



Rita, Congolese woman, 59

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KEY FINDINGS

short, employment focused training such as CV-writing workshops, and English language.

- The group of young adults (13-24) faced the greatest difficulties. They arrived expecting to be able to continue with or transition to full time education, yet they struggled to gain qualifications at 16 and 18 years, and faced pressures to find a job as soon as they turned

6. HOUSING SHOULD BE SAFE, SECURE AND AS STABLE AS POSSIBLE

- The safety of Housing was widely remarked upon by refugees and must be considered a key element of success of the programme.
- Yet the provision of housing is a major difficulty faced by local authorities and partly explains why Brighton & Hove Council is the only local authority in the South East to have engaged with Gateway.
- Refugees were significantly more satisfied with their current house than with their first house, but frequency of moves was a source of anxiety. In Brighton & Hove refugees have experienced as many as 7 moves in eight years since the end of the programme.

7. LIFE IN THE UK IS SAFE AND SECURE BUT DISCRIMINATION IS WIDESPREAD

- At time point three, 78.9% of respondents reported that they felt either safe (31.1%) or 'very safe' (47.8%) in the UK and only 1.1% of individuals (a total of 2 individuals) reported that they felt 'not at all safe'
- Nevertheless many individuals reported that they had faced racist abuse in the UK, ranging from verbal attacks to physical assaults. More than half (51%, 133 people) reported that they had not been given a job as a result of discrimination.

8. ACQUIRING UK CITIZENSHIP HAS AN IMPACT BUT BARRIERS TO NATURALISATION REMAIN TOO GREAT FOR MANY

- At the final research point all refugees had been eligible to apply for UK citizenship for at least a year and 60% had acquired it.
- The acquisition of citizenship related to an increase in overall levels of wellbeing. This can be separated into higher levels of emotional security due to certainty that they would be able to remain in the UK, an increase in personal confidence and contacts with the local council, improved labour market integration, opportunity to travel beyond the UK, particularly to visit family and friends.

- Despite these attractions the large minority who had not acquired British citizenship cited reasons of cost which for a family with two adults and two children more than tripled over the course of our research to well over £4,000 and has become considerably more difficult.

9. SOCIAL CONTACTS: BRIDGING AND BONDING ARE IMPORTANT BUT ALSO TRANSNATIONAL SOCIAL LINKS

- Our research confirmed the complementary functions of 'bridging' and 'bonding' social capital. Bridging involves links with people from different social and ethnic backgrounds and bonding with people of the same background, including immediate family.
- The quality of both bridging and bonding relationships was significantly correlated with overall wellbeing for refugees.
- Quantity of contact with British people was significantly and positively associated with wellbeing over time.
- A surprising finding for this research is that transnational links were also found to have a strong positive influence on wellbeing in the UK. We asked refugees specifically about the quality of their contact with family and friends in their country of origin or in the refugee camp where many of them spent many years. Recognising the importance of these connections is a good way to promote wellbeing and resilience.

10. PROGRAMME SUPPORT IS MOST EFFECTIVE WHEN IT IS TAILORED TO INDIVIDUALS' NEEDS

- Research has demonstrated that refugees are a very heterogeneous group. This includes the presence or absence of family networks or existing contacts in the UK, the state of their mental and physical health, their ability to speak English, their previous qualifications and experience of employment. This diversity affects all aspects of their integration.
- Programme support for resettlement is considered most effective by refugees concerned when it takes account of and builds on these various needs.

Refugee resettlement is one of three durable solutions to refugee displacement recognised by UNHCR. Resettlement schemes are a vital instrument of international solidarity and humanitarian cooperation, and a crucial component of international protection regimes. As one of the top three resettlement countries in Europe, the UK has a long-standing experience of resettlement initiatives (Beirens and Fratzke 2017). The UK currently receives refugees through three main resettlement schemes: the Gateway Protection Programme (GPP) which began operating in 2004, the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), established in 2015 and the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS), established in 2016.

This research project began in 2013. At that time only the GPP operated, with a quota of 750 people a year from anywhere in the world. In 2015, the UK Government expanded this quota by committing to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees by 2020 under the VPRS, though this was relaxed in 2017 to include refugees of any nationality fleeing as a result of the war in Syria. Since 2015, 10,538 refugees have arrived under the VPRS and it is anticipated that the target of 20,000 will be reached before 2020 (Home Office 2018a). Only 18 local authorities have been involved in the GPP, although more than 160 local authorities have signed up to accept refugees through the VPRS (Home Office, 2017a), meaning that refugees are increasingly being resettled to areas of the UK with no history or prior experience of resettlement.

We hope that the findings from this four-year longitudinal study will inspire authorities receiving resettled refugees to maximise long-term integration policies by providing ample support and improving refugees' well-being. This research has followed the largest cohort of resettled refugees of any research in the UK. It is also the first to follow refugees long term, that is from four to 11 years after their arrival in the UK. Our central finding in this research is that, despite many individual success stories, refugees resettled to the UK are struggling in the medium to long term. Addressing this requires a long-term commitment to their continued integration on the part of national and local governments. This strategy has clear economic and social benefits. It will allow resettled refugees to make the

The ESRC funded project 'Integration of Resettled Refugees in the UK' explored the integration outcomes for refugees resettled to the UK under Gateway Protection Programme in Brighton, Norwich, and Greater Manchester. These cities were selected to investigate different ways of managing the GPP. Different combinations of local government and voluntary sector involvement were implemented in the three cities, although ultimately we found no significant difference in the welfare of refugees that may have arisen from these different approaches. Cities were also selected to ensure that each national group of refugees was represented in more than one city. For this reason a small number of Iraqi refugees resettled to Sheffield were also included in the questionnaire survey.

In total, 280 individuals took part in the multi-method and longitudinal research. The quantitative data was collected at three time points over three years, starting in 2014. Given the low annual quotas that operated in the years when refugees arrived, participants were selected from a population that in some cities was not much larger than the sample size. In Brighton and Hove, for example, almost all households who had arrived in 2006 were involved in the research. Sampling was not necessary since all refugees who could be identified who had arrived before 2010 were invited to participate and all those who agreed were included in the research. Since refugees' direct contact with programme providers had ended several years before research began, there were no up to date records for our target cohorts. Identification therefore proceeded by network methods and using the community knowledge of the peer researchers.

All refugees who had participated in the survey at time point one were invited again at time points two and three. One hundred and eighty refugees (64% of all research participants) filled out the questionnaires all three times, each time about a year apart, which allowed for longitudinal analyses looking at different variables. The questionnaire explored a number of areas: employment, education, physical health, well-being, housing, language, culture, social connections and identity.

In addition to the survey, we conducted 90 interviews with refugee participants and 9 interviews with stakeholders in each area. These interviews were conducted at 3 time points between 2014 and 2016, and eight focus groups were held with a total of 53 people which took place at the start of the project in 2014. The qualitative data was collected from a selection of the participants who had filled out the questionnaires. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in English and audio-recorded. Data were analysed using inductive thematic analysis. Participants have been given pseudonyms in this report. Where data from only one time point is used it is based on data from T1 only unless otherwise stated.

