



Equal Access to Higher Education for Adult Refugees and Asylum Seekers

REPORT

Warwick STAR | March 2017



Contents

- 1 Summary
- 2 Introduction
- 3 Equal Access Event
- 4 Equal Access Campaign
- 5 Resources



Summary

This is a report on Warwick STAR campaign of Equal Access to Education. The report highlights Warwick STAR event *'Refugee Access to Education: how can we help?'* held in the Oculus at the University of Warwick on 17 February 2017. The report also gives an insight into the educational context for refugees and asylum seekers in the UK and a guide to application and relevant resources.

Introduction

When refugees arrive in the UK, their stories of survival do not end. Rather they encounter new challenges on the path to re-building their lives, including how to pursue higher education and training. STAR National and NUS have provided a toolkit for higher education of refugees and asylum seekers. We quote the situation in England:

Asylum Seekers are classified as 'overseas students' and have to pay international student tuition fees. They cannot access student finance (loans) to cover the cost of tuition fees or living costs. Also, they cannot work and if they have no money, must live on government support of just £36.95 per week.

People granted 'Discretionary Leave to Remain' (DLR) are classified as 'overseas students' and have to pay international student tuition fees. They cannot access student finance (loans) to cover the cost of tuition fees or living costs. They are allowed to work but cannot access student finance. In most cases this would mean a university education is out of reach. As of June 2016, a small number of people with DLR are eligible for student finance, under a category called 'long residence' for those who have lived in the UK for half their life.

People granted 'Humanitarian Protection' (HP) (including resettled Syrians), they are classified as 'home students' and can pay home tuition fees. They cannot access a student loan to cover the costs of their fees or living costs until they have '3 years of ordinary residence'. They are allowed to work but cannot access student finance. In most cases this would mean a university education is out of reach.



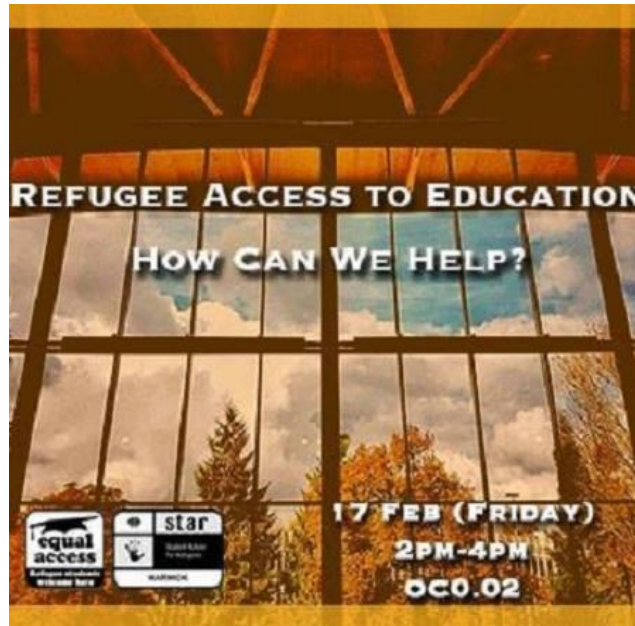
Therefore, Warwick STAR is running their campaign to highlight the difficulties of accessing higher education for refugees and asylum seekers. The campaign is investigating the educational needs and backgrounds of local refugees and then putting forward suggestions for universities and other educational institutions to facilitate access.

Equal Access Event

The event on 17 February brought together different stakeholders in higher education to engage in conversation on the ways to facilitate access to adult education for newly arrived people in Coventry.

The event comes in the light of efforts which the University of Warwick is making to become a “University of Sanctuary” through making education more accessible and welcoming to asylum seekers and refugees through partnership with the Article 26 project, supported by the Helena Kennedy Foundation.

The public event included two presentations by Warwick STAR and Life Long Learning respectively and a testimony talk by Najeeb Kabawa a refugee student on a scholarship offered by Warwick University to refugees and a short talk by Attal Hanufi a CLL graduate who took the 2+2-degree path and now studying a master’s degree in Politics. Among the attendees were representatives from some departments at Warwick University such Finance Office and Centre for Applied Linguistics. From Coventry, audience included representatives from Coventry City Council, Citizen Advice Bureau, Coventry University as well as audience from refugees who want to complete their education in the UK.



Prior to the event, Warwick STAR had a conversation with a few refugees and asylum seekers in Coventry and they told us about their education and professional backgrounds, and their hopes for their future in the UK. Their stories helped us better understand what we needed to do as part of our Equal Access Campaign.

