Embedded Integration and Organisational Change in Housing Providers in the UK

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The arrival of large numbers of asylum seekers in the UK, many of whom subsequently become refugees, has been an important contributor to the emergence of new migration. Integration policy and initiatives have placed a great deal of focus on securing housing for refugees and enhancing their employability. While academics stress that integration should be a two-way process, and highlight the need for institutions to adapt to meet migrant need, the vast majority of policy attention has focused on supporting refugees to adapt to life in the UK. Few initiatives and even less research attention has been paid to encouraging or exploring institutional adaptation. This article looks at the experiences of UK housing providers involved in the HACT Reach In initiative. The project was unusual in that it sought to encourage housing providers to adapt their approaches to service provision by embedding refugees into their everyday work. Using data collected via qualitative longitudinal methods, the article examines the ways in which institutions changed their cultures and approaches to service delivery. It finds that initiatives that enable hosts and migrants to access new social fields create the opportunity for embedded integration that moves beyond the individual to impact upon institutions, and argues that shifting our attention to institutions has much to offer in conceptual, empirical and policy terms.

Keywords: Integration, refugees, housing, institutional change, embeddedness.

Introduction

The United Kingdom and other EU countries have witnessed an increase in immigration in recent years. While migrants arrive in the UK with a range of different immigration statuses, the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees have received the most attention in both policy and academic terms. The majority of immigration policy and legislation has adopted a restrictionist stance on asylum, placing emphasis on securing borders and restricting access to social welfare for asylum seekers (Sales, 2002; Phillimore, 2012). However, a separate, less visible, strand of policy has developed around supporting the integration of refugees. The UK Government and the EU have set out integration strategies (Home Office, 2005, 2009; Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012) aimed at encouraging the development of policy intended to aid refugee integration. These strategies outline what integration should look like, why it is important and how it might be achieved. Housing, employment and language acquisition are at the centre of such strategies. Initiatives, such as those funded by the now defunct European Refugee Fund and Migrant Impact Fund, provided finances for a range of providers, many of whom were civil society organisations, to develop projects to help secure the functional and social integration of refugees.

The focus of this article is a project developed by HACT, a London-based housing action charity with national influence, which aimed to improve refugee employment prospects, address the skills gap within housing, to improve housing services for migrants and to help housing providers create cohesive communities. HACT's approach was unusual in that they sought to encourage long-term institutional change within housing organisations by placing refugee volunteers at the front-line of provision and supporting volunteers and providers to learn from each other. This approach moved beyond the assimilationist approach that had come to dominate government thinking, in which the onus was placed upon refugees to adapt to UK culture, to more of an integrative approach wherein adaptation was viewed as a two-way process. Institutions, in this case housing providers, were supported to adapt to the arrival of refugees, while refugees were given opportunities to use volunteering to enhance their employability and improve their language skills.

Using data collected via qualitative longitudinal methods, this article asks what changes occurred when housing providers and refugee volunteers came together; what do the experiences of institutions tell us about integration theory, policy and practice; and how might further change be encouraged. While there were also interviews with refugee volunteers, this article largely focuses on the experiences of providers. Volunteer experiences are reported elsewhere (Allen and Phillimore, 2011).

Asylum seekers, and refugees in the UK

The subject of migration, with a particular focus on refugees and asylum seekers, is rarely out of the public eye, with sustained media attention and public polls showing that migration is one of the key concerns of the British public (Duffy and Frere-Smith, 2014). The UK government has resolutely pursued a strategy of restrictionism, successfully limiting the right to asylum by introducing a range of measures including stricter border controls and a reduction of social benefits (Law, 2009). Immigration and asylum policy has taken a deterrent stance, the object of which is communicating that asylum seekers are not welcome here.

The poor quality of immigration data means that we lack reliable information about the numbers of asylum seekers and refugees living in the UK. Some 149,765 known refugees were estimated to be living in UK in 2012, with 23,499 new asylum applications received for the year ending June 2013 (UNHCR, 2013). Of those asylum seekers arriving annually, thousands gain refugee status or the right to remain, while even more are unsuccessful and go into hiding, subsist using food vouchers or are deported. Some asylum seekers wait several years for a decision; at least 160,000 legacy cases were granted leave to remain by 2011 (UKBA, 2011). The asylum seeker and refugee population of the UK continues to expand with the continuance of global conflict and despite restrictionist immigration policy. There has been gradual realisation that policies and initiatives are needed to support the integration of the growing refugee population with much academic attention focusing upon understanding integration processes.

