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Essay collection

“If you could do one thing...”

10 local actions
to promote
social integration





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The British Academy social integration project “If you could do one thing...” set out to examine successful integration projects drawing lessons from clear evidence about methods that can improve integration and result in long term cohesion in our society.

This collection of essays brings academic viewpoints and research on social integration together with examples of practical interventions and activities that have been shown to make significant positive impact. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not represent the views of the British Academy but are commended as a contribution to public debate.

This collection of ideas is accompanied by a set of case studies on the integration experiences of recently arrived migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, with a focus on young people.

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Executive Summary

While there exists a good body of evidence on social integration in the UK, little has been done previously to draw together the evidence from different sources and provide local government, charities or other organisations with practical tools to help them to tackle issues that affect their communities.

This report aims to change that and draws on the expertise and experience of academics and practitioners to suggest interventions which might be implemented at a local level to tackle some of the challenges faced by a diverse society, and thus to promote social integration.

Each essay offers a simple, practical, measure to improve social integration, with the understanding that local bodies have – and are likely to continue to have – constrained resources.

Covering a range of aspects of integration across language, education, employment, social relations and political behaviour, the chapters cover integration issues both of long-standing communities, as well as those facing newly-arrived migrants including refugees, undocumented migrants and children.

Each of the eleven contributors presents a specific initiative designed to tackle one particular challenge, ranging from the challenges faced by refugees on arrival in Britain to those of long-established communities in overcoming entrenched disadvantage. In many of the chapters our contributors report an example of a practical initiative which has already been put into practice and evaluated.



The first contribution, by Ted Cantle CBE, provides a framework for the following ten local actions ideas. He develops the concept of Local Integration Plans and spells out why such plans are needed and what they should cover. He adopts a multidimensional approach to integration, and identifies a range of different elements of a local plan, such as learning to live together, resources for managing population and demographic change, and tackling segregation and discrimination in all domains of public life. The different components tackle the variety of challenges facing local areas, and are complementary and mutually reinforcing. They are not ‘either/or’ alternatives but should be implemented together.



The 10 local actions ideas are set out in:

- **Chapter 2** which presents a case study of the **Welcome Project** in Handsworth, Birmingham. This group provides a **safe space for newly-arrived refugees, migrants and asylum seekers** – many of whom have experienced psychological trauma and displacement – together with practical advice on how to secure help with the many challenges of adjusting to life in Britain. The authors emphasise the need for a physical space within the community, the two-way approach to integration such as engaging on an equal footing and maintaining a non-judgemental attitude, as well as the importance of local knowledge. The project is largely staffed by volunteers and funded by donations, and so running costs are low.
- **Chapter 3** continues with the theme of welcoming new migrants, but suggests that the existing institution of **the community centre**, with its long and distinguished history, provides a forum which could readily be adapted. The author argues that community centres can be particularly useful too, for establishing bridging social capital, linking migrants with the established local community.
- **Chapter 4** describes a **collaboration between the Welsh Refugee Council and the teacher training department of the University of South Wales**. Educational organisations are uniquely placed to promote the cultural and linguistic integration of forced migrants in the United Kingdom. By **using ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) teacher training to fulfil the needs of migrants** in Cardiff on long waiting lists for lessons, this partnership shows mutually beneficial impacts. Trainee teachers gain an understanding of the experiences and needs of migrants, whilst migrants gain the language skills needed to integrate, gain employment and access services.
- **Chapter 5** describes the work of the **Linking Network**, initially developed in Bradford by the local authority, to **pair primary school classes from different areas to tackle segregation**. The programme developed a structured year-long programme where the children could work and debate together in terms of mutual respect and on an equal footing. The project has since developed into a national framework, and offers cost-effective ways to help young children develop positive skills, attitudes, perceptions and behaviours.
- **Chapter 6** focusses on the **National Citizen Service (NCS)**, which provides opportunities for **young people from different communities to meet and engage on an equal footing**. It discusses the potential obstacles to meaningful contact with other groups, and the role of the NCS in developing a programme of structured activities leading up to the planning and delivery of a social action project in the local community. Such schemes can promote a range of aspects of social integration in a cost-effective manner, and the benefits appear to be stronger for young people from the most disadvantaged and segregated backgrounds.
- **Chapter 7** offers the example of a **community arts festival** arising from **People United's 'Best of Us' project** in Newington, Ramsgate. Discussing civic engagement, it demonstrates the potential for an arts-based community-level intervention to promote community connectedness and engagement. The psychological connections arising from the arts have the potential to transcend parochial group memberships. The authors argue that it is possible to integrate the use of arts-based methods into existing local plans.
- **Chapter 8** continues the theme of civic engagement but shifts the focus to the way in which campaigns can assist civic and political integration. The author describes the **'Donate Polish Blood' and 'Poles are Polls'** campaigns, developed by the Polish community in Britain to **provide a positive story of the Polish contribution to British society and encouraging members of the Polish community to register to vote**.
- **Chapter 9** discusses discrimination and disparity in employment and the workplace as known barriers to long-term social integration. It describes the London-based **'Moving on Up' (MoU)** initiative, a partnership between the **Black Training and Enterprise Group, Trust for London and the City Bridge Trust**, which aims to **work with local businesses to increase the employment rate of young black men in London**, and to bring it up to the rate for young white men. MoU involves working with local authorities, charities and above all local businesses to help young people from BAME communities into work and professional advancement so that they have a stronger stake in society. The project employs effective monitoring and evaluation, and a local area-led approach to getting the right partners involved. Beyond employment, the initiative has a range of psychological benefits for participants around skills, attitudes, confidence and understanding of work.
- **Chapter 10** describes **Runnymede's 'Race Equality Scorecards'** as a tool for helping local authorities to **record reliable data and understand local disparities**, with a view to developing and implementing tailored solutions. The Scorecards bring together quantitative evidence on seven key indicators – education, employment, housing, health, criminal justice, civic participation and support for the BAME voluntary sector – to identify the nature of the local priorities and inform the decision-making processes of local authorities, whilst equipping local communities with the tools to hold them to account.
- **Chapter 11** focusses on the role of universities to assist local communities in researching needs and information. Using **Manchester University's Knowing How project** as an example, the authors describe the process of **bringing together academics with partners in local community organisations to develop community capacity**. The authors argue that universities can play a useful role in helping communities to develop a bottom-up approach whereby disadvantaged or excluded groups can raise the issues that concern them, develop their capacities to stimulate social change and integration, and to work with other community bodies in a shared endeavour to overcome the challenges of diversity.

Professor Anthony Heath CBE FBA

Introduction

Britain, like most other highly developed societies, has become increasingly diverse over the last half century, and will become even more so in future.

From around 3 per cent in 1950, the proportion of the British population with a migration background rose to nearly 20 per cent in the 2011 census, and among young people the proportion was considerably higher. The origins of these young people have also become increasingly diverse. Formerly, primarily labour migrants coming from commonwealth countries (along with Jewish refugees before the second world war and a Polish community who had fought alongside the Allies during the second world war), migrants coming to Britain today include refugees from a wide variety of countries as well as large numbers coming from the developed world seeking employment at all levels of the occupational structure.

Increasing diversity has brought both opportunities and challenges. Immigration has brought many workers who have filled labour shortages, such as the migrants from the Caribbean who were actively recruited in the 1950s to fill vacancies in the NHS and in London Transport. It has brought highly skilled workers and senior staff for multinational businesses and higher education. Diversity has also brought innovation and dynamism to the economy, science and the arts – as exemplified by the recent Nobel Prize in literature for Japanese-British Kazuo Ishiguro (joining former prize-winners Trinidadian-British V.S. Naipaul, South African-British Doris Lessing and American-British T. S. Eliot).

But over the years, challenges have been apparent too. Migrants and their descendants (particularly those from non-European origins) have faced a sometimes-hostile reception such as the Notting Hill riots in 1958 when immigrants from the West Indies were attacked by predominantly white youths. (In response a Caribbean Carnival which later developed into the Notting Hill Carnival was established.) Minorities also experienced inequalities of opportunity in British society, as demonstrated powerfully

by a series of field experiments of racial discrimination in the labour and housing markets. Minorities continue to be under-represented in leading positions, for example in Parliament and on the boards of leading companies. But at the same time there have been concerns that minorities themselves have chosen to lead separate lives. The disorders in northern cities such as Bradford, Burnley and Oldham in 2000 were widely seen as having their roots in divided communities. Trevor Phillips, then chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, warned that Britain was in danger of sleepwalking into segregation.

A long series of government reports and legislation has sought over the years to tackle these different challenges, although Britain has never really had an integration policy as such.

Some of the landmarks which are most relevant to our current publication are:

- The 1947 Polish Resettlement Act, which made provisions for the settlement of Polish soldiers who had fought alongside the Allies in the second world war.
- The 1965, 1968 and 1976 Race Relations Acts which progressively outlawed discrimination in different areas of public life.
- The 1967 PEP report Racial Discrimination in England (sponsored by the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants), the first study to demonstrate the presence of racial discrimination in the housing and labour markets using field experiments.
- The 1981 Scarman Report, The Brixton Disorders 10 –12 April 1981, which highlighted problems of racial disadvantage, inner city decline, and heavy-handed policing which were the sources of the disorders.
- The 1985 Swann Report, Education for All (established after the Commons Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration had highlighted widespread concerns about the poor performance of West Indian children in schools). The Report recommended that multicultural understanding should permeate all aspects of a school’s work.

- The 2000 Race Relations (Amendment) Act, which placed a duty on public bodies to promote race equality.
- The 2001 Cattle Report, Community Cohesion (established after the disturbances in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham and other English cities in 2000). The report recommended, inter alia, the development of local cohesion plans for “the promotion of cross cultural contact between different communities at all levels, [to] foster understanding and respect, and break down barriers”.
- The 2010 Equality Act, which introduced an equality duty, building on the previous race equality duty, to foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- The 2016 Casey Review into Opportunity and Integration, which highlighted both continuing inequalities of opportunity and residential segregation.
- The 2017 McGregor-Smith Review: Race in the Workplace, which emphasized the need for action to tackle ethnic minority under-representation at work. The review estimated the potential benefit to the UK economy from full representation of individuals from black and minority groups across the labour market through improved participation and progression at £24 billion a year (1.3 per cent of GDP).

These landmarks suggest that strategies for integration have to some extent changed over time, reflecting in part the evolving challenges arising from migration and diversity. In the 1960s and 1970s a major focus was on overcoming racial discrimination and exclusion in housing and the labour market. Ideas of multiculturalism then came to the fore, interpreted at that time as ensuring understanding and respect for people from different cultures. Issues of social cohesion then came to be emphasized, following the disturbances in northern cities in 2000. One should also mention the Prevent strategy (first introduced by the Labour government in 2006), which has been focussed on the prevention of radicalisation. Radicalisation and extremism are outside the scope of this publication, although equality of opportunity and social integration are surely likely to mitigate risks of radicalisation.

Our aim in this publication is not to produce yet another report but to suggest a range of practical initiatives for addressing some of the challenges which have been identified by previous reports. Our emphasis is on local initiatives. To be sure, there is a need for a national framework, as exemplified by the series of Race Relations Acts to prohibit discrimination in employment and housing, and by the duties placed on public bodies to promote good relations. But the challenges vary between different cities and parts of the country, and the implementation of many policies has to be at a local level.

Our approach, therefore, is in these respects in line with the Casey Review, which emphasized the need to build local communities’ resilience by:

- Providing additional funding for area-based plans and projects that will address the key priorities identified ... including the promotion of English language skills, empowering marginalised women, promoting more social mixing, particularly among young people, and tackling barriers to employment for the most socially isolated groups.
- Developing a set of local indicators of integration and requiring regular collection of the data supporting these indicators.
- Identifying and promoting successful approaches to integration.

In this collection, therefore, we present a range of practical, evidence-based policies which can be implemented at a local level in order to tackle some of the challenges faced by a diverse society, and thus to promote social integration. Each of the authors presents a specific initiative designed to tackle one particular challenge, ranging from the challenges faced by refugees on arrival in Britain to those of long-established communities in overcoming entrenched disadvantage.

