

## SELF FUNDED PHD OPPORTUNITY

### Exploring the Career Choices of Recently-Arrived Refugees in the UK

**Research Proposal:** Exploring the Career Choices of Recently-Arrived Refugees in the UK.

**Supervisors:** Dr Laila Kasem and Dr Catharine Ross.

With various devastating conflicts occurring around the world in the past decade, we are currently witnessing the worst forced displacement crisis since World War Two. Many of the displaced people seek refuge outside their home countries, mainly in countries neighbouring their own. However, Europe has welcomed an increasing number of refugees – individuals who have fled their own country and who are unable to return due to fear of persecution. The UK has welcomed an increasing numbers of Syrians since the start of the Syrian civil war in early 2011. Syrians arrived in the UK either through the UK Government's Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement (VPR) Programme, which up until September 2018 has resettled nearly 14,000 people, or independently and claimed asylum in the UK – over 11,000 people did so by September 2018 (Refugee Council, 2019). Syrians are just one group of many other refugees that arrive every year in the UK. However, we know very little about the economic lives of refugees (Betts, Bloom, Kaplan and Omata 2014). Although that is starting to change (e.g. a 2018 special issue in *Journal of Vocational Behavior*), we still know very little about how do refugees make their career choices.

While some countries, Scandinavia and Germany in particular, put in place a clear policy for integrating refugees economically in their countries (MPI 2018), the UK has lacked such a policy. The new Integrated Communities Strategy, issued in 2018, identifies the main barriers to integration, but has not set out how to tackle them (CFE, 2018; LGA, 2018). The Integrated Communities Action Plan, that has just been published, makes some advancements regarding that but still offers very little about how refugees will be supported in the different options that are available to re-establish their economic lives in the UK (MHCLG, 2019). To add to that, refugee employment in the UK is much worse than that of nationals or other immigrants (EU 2016). Hence, the proposed research aims to explore career choice of refugees in the UK and the factors affecting them.

'The project will be supervised by Laila Kasem as Director of Studies, who has expertise in the economic status of refugees, and Catharine Ross, as second supervisor, who has expertise in careers. Both are active supervisors from WBS on the University of Worcester's supervisory register, and Catharine Ross has 6 PhD completions.'

## References

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