Leeds Social Sciences Institute
PGR Placement Fellowship Opportunity

‘The Steps to Settlement Project’
with RETAS
(10 hours per week for 13 weeks from December 2012)

The Leeds Social Science Institute successfully launched the PGR placement scheme in 2011, and now has a range of new placement opportunities for post graduate researchers from across the social sciences who are interested in working in a research capacity in a range of local organisations. The Scheme encourages social science post graduate researchers to engage with the needs of external organisations and to build the knowledge gained from the placement into their future research plans.

The successful applicants will receive a bursary funded by University of Leeds Higher Education Innovation Fund. In time it is hoped that the University and the partner organisation will co-fund the fellowships. The student will be employed by the University of Leeds throughout the placement.

Research Organisation: RETAS

Project Title: The Steps to Settlement Project

Length of Fellowship: 10 hours per week for 13 weeks

Proposed start date: January 2013

Location of Fellowship: RETAS’ central office in Harehills

EXPECTED TASKS
The researcher will be asked to:

- Research the needs of asylum seekers and refugees in the first 2 years of living in the UK
- Research how the challenges of the asylum system and transition from it to mainstream society
- Record and evaluate the effects of the Steps to Settlement Project on the participants.

Where the student would be involved in working with vulnerable groups they would have to undergo relevant CRB checks. Any research involving the student in direct contact with the public (e.g. interviews) would also have to be approved by the University Ethics Committee.

SKILLS REQUIRED

- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Proven qualitative and quantitative research skills
- Working with people for whom English is not their first language
- An understanding and/or experience with working with refugees would be a huge advantage

BACKGROUND
Steps to Settlement seeks to enable refugees and their dependents living in Leeds to transition well from leaving the asylum system and to positively engage with mainstream UK society. Through an innovative holistic package of formal and informal learning experiences, newly arrived asylum seekers and refugees (within the past 24 months) will be helped along fundamental steps towards successful integration and settlement in Leeds. By improving wellbeing and employability, refugees will have improved chances of engaging with and achieving successful integration in the communities where they live. The wide range of partners involved plays a key role in actively engaging refugees with members of the wider community and up-skilling to enable better integration. The project will reduce pressure on local housing and advice services and reduce homelessness, giving refugees a solid foundation upon which they are able to rebuild their lives.
The 10 week programme involves 20 refugees taking four steps: **Sanctuary, Serenity, Skills** and **Settlement**. Within each step a diverse range of compulsory modules will be delivered, focusing on well-being, confidence building, digital learning, financially sustainable living and developing skills for employability. There are 4 programmes (4x10weeks) between September 2012 and the end of July 2013.

The project involves over 110 hours of learning for each learner and over 1280 hours of input from volunteers. Partners helping to deliver the project include Price Waterhouse Coopers, DLA Piper, Feel Good Factor, the National Careers Service and the Leeds Needs Charity Shop.

We would require a researcher with the appropriate skills to research the needs of asylum seekers and refugees, and evaluate the effects of the project. A report outlining the findings of the research will be used as a basis for evaluating and developing the project.

The student will work with the Director of the Leeds Social Sciences Institute to evaluate the success of the placement and identify other opportunities for placements within RETAS and partner organisations.

Leeds Social Sciences Institute will fund the placement through HEIF funds, providing a bursary of £1950, and the placement must be completed by the 31st July 2013.

This project supports the Institutes’ strategic objective to enhance partnerships between social scientists and the public and third sector, to maximise the impact of our research and to make a valuable contribution to society. It is also in line with the ESRC’s strategic objective to extend and deepen knowledge exchange networks across the public, private and third sectors.

The student will be able to use the results of this study (suitably anonymised and with ethical approval from the appropriate University of Leeds committee) to produce a range of academic publications and presentations.

The closing date for this call is **4 January 2013**.

**Applicants should submit a short CV plus a statement explaining why they would like to take up this opportunity, what experiences and skills make them suited to the position and what this work will contribute towards their research plans to Sophia Kennedy at s.kennedy@leeds.ac.uk.**

Applications will be considered by the panel and successful applicants will be notified within two weeks of the application closing date. **Written confirmation of support from the applicant’s supervisor will be required with the application.**

Any enquiries please contact Sophia Kennedy at s.kennedy@leeds.ac.uk

OR

Chris Brooks at chrisbrooks@retasleeds.org.uk