Integration theory

Integration as a term is often used in policy, practice and academia, but it can mean different things to different actors depending on their perspective, interests, assumptions

and values (Castles *et al.,* 2002). Work by social psychologists, and particularly Berry (1994, 1997), builds on the idea of integration as a process arguing that over time both migrant groups *and* host societies change and new identities emerge. For Berry, integration is one possible dimension of the acculturation process. He argues that integration occurs where an individual has an interest both in maintaining their original culture *and* taking part in daily interactions with other groups. They could, alternatively 'assimilate', if they do not maintain their original cultural links; 'separate', when they do not mix with the indigenous (*sic*) population; or, if excluded, become 'marginalised' and have little contact with the indigenous population or members of their own ethnic group. Acculturation strategies may be *chosen* by migrants or imposed upon them if, for example, they experience structural inequalities or racial hatred. The central tenet of Berry's conceptualisation of integration is the two-way nature of the process which requires both host and migrant adaptation.

Some authors have criticised Berry's conceptualisation of integration as a linear process and propose alternative discourses concerned more with diversity and complexity of cultures or contexts (Hall, 1990; Bhatia and Ram, 2009). They argue that integration is an ongoing negotiation between past and present, and country of origin and country of refuge, wherein identity is contested and constantly moving. Acknowledging the variability of integration processes builds upon some of the thinking around segmented assimilation which highlights the possibility of diverse pathways that lead towards multiple mainstreams (Schneider and Crul, 2011). In addition, the notion that integration may be non-linear accounts for interruptions that may occur, and may impede aspects of integration and supports Berry's argument that a wide range of actors, including institutions and agencies, have a role (which may be disruptive) in integration. Schneider and Crul (2010) in introducing the notion of comparative integration contexts, highlight the ways in which integration in Europe is shaped by different social and political contexts within which institutions will of course play an important role. They do not examine how such contexts might be adapted to take into account diversifying populations. While other work has explored the experiences of refugees and migrant and refugee organisations (MRCOs) and given them the opportunity to articulate their views and experiences thereby allowing interrogation of the subjective nature of integration processes (Schibel *et al.,* 2002; Korac 2009), and much focus has been placed upon access to the functional aspects of integration – housing, employment, education and health services (see Ager and Strang, 2004, 2008) – almost no attention has been paid to the experiences or influences of institutions and agencies. One exception is work by Mullins and Jones (2009) which focused on network management as an implicit theory in a refugee integration project, Accommodate, which facilitated partnership working between MRCOs and housing providers in the hope that they would co-develop services. Mullins and Jones (2009) found that co-operation did little to impact on the corporate cultures of large and powerful institutions.

While integration theory emphasises the importance of two-way adaption and the role of institutions, most conceptual attention has focused on the ways in which migrant integration outcomes might be understood or measured (Zetter and Pearl, 2000; Ager and Strang, 2008; Phillimore and Goodson, 2008), rather than how the adaptation of institutions may be understood. In this respect, the concept of mixed embeddedness is useful. Embeddedness has been used to explain the success of migrant entrepreneurs in relation to their connections to so-called co-ethnics. Kloosterman (2010) argues

that the notion of mixed embeddedness neglects the wider institutional context in which embeddedness occurs and claims that the shape of opportunities migrants access depends upon the institutional context within which they are inserted. Focusing upon the embedding of migrants within institutions, and institutional responses to embedding, offers potential for us to explore integration from the perspective of both migrants and institutions bringing a new lens to the understanding of integration processes.

Integration policy and practice

The New Labour government initially set out its desire to make refugees 'full and equal citizens' in 2000, then developed a national refuge integration strategy in 2005, renewing their commitment to refugees in 2009 (Home Office, 2000, 2005, 2009). In the early stages of integration policy, emphasis was placed upon funding MRCOs to enable them to help facilitate refugee integration through the provision of advocacy and support (Gameledin-Adhami *et al.*, 2002; Home Office, 2005; Griffiths et al., 2006). This approach reflected the multicultural route to migrant settlement that at the time dominated in the UK. In 2006, there was a major shakeup that saw the majority of funds withdrawn from MRCOs. Approaches to refugee integration took more of an assimilationist turn that reflected the growing backlash against multiculturalism emerging from concerns that it fostered separateness, undermined common values or encouraged terrorism (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010). By 2012, the Coalition government had shifted position again, clearly placing responsibility onto migrants themselves and withdrawing even from a strategic role, issuing a paper focusing on localities rather than the state (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012). Projects funded by the European Refugee Fund (ERF) were amongst the few remaining that focused upon refugee integration (Phillimore, 2012).

