

Most young Syrian refugees are in work or studying, research says

April 12 2018, by Tony Trueman

Around two-thirds of young Syrian refugees in Britain are either in work or studying, latest figures show.

The British Sociological Association's annual conference in Newcastle heard today [Thursday 12 April] about research carried out among the 7,300 Syrian refugees resettled in the UK since 2015.

A research team from the University of Glasgow, including Dr. Georgios Karyotis, Dr. Gareth Mulvey and Dr. Dimitris Skleparis, surveyed 484 of the refugees who were aged 18 to 32. They reported that:

- 52 percent of the 484 were married, and 43 percent had children with them in the UK; 90 percent were Arab Syrians and 8 percent were Kurds; 91 percent were Muslim.
- 27 percent were university graduates and 28 percent had intermediate level education.
- 27 percent were in employment, 36 percent were students and 14 percent were homemakers; 19 percent said they were unemployed and searching for a job.
- 55 percent said that their main barrier to labour market access was language.
- Just 2 percent said that they were unemployed and looking for a job six months before leaving Syria. Before they came to Britain, 40 percent of those surveyed were students and over a third were in employment; 41 percent said they were unable to complete their studies due to the conflict.

- 77 percent said they were planning to remain in the UK.

The researchers found that the refugees were generally positive about living in the UK: 57 percent said they were hopeful about the future, 45 percent said they were happy, and 26 percent that they were confident. However, 22 percent said they were anxious, 11 percent that they were sad, and 10 percent that they were afraid.

When asked about how Britons felt about them 25 percent said they thought Britons were anxious; and 19 percent thought Britons were afraid. However, 22 percent thought Britons were happy and 16 percent thought Britons were hopeful.

Dr. Skleparis told the conference: "Our research debunks the myth that many Syrians are reluctant to participate in the labour market and are taking advantage of social welfare provisions.

"In fact, despite the language barrier, an often interrupted education and experiences of trauma, less than one in five is unemployed and looking for work, while most of the rest are either students, in work or looking after children.

"Young Syrian refugees in the UK are highly educated and skilled, with high aspirations, who want to settle in the UK and are very grateful for the support and welcome they have received."

When the refugees were asked what they would like to say to Britons, one said: "We have the skills and education needed to start a new life and to help further improve this country, so we are just asking you to have faith in us, in our abilities and good intentions.

Another said: "Tolerance and acceptance of the Other needs courage and compassion, two traits British citizens have often shown. Therefore,

please give Syrians the helping hand in the time of need."

The Syrian refugees came to Britain through either as asylum seekers or were resettled under the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Programme.

Since the Syrian civil war began, 5.1 million people have fled the country, with 3 million now living in Turkey and 1 million in Lebanon. In 2015 the British government agreed to take 20,000 refugees over a five-year period; as of March 2017, 7,307 have been resettled in the UK.

Provided by British Sociological Association

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