



Refugees in London

LSESU - Beyond the Classroom

7 November 2017

A bit about me...



International
Inequalities Institute



**BREAKING
BARRIERS**

Refugees lived once. Help them live again.



Volunteer Centre



Agenda

- Dissertation on highly educated Syrians
- Ways to get involved
- Some things to keep in mind
- Questions?

LSESU Beyond
the Classroom:
Skills Sessions

What is a 'refugee'?

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS



Those who have fled their homes because of natural or man-made disasters, violence, or persecution. They are displaced within their own country and have not crossed an internationally recognized country border.

REFUGEES



Those who have fled their country because of violence, conflict, or fear of persecution. They are unable or too afraid to seek protection from their country, or return there, for fear of discrimination.

MIGRANTS



Those who have left their homes to live or work elsewhere. Their reasons for leaving vary, and their migration may be voluntary or forced.

Source: UNHCR/International Organization for Migration. Icons by Gerald Wildmoser and Luis Prado, the Noun Project



“Suddenly your life is upside down”

The experienced change in position of highly educated Syrian refugees in British society

LSE MSc in Inequalities and Social Science dissertation 2016

Syrians in the UK

- 2011-2016: 5,000 Syrian refugees received asylum seeker status (Ashworth-Hayes 2016).
- Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme

Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme



Our scheme will provide refuge to **20,000** vulnerable refugees by 2020

Of the **over 7,000** individuals resettled through the scheme so far, around half are **children**



But also...

- Dismantling of refugee support since 2000
 - My respondents received about 75 pounds a week, plus housing benefits




Exploratory study

- Qualitative in-depth interviews
 - Syrian
 - Male
 - Refugee status
 - Minimum Bachelor's degree
- Experienced social position in Syria vs UK



Main findings


- UK downgrade in terms of economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital
- Determined to improve social position, but many barriers e.g.
 - Language skills
 - Education and employment not recognized
 - (lack of) social network

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“I volunteer now cause I need more experience, and I can get work in the future for example dealing with human rights, or refugees, but finally I would take any job because I need to survive.”

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Building up a new life is a two
way process...

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“Especially when I’m sometimes
closing the shop and starting to
clean...”

But [silence] you have to forget, we
have to survive.”

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What can you do?



Raise awareness



Show your support

- Write you MP
- Share on Social Media
- Attend or organise a lecture/event
- Do research
 - Reach Out Research - MSc students
- Talk to others about the issues (!)



Volunteer



Think about...

- The skills you can offer, e.g.
 - Language
 - Marketing
 - Research
 - Accounting
- How much time you have to give?
- Which (type of) organisation



Raise money or goods



How?


- With your sports club, society, class etc.
- Promote, participate in, or set up a fundraising event
- LSE Faith Centre's Giving Tree (13-17/11)

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Some things to keep in mind...

Be aware of stereotypes and power balances



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“I have the idea that I have something to prove because I am from Syria.

I have to prove that my mom doesn't wear a burqa. And I don't beat my sister with a stick.”



Be aware of terminology

“I told you, we had a good life in Syria. Sometimes this word ‘refugee’ let’s me feel like I am a very low thing in this world - nobody wants to be a refugee.”



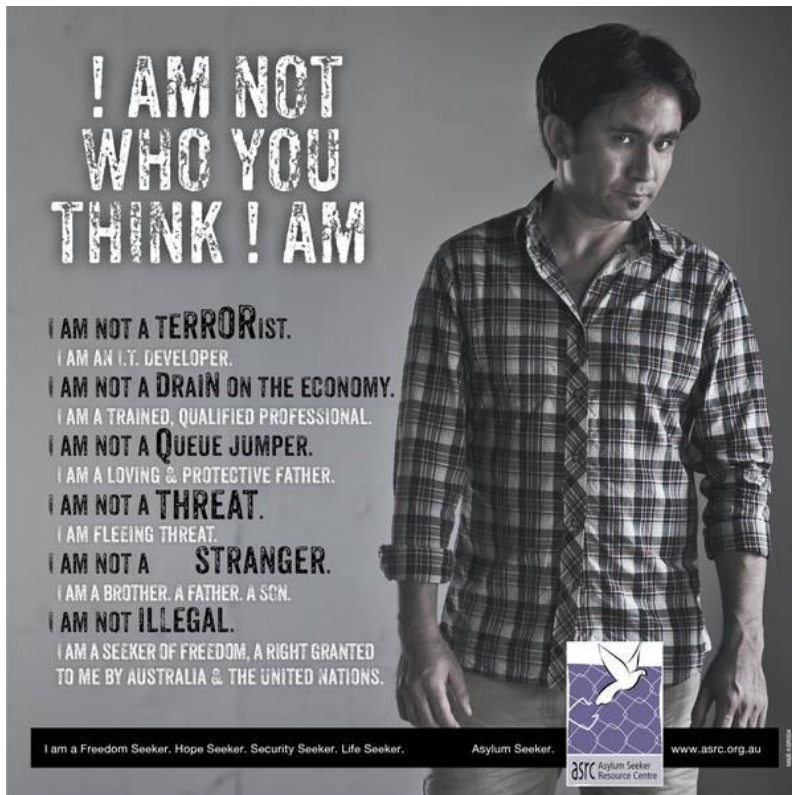
Be thoughtful

“Sometimes I feel like, what is waiting me in this country? Maybe one day I’ll be 40 and I still haven’t achieved anything in this country. What will I say to my family, to my kids, to myself?”

[...] I don’t have house here, don’t have brother, maybe one day I will die and no-one will know about me. [...].”

Don't make assumptions & do your research

- Work with organisations
- Ask people what they need



**! AM NOT
WHO YOU
THINK ! AM**

I AM NOT A **TERRORIST**.
I AM AN I.T. DEVELOPER.


I AM NOT A **DRAIN ON THE ECONOMY**.
I AM A TRAINED, QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL.

I AM NOT A **QUEUE JUMPER**.
I AM A LOVING & PROTECTIVE FATHER.

I AM NOT A **THREAT**.
I AM FLEEING THREAT.

I AM NOT A **STRANGER**.
I AM A BROTHER, A FATHER, A SON.

I AM NOT **ILLEGAL**.
I AM A SEEKER OF FREEDOM, A RIGHT GRANTED
TO ME BY AUSTRALIA & THE UNITED NATIONS.

I am a Freedom Seeker, Hope Seeker, Security Seeker, Life Seeker. Asylum Seeker.  www.asrc.org.au



Organisations that might be of interest...

- Afghanistan and Central Asian Association
- Wonder Foundation
- Chatterbox
- Salusbury World
- Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network
- Refugee Action
- The Entrepreneurial Refugee Network
- Breaking Barriers
- Detention Action

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Questions?

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