Interview time 1 (T1): beginning Jan 2014:
280 questionnaires, 31 interviews

Interview time 2 (T2): beginning Jan 2015:
211 questionnaires, 30 interviews

Interview time 3 (T3): beginning Jan 2016:
206 questionnaires, 29 interviews

An additional innovation was employment of a team of peer group researchers. Eleven formerly resettled refugees, who had an existing network among refugee communities in the UK were provided with a week of research methods training to become research assistants (RAs). They supported the research team in elaborating the questionnaires by highlighting important topics from their experiences. Translations of the items used in the questionnaire were extensively discussed with RAs and agreed on before data collection started. RAs further assisted in the questionnaire data collection by providing contacts to their community as well as to their network of people from city and county councils and civil society organizations for further contacts.

The final element of the research was the steering group, which met annually at key stages in the research process. Members included representatives of national and local government, key civil society organisations and representatives from international organisations and the resettled refugee community.

The refugees arrived in the UK in 2010 or earlier. On average, refugees interviewed in Brighton were resettled approximately two years earlier than in the other two locations. The table below (Table 3) indicates the refugees' average years of stay for each city at the last time of interview (time 3) in 2016.

Table 3: Average time refugee participants had lived in each city at T3



Like every state-led resettlement programme, the GPP involved a number of organisations before refugees arrived in the UK. First, all refugees had been through a status determination process, carried out by UNHCR. They were subsequently identified by UNHCR as a priority for resettlement, based on UNHCR's indicators of vulnerability. Having been identified by UNHCR all refugees were interviewed in their country of first asylum by representatives of the Home Office. They then attended orientation courses before their departure for resettlement, as part of the pre-arrival support period. Most of the courses were carried out by the International Organisation for Migration. Participants resettled to Manchester also had information sessions once they have arrived in the UK

ADDRESS THE SIGNIFICANT VARIATIONS IN THE DELIVERY OF PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION

A solid pre-departure preparation in refugees' first country of asylum is crucial for a smooth implementation of the programme and for refugees' initial steps towards integration in the UK. For institutions in the resettlement community, information about pre-migration experiences of refugees is vital to ensure that adequate support services are in place before refugees arrive. For refugees, pre-departure orientation courses are vital preparation for potential challenges they may face in the UK, and to manage their expectations regarding their resettlement to the UK.

There was substantial variation in the level of pre-departure information refugees received. Research participants arriving in 2010 or earlier had between 3 and 14 days of training. The courses mainly contained information on the journey, cultural norms of the UK, and daily life, such as the use of electricity. According to our interviewees, their friends who arrived later than them, around 2015, received three hours of cultural orientation to prepare them for life in Britain. Currently, other countries of resettlement devote more time to pre-arrival cultural orientation. Workshops delivered by IOM on behalf of the United States, for instance, run for four days, and the Australian government sponsors the delivery of five days of training (Bolt 2018).

Participants who had 3 days of training found that the general information provided on life in the UK was insufficient. It was reported that due to the limited time, the workshops focused predominantly on practical aspects on the journey to the UK. Jira felt unprepared on arrival in the UK:

Jira, 62, male, Ethiopian

Ko highlighted a range of issues that could have been covered much better, though many of these issues would have been more easily communicated after arrival.

Ko, 52, male, Ethiopian

Most participants found the training useful. However, for some interviewees the emphasis of the courses was too much about socio/cultural norms like how to say 'please' and 'thank you'. They would have preferred to receive more information on the type and length of the GPP support. Others considered that, with hindsight, the information provided in these workshops was not accurate. This especially concerned information on finding employment, or on access to education which were considered to have been 'too positive' compared to their reality in the UK.

A final, commonly mentioned issue was the need for more frequent translation in the provision of training. Given the amount of information provided in a short period of time and the unfamiliarity of the topic, refugees pointed to a need for more translation during the workshops, and hand-outs to re-read the information at a later point.

GAPS BETWEEN PRE-DEPARTURE EXPECTATIONS AND REALITY ARE RELATED TO LATER WELLBEING

There is a strong relationship between integration several years after arrival and the size of the gap between refugees' pre-arrival expectations and the subsequent reality. In our study, we asked participants to rate their expectations about their lives in the UK regarding finding a job, having access to education, housing and feeling safe in the UK on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much). The same questions were asked about reality. The results showed that a difference between expectation and reality was related to a number of variables that could support integration. Larger gaps between expectations and reality was strongly associated with lower levels of well-being and less frequent contact with the wider British population.

There was a significant difference in the gap between expectation and reality by national groups: Iraqis experienced the largest gap, and Somalis the smallest. This result might be linked to the fact that many Iraqis had much better living standards, prior to becoming refugees, so they experienced the change much more abruptly. In general, interviewees living in camps before their arrival to the UK had smaller differences between expectations and reality than those who had not lived in a camp.

Finally, we also found regional differences. Refugees resettled to Brighton and Hove experienced a smaller gap between expectations and reality than those living in Greater Manchester and Sheffield. These findings point to the importance of pre-departure cultural orientation which prepares refugees for the realities of resettlement.

FURTHER POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- The pre-departure orientation course has been extended from 1 day (5 hours) to 2 days (10 hours) in currently running programmes. Based on our findings, we recommend providing a minimum 3-day pre-departure workshop. If this is not possible, a 2-day pre-departure workshop should be combined with information courses on arrival.

Optimise content of pre-departure orientation courses with post-arrival first information sessions or civic orientation courses.