Reflecting the varied nature of the challenges, we take a multidimensional view of integration. A variety of different definitions of integration has been proposed by academic and public bodies. The core idea however is that of ‘equal participation in a group or institution’. The Home Office has provided the following working definition, which covers the themes we address: “An individual or group is integrated within a society when they: achieve public outcomes within employment, housing, education, health etc. which are equivalent to those achieved within the wider host communities, and are in active relationship with members of their ethnic or national community, wider host communities and relevant services and functions of the state, in a manner consistent with shared notions of nationhood and citizenship in that society.”



With its emphasis on public outcomes this definition excludes areas such as religious practice and faith which are usually seen in Britain as being matters for individual conscience (and which would be covered by the distinct concept of assimilation).

Social cohesion is a somewhat distinct and narrower concept than social integration. As Ted Cantle explains in his chapter, social cohesion focusses on the nature of the relationships between members of a community and their sense of belonging to the community. It is however included within the Home Office definition cited above under the rubric of ‘active relationships’, and a number of our contributions focus on aspects of social cohesion.

Multiculturalism is another distinct concept, one which has a number of different and controversial definitions. For the Swann Report it represented mutual respect and understanding of other communities’ history, culture and ways of life, and in this sense, is entirely compatible with social integration in the vein of the Home Office definition cited above. Some of our contributions pick up on this theme of mutual respect and understanding, but arguments for and against multiculturalism are not our focus.

As several of our contributions emphasize, it is also important to see integration as a two-way process. It requires both that diverse communities are given the opportunity of participation in public life, rather than being excluded, as well as requiring that communities avail themselves of these opportunities, rather than self-segregating.

Each of our eleven contributors were asked to focus on an initiative which could be implemented at a local level in order to promote social integration. In many of the chapters our contributors report an example of a practical initiative which has already been put into practice and the success of which has been evaluated. We begin however with a proposal from Ted Cantle (iCoCo Foundation) for local integration plans. Such plans were suggested by Louise Casey in her independent review of social integration. Ted Cantle develops the idea of local integration plans, spelling out why such plans are needed and what they should cover.

In line with the multidimensional approach to integration suggested above, he identifies a range of different elements of a local plan, the different components tackling the variety of challenges which local areas face. He emphasizes, however, that the different components are complementary and mutually reinforcing. They are not ‘either/or’ alternatives but must be implemented together.

Many of the individual components which Ted Cantle suggests for local integration plans are taken up in subsequent chapters (although not necessarily exactly in the form he might have had in mind). One element that he emphasizes in his chapter is that particular attention has to be paid to new arrivals. Many will need support to settle and to understand the law of the land, social norms, and acceptable behaviours. Some, he emphasizes, may arrive with painful memories of traumatic experiences. This is a topic on which Jenny Phillimore, Aleksandra Grzymala-Kazłowska and Sin Yi Cheung focus with their case study of the Welcome Project in Handsworth, Birmingham, the

project providing a safe space for newly-arrived refugees together with practical advice on how to secure help with the many challenges of adjusting to a new life in Britain. Neli Demireva also takes up this theme in her chapter, arguing that existing institutions such as community centres can play a welcoming role.

Another key component of a local integration plan identified by Ted Cattle is learning to live together. He emphasizes that living together requires a common language, and that English language schemes need to be offered on a universal and accessible basis. This is a theme which Mike Chick and Iona Hannagan Lewis take up in their chapter describing and assessing a local collaboration between the Welsh Refugee Council and the teacher training department of the University of South Wales. Ted Cattle also emphasizes that people have to want to integrate; it cannot be forced upon them. He argues that there is a need for a positive narrative, championing a diverse and mixed society and the benefits of pluralism. This idea of a positive narrative is taken up in Gabriella Elgenius's chapter where she describes the 'Donate Polish Blood' campaign, developed by the Polish community in Britain to provide a positive story of the Polish contribution to British society.

Other components in the suggested local integration plans are designed to tackle segregation in schools, the workplace, housing, and communities. The issue of tackling segregation in schools is taken up by Yasmeen Akhtar, Meg Henry and Stephanie Longson with their chapter on the Schools Linking Network, which was initiated in Bradford by the local authority. The network paired primary school classes from different areas and developed a structured yearlong programme where the children could work and debate together in terms of mutual respect and equal footing.

In the case of segregation in the workplace, Ted Cattle emphasizes the need for plans involving local businesses, promoting equal opportunities and ensuring that their workforces are representative of the communities and customers they serve. This theme is picked up by Jeremy Crook with his example of the London-based initiative 'Moving On Up', which aims to work with local businesses in order to increase the employment rate of young black men in London, and to bring it up to the rate for young white men.

Ted Cattle recognizes that housing is a particularly difficult topic in that people will resist any sense of compulsion as to where they should live. He suggests that the focus therefore needs to be on positive incentives and ensuring that diverse areas are seen as attractive and creative areas to live, with exciting and interesting social and cultural events. This is exactly the topic taken up by Dominic Abrams and Julie Van de Vyver, who take as their example a community arts festival arising from People United's 'Best of Us' project in Newington, Ramsgate. Ted Cattle continues with this theme under the heading of community, where he emphasizes the need to build opportunities to engage with others. This is the focus of James Lawrence's chapter on the work of the National Citizen Service among young people, providing opportunities for young people from different communities to engage in locally-based civic activities.

In order to develop a local integration plan, local bodies need first to understand the specific challenges faced by their local area – the extent of segregation in schools, housing, workplaces and local neighbourhoods, for example – challenges which will vary hugely across Britain.

This is an issue which Omar Khan and Gemma Catney develop in their chapter which describes Runnymede's 'Race Equality Scorecards', while Laurence Lessard-Phillips and Silvia Galandini describe how partnerships with local universities can assist local communities in researching needs and information.

The initiatives described by our contributors provide valuable examples of what might be effective in tackling social integration in local areas. They suggest that providing a welcoming environment for refugees and migrants should be both feasible and cost effective. Tackling language barriers to integration also appears feasible, although it may require a substantial commitment of new resources if existing initiatives are to be scaled up. Initiatives to promote social mixing and good relations, such as the National Citizen Service, have received promising evaluations and should surely be maintained. The most serious challenge, however, remains on the economic front, where efforts to involve local business have been relatively disappointing. Without economic integration, one fears that attempts to deal with other aspects of integration might be undermined. Given the multidimensional nature of integration, an effective integration strategy cannot afford to ignore the economic realities such as high minority unemployment rates.



In order to develop a local integration plan, local bodies need first to **understand the specific challenges** faced by their local area

“If you could do one thing...” 10 local actions to promote social integration

Ted Cantle CBE, Director, The iCoCo Foundation, UK

A Proposal for Local Integration Plans

1



1 Introduction

There is no integration policy in the UK at present – no vision or objectives, no programme or targets and no monitoring of the state of integration over time.

The Coalition Government produced a document (which civil servants were not allowed to call a strategy) *Creating the Conditions for Integration* which stated that the ‘Government will only act exceptionally’ and saw no reason to introduce any specific initiatives.¹ Clearly, this is something that the Government later regretted, having appointed Louise Casey four years later to conduct a review of integration² following a series of concerns, such as the school ‘Trojan Horse’ affair, a rising level of extremism, and growing anxiety over immigration. However, despite strong recommendations from Casey and an All-Party Parliamentary Group³ to develop integration, the Government is yet to respond.⁴

To be fair to the present Government, there has never been much by way of integration policy and practice. The assumption was that integration would occur naturally over time.

Indeed, there was resistance from those who feared that integration really meant assimilation. However, the lack of support or encouragement for integration was exposed in 2001 by the Independent Review Team’s report⁵ on the disturbances in Northern towns and found that White and Asian communities were living in ‘parallel lives’ with little contact between them – and little by way of mutual understanding, trust, or tolerance. Tensions were never far beneath the surface.

From 2001 onwards, Community Cohesion offered a way forward. It took little from the previous ‘multicultural’ policies, other than suggesting that it was necessary to improve equal opportunities.

What was quite new to UK policy was that community cohesion sought to find ways that communities could get on well with each other, break down barriers and avoid tensions.

This made it a much more proactive concept than ‘integration’ which had never had an agreed definition let alone programme. Community cohesion advocated that people should interact with each other, to build strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds – in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods. It also meant promoting a sense of belonging for all communities, creating an appreciation of difference, whilst investing in commonalities.

Community cohesion programmes were highly localised and did take full account of the local context. However, community cohesion programmes were designed to bring groups together and reduce tension – they were not plans for integration.

The opportunity now exists for the development and implementation of Local Integration Plans, building on the earlier experience of community cohesion, but also reflecting on the new political and social context. This is therefore proposed as the most effective means of



2 Learning from the Community Cohesion Approach

Local Integration Plans (LIPs) can borrow a great deal from the approach taken by community cohesion, but will need to go further in a number of important respects. A brief review of the community cohesion approach will help to determine the direction for the new LIPs.

Some of the most notable and useful features of community cohesion programmes⁶ are:

- For the first time, they began to engage the majority community who were struggling to come to terms with change – programmes were no longer simply focussed on minorities.
- They were devised to promote interaction between a range of groups to dispel prejudices and undermine stereotypes. Intercultural contact could no longer be left to chance and institutional barriers had to be removed.
- Though they began on the basis of improving relations between different ethnic and faith groups, it was soon used to change perceptions of all other areas of difference – for example, intergenerational, disabilities, gender, social class, sexual orientation.
- They were also locally focussed, tackling the differences and tensions that were evident in each particular area and making the interventions relevant to them.
- They did consider how the institutional barriers could be reduced, especially in respect of ensuring equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.

A variety of agencies implemented the community cohesion programme and would be able to assist with LIPs

These included:

- **Specially created voluntary sector bodies**, funded by government or by philanthropists.
- **Local government and other statutory bodies**, such as the police, health service and social housing agencies – but these were not special programmes, they were to be built into their everyday, or ‘mainstream’ services.
- **Schools** – they were a key focus, for both the students and their families.
- **The private sector** – a number of employers established cross-cultural programmes and developed mixed teams for the first time (also helping the equality programme)
- **Faith groups** worked with their members and developed inter-faith initiatives.

It is also useful to consider their approach in more general terms.⁷

Firstly, they tried to change attitudes in a more general way. This included creating a sense of belonging by developing a positive story for all groups and promoting a series of new images of diversity right across the community. Campaigns like ‘One Leicester’ were championed in most cities. These were also presented through the press and media and many attempts were made to rebut negative stories about minorities, even to the extent of using ‘myth-busting’ programmes. And they also continued with positive action to tackle inequalities.

There was some resistance at first – people were understandably apprehensive about getting out of their comfort zones. This was soon overcome with the emphasis on enjoyable and challenging activities, for example by using the performing arts and by bringing people together around a common cause and creating local pride.

Community and faith leaders also sometimes felt that their control was being undermined as attitudes and behaviours were now individualised rather than mediated through them. And this proved to be the case with less financial support being channelled through single identity groups.

The results were very encouraging – surveys demonstrated that attitudes were becoming more positive about diversity and research based evaluations showed that intercultural contact did in fact reduce prejudice and intolerance. In wider policy terms, an intercultural policy narrative began to emerge to support community cohesion and to challenge the previous multicultural approach.

However, the new ‘extremism’ agenda, developing from about 2007 and initially in parallel with community cohesion, gradually became a very dominant and singular policy objective.

The Coalition Government stopped almost all community cohesion programmes, removing what was really quite modest funding and downgraded the policy, for example by taking the ‘duty to promote community cohesion’ in schools out of the Ofsted inspection framework and the focus has shifted to tackling extremist views. These are largely seen to revolve around the Muslim communities, but some initiatives are focussed on the Far Right.

The UK’s Prevent programme has also become almost entirely concentrated on attempting to stop young people becoming radicalised.

3 The need for Local Integration Plans

The evidence suggests that two trends are evident. First, there are some parts of the country where more mixed and diverse areas are being created, with little by way of community tensions. Younger people in these areas seem to regard diversity as a part of normal life, attach some positive benefit to it and increasingly identify with a global community. On the other hand, there are now more segregated communities in many towns and cities.

