

PRESS RELEASE | London

19th March 2018

Contact: Laura Moross (laura@ismpr.co.uk, 07969673895)

UK must embrace refugees' entrepreneurial potential, think tank urges

The Centre for Entrepreneurs (CFE) – the entrepreneurship think tank – has today released a report calling on the UK to empower resettled refugees through entrepreneurship. *'Starting afresh: How entrepreneurship is transforming the lives of resettled refugees'* details the experience and interest in entrepreneurship among refugees, and highlights the profound role self-employment can play in helping newly-arrived refugees retake control of their lives.

The report calls on the business sector, philanthropists and the government to work together in rolling out refugee entrepreneurship programmes nationwide. These provide tailored startup support to refugees, and would replicate the success of organisations in Australia, Germany, Denmark and London, which are profiled in the report. The Centre calculates that if programmes were made available to the 20,000 Syrian refugees the UK has committed to accepting, it could save the government up to £170m over five years on the cost of refugee welfare payments, which are forecast to cost £1.7bn over the same period. The roll-out of such programmes would cost £4.8 million, generating a 35x return on investment.

The report includes a survey conducted by the Centre, in partnership with Ashley Community Housing and North of England Refugee Service, of 96 refugees and their views on entrepreneurship. An overwhelming 80% agreed that entrepreneurship is a good career path and a further 56% agreed that entrepreneurship is a better career path than employment. In that same group, 73% had already considered becoming self-employed or starting their own business.

Far more than a simple cost-saving measure, the report details how refugees are 'starting afresh' through entrepreneurship. Equipped with the skills and motivational traits common among entrepreneurs, the Centre has amassed substantial evidence that entrepreneurship is the right path for many refugees. The report draws on research from around the world to detail the many incidences in which refugee entrepreneurs are defying stereotypes, breaking down economic and societal barriers and seizing the opportunities to retake control of their lives.

"We need to move away from employment as a catch-all solution" says Matt Smith, director of the Centre for Entrepreneurs. "Many refugees have clearly demonstrated that they want to be self-employed and start their own businesses. We must give them the opportunity and support they need. Refugee entrepreneurship programmes are the best way to do this: it provides them with the advice, mentoring and skills they need to succeed."

The Centre believes that now more than ever is the right time to support refugee entrepreneurship. In recent years, the government has shrunk its role in providing tailored support for refugees and has lacked effective direction in resettlement policy making. CFE advises that the adoption of refugee entrepreneurship programmes should spearhead a new resettlement strategy in the UK. By wholeheartedly embracing refugee entrepreneurship, the UK can become one of the most innovative and progressive nations in the world for its support of refugees.

*****ENDS*****

Contacts

Media: Laura Moross (laura@lsmpr.co.uk, 07969673895)

Research: Robert Osborne (robert@centreforentrepreneurs.org)

About the Centre for Entrepreneurs

The Centre for Entrepreneurs (CFE) is the UK's leading entrepreneurship think tank. It researches the economic and social value created by entrepreneurs.

The Centre was launched in 2013 by Sunday Times columnist and serial entrepreneur Luke Johnson, with the support of the Legatum Foundation. In 2017, CFE joined forces with the New Entrepreneurs Foundation to form a unified charitable foundation to undertake research, campaigns and programmes to advance entrepreneurship across the UK.

Since launch, the Centre has advocated in-prison entrepreneurship programmes, uncovered how entrepreneurs are reviving seaside towns, championed angel investors as Britain's unsung heroes and shattered negative stereotypes affecting women entrepreneurs. It has also published never-before-seen data on migrant entrepreneurs, annual company formation rates, and local authority SME spending.

Case studies

The Centre has conducted research interviews and written in-depth profiles on:

Individuals:

- Edin Bašić, co-founder, Firezza Pizza (Bosnian)
- Razan Alsous, founder, Yorkshire Dama Chese (Syrian)
- Faith Gakanje, founder, Fagee Fashions (Zimbabwean)
- Michael Sebhatu, founder QuadSaw (Eritrean)

Refugee entrepreneurship programmes:

- The Entrepreneurial Refugee Network (London)
- SINGA Business Lab (Berlin)
- Refugee Entrepreneurs Denmark (Copenhagen)
- Catalysr (Sydney)