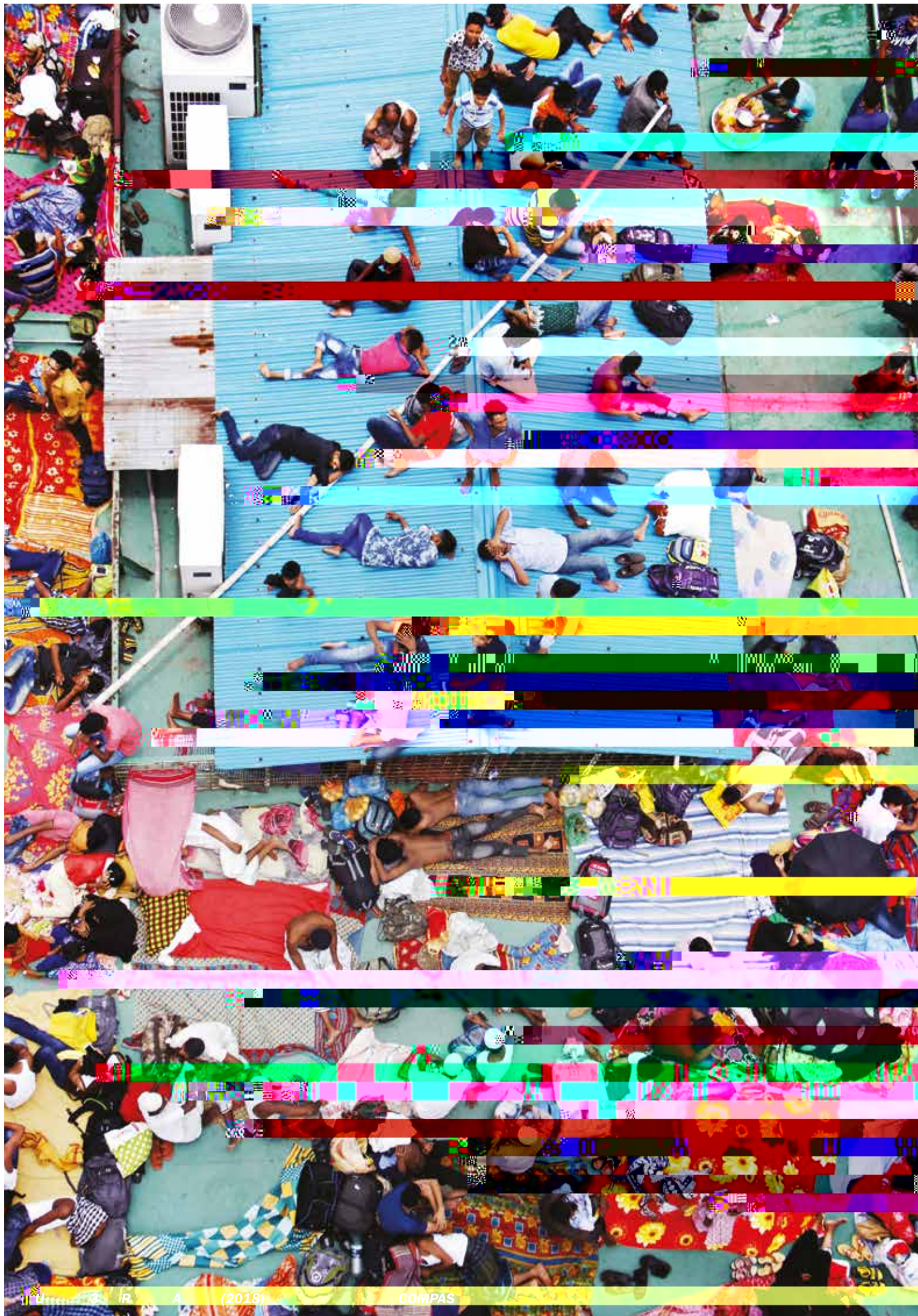
Pre-departure information should be place specific (not based on London), and contain information about local employment market.

Involve resettled refugees in the design and delivery of cultural orientation courses, recognising the expertise of resettled refugees, and providing information directly without the need for translation.

Use skills profiling tools in the pre-departure orientation course for refugees in order to improve advance information on their background, education and skills in order to facilitate a better integration outcome for refugees (see for instance pilot programmes such as the 'LINK IT' (IOM 2018)).

Based on our finding that expectations regarding refugees' lives in the UK varied between the different refugee communities, cultural orientation courses need to be adjusted to meet the different needs.





CHILDREN

Refugee children and youth often experience severe disruption to their schooling prior to resettlement because of conflict and prolonged displacement. Trauma has an adverse impact on learning capacity and outcomes. The lack of education certificates from overseas may create further difficulties. Given these barriers to education, refugee children need specific support in their integration into compulsory education and in their educational pathway. Our data on education only covers children who were 13 years or older on arrival.

The majority of children who were 16 and under at the time of arrival were enrolled into mainstream compulsory schools within a few weeks of arrival. The support through specialist educational units in some areas, such as the Gateway Schools, or third sector educational programmes aimed to support refugee children's entry into learning environments, and to overcome language barriers. There were some instances of children arriving aged 15–16 who did not go to school and instead received language support before going straight to college. The language support offered was not full time and these young people expressed disappointment at not being able to access school.

Those who had entered the school system at 13 years and older did not always find the transition easy, and this largely depended on their level of English language, their level of education and the extent of disruption to their education prior to resettlement. Young people spoke of being 'thrown into' school and the assumption that, with limited support, they would be able to catch up with their non-refugee peers and gain the qualifications:

Ahmad, arrived aged 14, Iraq

The key barriers to educational attainment were insufficient support with language, lack of support to catch up with academic content, a lack of understanding of academic expectations and unfamiliar practices and

systems. Parents also highlighted their own lack of familiarity with the UK education system as a disadvantage in supporting their children, and not knowing how to communicate with schools, for example what questions they should be asking about their child's progress.

For parents, after safety, the integration of their children into UK mainstream education was the second most important aspect of their new lives in Britain, positively affecting their well-being:

Alma, 45, female, Ethiopian

Parents were hopeful that their children would have a better quality of life in the UK because they were able to get 'a proper education'.

EDUCATION OF REFUGEE ADULTS

Contrary to the enrolment of refugee children into mainstream compulsory education, the integration of adults into education was problematic. Refugees who arrived as adults (i.e. over the age of 18) were unlikely to receive any education apart from language provision, and short training courses, such as CV writing offered by the Job Centre. In the early days after arrival the desire to become self-sufficient and to have a job outweighed thoughts of education. People were also unaware of how important qualifications are to gaining access to skilled employment and to progression within employment. Four or more years after arrival refugees regretted not having had the opportunity to access education and to gain the skills and qualifications which would open the doors to sustainable employment.

Negasi, 47, male, Ethiopian

As the graph below shows (Figure 1) refugees arrived with very diverse educational backgrounds.



Figure 1: Education before coming to the UK (N = 269)

Refugees arrived in the UK with a wide range of previous educational experiences: 17.1% had no education at all in their country of origin, whereas 20.8% had received a university education. Research participants included people who had previously worked in professional roles such as teachers, university lecturers, translators, midwives, doctors and a judge. Their qualifications from overseas were not recognised in the UK and they found there were no opportunities to 'top-up' or to build on existing skills and qualifications; instead they were told they would need to start from scratch. Without foundational qualifications of GCSE and A level, very few managed to access Higher Education. None of those interviewed were working in jobs which were commensurate with the skills and qualifications which they came with.

One participant, who had worked as a doctor in Ethiopia, described the impact on the community when previously well-respected and well-qualified people were unable to find employment:

Michael, 57, male, Ethiopian

EDUCATION OF REFUGEE YOUTH

Those aged 13-24 on arrival faced distinct barriers to education. Education was a high priority for refugee youth and they had high expectations. Quality education was a very widely reported aspiration on moving to the UK. Yet both our quantitative and qualitative data shows that for a significant number of research participants, particularly those arriving from mid-teens onwards, these aspirations for education were not recognised or met. Most of our young participants were highly disappointed about their lack of access to tertiary or vocational education.

A quarter (24.3%) of those arriving before they were 19

THE MAIN BARRIERS TO ENTRY INTO POST-COMPULSORY EDUCATION WERE:

Insufficient language skills

Lack of necessary qualifications. Delays, or lack of opportunity, to gain qualifications meant that post-18 they were too old to access full time publicly funded education. Many told us how they would like to study hairdressing, plumbing or decorating, or to go to university but had been told that they required GCSEs in English or maths. As a consequence many felt 'let down' by the UK.

Refugees who had tried to combine claiming benefits with education of more than 15 hours a week (for example, GCSE English and a part-time Access to Higher Education course) were sanctioned by the Job Centre and required to repay their benefits, ending up in debt.