The Demos Integration Hub⁸ made the following points last year:

- Though white areas have become less white, minority areas have not become less minority. In fact, in 2011, 4.1 million minorities (41 per cent of the minority population) live in wards that are less than 50 per cent white. This compares with about a million minorities (25 per cent of the minority population) living in white minority wards in 2001.
- In 2001, just 119 wards were majority non-white. In 2011, 429 were.
- In 2001, a fifth of minorities lived in the most diverse quintile, where 33 per cent of the population was white. Today, a fifth of minorities live in the most diverse quintile, which is just 21 per cent white.
- What is occurring is that, with a few exceptions, when whites and minorities leave inner-city areas of minority concentration, their place is generally taken by other minorities.
- Overall, minorities are entering white areas, but whites are often avoiding minority areas, producing a growing number of zones in which minorities are relatively isolated from whites. On the other hand, there are now more segregated communities in many towns and cities.

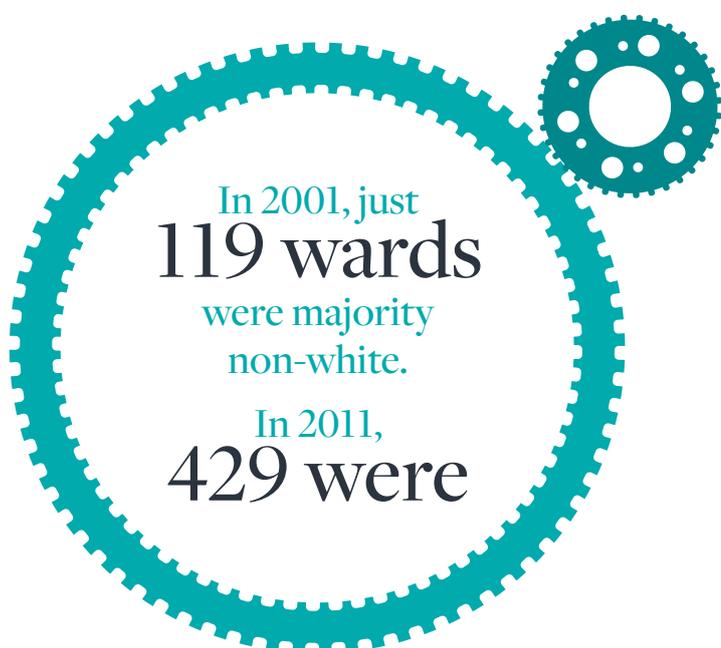
At the same time many White British people are leaving towns and cities and generally being replaced by minorities and by additional minority migrant populations. For example, in London the White population reduced by 600,000 between 2001 and 2011 and were replaced by 1,200,000 people from minorities. This is sometimes described as ‘White Flight’ but this term suggests that they have been leaving because they are White and has some racist connotation. It may well be simply a reflection of socio-economic position and the attraction of more suburban and rural areas. However, the motivation is less important than the fact that some of our towns and cities are becoming significantly more minority-concentrated, whilst mixing in other areas is increasing but to a much more limited extent.

There is more recent evidence that segregation is increasing rather than reducing in respect of residential patterns, at least in terms of the White British population and minorities as a whole. Cantle and Kaufmann (2016) found that towns and cities that had had a disproportionately low White British population had become even lower and those that had had a disproportionately high number had become even less proportionate, often due to out and in movement of the White British group in each case.⁹

School segregation is equally problematic (and interconnected). The Integration Hub points out that whilst attainment has improved ‘meanwhile British schools have become more segregated’.

They go on to point to some significant divisions with and between schools:

“In 2013, over 50 per cent of ethnic minority students were in schools where ethnic minorities were in the majority (although not necessarily their own minority). This compares to over 90 per cent of White British pupils who are in majority White British schools. But there is some variation between cohorts. For instance, 52 per cent of ethnic minority pupils in Year 11 are in schools where ethnic minority pupils are in the majority compared to 60.8 per cent of Year 1 ethnic minority pupils. As recently as 2008 only 49.1 per cent of ethnic majority pupils in Year 13 were in ethnic minority majority schools, by 2013 the share had risen to 54 per cent. In London alone, 90 per cent of ethnic minority Year 1s are in ethnic minority majority schools. This compares to 49 per cent of White British in majority White British schools.”





School segregation patterns have also been assessed more recently in similar terms¹⁰ with school populations becoming more polarised, again reducing the opportunities for children to learn about difference and for their families to mix and develop an understanding of the ‘other’. The current trend towards differentiated school structure and type, including a wider range of faith schools, seems set to accelerate this trend.

It must be emphasised that ‘segregation’ usually refers to ethnic clustering and divisions, but any form of separation in which ‘others’ are physically distant is likely to result in the development of stereotypes and prejudice. In the UK the ‘parallel lives’ first described in relation to ethnicity¹¹ are even more evident in the sectarian divide in parts of Northern Ireland, but would also potentially include enclaves for older people, gated communities for the rich, housing schemes with ‘poor doors’, schools for children with special needs, and separate units for people with disabilities and mental health problems – as well as communities separated more generally by faith or class – means that the possibility of tolerance and understanding is greatly diminished.

It is known, however, that contact with the ‘other’ in one dimension may assist in reducing prejudice in other respects¹² through indirect contact with people from different backgrounds, simply by living and working in close proximity, rather than through more meaningful associations or friendships. Yet, again, little is done to capitalise on such arrangements and there is currently no systematic or policy framework to build bridges between communities. Rather, local government and other funding restrictions have led to a reduction in intercultural programmes.

4 The potential programmes for LIPs

4.1. Learning to Live Together

LIPs will provide a framework for reinvesting in contact between all sections of the population, particularly across faiths and ethnicities, whilst not forgetting that contact can reduce prejudice and stereotyping in respect of all areas of difference. In other words, we all need to learn to live together. These are very low cost (and in many cases no-cost) schemes which simply mean working across communities and providing services on an integrated basis. The support of schools, communities and workplaces will of course need to be enlisted.

However, this is not just about contact. LIPs can also develop real discussion and debate – and even ‘dangerous conversations’ in which simplistic and extremist views are undermined by developing intercultural understanding and building religious literacy – skills that younger people will need in an increasingly globalised world. This means challenging the controlling influence of some of the so-called community leaders. It also means that there are limits to the difference that are afforded respect, i.e. not those differences that conflict with human rights – and the Government can claim some success here in taking action against FGM and forced marriage – which went unchallenged by former multicultural policy.

Unfortunately, the Government seems to want to restrict debate rather than use it to challenge extremists and those who peddle hatred of others – for example the recent controversial¹³ restrictions imposed on universities.

We also need to change from the present emphasis on countering fear and threats. This unfortunately serves to reinforce negative perspectives of diversity, immigration and radicalisation. Many of the present policies and programmes are designed to repair the problems of diversity, not support the benefits, nor enable people to become more comfortable with diversity.

People have to *want* to integrate, it cannot be forced upon them. But there is little by way of a positive story to tell – to either minority, or majority, communities. There is no narrative which champions a diverse and mixed society, nor the benefits of pluralism and the development of a cosmopolitan, or world view.

LIPs will also need to recognise that whilst faith leaders can be part of the solution they are also part of the problem. Little is done to challenge faith leaders to allow free choice, nor to dismantle the present community taboos and pressures – for example in respect of ‘marrying out’, apostasy and the singular education requirement of children with parents of different faiths. Many schools teach only a single doctrine and are allowed to perpetuate the idea that people are ‘born into’ a faith and that there are Christian, Jewish or Muslim children. Whilst it is not for the state to regulate home life (unless abuse is taking place) schools and all places of learning must be expected to comply with a plurality of views about faith and non-faith beliefs, allowing free choice at adulthood. The recent *Living With Difference* Butler-Sloss Report¹⁴ takes a step in this direction but requires a clear and statutory underpinning.

And with this in mind, we need to develop new ways of engaging Muslim communities in particular, and consider both how they will feel included rather than ‘suspect’, which would encourage them to engage others and be matched by a greater willingness by others to engage with them. This is perhaps one of the most urgent tasks which we face. It needs to be carefully planned and developed, but is not as difficult as may be supposed – there are now many good examples of changing perceptions of the ‘other’ – and some are serendipitous, for example it is arguable that Nadiya Hussain’s appearance on ‘Bake Off’ has done more to promote unity than 10 years of Government policy.

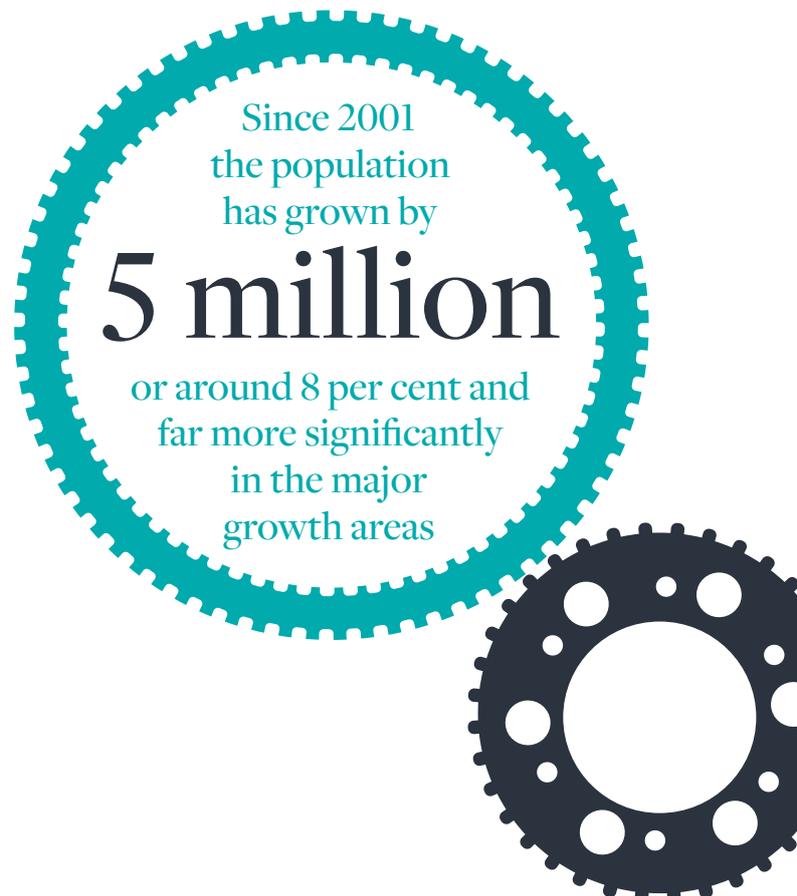
It also goes without saying that contact depends upon a common language. English language schemes – not just classes need to be offered on a universal and accessible basis.*

4.2. Providing for population growth – resources

There has been little recognition that many people are struggling to come to terms with the pace of change in their communities. As a consequence, some suggest that inward migration has to be slowed down, but in any case, the foreign-born and migrant population is already significant, and LIPs will need to respond with much more investment in integration measures.

But there is a second and much more controversial point here too. Since 2001, the population has grown by 5 million or around 8 per cent and far more significantly in the major growth areas. But school places and resources, affordable housing, transport capacity and the health service have not grown by anything like the same amount. Migration is clearly tied to economic growth and tax revenues, but whilst the benefits seem to accrue nationally, they do not appear to have been invested in increased capacity at the local level and there is very evident feeling of competition within communities. This has been dismissed too lightly and should now be addressed.

Governments have largely failed to acknowledge the impact of the growth in population – which is largely due to inward migration – and is faster and higher than any period since the 1950/60s post war period. Government spending is related to current or previous levels in cash or real terms, not to overall population, nor to per capita spending. In this way, most public spending, for example on health or education, can be shown as an increase but does not relate to real demand for services.



* See Ch 4 p33 by Mike Chick and Iona Hannagan Lewis

It is instructive to compare the present situation with the post-war period. At that time, government was building up to 350,000 homes a year, embarking on a massive school building programme, building new hospitals, developing new transport and roads to cater for the increase. Indeed, elections were won or lost on promised public services, with every political party competing over housebuilding targets.

Housing – particularly that which is affordable – is now under most pressure and in contrast to the post-war period, housebuilding is lagging seriously behind the present growth in population, especially in respect of social housing.

In the early post-war period, housebuilding easily matched the growth in population, with around half provided as social housing. In the last 15 years however, the 5 million extra population has not been matched by provision – only 2.2 million new homes, of which only 300,000 were accessible social housing.¹⁵

It is no wonder that there are now around 1.2 million households on the waiting list for social housing; that house purchase has become beyond the reach of many young people and; that rents have risen to unprecedented levels.