Access to appropriate housing and employment has long been viewed as fundamental to refugee integration (see Bloch, 2002; Phillimore and Goodson, 2006), and indeed formed part of the focus of early work on race and housing (i.e. Rex and Moore, 1967). There is a body of work clearly demonstrating that the majority of minority ethnic groups reported higher levels of overcrowding, poorer housing conditions and experiences and greater levels of segregation into deprived areas than the general population (Harrison and Phillips, 2003). The Home Office (2005, 2009) themselves acknowledged that employment and housing were the two main social policy areas that were fundamental to integration. At the same time, studies have indicated that the lack of stable housing and employment continues to facilitate against refugee integration (Phillimore and Goodson, 2006). The New Labour government's 2005 report (*Causes of Ethnic Minority Homelessness*, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) found that eviction from state-provided accommodation was one of the main causes of refugee homelessness. Research has indicated that even several years after gaining leave to remain in the UK, refugees struggled to locate settled, good quality housing (Cheung and Phillimore, 2014). Little action had been taken to establish specialist refugee housing or employment schemes.

Thus UK policy increasingly regards integration as the responsibility of migrants themselves, and in contrast to many European countries, since New Labour left power, the UK has neither an integration policy nor an integration programme, at odds with academic debate, which regards integration as a two-way process involving change for the migrants

and crucially the 'host' society (see Berry, 1997; Ager and Strang, 2008). Indeed, academic analysis itself has tended to neglect the process of change required for institutions to provide refugees access to these opportunities and acceptance. This article begins to address this gap in knowledge by looking at the integration outcomes for institutions participating in a project specifically focused upon pursuing change in the social housing sector whilst trying to enhance refugee employability. The Reach In project brought together the key functional indicators of integration, housing and employment, together with an institutional approach that sought to encourage housing providers to adapt their cultures to better meet the needs of refugee communities. The article argues that directing research at institutions rather than migrants offers much potential to enhance the academic debate around integration, both in terms of understanding how integration processes might be facilitated and in challenging the dominant popular and political narrative.

Methods

Researchers used a multi-method approach to explore the efficacy of the initiative from the perspectives of both providers and volunteers. The focus was upon a formative approach, described by Mullins and Jones (2009: 121) as 'a philosophy of evaluation based on capturing and promoting learning rather than checking compliance', that was longitudinal in nature and provided a baseline against which to assess progress. This article focuses upon the work undertaken with managers with responsibility for implementing the volunteer programmes within provider organisations. At the early stages of the project, the research team facilitated focus groups, dividing into two groups the fifteen managers who able to attend a group meeting in London. The discussions were guided by semi-structured questions which explored organisations' hopes and aspirations asking questions such as: 'What expectations do you have?' 'What support might you need?' Some twenty managers were interviewed on a one-to-one basis[1] at the end of the programme to explore the extent to which their aspirations had been met and to examine the key impacts and challenges associated with the project. They were asked to explore their experiences in supporting volunteers, consider the benefits and challenges of engaging with the programme, examine the ways in which the project helped them meet the needs of refugee communities and consider the legacy of the project for participating organisations.

All interactions were recorded, transcribed and then analysed using a systematic thematic approach by the author. Where organisational changes occurred, these were identified by the individuals interviewed. We were not in a position to measure the extent of changes made by interviewing a sample of their wider employee base to check that claims made were accurate, but we did interview the refugee volunteers who had been on placement in the organisations and were able to triangulate some of the findings. Clearly, in order to make more robust and generalisable claims, further research is needed which would move beyond claims made by managers and volunteers to survey actual impact within organisations.

The approach

HACT's approach to refugee integration was innovative in that it used the volunteering programme to enhance refugee employability while supporting housing associations to

make their services more refugee friendly. As such, it sought to overcome the shortcomings of the earlier Accommodate project by 'embedding responsiveness to the refugee agenda in their corporate cultures' (Mullins and Jones, 2009: 121). HACT accessed European Refugee funding, and established Reach In with a project manager and support staff. Funding provided by the European Refugee Fund III was matched by financial support from some of the participating housing providers and HACT's own reserves. HACT recruited housing providers and volunteers, and worked with the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) to establish a training programme for volunteers. HACT matched volunteers to providers and worked with them to ensure each volunteer had a line manager and mentor. Most refugees were placed for six months with several seeking extensions to their contracts. Providers participated in workshops which gave them opportunities to learn from experts and each other, and HACT offered a support/trouble-shooting role helping providers with queries and problems. Twenty-five housing providers had a role in the programme. Thirteen of them provided match funding and offered a placement, while the remaining twelve offered a placement (see Table 1). Providers ranged from small housing associations managing just 200 properties to local authorities and larger housing associations with 50,000 properties. Some ten providers had no previous experience of working with refugees; the remaining twenty-five had, according to their own definitions, various degrees of experience.