There was a lack of guidance about post-compulsory education pathways, career choices, and their further education outcomes:

Amadi, 28, male, Ethiopian

Jemal, 24, male, Ethiopian

Independent initiatives of refugees to access Further or Higher Education often failed, because of unfamiliarity with the complex UK post compulsory sector, or due to financial issues: For instance:

- Refugees were late in their applications and lost money, time and motivation
- they struggled to find the financial means to enrol on courses
- they were unaware of the availability of Government student loans for Higher Education
- they could not afford the necessary equipment, or the transportation to attend their evening classes
- they were not able to complete their qualifications, either because they were unable to afford GCSE examination fees, or they didn't find the right information about exam dates.

Daniel, 27, male, Ethiopian

Once they reached the age of 18 young refugees felt pressured to move into employment. Many commented that they had to take up jobs right away, or that 'they just put us on benefits'. Once in employment or on Jobseeker's Allowance it was very difficult to continue to attend English classes or to study part-time.

Many refugees felt not only alone and lost in their choices on educational routes, but they were simply not encouraged to take up further education, which would have potentially increased their chances to find long-term secure employment:

Aaron, 28, male, Ethiopian

Didier, 31, male, Congolese

Others felt frustrated about the lack of flexibility of programmes and the delays in admission to education. Depending on when they arrived they often had to wait many months until the beginning of the next academic year to start a programme. This inevitably increases the risk that they will no longer be eligible for publicly funded full-time education. In their opinion, the waiting periods could have been avoided with an improved preparation of their arrival in the UK, and organising their integration into

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

REFUGEE CHILDREN:

Provision of adapted approaches to language and literacy support and bridging programmes for successful integration of children into compulsory schooling, through:

- Tailored educational support, including intensive language and literacy support alongside mainstream education
- Support to catch up with academic content
- Additional time in exams
- Financial support for NGOs in the educational sector providing homework clubs and informal learning spaces
- Initiatives to support families and carers to engage with schools
- Support for social and emotional well-being of children

REFUGEE YOUTH:

- Access to additional routes to further and higher education; i.e. the creation of bridging programmes to enable refugees to catch up on content and language skills.

- Better support for refugee youth to navigate the complicated and unfamiliar education system, including the use of mentors and coaches.
- Extension of support for full time education up to the age of 25 (in line with provision for care leavers).
- Enrol young refugees into education prior to resettlement in order to minimise waiting periods (i.e. to colleges)
- Flexible approach to college and university admissions. For example, alternatives to GCSE

LANGUAGE AS THE KEY TO INTEGRATION

Learning English is the key to refugees' ability to communicate in the UK, to integrate and to gain confidence and independence. Language proficiency significantly and positively relates to different aspects of refugees' lives (Fig. 2):

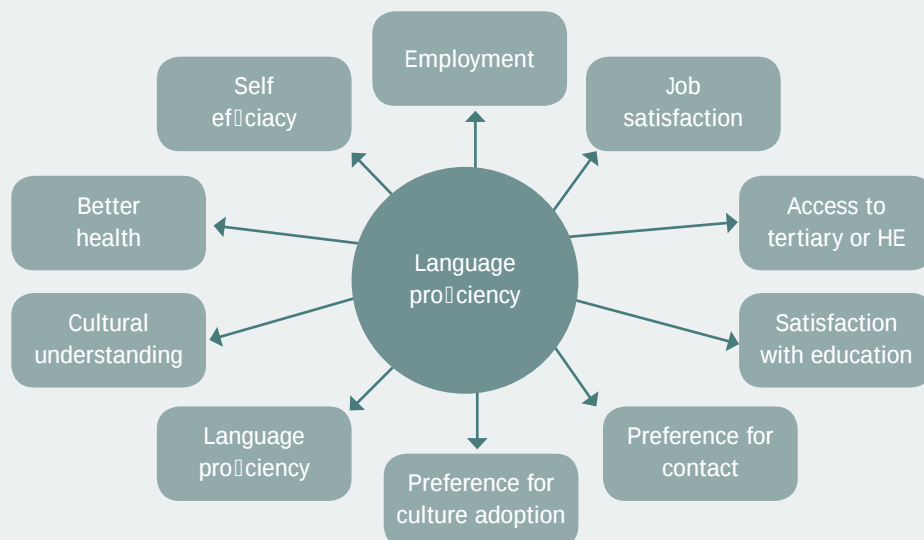


Figure 2: the positive impacts of English language proficiency

Higher language proficiency was linked to better health, greater belief in refugees' own abilities (self-efficacy); better cultural understanding and a preference for adopting British culture. Refugees with higher language skills were more likely to be employed and to have higher job satisfaction; they were more likely to access further and higher education and more likely to be satisfied with education. Overall higher levels of language were correlated with higher levels of well-being. Importantly we found that the higher refugees' language levels, the more contact they had with British people, and the more positive contact.

These findings confirm the importance of skills in the dominant language for integration. Yet this research has further refined this established connection.

As this was a longitudinal study we have been able to investigate the direction of the effects of English language skills over time. We find that better language skills lead to more contact with British people at later time points, but not vice versa. In turn, more contact with British people leads to better well-being over time among refugees, but again not the other way round. This means that people need language classes before they can make these contacts, and making these contacts is important because they are associated with better refugee well-being over time. The effect is displayed in the figure below (Fig. 3).

Figure 3: the direction of effect between English language skills and wellbeing.

Refugees themselves overwhelmingly expressed the desire to learn English and saw it as fundamental to their integration. As one participant said:

Jacques, male, 43, Congolese

English language was valued because it enabled (such as) education good (when they) temples t (y)

No education

Figure 5: English Language proficiency by type of education level of the resettled refugees

REFUGEES' EXPERIENCES WITH
ESOL² PROVISION

The number of hours of tuition during the first year varied considerably between locations and depended on the time of arrival. Participants reported between four and 15 hours a week of tuition. The standard mode of ESOL delivery once learners entered the mainstream was two hours twice a week. For the vast majority this was not considered sufficient for their needs. Participants living in all three research locations were not satisfied with the frequency and intensity of ESOL provision, nor with the teaching.

At first, most refugees in all locations received bespoke language classes with their co-nationals. This was reported as helpful in the early days after arrival as it was an opportunity to share experiences and gain support as they adjusted to living in a new context. However, mixed nationality groups of mainstream provision promoted greater use of English among students and therefore was more conducive to language learning; it was in these classes that people felt they learnt more, and it was here that they made contacts with other communities, making friends and extending their social networks.