For the NHS, the picture is not much better. For hospital beds, the reduction is particularly noticeable. Despite the large increase in population, the number of hospital beds has continued to decline by 51 per cent since 1988 in England.¹⁶ This is justified in part as a result both of medical advances (leading to shorter lengths of stay) and a shift in policy towards treatment and care outside hospital. On the other hand, the number of elderly and very elderly in the population has grown and they will inevitably need more medical interventions and care than the population as a whole. Consequently, there has been an increase in the intensity with which beds are being used (measured by occupancy rates).

Occupancy rates for acute beds have increased from 87.7 per cent in 2010/11 to 89.5 per cent in 2014/15. Given the pressure on hospitals now being experienced, the bed reduction has clearly gone too far and too quickly.

For GPs in the UK the picture is also one of rising pressure. There has been a 24 per cent increase in GP consultations since 1998 and it is estimated that 340 million consultations are undertaken every year, this is up 40 million since 2008 from 2014.¹⁷ Overall, for England, between 2009 and 2015 the number of professionally qualified clinical staff within the NHS has risen by 3.9 per cent. This rise includes an increase in doctors of 8.9 per cent; a rise in the number of nurses of 0.7 per cent; and 6.8 per cent more qualified ambulance staff.¹⁸

Clearly the NHS is under huge pressure. It has had some extra staff and has improved efficiency, but this has not kept pace with the increase in population, the ageing of that population, medical advances and cost pressures.

For school education we see the same picture, with the education budget rising, but spend per pupil down by as much as 8 per cent under present spending proposals, according to the Institute of Fiscal Studies.¹⁹ Class sizes are rising as a consequence, teaching and other support staff – perhaps especially teaching assistants – have been reduced.

Local Government has been particularly badly hit by expenditure reductions and police numbers have also been reduced following budget changes.

The physical infrastructure – roads, rail, airports, water and utility supply networks – are also under much greater pressure, with the National Infrastructure Commission warning that ‘The UK faces gridlock on the roads, railways and in the skies, slower mobile and broadband connections and ever-worsening air quality’.²⁰

Few if any areas of public services have kept pace with rising population. The failure to provide for a rising population is hard to explain, given that the benefit of inward migration has been seen in terms of higher levels of GDP and tax revenues, particularly in respect of migrants from the EU²¹, and many studies have suggested that this ‘growth’ has improved our overall economic position. But, if this is the case, this benefit has accrued nationally and seemingly not applied to basic public services at the local level to meet the needs of the growing population.

Further, the local impact is highly variable: There needs to be greater recognition of, and support for, the local impact of immigration. The non-UK born population of England and Wales grew by 2.9 million between 2001-11. Three quarters of this rise happened in just a quarter of local authorities. Although we show that, nationally, the economic impact of immigration on GDP per head, productivity and prices is very modest, the economic and social impact on particular local authorities is much stronger. This includes pressure on education and health services and on the housing market and potential problems around cohesion, integration and wellbeing.²²

Clearly, this assessment has not been acted upon and those who claim that inward migration – or more correctly, the increase in population – has resulted in more competition for limited resources and public services cannot be so easily dismissed.

Local Integration Plans therefore need to assess the demand for new resources in their own areas and put resource planning at the heart of their proposals.

4.3. Tackling Segregation – Promoting Integration

There are four principal domains where it is possible to make progress: schools, housing, employment and community.

Schools

Firstly, schools should provide young people with the skills and experience to further integration and to live successfully in an ever increasingly diverse and globalised world. Indeed, they will need such skills to compete in the future job market.

This does not mean specific learning programmes (though they would benefit from being part of the school curriculum), but by ensuring it is part of the ethos of the institution and that every opportunity is taken to build critical thinking skills and resilience by introducing key contemporary issues into all areas of the school society. This should include ‘dangerous conversations’ which are often avoided in schools, partly because teachers lack the confidence and training and partly, because of the fear of upsetting some part of the school’s community.

Secondly, we need to take seriously the former Prime Minister’s commitment²³ to: “building a shared community where children of many faiths and backgrounds learn not just with each other, but from each other too.”

This can only be realised if schools develop a mixed intake in which students interact with each other and moreover, develop friendships across boundaries which bring family networks and communities together.

The Prime Minister also said²⁴ “it is right to look again more broadly at how we can move away from segregated schooling in our most divided communities. We have already said that all new faith academies and free schools must allocate half their places without reference to faith. But now we’ll go further to incentivise schools in our most divided areas to provide a shared future for our children.”

As any parent will know, school friendships create contact between families and within wider communities and are therefore very important for bringing a wide range of people together.

However, schools in many parts of the Country have become more segregated than the areas which they serve.²⁵

The Government should grasp the logic of its own position and request, or require, all schools to broaden their intake to encompass 50 per cent of children from other backgrounds, or at least reflect the diversity of their local areas. There will be arguments about what constitute their ‘local area’ particularly with regard to faith schools, but schools need to implement this requirement in the spirit it is intended – as a small number of them are already doing. This does not just apply to faith schools, (although it is very disappointing to see many faith schools manipulating their admissions code to deny access to other backgrounds) all schools need to broaden their intakes, taking account of faith, ethnicity, class and special needs. In the absence of a national commitment, however, each local authority should be working with all schools to develop this approach – a positive appeal may have to be reinforced by the potential exposure of current poor practice – though local authorities still directly controlled a substantial minority of all schools and can develop exemplar projects.



Thirdly, the school curriculum has to be broadened. The teaching of ‘British Values’ is to be welcomed but in its present form is unlikely to have much impact. Most of the concepts are relatively abstract and do not relate to everyday experiences.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education needs to be taken more seriously, provide a clearer framework, but seen as part of the whole curriculum, not as a separate programme.

As suggested by the recent Woolf Institute report²⁶ religious education also needs to be reconsidered. All students need a religious literacy which includes an understanding of all belief (and non-faith) systems.

Religious instruction (in one faith) should be clearly separated from the above and children from that faith should be withdrawn, preferably outside normal school time, so that they can distinguish their faith from an understanding of a world view. This instruction should of course, be subject to inspection to ensure that it does not develop into a superior or hateful view of ‘others’.

Again, in the absence of such a commitment from national government each local area should be seeking to promote such practice.

The workplace

The segregation of workplaces has been under the radar for far too long. It is of course the case that some workforces are richly diverse, and the NHS particularly stands out in this regard (though not of course in every area or level of seniority).

However, there are many businesses that are very monocultural and make little attempt to broaden their recruitment. This is especially true of employers that target new migrants and even more so where labour providers are used to recruit the workforce. Many parts of the food picking, packing and processing industry are deeply segregated, often built around separate language and/or ethnic groups.

However, segregation is also found in some of the businesses that have been established for decades and the labour force has been continually replenished by a particular community or communities.

Apart from the problem of segregation, these firms often experience other problems – the lack of job mobility, supervision by managers who are only qualified by their language ability, the failure to use the available skills and lack of protection against discrimination and abuse.

Many businesses are, however, often a beacon of good practice and business leaders have become champions of diversity and fully recognise the commercial advantages, in terms of creativity, entrepreneurialism and internationalisation.

A business-led task force needs to address this problem with some urgency and ensure more integration in the workforce and in the communities which they inhabit.

In addition, employers need to do far more to promote equal opportunities and positive action to ensure that their workforces represent the communities and customers they serve.* This will also ensure that employees have the opportunity to relate to each other on a day to day basis.

Local authorities therefore need to work with local employers, FE and HE and the training providers to promote more open recruitment and selection.

Housing

Housing is a crucial – but the most difficult – part of the integration story. People have to live in the same vicinity in order to encounter each other in shops, parks, sports centres and on the streets. Even this level of proximity has been found to reduce prejudice. However, this becomes even more beneficial when this ‘observational’ form of meeting becomes more meaningful as friendships form as a result of regular contact over time, especially where facilities are shared, schools are integrated, or people meet as neighbours. Too many areas are segregated, however, and have become more so in recent years.

Social housing has generally been provided on the basis of need, irrespective of differences and is therefore generally more integrated than other forms. However, there are many barriers to entry, both real and imagined – and is both in decline and often not available to new arrivals. Social housing providers also have a good record in tackling hate crimes and discrimination, but there is more that they could do to examine intercultural relations in the areas that they manage and develop a more proactive and positive approach in response to any perceived problems.

Owner occupied housing should contribute more to the integration effort. There are often local voluntary organisations, such as a Neighbourhood Watch or a Residents’ Association, that could help to review and promote positive relations, but currently have been given no incentive or remit. This would therefore need the support of local or national government, in a modest way. Barriers to entry also need to be considered and house builders need to consider whether their designs make them attractive to all – very limited attempts in this direction have been made in the past.²⁷ More particularly, rented and owner-occupied housing should be integrated from the outset and both national and local government need to be more proactive in this area.

* See Ch 9 p77 by Jeremy Crook

The private rented sector has become part of the inner city revolving door for new arrivals, maintaining a separation of migrants over many decades. Dispersal policies need review both between different parts of the Country and within towns and cities. The private rented sector also has the poorest housing conditions and needs to be better regulated.

It is recognised that housing is a difficult area in that people will resist any sense of compulsion. The focus therefore needs to be on incentives and particularly by ensuring that diverse areas are seen as attractive and creative places to live, with exciting and interesting social and cultural events. This can only succeed if supported by the ‘narrative which champions a diverse and mixed society’ referred to earlier.

This also has to be related to wider community design issues and ‘place making’, which encompasses the whole of the public realm, as suggested by Nasser’s recent *Bridging Cultures* and supported by social and cultural signals.²⁸

It is suggested that a series of related discussion groups, involving both professional and community organisations be established to develop ideas and guidance across these areas.

Communities

As suggested in the ‘Living Together’ strand, it is necessary to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to engage with others across divides and develop an intercultural competence. This clearly cannot be left to chance and has to be carefully planned and organised, at least until new networks are established. And the results are very clear – contact between different groups helps to promote tolerance and reduce prejudice.

Much of this work can be done by voluntary agencies in communities and they will need support, again at a relatively modest level. Some sports bodies have been particularly successful in the past but now receive little encouragement and support for this valuable work. Statutory agencies, such as health and housing trusts can also facilitate such interaction, and in some cases, need to avoid developing services along ethnic and faith lines. The business sector, as suggested above, also needs to review its practices in terms of recruitment and workplace organisation to ensure that cross cultural teams become the norm.

There are now many examples of intercultural activities,²⁹ including the twinning of schools with different faith and ethnic intakes*; theatre productions that use drama to explore controversial and extreme views;³⁰ local projects that confront anti-migrant and xenophobic views of young people who have no previous experience of ‘difference’;³¹ and inter-faith encounters and dialogue.³²

LIPs will also have to recognise that deeply segregated areas – both minority and majority – are likely to express the biggest resistance to integration. This is partly to do with fear of the loss of identity and perhaps also to economic pressures. But it is also a reflection of the lack of opportunity to experience diversity. In terms of priorities, the most deeply segregated areas will need the most investment in building opportunities to engage with others.

Particular attention also has to be paid to new arrivals. Many will need support to settle and to integrate. In some cases, they will be coming from very different cultures with limited understanding of norms, accepted and acceptable behaviours – and the law of the land which may be very different to their home countries. A nationally co-ordinated settlement programme is clearly necessary, with resources directed to local agencies to evaluate needs and determine local responses. This could be connected to schemes for learning the English language and a series of planned learning experiences, conducted on both an informal or formal level.

5 Concluding remarks

The introduction of Local Integration Plans will help to build a new language of integration that is positive, and they are likely to succeed in this because they are based around the lived experience of people in local communities.

They must also provide opportunities for people to grow and develop. This must relate to ideas about identity and recognise that it is never fixed and that the absorbing of new and different layers of identity does not mean that people have to forsake their roots or give up their heritage, merely that they acquire new dimensions of it. What matters is that people have both the confidence and competence to discuss and explore their personal and collective boundaries without fear.

However, LIPs also need to tackle the real and perceived sense of grievance which arises from the resource competition associated with the needs of a growing population and declining public services. They must also recognise that the pace of change in some communities does give rise to concerns and that people need time to come to terms with that change and that this therefore needs investment in dialogue and debate, some of which will be difficult and controversial.

* See Ch 4 p33 on the Linking Network

Integration should never be taken for granted, it may take place without any form of intervention, but for many people some form of assistance will be necessary, if only to encourage and incentivise – and speed up – the process. It therefore needs to be supported and planned. This can only be done effectively at the local level, sensitive to the local context and by working with the community.

