

# Lack of education support is 'huge barrier' for refugees resettling in Britain

November 18 2016, by Lynsey Ford

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The government must improve the support it offers to resettled refugees trying to find a job in Britain, according to a group of resettlement experts from the University of Sussex.

In the first longitudinal study of its kind, academics, who researched the experiences of 280 refugees who resettled in Britain as part of the Government's Gateway Protection Programme five years ago, claim the system needs to provide better fast-track learning opportunities and mentoring schemes to help resettled refugees to find [work](#).

The three-year research programme, which was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), involved refugees from Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia and Iraq who were resettled in Brighton and Hove, Norwich, Manchester and Sheffield.

The University of Sussex experts found that the current system does not meet the diversity of refugees coming to resettle in Britain—as a result they are calling for the following changes to be made to the system:

- Refugees with higher levels of education need fast-track learning routes which support them in finding employment which reflects their previous work and qualifications.
- Overseas qualifications are often not recognised in the UK - pathways through the education system such as vocational training and ways of 'topping up' qualifications need to be put in place to support people.

- If you don't have UK qualifications or UK work experience it is very difficult to convince an employer to hire you—research highlights the need for buddying schemes, work shadowing and mentoring to prove you can do a job.

The government's Gateway Protection Programme resettles up to 750 refugees a year in small groups (between 60 – 100 people) based on nationality. Last year the former Prime Minister David Cameron pledged to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees by 2020 – the academics are now calling on the current Prime Minister Theresa May to ensure the system reflects the diversity of refugees in order for them to have optimum chance to reach their full potential.

Dr Linda Morrice, who worked on the research project, said: "Refugees who are starting a new life in Britain want to work and see this as a key pathway to integrating. This government needs to improve the current resettlement system in order to ensure refugees resettling in Britain now, like those from Syria, have the best opportunity and support to gain employment which meet their skills.

"We must shift the focus from talking about 'meeting numbers and targets' to ensuring that we have fast-track learning routes in place, especially English language learning. For people with higher-level qualifications we need tailored support to help [refugees](#) to gain [qualifications](#) and find work."

Yared, a former high court judge in Ethiopia, who resettled in the UK 10 years ago as part of the government's scheme, struggled to get a job when he arrived and is now a traffic warden in Brighton. He dreams of being a human rights lawyer but works as a traffic warden because, he says: "Without a job you are living as a beggar."

**More information:** "Optimising refugee resettlement in the UK: A

comparative analysis." [www.sussex.ac.uk/migration/res.../refugeeresettlement](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/migration/res.../refugeeresettlement)

Provided by University of Sussex

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