Refugees often criticised the lack of opportunities to practice their conversation skills in class. Furthermore, they found that ESOL classes were not very useful in providing them with the necessary English vocabulary of 'how to get around in daily life':

Jacques, 43, male, Congolese

Ko, 52, male, Ethiopian

Elisabeth, 49, female, Congolese

² English for Speakers of Other Languages

Language classes are about more than learning the language and providing a platform to develop social connections. Language providers also had an important role in solving practical issues after the Gateway support ended. Participants who struggled to manage their lives on their own without a local support system reported that teachers and the wider ESOL staff provided them with vital support in solving a variety of practical issues related to their life in the UK including problems with the benefits and housing. ESOL teachers and staff were often mentioned as the only local contacts refugees had after the support period:

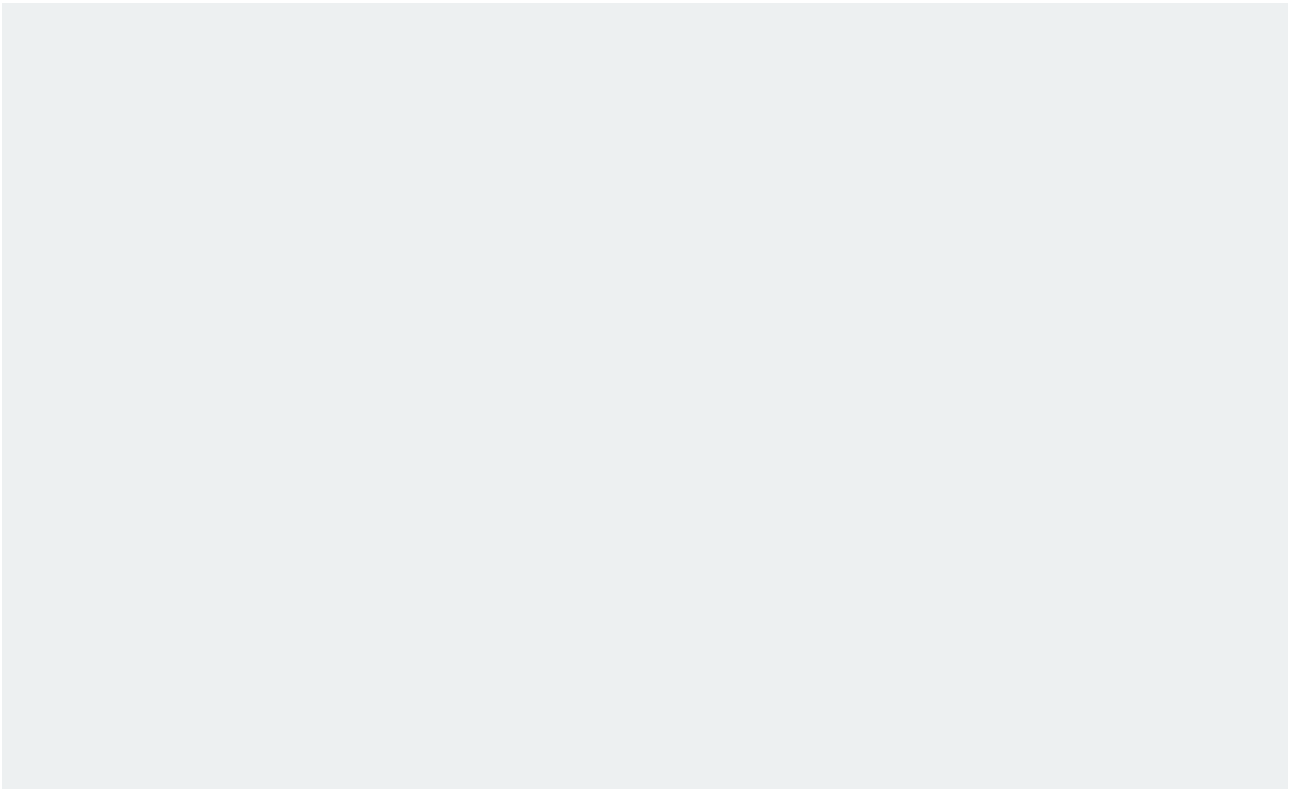
system poses a similarly intractable challenge. Eligibility criteria for free ESOL classes excluded those who were not 'actively seeking work'. This excluded some refugees who were caring for children or sick relatives, or who were retired.

Traditionally, employment and social contacts with English speakers have been thought to further enhance English language ability. Our research found that this was not systematically the case. Entering employment could be both a boost to English language development, but given the type of employment of many refugees it was more likely to be a hindrance. Those in entry level jobs requiring limited language were often working on their own or with members of their own community, for example cleaning or night security guards. Opportunities to interact with English speakers and improve their English were much rarer. Employment also reduced formal opportunities to develop language skills. Refugees in employment pointed to the need for access to free language provision at weekends and after work:

Amadi, 28 male, Ethiopian

All refugees requested more opportunities to communicate outside the classroom in order to improve their language skills, either through one-to-one mentoring, alternative language support by third sector organisations, or more interactions with other British people at work or in their local communities.

Our findings reinforce the importance of English as the key to refugees' long-term integration. Lack of English language skills hinders integration across a range of domains and prevents refugees fully contributing to UK society. It also creates systemic inequality. Without intensive language provision upon arrival in the UK refugees risk long term social exclusion. Certain groups tend to have lower English language proficiency: women, older refugees, those with poor health, those with caring responsibilities and those with limited pre-migration education. These groups face particular challenges, are most likely to struggle to learn English and are most at risk of exclusion.



LEVELS OF EMPLOYMENT REMAIN
LOW FOR RESETTLED REFUGEES

Significantly more men were employed than women. At T1 41% of men were employed, compared to only 11.4% of women.

PRE-ARRIVAL EXPERIENCES STRONGLY INFLUENCE EMPLOYMENT

Refugees with higher levels of pre-migration education, higher literacy levels, and experience of employment prior to arrival, tended to find employment faster (Table 5).

A diagram illustrating a 3x3 grid of rectangles. The top row consists of three rectangles of equal width. The middle row consists of a wide rectangle on the left and a narrow rectangle on the right. The bottom row consists of a wide rectangle on the left and a narrow rectangle on the right. The narrow rectangles in the middle and bottom rows are shaded gray, while the others are white.

Table 5: Pre-arrival experiences and levels of employment.

Research also identified a strong relationship between employment prior to their arrival in the UK and the likelihood of securing employment in the UK. Refugees who lived outside camps were more likely to be employed than those resettled from camps, who have been in average out of employment for a longer time.

Table 6: Link between duration in refugee camp and employment

Difficulties finding work are therefore highly predictable. Refugees who will need the greatest support can be identified as soon as they arrive. Even for those who find work, a good job is unlikely. The sectors in which refugees were employed were mostly in low-skilled jobs, such as in warehouse and distribution, car washes, taxi driving, retail, cleaning, and social care. According to a recently published report by The Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (2018), these are among the top sectors for high-risk of exploitation. Most refugees were stuck in multiple short-term employment contracts:

BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

The main self-reported barriers to employment were

Most refugees signed up at the Job Centre in the first or second week after arrival. At that time, participants were not familiar with British society, and they struggled with basic practicalities, such as where to buy food. Refugees reported that they simply did not understand what they were signing up for at the Job Centre, because it was 'too early' and they still felt lost in the UK:

Bereket, 41, male, Ethiopian

Early registration at the Job Centre and the pressure to enter the job market disadvantaged refugees in the long run. Early employment was prioritised at the expense of developing language skills and taking up training and education opportunities. As a result, refugees were not able to obtain even the most basic qualifications before being expected to find a job. They had very limited understanding of the UK job market and did not know how to answer questions about what jobs they were looking for.