Local Integration Plans also need to offer a range of interconnected and mutually supporting strategies across the domains indicated above – providing an intercultural experience in one domain may simply be undone by inwardlooking and restrictive experiences in other domains. And, as with any effective process, it will also mean developing clear lines of responsibility and accountability, with regular performance reporting.

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Voluntary Action for Asylum Seeker and Refugee Integration



1 Introduction

Starting a life in Britain for most asylum seekers and refugees is far from plain sailing. Many are desperate to integrate to the British society but lack the know-how or opportunity.

The term integration has been much contested but is “predominantly used in relation to immigrants’ participation in, and their incorporation into, receiving society” across multiple domains.¹

Much emphasis tends to be placed on social integration, the extent to which newcomers and longer-established residents mix, but this is not a static entity and priorities for both newcomers and host populations change over time. For the new arrivals, it seems obvious that access to public services: finding a roof above their heads, schools for children and a GP are the most pressing concerns. Once settled (and when permitted to), evidence suggests that the majority of refugees desire to engage in employment and build social networks.² Non-recognition of foreign qualification, lacking the ability to speak English and the absence of social connections are the key barriers to integration.

Analysis of the Survey of New Refugees in the UK provides the first systematic quantitative evidence that levels of language proficiency and extent of access to new social networks are closely related to refugees’ self-reported health, employment and housing outcomes.³

Importantly, length of residency and language proficiency are crucial in broadening one’s social networks. Contacts with religious and co-national groups bring help with employment and housing. In contrast, the absence of social networks has a detrimental effect on access to work.⁴ Being fluent in English not only enhances employment prospects, evidence shows that it is also associated with better mental and physical health. Asylum seekers and refugees with better language proficiency were found to have broader personal social networks with more frequent connections with friends and relatives⁵ as well as formal networks with civil society and government organisations.⁶ These findings have clear implications for both asylum and integration policy. The unequivocal importance of language ability for accessing employment points to a clear policy priority in improving competency. It is also abundantly clear that policy actions are needed to support asylum seekers and refugees to develop diverse personal social networks.

While some Northern European states funded refugee integration programmes, recognise this relationship and actively intervene to provide support with language and network formation – in terms of mentoring, tuition and volunteering places specifically for refugees, national provision in the UK was scrapped in 2010 austerity cuts. Although refugees arriving under the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme from Syria do get some help to integrate, the vast majority of refugees do not. Civil society has stepped in where the state has stepped out.

This chapter focusses on the role of a self-organised civil society project known as the Welcome Project, based in the superdiverse neighbourhood of Handsworth/Handsworth Wood, Birmingham, in supporting social integration. We begin by describing the characteristics of Handsworth/Handsworth Wood before setting out the reasons why the project was established and the needs it was intended to address. We then outline the services offered by the project before exploring the ways in which their work supports social integration locally. We end the chapter by reflecting on the reasons for the project’s success and the key dimensions of their approach that could be adopted elsewhere.

2 The context

The electoral ward of Lozells and East Handsworth, termed herein Handsworth is densely populated. Some 31,074 residents were recorded in the 2011 Census, of whom 44.9 per cent were foreign born, and 89.2 per cent had an ethnic minority background. Handsworth is an archetypal superdiverse neighbourhood. The people who live there come from almost every country in the world, with residents from 162 different countries of origin recorded in GP registration data between 2007 and 2009.⁷ Local people have varying immigration statuses, religions, educational backgrounds and ages. The area continues to be a dispersal area for asylum seekers many of whom remain after they receive refugee status. The ward is the fifth most deprived in Birmingham with a lengthy history of immigration and deprivation despite being the target of numerous regeneration initiatives which have sought to address both social and economic deprivation. It also has a history of civil unrest with so-called race riots occurring in 1985 and 2005. The neighbourhood has a history too, of community led action.

Photo credits: Joel Blackledge



Somewhere
between
15 and 30
individuals visit the project
each Friday, with some
attending for over
a decade



Despite a reputation as an area experiencing high levels of ethnic tensions, there is evidence that in recent years the neighbourhood's superdiversity has attracted individuals from diverse ethnic, religious and country of origin backgrounds who see Handsworth as a place where they can be anonymous, where there is a lower risk of experiencing racism than other parts of Birmingham and where they will be accepted regardless of their status, country of origin or religion.⁸

The authors came across the Welcome Project when undertaking research for the UPWEB project⁹ which looks at the ways in which individuals and organisations use multiple resources to address the health concerns of individuals living in superdiverse neighbourhoods. Following an interview with the Welcome Project lead it was evident that they were providing highly individualised support to individuals with complex needs. To examine further the ways in which they worked we undertook a mini-ethnography in the project over a period of several weeks. It was during our observations there that we realised how much of the work aimed at supporting individuals' overall wellbeing, that is providing support with addressing housing and mental health problems, was also promoting social integration.



3 Starting up

The project was started some sixteen years ago by Handsworth Inter-Church Council, a network formed by several churches from different Christian traditions working together in Handsworth/Handsworth Wood.

A big strength of the project is that it is supported by the different churches in the group, both practically, financially and through volunteers. The Welcome drop-in is hosted by the Elmwood United Reformed Church, who are part of the Inter-Church Council and where a drop-in and a lunch club are run on Fridays between 12 and 2.30pm. Although the Welcome Project is aimed at asylum seekers and refugees, other people coming to seek help will be offered lunch, a one-off food bag and signposting to other charities who can help them. The project is intended to provide a place of welcome and friendship, practical help and assistance (e.g. by providing food bags and second-hand clothing). Local churches identified high levels of poverty and isolation in the forced migrant population dispersed by the Home Office as asylum seekers to Handsworth on a no-choice basis. Many individuals were unsuccessful in their claims for asylum and became destitute until they could raise the resources or identify further evidence for an appeal. Some asylum seekers eventually gained refugee status but were, as is the case for all new refugees, evicted from their Home Officer funded accommodation.

The Welcome Project offers care to all those who come, noting high levels of anxiety and trauma in some individuals many who have lost their families, experienced persecution, conflict or trafficking and struggle to find their way around a new culture with novel institutional systems. Somewhere between 15 and 30 individuals visit the project each Friday, with some attending for over a decade, while others are new faces. The project does not keep records about individuals who attend, partly because they fear that asking for personal information will deter some people from coming. They estimate that since opening they have supported around 1500 refugees and asylum seekers. Most people attend having heard about the project through word of mouth. For those who are experiencing mental health issues the Welcome Project is perhaps the only time they leave their homes all week. For example, Abshir, who originally came to the project as an asylum seeker and has now

received his leave to remain after several years of waiting, rarely left his house after a random attack in the street which left him extremely anxious and frightened. The project spent months working with him to build his confidence. They offered him help with housing and other settlement matters.

Although he continues to be fearful, he now attends the project regularly and enjoys helping out as much as possible.

The project relies heavily on local volunteers with around five or six supporting the lunch club each week. Many have helped there for years, sometimes attending to overcome their own feelings of isolation or because they were supported by the project themselves at an earlier point in their lives. The project specifically focusses upon providing social support for all those who attend. For many this means offering some company, whether they are volunteers or beneficiaries, to overcome isolation and offering the place of belonging and anchoring.¹⁰ For asylum seekers, the project provides a distraction from waiting for a decision.

They also assist asylum seekers and refugees to help to address trauma resulting from persecution, separation from families, having been trafficked and racist attacks.

4 Services offered

The project primarily offers a safe space in which people can meet and get to know each other across immigration status, ethnic and religious cleavages.

The space is described as “safe” in that it is said to be completely non-judgemental – an individual does not need to disclose anything about their immigration status or their problems, and they will receive no criticism (or denial of services) if they declare, for example, that they are undocumented. Each Friday the project volunteers cook a meal, and volunteers and beneficiaries sit down together and talk. They share good news and bad. Through conversations the volunteers learn about the needs of beneficiaries and offer individualised support if they feel they can help. Such support may include reading and explaining letters from utility companies or hospitals, explaining how to pay bills, and making telephone calls to try to address problems with housing or health or other issues.

The project is embedded in the local neighbourhood so volunteers have excellent knowledge about the local ecology of services and frequently signpost individuals to other initiatives to help with specific problems. They also invite services to come and meet beneficiaries. For instance, Spring into Life, a mental health provider, came and assessed beneficiaries and offered cognitive therapy to those who needed it.

They organise talks about healthy eating, plus some massage and other therapies from time to time. The project runs some events in the grounds of the local leisure centre in the summer and uses these to introduce beneficiaries to the facilities available there. They work with other voluntary sector and faith organisations, for example the local mosque provides monthly food to those in need. While most activities are associated with the lunch club, others are organised according to need and the availability of resources. Some volunteers have rented an allotment for some beneficiaries and gave them the responsibility to plan and run it. The club has provided the funds for wellington boots and different tools. Four individuals from three different countries work together and enjoy fresh air, and access to nature. The project leader described to us how access to the allotments has helped to re-build self-esteem and offered opportunities for reciprocity which has a key role in the building of social networks¹¹:

“ I think it’s mentally good for them as well, isn’t it, the ability to grow something from a little seed and then eat it? We had food given to us. There’s one guy, he’s given us food that he’s grown, so I think they’d like to give back to us what they’ve grown. (...) It’s their thing; we’re not running it. It’s their baby, so it’s given them the power and the dignity to run their own thing.”

Welcome Project lead

Aware that accessing affordable English lessons is problematic for asylum seekers and refugees, Welcome have organised for their volunteers to run some classes on a Monday.

These will provide a further outlet for those who are isolated and also help them develop the language skills needed to build social networks.



5 Building support networks

The project focusses on providing a safe space where people can belong and make friends with other individuals who come for support and to volunteer.

The hope is that beneficiaries will befriend and support each other. Attempts at community building are constructed around celebration and empathy:

“ We celebrate anything we can, whether that’s baby showers, birthdays – the Queen’s birthday we’ve had parties – Olympics, the World Cup we try and celebrate anything. At the same time, when people have sad things happen, we put time into that., e.g. one Syrian families lost relatives in Syria who had been blown up so the Syrian woman was very distraught: I took her round all the volunteers and we all hugged her and said our sorrows and then, when more people came (...) we had a minute’s silence to just remember them, and everyone was silent. Then, afterwards, I said, “Please do feel free to go and show your care to Bana”, and it was just amazing to see women from different countries just going and hugging her – people who might not have spoken to her that much just showing their love and support. I think that’s one thing we do. We laugh when people are laughing, we cry when people are crying. We want this place to be a safe place where people feel they can come and feel supported.”

Welcome Project lead

Strong relationships sometimes form between volunteers and beneficiaries – these are spontaneous and frequently cross age and ethnic cleavages. We learned of instances when volunteers met beneficiaries outside of the project driving them to appointments and providing family support. Whilst it may appear that such relationships are rather one-sided in terms of support offered, the volunteers themselves gained a great deal from their interactions. For example, one elderly white British volunteer keeps coming to the club overcoming her initial reluctant attitude towards refugees and talks to participants and teaches them English.



The affective nature of support offered whilst not prescriptive, indeed largely spontaneous, is an important feature of interactions at the Welcome Project. Isolated individuals, both beneficiaries and volunteers, enjoy the intimacy, care, companionship and social interaction that is missing in their lives, and is offered through the social bonds built.

Thus, not only do they know each other sufficiently well to provide highly individualised support but they also develop enduring relationships which defy age, country of origin and immigration status. The words of the project leader highlight the importance of mixing different people together in order to support integration:

“ Actually, integration really works if they are integrated and connected with other women...We think, if we get one together it’s going to be of a similar – actually, a mix really helps and the fact that she knows people here have all gone through difficulties, that helps as well. Also, a lot of them want to get out of the mindset of ‘I am an asylum seeker,’ or, ‘I am desperate.’ They want to hang out with people who have normal lives.”

6 Success factors

We selected the Welcome Project for both an UPWEB mini-ethnography and then as a chapter for this British Academy report because their approach – although small-scale – is simple, effective and cheap and could potentially be replicated anywhere, for any community and even scaled up if more resources were available.