Campaigning on campus involved raising awareness about the issue of equal access to education for refugees and asylum seekers. Student Union officers and many students joined in making placards and taking pictures to show their support. Warwick STAR also encourage students to send out a letter to their schools/colleges to urge them to open their doors to refugees and asylum seekers.

Pursuing education in the UK as an adult refugee means facing many potential barriers, including English, funding, recognising qualifications, admission criteria,

contextual factors such as having to work to support family. We believe that Coventry as a ‘City of Sanctuary,’ is well placed to help us meet these aims.

As a City of Sanctuary, Coventry aims to promote the welfare of refugees and asylum seekers, aiming to facilitate local networks in welcoming and assisting refugees, as well as publishing the contribution of refugees to our local community, whilst at the same time challenging discrimination against them.

Equal Access Campaign Objectives



Warwick STAR equal access campaign aims to meet the following objectives:

- 1) Raise awareness about the issue of equal access to adult education for refugees;



- 2) Provide equal access to refugees and asylum seekers by classifying them as home students where they can pay home tuition fees;
- 3) Clear admission criteria for refugees and asylum seekers to study at University of Warwick;
- 4) Clear information about the available programmes such as foundation year and English language provision for refugees (ESOL, IELTS, Conversation classes, etc.) at the university and outside the university GCSEs and other educational opportunities);
- 5) Increasing the number of scholarships which the University offers to refugees;
- 6) Open scholarships for refugees inside and outside the UK;
- 7) Establish a strategic network to facilitate communication with organisations working with refugees in Coventry and in higher education;
- 8) More assistance for highly qualified refugees (to unlock their potential to contribute their expertise to wider society).

More Information about Warwick STAR Equal Access Campaign:

Warwick STAR Volunteer Blog

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/about/community/volunteers/volunteering/starconversonationclub/sessions/?newsItem=094d43f55a573c76015a62cad67c1152>

Refugee Testimony on Applying for a Warwick scholarship

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/about/community/volunteers/volunteering/starconverson-pofationclub/sessions/?newsItem=8a17841a5aae7e87015ab0215a6f252d>

Video of Equal Access Campaign event

https://www.facebook.com/groups/846804348795295/886581531484243/?notif_t=like_tagged¬if_id=1489241118309998

'Refugee Access to Education: how can we help?' event page on Facebook

https://www.facebook.com/events/285594615191668/?active_tab=discussion



Resources

University of Warwick website page for Sanctuary scholarships

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/academicoffice/funding/fundingyourstudies/otherfundingopps/article26>

STAR National: Universities Offering Financial Support and Step by Step Guide to Apply for Scholarships

http://www.star-network.org.uk/index.php/resources/access_to_university

Long Life Learning at Warwick University

2+2 Degree Pathway, Foundation Degrees and Part Time Degrees

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/study/cll/courses/undergraduate/2plus2/>

Refugees Welcome Guidance for Universities on Providing Asylum Seekers and Refugees with Access to Higher Education

<http://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Guidance-on-Providing-Asylum-Seekers-and-Refugees-with-Access-to-Higher-Education-Nov-2016.pdf>

Student Action for Refugees (STAR) and the NUS International Students Equal Access Campaign

http://www.starnetwork.org.uk/images/uploads/documents/Equal_Access_Campaign_To_olkit.pdf

NARIC (National Recognition Information Centre)

<https://www.naric.org.uk/naric/individuals/>

Kiron University – online courses

https://kiron.ngo/donateen?gclid=CjoKEQiAgJTGBRDLr5_az_Ouk44BEiQAIxaA409UATrnSNtNmV_zdPGcNNU_-moN1p2xp_aPxKz4z44aApV-8P8HAQ

CARA (Council for At-Risk Academics)

<http://www.cara.ngo/>



City of Sanctuary

coventry.cityofsanctuary.org

Warwick STAR

<https://www.facebook.com/WarwickSTAR/>

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/about/community/volunteers/volunteering/starconversationclub/>

Warwick STAR is a national network of young people and university based student groups aiming to:

- ✓ Raise awareness of refugee and asylum issues and run relevant campaigns;
- ✓ Practically support refugees and asylum seekers through volunteering in the local community
- ✓ Fundraising for refugees and asylum seekers

For any questions on the above report, don't hesitate to contact us on staratwarwick@gmail.com

End of Report