Aaron, 28, male, Ethiopian

Refugee found themselves invited to job interviews where they were unable to understand and answer the questions, or were turned down for the most basic jobs, such as cleaning, as they did not have experience.

Going to the Job Centre was a very stressful experience. Most refugees reported cultural and linguistic misunderstandings at the Job Centre. Making mistakes led to sanctions and benefits being withheld. This led to further rounds of paperwork and further meetings.

Jira, 62, male, Ethiopian

We were told many stories about difficulties at the Job Centre. These included the lack of adapted communication by staff, particularly employees speaking too quickly, and systemic issues, such as racism and discrimination. One woman reported that a Job Centre worker suggested that she couldn't find a job because she wore a hijab.

Alongside unfamiliarity with the British job application system and language barriers, refugees face technical barriers in filling in forms and in the use of the computerised system. These experiences were described as emotionally stressful, leaving many refugees with a feeling of helplessness and shame. This applied particularly to refugees with no computer and language literacy:

Dureessa, 22, male, Ethiopian

The Job Centre is the key institution that needs to be flexible enough to adapt to refugees from different backgrounds. This research has shown that decisions made very soon after refugees' arrival can influence key measures of integration even many years later.

Health is an important prerequisite for the strenuous efforts refugees' have to make to adjust to their new environments. We found no significant difference between men and women in overall health, nor in the extent to

It is also well-known that being a refugee can affect mental health and well-being adversely. In addition to any trauma that may have occurred before refugees arrive in the UK, their subsequent social isolation and lack of confidence to engage with the wider society and to form relationships can lead to emotional distress. Furthermore, mental health difficulties may be a more significant cultural taboo in countries and contexts from which refugees have come than in the UK. The resulting stigma may pose a barrier for refugees to seek treatment for mental health issues.

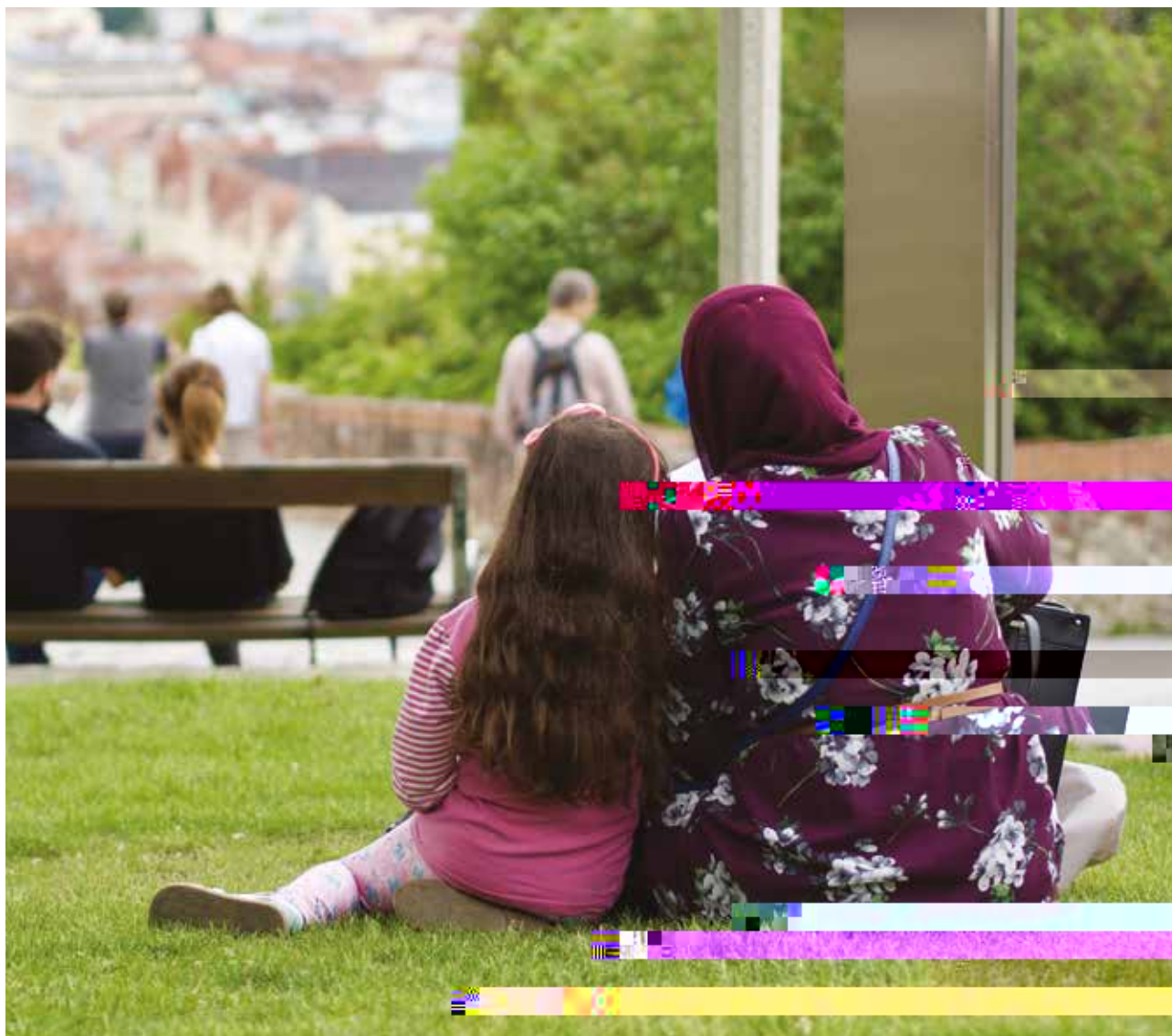
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure newly arrived refugees are aware of translation support for NHS visits
- Recognise the strong correlation between poor health and poor English language ability.
- Make systematic use of pre-arrival information of refugees' potential health needs and specialist support.
- Improve provision of mental-health support and faster access to mental health treatments after arrival.
- Create low-threshold opportunities like monthly workshops in which refugees can become involved in social activities (e.g. writing groups or sewing classes) to form relationships, improve peer support and develop confidence.



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure availability of affordable, sustainable and secure accommodation in order to avoid the stressful situation of moving houses
- Provide further assistance with housing, such as with bills, finding a new accommodation or access to public transport. This was highlighted in the 2017 UNHCR report on the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (UNHCR 2017).
- Make sure that specific needs are met, for instance in cases of disabilities
- Consider innovative and inclusive housing examples; such as affordable communal living space for young people, both existing residents and refugees, with co-management of communal living space like the STARTBLOK project in Amsterdam (Friends of Europe 2018).
- Accompany new initiatives and the accommodation of a larger number of refugees into a neighborhood with information meetings for the neighborhood, so that nearby residents can ask questions, meet tenants and generally learn more about the programme or projects, recognizing the two-way nature of integration.



