

UNHCR Recommendations on Integration



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Effective Resettlement

- ❑ Not only how many refugees, but also how well they are received and supported
- ❑ Requires advance preparation between all levels
- ❑ Ensure that required reception services and integration support are in place on arrival, and are available throughout their integration period



THE INTEGRATION OF RESETTLED REFUGEES

Essentials for Establishing a Resettlement Programme and Fundamentals
for Sustainable Resettlement Programmes



Effective Integration

- ❑ Directly affects degree to which receiving communities continue to endorse and support national resettlement policies
- ❑ Requires sustained government commitment to establish and implement legislation, policies, resources and expertise
- ❑ Overarching purpose and goal: that resettled refugees reach their potential as productive citizens



Establishing and Sustaining Resettlement Programmes

Essentials:

1. Legislative and policy instruments ensuring status and rights
2. Stakeholder consultation and collaboration
3. Integration programmes to deliver support and provide access to essential services

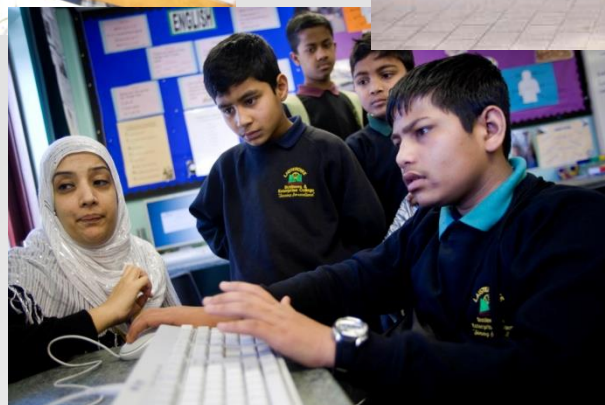
Principles of Reception and Integration in Europe

- ❑ *The Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees: A Charter of Principles*
- ❑ Product of workshops from ICMC resettlement training on reception and integration (June 2010, Portugal)
- ❑ Outlines four guiding principles for delivery of services in reception and integration (non-exhaustive) based on experiences of practitioners in 11 European countries

The Four Guiding Principles

1. Empowering refugees, fostering independence
2. Enabling integration
3. Enhancing partnerships, planning together
4. Strengthening receiving communities

The Important Role of Receiving Communities



Experience from Europe

- ❑ 'Linking-in EU Resettlement' project: UNHCR, IOM and ICMC (2011-2013)
- ❑ Launch of European Resettlement Network:
www.resettlement.eu
- ❑ Focus on reception and integration at the local level and linking the pre-departure and post-arrival phases
- ❑ **Themes:** resettlement needs and priorities, identification, selection, pre-departure, travel, reception, and integration

Refugee Integration, Capacity and Evaluation (RICE) Report

- ❑ Refugees are often very highly motivated to start a new life and integrate
- ❑ Often face additional barriers to integration compared to other migrant groups
- ❑ Mainstream housing, employment, health, social and educational services may not be sufficiently able to support beneficiaries of protection to overcome these barriers

RICE Report

- ❑ *A New Beginning: Refugee Integration in Europe*, September 2013, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/522980604.html>
- ❑ Austria, France, Ireland and Sweden national reports also available online, plus *Integration Evaluation Tool (IET)*



Conclusions and Recommendations

- ❑ Refugees rarely begin from same starting point as other migrants
- ❑ Networks are fewer, family separation, language, documentation, health status (trauma, violence)
- ❑ Individuality of each refugee's integration process, not an homogenous group
- ❑ Sought to understand "how refugees are doing"

Policy Areas

- ❑ Research confirmed that the specific challenges refugees face are complex and require some special measures
- ❑ Family separation, time spent in asylum procedure, documentation, health
- ❑ Key refugee-specific elements that influence if and how refugees are able to integrate
- ❑ Four key policy areas (Zaragoza Declaration):
Employment, Education, Social inclusion, Active
Citizenship

RICE Research Policy Areas

- Employment
- Education and language
- Social integration and inclusion
- Housing

Cross-Cutting Policy Areas

- Family separation
- Time spent in the asylum process
- Documentation
- Transition
- Health