There are certain ingredients, though, that are necessary to reproduce such a venture:

- **Firstly**, a community space is needed. The room used is attached to the church but it is reached via a side street so it is not necessary to enter the church. This is important to some beneficiaries who as non-Christians are nervous about entering a building associated with an unfamiliar religion. The space also has cooking and eating facilities meaning people can work together to produce and then share something.
- **Secondly** volunteers do not solely serve beneficiaries but meals are mainly served by volunteers and then they and beneficiaries eat together. Through sharing meals and celebrating together they develop relationships that extend beyond the project.
- **Thirdly** there is a leader who recruits the volunteers and encourages them to be nonjudgemental. In the event of conflict the leader intervenes sitting down to openly discuss and resolve any concerns. This approach helps to address any culturally driven and other misunderstandings.
- **Fourthly** the project actively encourages mixing across ages and countries of origin so people can build new networks that expand beyond their own communities.
- **Fifthly** the project has no “agenda” beyond providing a safe space and some lunch. All support emerges from the interaction between volunteers and beneficiaries and the desire to provide help to someone with whom they engage in friendly relations and who may eventually become a friend.

Finally, the project has been running for many years and is well known within the neighbourhood. The knowledge of the local ecology of services possessed by the project leader and some of the volunteers is critical in helping to connect beneficiaries to the kinds of support that they need which is beyond the scope of the help that can be offered on a one to one basis.

In combining personal relationships with local knowledge, the project is able to help individuals with complex problems and begin to address those difficulties in ways that are beyond the remit of state agencies many of which lack the time, expertise and resources to address complex needs in a superdiverse population. The Welcome Project to some extent fills the gap left by the absence of an integration programme for asylum seekers and refugees in the UK.

While the Welcome Project is aimed at asylum seekers and refugees it is clear that their approach has potential to meet the needs of other communities and build connections that both facilitate social integration and address complex needs. The Project would like to do more to help local communities perhaps running lunch clubs on other days aimed at different beneficiaries. The running costs are around £100 per week which covers the salary of a part-time worker and rental for the space used. From September 2017 they have joined the Fareshare Food network¹² which, for £21 a week, provides a weekly supply of fresh food and store cupboard staples. Despite the very low cost of running the existing club and dependence on donations of food and labour, they lack the resource to expand their activities. Nonetheless they are confident that their model has wider applications.

The final word in this chapter goes to the Welcome Project lead:

“You could start similar things to this that have no real agenda, no religious agenda, no funding agenda. I know you need the right people, but I just think this sort of place would benefit the man who’s at home, like, the young black man who’s got mental health problems who doesn’t know how to cope, or the pensioner who’s on their own, is lonely. We can have people in different countries come and be unity. I think we could have people who are British who could come and just feel safe. I think if something like this was made, because it doesn’t cost much and, you know, if you’ve got the right people and use volunteers – I would start up many of these. Clone them (laughs).”

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Note all names used are pseudonyms

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The Welcome Project are featured in this short film about welfare service provision in Birmingham: <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/upweb/news/2017/10/new-film-outlines-some-of-thefindings-from-the-UPWEB-project-Birmingham-case-study.aspx>



“If you could do one thing...” 10 local actions to promote social integration

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Promoting Contact Through Local Community Centres

3



1 Introduction

The recent report by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration 'Integration not Demonisation' (2017) places considerable importance upon welcome centres and recommends that:

“ local authorities in areas whose population normally includes significant numbers of new immigrants should establish welcome centres for new arrivals These centres should offer immigrants joined-up access to public services, language classes and cultural orientation initiatives.”

Furthermore, “the Home Office should consider whether an adequate number of welcome centres are available to new arrivals seeking to live and work in a particular area of the country when allocating region-specific visas”.¹ One cannot but feel that in this undoubtedly important call to action, the report is essentially suggesting for the local community centre to be resurrected.

This essay argues that for welcome centres to be viewed as innovative actors on the social integration scene, a very long and glorious history of community organisation in Britain would have to be discounted. The present-day implications of community centres as sites for social integration and facilitators of greater contact between people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds or nationalities can only be understood within a historical perspective that will exemplify just how close the two concepts are aligned. Three main organisations can be credited for the establishment and proliferation of community centres in Britain – The National Council of Social Service (which changed to the National Council of Voluntary Organisations in the 1980s), the Federation of Residential Settlements and the Educational Settlements Association.

2 A short history of community organisation in Britain

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) was set up with the bequest of Edward Vivian Birchall, a soldier in the First World War, who left £1000 in cash to establish an organisation that would promote voluntary services.

His generosity has had profound and lasting impact. As soon as it opened doors in 1919, the National Council of Social Services (as it was then known) busied itself with the legitimisation of the more than 18,000 charity organisations formed during the years of the First World War. Nowadays, the Council still represents over 12,500 member organisations, about a third of the voluntary sector workforce in England, and its charter remains largely unchanged. Connecting organisations with partners and resources, representing volunteering and the sector's interests to the government, and supporting voluntary organisations with knowledge and expertise are still at the heart of this enterprise.²



The Settlement Movement which started in the 1880s was also instrumental in the establishment of the community centre as we know it today.³ The movement put an emphasis upon the provision of social services to the urban poor, bringing social justice and equality to the neighbourhood locality. Among the pioneers of the Settlement Movement were Samuel Barnett, Canon of Westminster and his wife Dame Henrietta Barnett. On his memorial he is described as a firm believer “that we are all members one of another”. He “laboured unceasingly to unite men in the service of God and by his counsel and example inspired many to seek for themselves and for the nation the things that are eternal”. Thus, the social movement of which the Barnetts were founding members was essentially a movement against the barriers of class and hierarchical distinctions. The Federation of Residential Settlements, as it was known upon its creation in the 1920s, adopted in its core structure this vision of bringing together men and women to work for social betterment and the common good. The organisation represents the network of University Settlements founded from 1884 and approximately 60 large urban community centres.

Although small in terms of associated centres, the movement has been hugely influential. Toynbee Hall, created in 1884, provided a residential place for future leaders who would live and work as volunteers in the London’s East End, an area blighted by poverty, hunger and disadvantage at the end of 19th Century. Socio-political pioneers such as Clement Attlee and William Beveridge were both residents of Toynbee Hall. A major feature of the settlement movement has been the research in poverty and its connection to University academics. For example, Oxford House, opening doors in 1884, offered a period of volunteering for students and graduates from Keble College, Oxford who undertook a period of residential volunteering. The House, which has strong claim to be the first settlement house, operated as a mini Oxford College in Bethnal Green, and its residents provided support with the establishment of youth clubs, acted as lawyers for poor men and women, provided labour market guidance and adult education classes.

Unlike the Federation of Residential Settlements, the establishments that comprised the Educational Settlements Association, also founded in 1920, were primarily non-residential – 36 settlements of which only seven were residential colleges. Arnold S. Rowntree, President of the Association described it in January 1938 as a movement with “education in community” as the main driving force – a principle in which many of the movement’s patrons “have found a deep and abiding interest and concern”. The Educational Settlements Association was part of broader set of initiatives implemented by the Workers Educational Association and the Young Men’s Christian Association. The community centre was the means through which the principle of education for everybody was realised.⁴

The aforementioned three initiatives advanced important agendas by social pioneers and have been hugely important in the efforts to bring structural change and alleviate poverty. A number of local, grass-roots organisations also have their stories weaved into the creation of the community centre. The Social Service clubs which were formed around the miners’ strikes of 1926/27 helped the poor and provided a space for critical gatherings. Village halls in rural areas brought sociability to farmlands with dwellings frequently several miles apart, and represented residents to local and national governments. The growth of Women’s Institutes from 1915 assisted the organisation of the women’s contribution in the war effort as well as the promotion of various crafts.

3 The current state of service provision in community centres

All of these organisations have helped to construct and to contribute to the mission of the modern-day community centre. Community centres essentially provide a wide range of services aimed at the needs of the local community and the most disadvantaged among the local residents.

These activities may range from educational learning, employment advice, computer skills. Ultimately, however, community centres are about bringing together local residents which can be done in various ways – e.g. through educational and structured learning but also engagements with crafts, food and cultural celebrations, dance music and embracing of the arts.*

We can see how these educational aspects were particularly important for the incorporation of migrants and their families. By providing learning opportunities closer to a learner’s home, with staff known to the residents and knowledge of the local community, and offering services such as day care, community centres have been important channels for the dissemination of information and support to migrants and their families who can frequently lack knowledge of the ways in which the mainstream receiving society operates.**

Centres such as the Hackney Migrant Centre, which opened doors in April 2008, provide informal support to destitute individuals of all nationalities and denominations (with a particular focus on refugees) in need of access to healthcare services, legal advice, and practical support such as the clarification of rules of eligibility and residence.

* See Ch 7 p59 by Julie Van de Vyver and Dominic Abrams

** See Ch 4 p53 by Mike Chick and Iona Hannagan Lewis



The last few years have seen a dramatic re-working of the **community centre landscape** following serious spending cuts.

In subsequent generations, community centres have helped support ideas of multiculturalism by providing a space in which members can discuss their roots, engage in cultural practices, and at the same time receive support for the continuing re-incorporation into the mainstream. It is these aspects of community centres that have received criticism, much like the doctrine of multiculturalism. Community hubs which provide a space for cultural practices have been described as ‘enclaves’ by mainstream papers such as the Daily Mail, a potential breeding ground for reactionary ideas, and sentiments which help foster exclusion and division.⁵ It is not that the fault is placed with community centres per se. It is that multiculturalism policies have been under attack and British minority communities have been accused of failing to participate in wider society. Community centres seem to have been caught in the middle, and not only in the broader fight for social justice.

The last few years have seen a dramatic re-working of the community centre landscape following serious spending cuts. Faced with financial constraints, most community centres have had to operate on an ad-hoc basis. Nicola Davey, Chair of Trustees at the Greenstead Community Centre, described a situation in which the centre’s microwave broke a couple of years ago – a quick decision had to be made and just like that the whole kitchen in the centre was removed. In the long run, replacing expensive electric appliances seemed less of a viable strategy with money short, even though the impoverished local community, one of the poorest postcodes in Britain, would have benefited from such facilities.

In particular, the cuts to community legal centres, which cater at the sharper end of socio-economic vulnerability, seem short-sighted as unresolved legal problems can easily be redistributed to other areas of government spending such as child services or health care protection.⁶ When community centres are cut, there is usually an implicit or explicit assumption that they have been little used; in the case of migrant community centres, it is the opportunity for bonding that they offer that is frowned upon, and acts as a further mark against the local institution.

4 Positive inter-ethnic contact and the need of community mediators

In the research literature on the topic, bonding social capital refers to relationships between similar persons (for example, those alike with respect to socio-demographic and socioeconomic characteristics), while bridging social capital refers to relationships between dissimilar persons across social cleavages.

In the context of ethnic relations, bonding social capital can be interpreted as the ties between co-ethnic people – individuals within the same ethnic group – whereas bridging ties are inter-ethnic – individuals from different ethnic groups.

Bridging social capital allows an ethnic minority individual to enter wider social groups, and adapt structurally, while bonding social capital may reinforce the perpetuation of social isolation but also provides important social and psychological support for the more disadvantaged group members, including start-up financing and reliable labour for local entrepreneurs in dense ethnic environments. Bridging social capital is important in job search and advancement, especially for jobs where recruitment is done by word of mouth. Ethnic minority groups who lack bridging capital are often deemed isolated and without the social ties that will connect them to the employers in the mainstream labour market. A large volume of recent research underlines the importance of inter-ethnic contact in Britain: contact between people of different ethnic groups helps to reduce prejudice and barriers between groups. Contact can help

reduce prejudice and resolve conflict, and alongside those important outcomes of positive intergroup contact, we should also consider preventing violent conflict especially given the human and economic cost of conflict.⁷ In addition, integration has a multi-dimensionality and contact is linked with a variety of other integration outcomes. It is important certainly to distinguish between positive and negative contact.⁸ There is intriguing evidence to show that in more diverse communities the frequency of positive inter-group contact increases, but negative inter-group contact also increases.⁹ While the former is positively associated with inter-group attitudes the latter is negatively associated. Diversity may indeed exert countervailing positive and negative indirect-effects on attitudes towards immigrants via processes of inter-group contact; however, it is important to note that while the net-effect of diversity on attitudes via contact is positive, attitudes amongst those experiencing more frequent negative contact become progressively worse. Increasing diversity therefore leads to a polarisation in attitudes towards immigration as a result of, and not due to a lack of, inter-group contact. This research highlights the importance of the existence of mediators at the community level, and community centres can indeed play this important role as they provide a non-confrontational environment for people of a variety of backgrounds and variety of interests.

