

# New business start-up training for refugees in the UK

A pilot to encourage refugee entrepreneur programmes across the UK has been launched with the Centre for Entrepreneurs (CFE) with funding from the Home Office and The National Lottery Community Fund, the Immigration Minister announced today (Sunday 21 July).

The 1 year pilot jointly funded by the Home Office and The National Lottery Community Fund, will identify established local business support organisations to deliver tailored start-up programmes that will take refugees from idea stage to business launch.

Immigration minister Caroline Nokes said:

The UK has a proud history of providing protection to those that need it and we are committed to making sure that refugees can successfully integrate to life in the UK.

This exciting new programme gives refugees the opportunity to build businesses, leading to further independence as they rebuild their lives in the UK.

We will continue to collaborate with civil society and businesses to ensure that we deliver the best possible support to those who choose to make this country their home.

Centre for Entrepreneurs chairman Oliver Pawle said:

We are grateful for support from the Home Office and the National Lottery Community Fund in helping us realise the vision we set out in our report last year.

This pilot is the first step in helping many more refugees rebuild their lives through entrepreneurship.

England Director at The National Lottery Community Fund, James Harcourt, said:

By putting people in the lead and championing entrepreneurship, this project, made possible by National Lottery players, will support refugees to fulfil their potential and thrive.

Former refugee and co-founder of Firezza Pizza Edin Bašić said:

Back in 1992 when I received asylum in the UK, no support like this was available. Starting Firezza Pizza took me years of hard work, but others in my situation were not as fortunate.

With programmes like this, stories like mine can stop being the exception to the rule.

The pilot will be launched at an event in London on Monday 22 July. The 1 day summit will convene business support organisations to explore the entrepreneurial potential of refugees. Organisations will share insight from refugee-focused development programmes, carried out in the UK and overseas, which provide training and mentoring space to help grow the business.

The new start-up training model follows last year's CFE publication of 'Starting afresh: How entrepreneurship is transforming the lives of resettled refugees'. The CFE report detailed the level of experience and interest in entrepreneurship among refugees and highlighted the profound role self-employment can play in helping refugees retake control of their lives.

The report called on the business community, philanthropists and the government to work together in rolling out refugee entrepreneurship programmes nationwide – a model that has been adopted in over 130 cities around the world in recent years. The report also puts forward a compelling case about why refugees make great entrepreneurs, how they can contribute to the UK as business-creators, and how guiding them towards entrepreneurship can reduce public spending and strengthen social integration.

The programme will be overseen by CFE and a national expert steering group including representatives from the Home Office and The National Lottery Community Fund, refugee entrepreneurs, and experts from the academic and voluntary sectors.

Refugees in the UK have access to mainstream benefits and services to enable their integration and departments across government are working to ensure services meet their needs. This new pilot will allow refugees to move forward with the process of integration, which was the focus of the government's integrated communities action plan published in February 2019. In the action plan the government committed to increase integration support for all refugees in the UK, with one of the key focuses being employment.

As part of that commitment, the Home Office, in partnership with UNHCR, the International Organisation for Migration, Business in the Community and the Department for Work and Pensions recently launched 'Tapping Potential' – guidelines for British businesses on employing refugees. The government is also committed to continuing support for the refugee employment network, whose vision is to enable every refugee in the UK to gain appropriate, fulfilling, paid employment or self-employment.

The pilot will cost over £300,000 which will be split between the Home Office and The National Lottery Community Fund. The centre is working with academic partners to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the pilot so that, if

successful, it can be implemented more widely in the future.