importance of access to education and the opportunities it can create. The programme provided valuable guidance and encouragement at a time when I was exploring my next steps. It also introduced me to an organization whose mission closely reflected my own experiences and aspirations – supporting refugees gain access to different opportunities.

Following the training, I went on to study Software Development with the Charity *Code Your Future*. During my studies, I wanted to find a meaningful way to give back to the community and support others who might be facing challenges similar to those I had experienced. Knowing the positive impact ReConnect was having, I reached out to its founder, Theodros, to ask whether there were any volunteer opportunities available. I was delighted when I was offered a volunteer role and the chance to contribute to the organization's work.

My motivation for volunteering with ReConnect comes from a strong personal connection to its mission. ReConnect helps refugees and other underrepresented individuals access higher education, develop new skills, and build brighter futures. I know from my own experience how transformative education can be, and I wanted to play a part in helping others access the same opportunities.

Over the years, I have supported ReConnect in a variety of ways, particularly through website management and digital support. Drawing on the skills I developed during my software development studies, I have helped maintain and improve the organization's online presence, ensuring that information and resources remain accessible to those who need them. It has been rewarding to use my technical skills in a way that directly supports an organization making a real difference in people's lives.

Volunteering with ReConnect has been a meaningful and enriching experience. It has allowed me to contribute to a cause I deeply believe in, continue developing my skills, and connect with inspiring individuals who are committed to creating opportunities for others. I am grateful for the trust and support I have received from the ReConnect team and proud to have played a small part in its success. I look forward to seeing the organization continue to grow and empower many more people in the years ahead."

**MAKE DIFFERENCE/ DONATE**

- It costs £ 1,200 to enable a refugee/ asylum Seeker to undertake the 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. Donate via Charities Aid Foundation (CAF).** If you have a CAF account you can donate online through Your CAF account, or by email. You will need ReConnect's charity number: 1105016
- 3. Donate by Cheque**  
Please send to Theodros Abraham to: ReConnect, SPACES Camden, 142 Camden Street, London NW1 9PF, United Kingdom
- 4. 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/

[theodros@reconnectonline.org.uk](mailto:theodros@reconnectonline.org.uk)

telephoning: 020 3038 2648

**OUR THANKS**

- To all those who have supported us with grants and donations in recent years - The Equator Fund, Network for Social Change Charitable Trust (NSCCT), Resource for London/ Enhance Project, J H Levy Charitable Trust, Margaret Hayman Trust, The Cotton Tree Trust, Inchrye Trust and our many individual donors. With this financial support the Charity has been able to implement its programme.
- To our volunteers, for their dedication in assisting the Charity with their skills and experience.
- To UCL Institute of Education team for their dedicated teaching and pastoral support including for the 'buddying' (mentoring) initiative.
- To Ms. Aine McAllister (Associate Professor) for her tireless efforts in securing five fully funded awards (fees only) part-time Masters taught programme places from the Department of Culture, Communication and Media (CCM), and four PGCE places from UCL Institute of Education, for participants of ReConnect's Preparation for Higher Education Programme.
- To Mike Butler/ Resource for London, for his continuous committed support to the Charity's fundraising initiatives.

**LINKS TO OUR WORK**

A promotional film on Reconnect, funded by the Department of Culture, Communication and Media, and Produced by UCL Educational Media, June 2024

<https://mediacentral.ucl.ac.uk/Play/99481>

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/6DNZWzOXUU>