Findings

New knowledge and understanding

Most housing providers' expectations were linked to the aims of the programme, recognising that it gave them an opportunity to gain knowledge about refugees, and diversity more generally, or because its staff and/or client group were changing. As one provider explained:

> We work in an area with quite a low BME population . . . so our resident base is quite a low BME population . . . part of it is opening people's eyes to different communities and we felt that if we can start to do that through this programme, so that staff are working amongst people and picking up different backgrounds and getting on with people in an office setting, then they will be more likely to be able to do that when they have to go out and about knocking doors and deal with our customers.

Some providers expressed surprise at how useful their volunteers were, and found that the skills and knowledges they possessed benefitted providers' organisations. Extra human resources were useful, for example at the front-desk, on visits to clients, with IT or dealing with the media. Embedding refugees within organisations brought managers a new perspective on the capability of refugees, over-turning the dominant media discourse which frequently portrayed refugees as scroungers or lazy, instead demonstrating that they were in fact highly skilled:

> These people are capable of doing very valuable tasks, not just the filing or photocopying, that kind of thing. If you give them real work to do, they take in board and it saves you time.

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Table 1   Participating housing providers

Region/location	Type of organisation	Number of managed houses	Funder and host partner, or only host	BME experience	Refugee experience
London	HA	700	FP	Y	Y
London	HA	10,000	FP	Y	N
London	HA	7,000+	H	N	N
London	HA	7,000	H	N	N
London	HA (charity and social)	13,500	FP	Y	N
London	HA	260+	H	Y	Y
London	HA	200+	H	Y	Y
Stoke on Trent	HA	600 (specific for refugees)	FP	Y	Y
East of England–Norwich	L/A	18,000+	H	Y	N
East of England–Norwich	HA	52,000	H	Y	Y
East of England–Norwich	HA	4,500	H	Y	N
North West–Manchester and Blackburn	HA	3,000	H	Y	Y
North West–Bolton	HA	25,000+ (with partners)	FP	Y	Y
North West–Manchester and Blackburn	HA	15,000	FP	Y	Y
North West–Bolton	HA	18,000+	FP	Y	Y
Sheffield	HA	6,000	H	Y	N
Southend on Sea	L/A	15,000+	FP	N	N
South East–Hertfordshire	HA	4,200	FP	N	N
South Yorkshire–Bradford	HA	22,000	FP	Y	Y
Y and H–Leeds	HA	1,100	FP	Y	N
Y and H–Leeds	HA (local authority owned)	20,000+	H	Y	Y

Table 1   Continued

Region/location	Type of organisation	Number of managed houses	Funder and host partner, or only host	BME experience	Refugee experience
West Midlands– Birmingham	HA	2,500	FP	Y	Y
West Midlands– Birmingham	HA	363 flats/bedsits	H	Y	Y
West Midlands– Birmingham	HA	11,000+	FP	Y	Y
West Midlands– Birmingham	HA	32,000	H	Y	Y

Several providers noted how refugee volunteers helped their paid workers to think in new ways and to develop an understanding of the factors that impinged on refugees' lives, such as their immigration status and entitlements, that the difference between refugees and asylum seekers was just a legal definition and the employment and housing barriers both faced. Cultural knowledge from outside the UK was valued: '[it] enriches the culture within our team', 'really changed the team's outlook and brought in a nice experience'. Staff developed an understanding of the profound effect of language barriers upon the ability to access services, and consequently the importance of providing information in different languages. In some organisations, staff learned from the different way that their volunteer worked.

The embedding of volunteers into housing organisations enabled a gradual transfer of knowledge and understanding to providers about the key issues and challenges faced by displaced people and their communities, and about how vulnerability impacts on the housing sector, as well as other sectors, and sector-specific providers more widely. Some volunteers actively taught new skills to staff, such as how to work effectively with interpreters, and/or assess risk on home visits. In response to the learning that emerged from interactions, providers noted that 'staff gave up a lot of time but found it useful to their personal development'. The opportunity to interact on a personal level with refugees offered new insights into the complex problems experienced by forced migrants. The building of working and more personal relationships frequently took several weeks, and sometimes started quite slowly as some staff were wary of working with people who were so different from them.