Ultimately, positive contact is a foundational block of modern societies. For example, research involving multilevel path analyses demonstrate some negative direct effects of diversity for the majority group, but also confirmed predictions that diversity was associated indirectly with increased trust via positive contact and lower threat.¹⁰ It is important to note that these indirect effects had positive implications for total effects of diversity, cancelling out most negative direct effects. This work highlights the importance of studying intergroup contact. Bridging is an essential step for the integration of minority members, and the question of whether neighbourhood diversity is good, usually posited with the white majority in mind, is redundant – diversity needs to be encouraged if we are to create a well-functioning and cohesive society.¹¹

Yet, I will further argue that we should modify some of our inherent preconceptions about the role of bridging and bonding social capital in the social and civic integration of

the minority individual and allow for some grey areas in the overwhelmingly black and white characterisation of bonding that can happen in community centres. A lot of policy reports fail to acknowledge the pervasive force of generational change and the strong identification with Britain in the second generation. Recent analysis challenges stereotypical claims about the involvement of Muslim minorities and suggests that policy reports have paid little attention to perceived or actual identity patterns across the range of minority groups within societies. The research in question systematically investigates British identity across all the UK's ethno-religious groups, taking account of a whole variety of characteristics that can possibly influence identity such as ethnic embeddedness, religiosity and qualifications and political beliefs. Importantly, minorities' attachment to the larger society are compared to that of members of the majority group. The key conclusion is that minorities express strong British identities – in fact stronger than the white majority, and identification is further strengthened in the second generation. What is more, political identification is positively associated with a stronger British identity.¹² My work with Anthony Heath suggests that informal bonding reassuringly declines in the second generation across ethnic groups and with the acquisition of advanced educational credentials.¹³ Moreover, neither bonding nor bridging exercise on the employment prospects of the individual any of the proverbial negative impact attributed to them.¹⁴ Research has tended to compartmentalize cohesion, to place it within the realm of generalised trust, and to overlook other important outcomes and forms of associations that can happen at community centres. Both organisational bridging and bonding have substantial influence on the propensity of the minority individual to engage in civic action, voting and volunteering, and as a result, a possible policy recommendation can be drawn – to encourage organisational and community-wide involvement, rather than criticize intra-ethnic allegiances. Bridging and bonding can have complimentary not necessarily contradictory effects.



In his seminal work, *Bowling Alone*, the American political scientist Robert Putnam draws an important distinction between informal social connections and organisational involvement: “in Yiddish, men and women who invest lots of time in formal organisations are often termed *machers* – that is people who make things happen in the community. By contrast, those who spend many hours in informal conversations and communion are termed *schmoozers*. This distinction mirrors an important reality in American social life. *Machers* follow current events, attend church and club meetings, volunteer, give to charity, work on community projects...”¹⁵ Community centres facilitate our propensity to be a ‘*macher*’ and that is not necessarily the form of social engagement we should try to dissuade minorities from. There should be little plurality about the importance of minority participation and engagement. The ‘damned if you do, damned if you don’t’ narratives that gravitate around minorities’ associational involvement can undercut civiness, which is a foundational principle of a democratic society such as Britain.

5 Concluding remarks

Most local community centres are already struggling. They do not need rebranding into welcome centres – they need financial support that will allow them to continue providing their services.

While this essay does not provide a cost/benefit analysis of community centres and charitable institutions, it argues that there is enormous benefit in the maintenance of established institutions. It goes without saying that it costs less to use what is already there, rather than to build a new resource from scratch. Community centres are still run with the support of local volunteers, with an understanding of the locality, and their enormous energy deserves recognition. The time needed to comprehend the inner workings of community life and to build trust with local residents is invaluable. In its embeddedness within the locality, the community centre has no strong contender. Such a valuable resource ought not to be scaled down and cut. This is not just to the benefit of lofty ideals – one can evoke multiculturalism, or acceptance here. This is to the benefit of all of us, quietly and unassumingly.

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“If you could do one thing...” 10 local actions to promote social integration

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Higher Education and Voluntary Sector Collaboration for ESOL Provision

4



1 Introduction

This case study provides insights into the ways in which educational organisations are uniquely placed to enact a crucial role in the cultural and linguistic integration of forced migrants in the United Kingdom.

The Welsh Assembly Government's (2008) *Refugee Inclusion Strategy* describes successful integration as "...the removal of barriers which prevent refugees from becoming fully active members of society" and where there is "...the establishment of mutual and responsible relationships between refugees and their communities, civil society and government."¹ In describing a cooperative project between a human rights charity and a university teacher training department, we wish to draw attention to the significant educational impact that can result from collaborative projects and highlight the role they can play in removing barriers to integration. It is hoped that this story will serve as a trigger to encourage policy makers and fellow practitioners to explore the possibilities that grassroots partnerships can present.

The essay draws attention to the transformative educational process experienced by undergraduate language teachers and describes the valuable social and linguistic lifelines that the collaboration provides to asylum seekers and refugees who may otherwise be unable to access such learning opportunities. In examining the implications of such a collaboration, it is argued that universities are in an exceptional position to support the social and linguistic needs of the many people seeking sanctuary in the UK, and that joint programmes present numerous benefits for all involved.

2 Background

The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 ushered in a new policy of asylum seeker dispersal across the UK.

The intention was to ease the pressure of supporting asylum seekers on London and the South East. Following this legislation, asylum seekers are now routed on a no-choice basis to a dispersal area away from overburdened London, and settled in local authorities across the UK. Thus, over the last decade or so, Welsh cities such as Swansea, Newport, Wrexham and Cardiff have seen a major increase in the numbers of forced migrants, a situation that has been compounded in recent years as a result of wars in the Middle East and Africa.

Both the UK and Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) view the social integration of migrants as central tenets of their strategy towards migration and it is widely acknowledged that shared language is fundamental to integrated societies.² However, government funding of classes of English to Speakers of Other Language (ESOL), usually provided through colleges of further education, has not increased in line with inward net migration, meaning that there are often long waiting lists to join classes or that local ESOL provision is insufficient to cope with the demand. For example, in Cardiff, refugees and asylum seekers can face up to twelve months' wait before being able to attend government-funded classes. Indeed, a recent National Assembly for Wales report by the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee acknowledged this and called for action to be taken to tackle the serious shortfall in provision.³ The Welsh Government's recognition of the crisis in ESOL, and its attempt to understand the linguistic challenge faced by migrants is welcome.⁴

However, at present, there are still large numbers of people across Wales, and the UK, facing long delays before they can access college-based, accredited ESOL classes.



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and Asylum Act 1999
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3 Partnership

In 2014, with this situation in mind, the University of South Wales (USW) and the Welsh Refugee Council (WRC) decided to work together to deliver an innovative solution for the migrants in Cardiff who had been placed on the lengthy waiting list for formal ESOL instruction.

Initiating the collaboration made sense as the University ESOL department had a large number of trainee ESOL teachers, as well as experienced tutors, while the Refugee Council had classroom space and close contact with the local refugee community. The partnership has brought together undergraduate English language teacher trainees, apprehensive about undertaking their first ever live teaching experience, with international migrants, nervous about being in a new country yet eager to learn how to communicate in English. The trainee teachers are university students who have been studying English language instruction as part of their undergraduate BA degree. In their final year, each student is required to deliver at least six ESOL classes and these sessions now form part of the English language provision at the WRC.

The venture began with the launch of one weekly class of English which anyone unable to access formal ESOL classes was eligible to attend. The class was delivered at the Refugee Council headquarters, in a previously unused classroom. Fifteen people turned up for that first ESOL lesson. The language learners, ready to improve their communication skills, were desperately keen for more than simply two hours of class per week. Indeed, the experience alerted us to the huge demand that existed, and it was clear that many more language classes were required than even the Refugee Council had anticipated. That is to say, we discovered very quickly that a comprehensive suite of language provision was needed and that factors such as the learners’ level of competency, literacy, aims and gender would need to be considered if we wished to deliver an effective ESOL programme.

Despite these challenges, in the three years since the launch of that first class, the scope and quantity of provision has increased substantially. The formerly empty room at the Welsh Refugee Council headquarters is now the location for eight English language classes with nearly a hundred learners attending lessons each week. Through working together, the teacher educators have been able to advise on a syllabus, guide the organisation of classes, help recruit suitable volunteers, promote access to higher education and so on. Moreover, the success of the venture has led to the charity now taking a role in delivering Welsh Assembly Government funded ESOL classes. In sum, a substantial programme of ESOL provision, including classes for complete beginners, ESOL for women and exam preparation classes, have now been delivered by qualified, local volunteers, alongside University of South Wales TESOL students and teacher educators.

4 The collaboration and migrant support

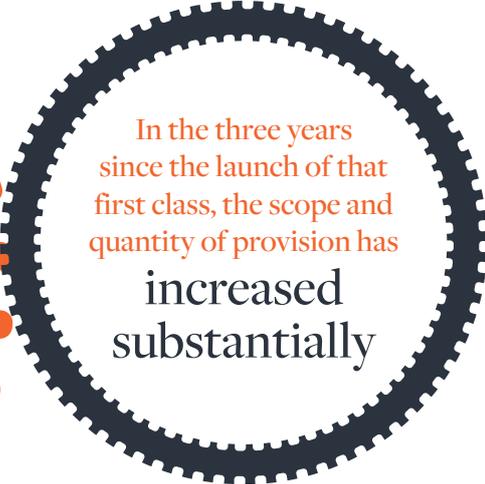
Due to the drop-in nature of the classes, information on the residence category of learners has not been systematically collected during the partnership.

However, anecdotal evidence would suggest that the majority of learners are asylum seekers, and are housed in the local asylum seeker initial accommodation, within close proximity to the refugee council. Others appear to have some degree of leave to remain; whether refugee status (a limited, five-year leave to remain) or otherwise. What nearly all of the language learners have in common is that they are on the waiting list for college ESOL classes.

Developing the ability to communicate in English is, of course, fundamental to being able to live independently. Language competency is key to accessing work or education opportunities and thus to reaching one’s potential. For the majority of second language learners, access to regular language classes plays an important part in fostering such competency. Interview data collected from people who regularly attend the ESOL language classes lend support to this assertion.



The trainee teachers are **university students** who have been studying English language instruction as part of their undergraduate BA degree



In the three years since the launch of that first class, the scope and quantity of provision has **increased substantially**

The sentiment expressed by the following respondent sums up both the linguistic and practical advantages of being able to access ESOL provision:

“The English classes are very important for us. Now, going to the doctor, going shopping, going out...is easy for us. Two months ago, we had zero English, now OK. Without the classes we (would) have big problems.” Ferass, Syria.

In point of fact, nearly all the learners who have attended the free classes express deep gratitude and constantly praise the local volunteers and student teachers. At the end of just about every class, the language learners make clear their motivation and gratitude:

“Thank you so much – The exam class helped me to understand the techniques for the test and will assist me in applying for university.” Language learner NM.

“The class has helped me make contact with new people and to understand English – thank you so much.”

Language learner FB

“Teacher, thanks to you and the class since I arrived, I can now speak in English.” Language learner HA.

Moreover, the language classes provide a social, as well as linguistic lifeline. As one WRC employee noted:

“For some, class is not only a practical means of learning English, but also the only event they have in their weekly calendars. English classes can become a real lifeline through which clients are able to feel part of a community that cares.” WRC Caseworker.

As language teaching professionals, we can empathise with the depth of feeling conveyed by these responses. Yet it remains the case that huge numbers of forced migrants are still denied access to such classes as local ESOL providers struggle to meet demand.