The provision of a safe and secure environment is the fundamental logic of refugee resettlement as a durable solution to refugee displacement. A safe environment is vital for refugees' well-being, considering that many reported being worried to step outside their houses due to fear of violence or persecution in their home country. At this minimum level, the programme has been successful

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide proactive public awareness raising campaigns, and the diffusion of 'positive refugee stories' to counterbalance ongoing anti-immigration public and policy discourse.
- Tackle institutional racism by providing refugee awareness courses and trainings in anti-discrimination practice for institutions involved in resettlement communities such as housing cooperation, job centres, banks, benefit system and police.
- Provide additional community-led development support in addressing race-related incidents, given the reported reluctance of some refugees to report incidents to the police.
- Ensure that refugees and the local community are informed how to report incidents of hate crime.



The second most frequently mentioned reason for not applying for British citizenship were concerns of failing the language test or the 'Life in the UK' test. This was especially the case for women with insufficient language proficiency (Morrice 2016):

Dureessa, 22, male Ethiopian

Thirdly, refugees find it difficult to understand the immigration system, including processes of applying for citizenship and family reunification. Cuts to legal aid, which impact people well beyond the refugee population, meant that refugees without language proficiency would have to navigate through the complex field of immigration law on their own. Across all three cities, the Citizen Advice Bureau was mentioned as an important provider of immigration advice. However, their services are no longer free and participants cannot afford to seek advice from solicitors. Consequently, some refugees paid agencies up to £250 to fill out application forms, in addition to the high fees to different outsourced affiliated agencies that administer peripheral processes, such as English tests and interviews.

Finally, we also found concerns, especially among the Congolese community, that the possession of British citizenship would not change their sense of identity, nor the ways others will perceive them. This result highlights an awareness of the significant levels of race inequality and prejudice in Britain with which newcomers are confronted:

Joseph, 30, male, Congolese

Despite the strong association between citizenship and well-being of refugees, a British passport alone does not automatically shape refugees' sense of identity and belonging to the UK. For some participants, other factors were more relevant for their sense of belonging to the UK. These included stable employment, financial independence and acceptance by their local community. Alma explains:

Alma, 45, female, Ethiopian

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider introducing cost exemption or a price reduction of the naturalisation fees for resettled refugees and their families, given that the government has a declared interest in their naturalisation, their numbers are small and they have clear structural barriers to meeting the rising cost of naturalisation.
- Reintroduce free legal aid and information for Immigration matters, such as family reunion and citizenship applications in order to make it affordable

for refugees to navigate the complicated process of exercising their rights of applying for citizenship and/or being reunited with their families (see Angus MacNeil's private member's bill on refugee family reunion had its second reading in the House of Commons on Friday, 16 March 2018).

- Prevent systemic inequality and/or discrimination in citizenship matters by providing access to intensive language classes for women and refugees with care duties, to improve their chances of success in the English language test.



The frequency of total contact with British people was highest among the Congolese refugees, followed by Ethiopians, Iraqi and Somali refugees. Participants living in Norwich and Brighton noted significantly more contacts with British people than refugees living in Manchester, where refugees had the least contact with British people.

The abrupt transition to a new unknown country is an emotionally stressful situation for refugees. They came from situations in which everyone interacted on a daily basis with their neighbours. To adjust to the perceived 'closed' and individualised British lifestyle has been a particular challenge:

Shegaw, 45, male, Ethiopian

Sheva, 45, male, Brighton

Those who arrived as children generally had more social contacts with the majority of society, due to better language skills:

Rita, 43, female, Congolese

Anne, 18, female, Congolese

Because refugee children and youth have in general more inter group contacts than their parents, they also inform them about current- and cultural events happening in the UK. Or, they accompany them on their visits to the GP and on administrative appointments for translation:

Yusuf, 44, male, Congolese

The necessary bridging capital linking refugees with wider society was generally experienced as difficult. Most refugees experienced most contacts with British people as friendly, but at best distant. For some this exacerbated intermittent feelings of isolation and loneliness:

Jacques, 43, male, Congolese

In some cases this variation in bridging social capital between children and parents created certain tensions in families. Some parents expressed concerns that their children might adjust 'too much' to British society, by adapting not only to the good parts of British culture, such as tolerance towards minorities, but also what they considered the more problematic aspects such as the perceived loss of intergenerational respect:

Benoit, 40, male, Congolese

Refugees accounts of the 'British way of life' were sometimes slightly distorted, resulting from little personal contacts with the British and limited opportunities for insights into their private lives. Refugees were rarely invited into private homes, which would have allowed a more nuanced image of a British family life.

The achievements of those who arrived as children in their multidimensional integration is very positive. Yet, we should not forget that some of these children and youth live with high levels of unemployment and poverty. Financial problems and/or anti-social working hours are one of the reasons why many parents find it difficult to socialise regularly with the local community. Deeper personal contacts and friendships mostly happened within refugees' own communities or with individuals of other national backgrounds. This is the essential role of bonding social capital.

BONDING: PROVIDE PLATFORMS FOR INTRA-GROUP CONTACTS

Our data on the refugees' interactions with members of the same community show a positive correlation between well-being and contacts with one's own ethnic community. Although some of the resettled communities are far from being harmonious and intra-group tensions exists, in general, contacts with community members were narrated as being helpful, especially in difficult times:

Genno, 28, female, Ethiopian

In this context, refugees also highlighted the crucial role of the church and mosques as important meeting points for interacting with other members of their community. Religious institutions also provide a way of meeting individuals from other nationalities. In all three cities, many refugees meet after school, they stay in contact via telephone, or they visit each other at home. They also get together through community organisations, around nationality or ethnicity.

The majority of respondents considered community organisations as a welcome means for practical and emotional support and for the practice of their culture and language. They saw the growing number of refugees and community organisations as a positive development and an advantage for incoming refugees – something which they missed upon their arrival. Refugees who arrived on their own were especially keen to highlight the value of attending community groups:

Hussein, 27, male, Ethiopian

Ali, 29, male, Ethiopian

Community organisations were particularly important for older refugees, as a vital means for maintaining their cultural identity. Community organisations also played a crucial role for emotional and financial support for refugees who go through a loss of a family member back home. In contrast, younger refugees who arrived at an early age, and who were mainly socialised in the UK considered community organisations to be less relevant. With the exception of young refugees who are actively involved in intra-community youth activities, such as sport activities, most considered the associational life of their community as a place for 'older people':

Jira, 62, male, Ethiopian

Dureessa, 22, male, Ethiopian

These comments refer to transnational relationships that have lasted in some cases more than a decade since refugees arrived in the UK. The quality of these relationships has a significant impact on refugees' reported levels of wellbeing and in turn on their openness to become involved in social life in the UK. Despite being a multicultural country, Britain can be isolating for newcomers. The undeniable positive effects of contacts with the wider society on refugees' well-being highlights the need for the creation of more opportunities for contact.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Social integration is a dynamic process that takes place at the individual, local and national level. Bridging, bonding and transnational links are important to consider in each context:

Individual level

- Encourage and ensure access to bridging activities, so that refugees feel welcomed and can develop a sense of belonging in their new society, for example intercultural exchange projects or mentoring and buddy schemes.
- Increase publicity and information addressed to both locals and members of the refugee community about volunteer organisations and their programs to socially engage wiandu[directgage s ofboth unity 00.w .
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Under Gateway, refugees still receive 12 months of focused support, which then comes to a more or less abrupt end. Looking back with the perspective of as much as a decade after arrival, refugees were generally positive about the immediate programme support they received upon arrival:

Hussein, 27, male, Ethiopian

Praise for Gateway was very common and the greatest success of the scheme was in meeting immediate needs on and soon after arrival. Yet long-term integration of refugees into British society is just as important. Provision under Gateway was understandably focused at immediate support. With hindsight it is clear that programme support was planned less with a view to longer-term implications. The one-year government support, after which time it is assumed that refugees' needs will be accommodated by mainstream service provision, was considered adequate by some, but too short by many.