There were some instances where providers were able to give examples of how the presence of a refugee volunteer with a different outlook on life had enhanced staff morale and enabled them to look at their work from a different perspective:

> it really boosted our morale in the team because you know you get a bit complacent and comfortable and demanding and unhappy about things at times and he really made me look at things from a different way and opened our eyes up.

In two providers, the working environment became more positive and staff apparently worked harder as they were motivated by the enthusiasm of their volunteer.

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New institutional relationships

Providers spoke of new relationships being developed with MRCOs and the wider third sector. For those who said they were experienced with working with BME or refugee groups, the presence of a volunteer enabled them to expand their reach: 'our volunteer was able to link us up to other refugee organisations that we were not aware of'. Others outlined how working with MRCOs and community groups became embedded in their organisational culture. That they did not do this before was expressed in terms of not knowing who to speak to or how to initiate contact with refugee communities. Working closely with a refugee built confidence in staff's ability to approach and to engage with refugee communities and clients, which we were told improved services:

> before the volunteers came to the organisation we had that fear when customers of different groups come into the office, we had that fear of how do we talk to these customers. Now that difference is celebrated.

As well as this new understanding, volunteers contributed to the development of new solutions and facilitated new provider contacts with local migrant and refugee organisations and networks, helping providers to build new partnerships and gradually construct new initiatives that were possible because of the ongoing development of trust and understanding. Volunteers were said to be integral to establishing relationships between minority communities and housing providers, with volunteers acting as a social 'bridge' between them, facilitating access to information, which Coleman (1988) describes as a valuable form of social capital. The length of time that refugees were placed within organisations was important. Refugees needed familiarity with the ways that organisations worked, outreach potential and service delivery capabilities, as well as to believe that their employers genuinely wanted to make a difference before they felt sufficiently confident to make connections which later formed the basis of partnerships. Once these were in place, volunteers often adopted a facilitator role helping their employer to develop new initiatives, such as translated materials, with new community partners.

New ways of working

Providers enhanced their ability to engage with minority and displaced communities and made changes to their services making them more sensitive to wide-ranging needs. Direct gains resulted from being able to see how their services looked from a minority and/or migrant perspective. Possibly the most frequently discussed long-term outcome of the embedding of a refugee volunteer within an organisation, particularly for organisations with predominantly white staff, was the development of ability to work with minority ethnic groups. For many organisations, the barrier to such work was confidence:

> the barrier has been broken now that we have a workforce that have been able to improve with the minority ethnic group through the volunteers. That has been translated in a way to how much staff can actually engage with customers from the same ethnic background. I know that staff are feeling more confident.

Participation in Reach In prompted some organisations to re-evaluate their institutional cultures. Those providers who had previously worked with refugees

experienced the least change and tended to view their involvement as a consolidation of knowledge. Organisations with less experience noted more radical, long-term benefits impacting upon the way they worked and their future plans. One provider noted that after finding out from their volunteer that services were not reaching refugees, 'we realised that it could be that the services we are providing aren't suitable for everyone'. Others found the experience prompted them to 'look outside the box and take a wider view of how we do things'. After realising they were not as inclusive as they had imagined, providers undertook activities such as providing housing options talks to a wider range of communities so their services reached out to groups such as the elderly, A8 migrants, British minorities and young people. Some allocated their volunteer specific projects, for example, researching needs in refugee communities or developing proposals about how needs could be met more effectively. Other providers independently revisited customer profiles and reassessed needs across the board:

> biggest impact was how services as a landlord have an impact on non-mainstream tenants. It was useful for pulling back our focus and asking why we are doing things in a certain way.

New services were developed, for example, a service around neighbourhood safety, and an initiative to help refugees access housing in the private sector. Several noted that their organisations had become more person-centred because they now tended to view people as individuals, whereas previously they had 'grouped' them and made assumptions about characteristics: 'staff now add the personal touch when dealing with refugee clients' and 'helped staff to be more person centred in their practice'. These new approaches were often directed at all 'vulnerable' clients rather than just refugees. Existing mechanisms, such as customer fora, were expanded to become more inclusive.

