

Media release

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Retraining refugees could save taxpayers money

Retraining highly-qualified refugees so they can work in the UK could save taxpayers money and reduce tensions in local communities, according to a new report published today.

The report on refugees and asylum seekers, *Home truths**, is published by New Philanthropy Capital (NPC), an independent, non-profit making organisation which advises donors on how to give more effectively to charities.

NPC says improving the asylum system to reduce the number of appeals would also save taxpayers money and charities can play a key role in both areas. The report highlights potential savings from retraining those with professional qualifications that are in short supply such as experienced doctors, engineers, teachers and nurses.

It costs the NHS only £10,000 to retrain a refugee doctor compared with £250,000 to train someone from scratch – a saving of £240,000. Helping just 500 of the unemployed refugee doctors in the UK to requalify to work in the health service could save £120m.

“Employment is key to integrating refugees in society. Many are highly-qualified professionals with a huge amount to contribute, but one of the biggest barriers to working is having qualifications that are recognised in the UK,” said Martin Brookes, head of research.

Recommended charities that help refugees find employment include the Refugee Education and Training Advisory Service (RETAS – a project of the charity Education Action International) which needs £3,600 to help a doctor to requalify. The Somali Women Support and Development Group is a refugee community organisation (RCO) that needs £10,000 to provide a vocational childcare course to help refugees into employment.

The report also highlights failings in the asylum system. Home Office staff get little proper training; there is a tendency to reject every aspect of a claim; and there are many cases where decisions do not meet basic standards such as stating what the Home Office disbelieve about an application.

As evidence of the failings, NPC says that 20% of the Home Office’s initial refusals to grant asylum applications are overturned on appeal. “If the Home Office could reduce the proportion of asylum applicants who appeal by 5%, it would save the public purse £15m each year,” the report says.



Although the Government has recently committed to improve training, new caseworkers receive only 11 days education and 11 days on the job training compared with 6 months training for similar officials in Germany and the Netherlands.

NPC says that charities play an important role in bringing about improvements in the asylum system, which could reduce the number of appeals. Asylum Aid and the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture have both published reports highlighting poor decisions.

Other charities recommended by NPC in the report include Bail for Immigration Detainees, the Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group, Positive Action in Housing and The Refugee Council.

* *Home truths*, along with some examples of recommended charities, can be downloaded free of charge from www.philanthropycapital.org. Copies can also be ordered from Central Books, telephone 0845 458 9910.

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For further information about NPC, its research reports and charity recommendations, or to arrange an interview please contact:

Martin Brookes, Head of Research, New Philanthropy Capital
Sue Wixley, Marketing Manager
Tel: 020 7785-6317

OR

Peter Wilson-Smith, Quiller Consultants
Rachel Laffer, Quiller Consultants
Tel : 020 7233-9444

Notes to Editors

1. New Philanthropy Capital advises all types of donors on how to give more effectively. It identifies examples of charities with highly effective approaches to tackling problems in the sector. By recommending these charities to potential donors, NPC aims to increase the quantity and quality of resources available to the charitable sector.
2. NPC focuses on human welfare, including problems in communities and families, education, and health and disability in the UK. NPC has published research on sectors ranging from cancer to older people, and domestic violence to special educational needs.
3. NPC develops a detailed understanding of social problems by talking to policy-makers, practitioners, academics and other experts. Its charity recommendations are arrived at after visiting and analysing charities across the sector. Assessments are made of the achievements, the need for additional funding, the financial structure and fundraising potential, as well as the risks.
4. NPC uses its research and experience to help donors ensure they have high impact and a rewarding experience. This can involve developing a tailored giving strategy to meet specific goals, selecting which charities to support and reporting on impact. Donors can also access NPC's research and some of its recommendations at no cost on NPC's website.