Refugees had different experiences of the management of the termination of support mechanisms. In some cases, the lack of appropriate information about upcoming changes caused refugees extra stress and anxiety. Many did not feel confident to manage everyday life independently. Thus, they stressed the need for more long-term integration measures, beyond the funding period, which would have allowed them to better understand the UK system. Those who struggled the most in managing their lives after the support ended were those who received support provisions over a shorter period (four to six months), elderly refugees, people with more limited English language skills, which disproportionately affected women and refugees with no local support networks:

Hussein, 27, male, Ethiopian

Many of these difficulties are periodic and clear. For example, reading and understanding letters from utilities companies, HMRC or concerning benefits was something that few refugees felt confident with at the end of official Gateway support. Such letters could provoke significant anxiety:

Max, 39, male, Congolese

After the end of the supporting period, refugees welcomed any opportunity to ask for official advice. Where there was an individual they were able to go to seek support or information, as in Brighton, they really welcomed this. The institutionalization of an official drop in to ease refugees away from case worker support was mentioned by many, in this case a refugee from Greater Manchester:

Elisabeth, 49, female, Congolese

Once Gateway support has ended, the impersonal and complex access to support, for example by phone rather than in person, makes it particularly difficult for refugees with few English skills to explain their situation and to clarify misunderstandings. Such misunderstandings often occurred at times of moving home. A frequently mentioned issue in this regard was that refugees mistakenly paid remaining bills from previous tenants after their relocation into a new home. In some cases, refugees paid considerable sums of money, precisely because they could not explain their situation, and consequently struggled to make ends meet on their income.

The need for a more tailored approach to service provision through Gateway and for a more tapered transition once Gateway support ends was a common suggestion for improving the system. This could be developed in future provision, as it has in the VPRS. In the absence of such provision, some were lucky enough to find other support. Developing opportunities for other forms of solidarity and linking refugees into existing voluntary networks is a vital additional channel of support.

ENCOURAGE 'GOOD THINGS HAPPENING': FORMAL AND INFORMAL LOCAL SOLIDARITY

Many refugees relied on friends or local volunteers for ongoing support after their official support ended. On many occasions, formerly resettled refugees helped those who needed more guidance in coping with their daily lives. These community mentors reported that many of their mentees needed somebody to 'sit with them' to solve their administrative difficulties or to help them in accessing local services after the support mechanisms ended.

Befriending and mentoring schemes have become increasingly common across the UK in recent years. Refugees considered these to be extremely helpful during both the arrival period and afterwards. The mentoring support network in place helped many to absorb the 'abrupt' termination of support, and to cover their needs:

Some parents found it crucial to have positive role models for their children in the wider community, like friends, mentors and neighbours. Hussein was particularly keen to pass on their positive experiences of local solidarity to their children:

Hussein, 43, male, Iraqi

This reinforces the broader survey result of a positive correlation between positive contacts with the local community and the overall well-being of refugees. It further highlights the importance of a more inclusive approach to resettlement beyond the main service providers. Yet it is obviously that refugees are not only beneficiaries of solidarity. As the UK becomes a more and more established resettlement country, larger numbers of refugees have relevant expertise.

Negasi, male, 47, Ethiopian

ALLOW FORMER REFUGEES TO 'GIVE BACK SOMETHING TO THE UK'

Many formerly resettled refugees expressed their wish to 'give back something' to the UK, because they had 'been chosen' to be resettled to the UK. They want to be 'useful' for the wider English society by paying taxes and by 'trying to help' new incoming refugees – as a means to support the state-led resettlement programme. Many former refugees would be willing to help newcomers and to volunteer in the future, even if they are living in strained circumstances that limits their time and energy to take up a volunteer engagement.

Jim, 37, male, Iraqi

Hassan, 27, male, Ethiopian

Living on benefits, however, prevents many refugees from feeling useful to the British society. There is certainly great potential in involving former resettled refugees in a more systematic way as mentors and volunteers into currently running or future resettlement programmes.

This is the first study into long-term integration of resettled refugees in the UK. Our three-wave longitudinal study followed resettled refugees as far as ten years after their initial arrival in the UK. Although there can be no doubt that resettlement has brought them tremendous benefits there is also reason for significant concerns. Previous research followed refugees for the first year or two after arrival and found that major difficulties persisted in access to education, employment and English language skills and that these contributed to very substantial inequalities between resettled refugees and the UK population as a whole. Our research demonstrates that these inequalities persist. Severe inequality remains pronounced even in our final wave of research, which followed some refugees into their second decade in the UK. Countering this inequality requires a long-term commitment to the integration of resettled refugees.

Our research has highlighted many things that can be done to ease the difficulties that refugees encounter in the UK if they are to reach their potential in the future. The most significant barriers faced by refugees on their pathways to a settled life in the UK are closely related and reinforce each other. They are compounded by gendered vulnerabilities: unemployment makes it difficult to afford decent housing; the lack of language skills, and the non-recognition of refugees' qualifications aggravates the search for employment, and the precarious life situations make further education and upward mobility almost impossible for the majority of refugees involved in this research. All of these factors can push refugees into long-term vulnerability.

To mitigate these negative consequences, and in order to avoid the production of new inequalities we suggest it is necessary to find ways to deliver an overall holistic support model – which requires increased collaboration between resettlement providers, refugee support organisations, mainstream service providers, local employers and the wider society, especially where housing, language, employment and social integration are concerned. A more holistic approach to the needs of refugees also involves adapting a model beyond trying to merely fit refugees in to existing systems, and instead recognises their different trajectories, to improve access to different institutions and provides the structures and opportunities to enable them to invest in their futures.

As the UK government considers the development of a new refugee resettlement programme after 2020, the findings of this research have a lot to contribute. Ambitious state-led resettlement programmes, including integration programmes should be combined with additional innovative private or third sector projects. A special priority should be given to projects and initiatives which, despite cultural and linguistic differences, focus on collaboration, whether among resettled refugees and citizens or between the public and private sector. Newly launched projects should ideally focus on concepts of self-management and autonomy of refugees. In doing so, new initiatives can contribute to changing the more negative narrative around refugees, based on victimhood, towards a story of personal agency. They can make enormous contribution to helping refugees to become part of their new environment. The UK is now seen as a world leader in refugee resettlement. It is ideally placed to make a long-term commitment in this area.

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