A small number of providers spoke of the programme helping to give them a business advantage by pushing them into new areas. In the words of one respondent, 'we have the upper hand with this client group'. Respondents felt that at local level their experience of Reach In had shown the wider housing sector that refugees are a resource rather than a problem. While most benefits were in the immediate service area in which refugees worked, some noted new knowledge, ideas and connections led to 'a new way of working with these communities' to be adopted across their organisation. In this respect, the high profile that the Reach In project enjoyed within organisations was important: HACT ensured they got sign up from Chief Executives at the beginning of the project, and many, as noted above, actually invested heavily, so there was a clear interest in gaining from their engagement.

Some providers reported a complete change of approach as a result of participation. They argued that they were more customer focused and now viewed their primary role as resident involvement and treated the community as a partner. One provider stated they had adopted more of a Housing Plus-type approach, expanding their role to include community development. Translation of information into community languages became more of a priority, the range of languages was expanded, and one provider highlighted the importance of language by creating a section detailing provision in their Annual Report. The opportunity that Reach In offered for providers to meet regularly and to hear how others were benefitting from their volunteer(s) built confidence in trusting volunteers with

more responsibility and bonding capital between organisations which helped them to access advice and information.

Conclusions

On the whole, providers believed that they benefitted from their involvement, and provided evidence to suggest the experience had been, as Berry (1997) proposes, one of two-way adaptation. By bringing different actors into housing providers, HACT reduced the closedness of these organisations and exposed existing actors to different cultures and values (De Bruijn and Ten Heuvelhof, 1997, cited in Mullins and Jones, 2009). Refugees learned about social and cultural norms in UK institutions while enhancing their employability, and providers learned about refugee experiences; their staff developed new skills and knowledge; and providers, particularly those with little 'diversity' knowledge, built broader and deeper connections with the communities they served. The programme frequently resulted in the introduction of a reflexive approach to provision and acceptance that change was necessary, and possible, in a changing world. Given the huge demographic changes witnessed in much of Europe in past decades, and continued flows of refugees into Europe via the Mediterranean and Aegean, arguably initiatives that are capable of helping institutions adapt to the increased diversity that Vertovec (2008) has labelled superdiversity are critical. Research looking at access to other forms of welfare in superdiverse areas has found that failure to adapt to the novelty and newness of rapidly changing populations places huge pressures on front-line staff while failing to meet the needs of vulnerable groups (Phillimore, 2011, 2015).

The main mechanism for these changes was the development of social connections between staff and refugees. These new networks enabled both sets of actors to benefit from exchange of social and cultural capitals through exposing them both to new fields previously closed to them (Bourdieu, 1984). Through embedding refugees into the everyday worlds of housing providers, both accessed resources, in particular exposure to new ways of acting, doing and thinking that they had not previously experienced and that enabled them to learn and adapt. Time was an important factor. As relationships evolved over weeks and months, staff and volunteers were able to overcome initial reticence and develop sufficient trust and confidence to ask questions of each other and make and respond to suggestions about how services could be improved. Some providers benefitted from linking relationships with wider refugee communities or via partnerships with MRCOs, making use of both bridging and linking capital that Putnam (2002) has argued are important to build strong communities, and Ager and Strang (2008), amongst others, have pointed to as being critical to refugee integration.

Critically, through prolonged social contact and the development of new skills, knowledge and understandings, providers changed their approaches to service delivery. So while individual refugee volunteers became employed or more employable, the changes within organisations extended *beyond* individuals to new services, new connections and new ways of thinking. The changes that took place appeared to be long lasting and sustainable. Further research some years after the end of the programme is needed to explore the extent to which they have endured.

The experience of the Reach In project shows that it may be possible to facilitate the institutional changes that commentators such as Berry (1997) argue are necessary if integration in its widest form is to occur, and supports the contention that it is important

to look beyond the individual migrant to the ways that institutions adapt to the ongoing superdiversification of populations. We term the approach adopted within the project as embedded integration because it provided prolonged and in situ access to new social fields, and as a consequence new sources of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984) accessed through networks and interactions. Given the large numbers of refugees in the UK, coupled with low levels of resources available for integration initiatives, there will never be enough volunteering places for all who need them. Furthermore, following the backlash against multiculturalism (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010) there is a lack of political will to encourage or fund the development of specialist integration services. Possibly one of the most cost-efficient ways to achieve integration is through embedded initiatives promoting institutional changes. The social capital which results from connections is the key building block for mutual adaptation and effective integration. Our work refocuses integration research and theory away from individuals, showing that two-way adaptation is feasible and that interventions centring on institutions have potential to shape integration processes. Much more research is now needed to examine more widely institutional responses to demographic changes.

Acknowledgements

Note

1 We were able to interview five additional managers as well as re-interview those involved in the original focus groups.

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