

Gurkha study reveals an economically active and self-reliant social group

The first ever study on Gurkha settlement and their integration process in the UK has revealed that working age Gurkhas are the most economically active and self-reliant social group in Britain.

They are also outward-looking and actively seek advice before making important decisions, with almost 80% considering proficiency in English and having children in education, employment and training as most important. Seventy-one percent are involved in voluntary work in their communities.

The South East Strategic Partnership for Migration-funded study was conducted by researcher Nina Gurung at the University of Kent's School of Social Policy, Sociology & Social Research, who surveyed 100 Gurkha men and women from Kent and the borough of Rushmoor, which covers the towns of Aldershot and Farnborough. These two areas have the largest Gurkha settlements in the UK.

The study has also shown that: employment rates among Gurkha males and females are extraordinarily high with 95.1% for under 60s males and 92.6% for under 60s females; 92.5% of males and 61.3% of females are in full-time work; 87.5% of males and 77.5% of females travel away from resident area to their place of work; 8.8% of males and 1.3% of females are self-employed or are an employer (with the highest number of jobs created by Gurkha employers being 370); and that 40% of Gurkhas are accessing education or and skills improvement training (44%).

Despite their recent settlement in the UK, Gurkha home ownership rate stands at 56%, while many others rent privately. Reliance on housing benefit is mostly confined to older veterans due to low income. 80% of over 60s were on pension credits.

Nina Gurung explained that since Gurkha settlement began in 2004, Gurkha clusters are now emerging in the UK, with affordable housing and neighbourhood safety the important factors when choosing a settlement area.

She said: 'Most Gurkhas are settled in mainly British areas (55%) and some in mixed Nepalese and British areas (27%). Most Kent-based Gurkhas live in mainly British areas. The main universal services accessed by Gurkhas are health services (100%) and children's education services (75%); in large Gurkha settlement areas, this is likely to put pressure on relevant service providers.'

Of the barriers to Gurkha integration, Nina discovered that these were: little knowledge about local community support providers (91%); access to adult education (70%); access to local leisure activities/facilities (63%); and information on children's education, employment and training (78%).

There was 4% NEET (not in employment, education or training) population amongst Gurkha children.

Nina concluded: 'These are important findings that could significantly help inform Gurkha settlement and integration policy-making process.'

- ends -

For further information or interview requests contact the Press Office at the University of Kent

Tel: 01227 823100/823581

Email: PressOffice@kent.ac.uk

News releases can also be found at <http://www.kent.ac.uk/news>

University of Kent on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/UniKent>

University of Kent Blogs: <https://blogs.kent.ac.uk/>

Note to editors:

The University of Kent was established at Canterbury in 1965 and has now become known as the UK's European university, with students in Brussels and Paris as well as at its other Kent campuses at Medway and Tonbridge. It has nearly 20,000 students, of which around 17,000 are undergraduates and approaching 3,000 are postgraduates.

The University has consistently been rated by its own students as one of the best universities in the UK in the National Student Survey for the quality of its teaching and academic provision. The 2012 Guardian University Guide sees Kent ranked 23rd, with one third of its subjects in the top 12 nationally for teaching.

In the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise, the University was placed 24th out of 159 participating institutions in the UK for its world-leading research, while 97% of its academic staff work in schools or centres where the research is rated as either internationally or nationally excellent.

In 2008, the University was awarded The Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education for the work of its Kent Law Clinic.

The University's strong European impact is reinforced by long-standing partnerships with more than 100 universities in mainland Europe and it is the only UK university to have specialist postgraduate centres in Brussels and Paris. The University has also developed relationships with many leading overseas universities outside Europe and in 2010 launched a new initiative to offer more scholarships to students from Hong Kong and China.

It is a major educational, economic and cultural force in Canterbury, Medway and throughout the rest of Kent, supporting innovation and enterprise across the region. During 2010/2011 the University expects to contribute at least £200m to the economy