Employment

- ❑ Important policy area in all countries and at EU level
- ❑ Generally, lower employment, precarious employment and higher downward professional mobility compared with other migrants
- ❑ Role of freedom and mobility is under researched

Employment - Recommendations

1. Support employment agencies in recognizing skills of refugees and in directing them to appropriate employment
2. Combination work/language opportunities should be considered in addition to basic language training
3. Ensure close coordination between the authority granting refugee status and the authority issuing documentation to avoid delays or gaps
4. Support to be provided to all asylum-seekers, whether living in reception centres or not during the asylum process

Housing

- ❑ Not an EU policy area, but prominent in many countries' framework – also linked to question of urban development
- ❑ In all countries, refugee housing seemed a particular concern
- ❑ Poorer outcomes for refugees, including homelessness, than for migrants in general

Housing – Influencing Factors

- ❑ Transition phase from asylum to refugee status particularly relevant and time of vulnerability
- ❑ Lack of employment, and therefore secure income
- ❑ Landlords reluctant to rent to refugees, including high landlord requirements, which refugees cannot easily meet
- ❑ Shortage of affordable and suitable housing
- ❑ Insufficient support to find housing
- ❑ Urban preference, for networking/networks or employment

Housing – Recommendations

- ❑ Provide support to refugees to find suitable and affordable housing upon recognition and take measures to prevent refugees from becoming homeless
- ❑ Take measures to create greater awareness among landlords and social housing authorities about the limitations for refugees to meet standard housing requirements (guarantor scheme)

Education and Language

- ❑ Important policy area for all countries and at EU level
- ❑ Language seen as very important to all areas of integration, most notably employment

Education and Language - Recommendations

1. Higher levels of language training to be made available
2. Language training should be made available as early as possible
3. Ensure personnel who provide services or information have training on empowering clients
4. Loan, grant and scholarship schemes for higher education could be included

Social Integration/Inclusion and Active Citizenship

- ❑ Commonly cited influencing factors:
 - Political participation influenced by past negative experiences
 - Attitude in society and portrayal in media
 - Barriers to volunteering – including documentation
 - Limitations to political participation (voting) or citizenship
- ❑ Isolation and lack of social bonding and bridging (lack of language ability; habits around socializing; uncertainty about cultural norms; fear of rejection/racism; psychological and health-related barriers)

Social Integration/Inclusion and Active Citizenship – Recommendations

1. More collective efforts are needed by all stakeholders to support social networking, such as mentor projects and volunteer interaction
2. Strong anti-discrimination framework and promotion of intercultural dialogue should be included in strategies to promote active citizenship
3. More information should be collected in relation to the links between social inclusion and active citizenship, and citizenship and integration more generally

Cross-Cutting Issues – Family Separation

- ❑ Not an indicator area
- ❑ Studies highlight that separation from family can lead to stress and anxiety, but also that the prolonged time apart has consequences on its own, including difficulties re-adjusting
- ❑ It is next to impossible to “measure” the impact family separation has on other areas of integration in a quantitative manner

Family Separation - Recommendation

- Simplification of the family reunification process and flexible criteria applied in identifying family members in order to promote the comprehensive reunification of families, including extended family members, should be introduced for persons with protection status

Asylum Process

- ❑ Not a policy or an indicator area – however, clearly an important factor in refugee integration
- ❑ Research highlights the negative impact the long process can have – stress, anxiety, distrust of authorities, dependency, general health and psychological stability

Asylum Process - Recommendation

- ❑ Considering the negative impact on both integration and the ability to return following prolonged time spent in asylum procedures, efforts should be made to ensure efficiency in asylum procedures
- ❑ Conditions, practices and support during the asylum process should promote dignity and aim at empowering the individual asylum-seeker

Other Recommendations

Documentation

- ❑ Service providers and others working with refugee integration should be informed about the particular challenges for refugees in obtaining documents

Transition

- ❑ Initial targeted integration support to beneficiaries of protection upon recognition should be considered in all Member States as a good practice
- ❑ Integration approaches and support need to recognize the individual character of integration (individualised integration plans)

Health

- ❑ Refugees' health should be understood as a cross-cutting issue influencing many aspects of the integration process

Good Reception and Integration Matters!