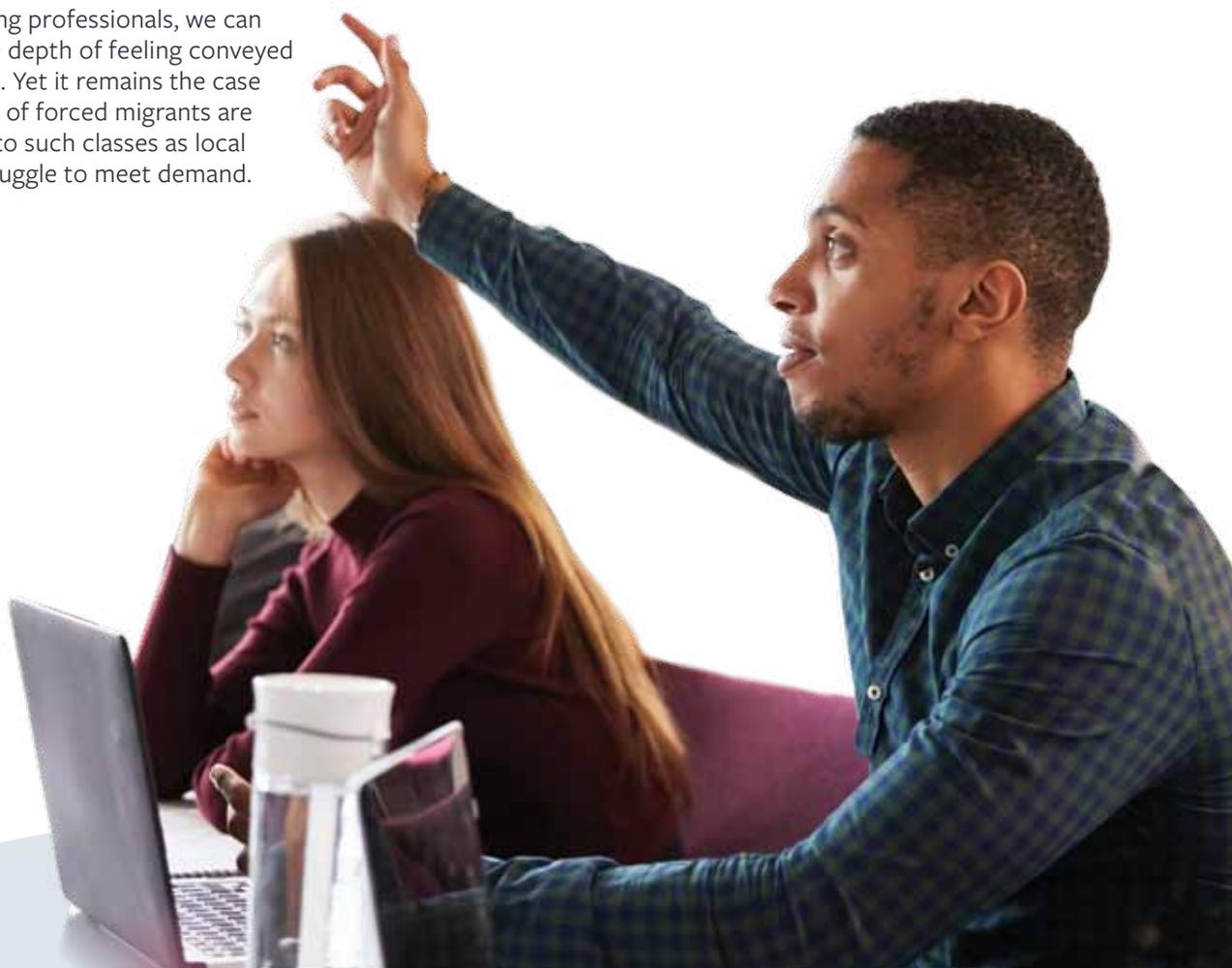
5 A richer education

Data collected from the trainee teachers makes it clear that pedagogical learning is not the only knowledge base that is developed in bringing together undergraduate student teachers and migrants.

Rather, spending time with and getting to know people from varied backgrounds, and who face challenging circumstances, has a deep impact on the development of the trainees’ understandings of concepts such as equality, language policy, and social justice. The student teachers repeatedly refer to the intense nature of meeting and teaching people who have been forced to flee their homes. Whilst improving their practical, classroom-based abilities, they concurrently undergo a profound educational experience, as exemplified by the following reflections:

“When I first began at the WRC, I recall how I used to often be surprised at the academic and or professional achievements of the students. I am now ashamed at my previous surprise reactions. Why wouldn’t people from other countries be just as educated as people from my country?”

Learner teacher LB



“I learnt more about myself in the few weeks I was at the refugee centre than I have over the whole of the last year. I hope to continue volunteering, and I just wish that more people could have the chance to meet refugees, to understand that they are people just like us, but who are fleeing from terrible situations.” Learner teacher ND

The dreadful difficulties and struggles of migrant learners may well help to put a realistic perspective on the conventional worries faced by student teachers. For instance, anxiety about lesson plan timings or language awareness knowledge may be lessened somewhat by helping the trainee to contemplate some of the broader issues connected to language teaching and learning. Moreover, anxieties about their own lives, such as their university grade, are put into perspective in meeting refugees and asylum seekers of their own age, and becoming aware of the type of problems they face every day of their lives. The reflections below perhaps illustrate how central the role of the learner appears to be in the teachers’ emergent understanding of a language classroom. They are, it appears, developing a conceptualization of teaching as a people, rather than product-based profession:

“This has been one of the most rewarding things I have ever done. I look forward to teaching every week as the class are so lovely AND eager to learn. It is great to be able to do something positive for people who have gone through experiences like they have in their lives. Knowing how much we are helping them is a wonderful feeling and I wish to continue as a volunteer for as long as possible.” Learner teacher HC.

“We are able to use our education and knowledge to teach people who are so deserving of our time. I hope that my learners have taken as much as I have from the lessons. I also hope that they can thrive in our community.”

Learner teacher PE

The key factor to highlight here is that in bringing together the similarly-aged students and migrants, in an educational setting, an ideal space is created for mutual understanding and respect to flourish. The following descriptions illustrate just how intense the experience can be:

“This experience has allowed me a first-hand experience to meet people who have been forced from their countries and families; people who are often communicated in the media as ‘a problem’. Even after 3 months of teaching, their ability to maintain their humanity, after all that they have been through, amazes me. My life has become richer for the friends I have made.”

Learner teacher LB

“I respect their dedication to learn and make it work in a country that has a completely different culture to theirs. Interacting with them made the situations they dealt with their home country a lot more real for me and have made a positive impact in my life.” Learner teacher PS.

As can be inferred from the above reflections, encouraging trainees to reflect on and articulate their thoughts can often open up discussion to more abstract concepts such as critical pedagogy and social justice. These are experiences that would be impossible to replicate in an isolated, university campus classroom. It is the bringing together of the students and migrants that is imperative, as the following quote encapsulates:

“I realised that the media’s portrayal of refugees only offers an image of a minute proportion – the people I worked with are some of the most kind and genuine people I have ever met.” Learner teacher EJ.

Such sentiments present a vivid snapshot of the ways in which cooperation between universities and migrant charities can be deeply beneficial to the educational experience of undergraduate students – as well as to the people accessing the charities’ services. As educators, this project represents, by far, the most satisfying endeavour of our careers to date. Our involvement demonstrates that organising student learning in such a setting, in this case teacher education, can facilitate a broader, transformative educational experience, and promote opportunities for the consideration of hugely important, critical educational concepts. However, the pedagogic advantages to the collaboration represent only a portion of the positive outcomes that have resulted from the cooperation. The next section briefly outlines the unforeseen benefits that the joint venture has brought.

6 From strength to strength

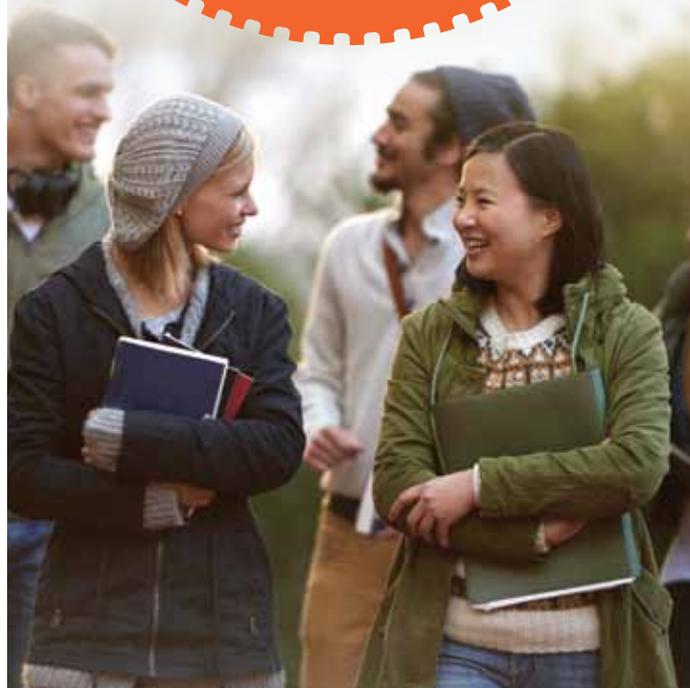
The initial collaboration has generated a range of unanticipated projects and ventures. For example, the one ESOL class a week that started in 2014 has been transformed into a far more wide-ranging and diverse programme of educational support.

The enhanced service became possible due to funding from the Waterloo Foundation, in an application that was underpinned by the collaboration. The funding, granted in 2015 for a period of two years, allowed for the employment of a full time ESOL / Education Officer (Iona Hannagan Lewis). That role facilitated the comprehensive Education and Employment services provided at the Welsh Refugee Council. This service supported the development of 17 scholarship schemes for refugees and asylum seekers in local colleges and universities between 2015 and 2017. Moreover, as a result of having an Education Officer in place, the Refugee Council was able to create and manage the UK's first six-week summer school for refugees and asylum seekers, in which around 60 migrants accessed free, accredited courses at Cardiff University. Another benefit that resulted from providing the enhanced employment and education service is that more organisations have been encouraged to identify how they can create partnerships. For example, in Cardiff the Refugee Council now collaborates with a number of institutions keen to develop bespoke courses on topics such as Finding Employment in Wales or Understanding the UK University Application Process. Other examples of such collaborations include a series of employability workshops with an international student recruitment agency and a course in social entrepreneurship with Cardiff University Business School.

The Education Officer role also included providing one-on-one mentoring to help refugees and asylum seekers into education and employment. This advisory service generated significant data pertaining to forced migrants' skills, qualifications, and aspirations for employment in the United Kingdom, as well as to the barriers to their successful integration into the labour market. Such a service is crucially important since despite having the right to work in the United Kingdom, and arriving with qualifications and work experience from their countries of origin, refugees often experience high levels of unemployment and underemployment.⁵

Unfortunately, the funding for this provision came to an end in October 2017. Nevertheless, the University of South Wales and the Welsh Refugee Council have been successful in securing funding to start a large-scale research study in autumn 2017. The funding, granted by the European Social Fund, will allow a post-graduate researcher to investigate the barriers to education, employment and language instruction experienced by new migrants in Wales. The researcher will be supervised by staff at the university with the specific objectives of the research co-decided by the Welsh Refugee Council. The data collected from refugees, employment organisations, educational establishments and other stakeholders will be used to produce a series of recommendations and action plans that, hopefully, can help inform Welsh Assembly Government decision-making on matters such as integration and community cohesion.

Additional
funding led to the
development of
**17 scholarship
schemes**
for refugee and asylum
seekers in local colleges
and universities



A final, unexpected development that has emerged, principally as a result of the comprehensive ESOL provision, is closer contact with policy coordinators and, more recently, direct involvement in Welsh Government funded ESOL provision. The Refugee Council were consulted by Welsh Government officials responsible for drafting the 2017 Assembly Government ESOL policy and, in consequence, written and oral evidence was provided to the all-party committee tasked with drafting the new strategy. One outcome of that consultation is that a number of third sector ESOL providers in Cardiff (of which the Refugee Council is one) will now receive direct funding to support ESOL provision for migrants on waiting lists for formal classes. The new Welsh Assembly policy puts an emphasis on developing easily accessible, flexible, community-based ESOL provision and supports partnership building across the public, private and third sectors. We believe the University of South Wales / Refugee Council partnership may help in serving as a model for this type of cross-sector collaboration.

7 Conclusions and Implications

What we hope this brief account conveys is the untapped potential that exists in universities working closely with charitable organisations.

Bringing the two institutions together has deepened the educational experience of the student teachers. For refugees, it has facilitated the emergence of tailored language classes and a broad range of initiatives such as courses on access to university, intensive summer schools and various bespoke employment-centred workshops. Higher education institutions are in an exceptional position. They have the knowledge and resources to assist those most in need and, crucially, can do so while improving the quality and breadth of education offered to their own students. At the University of South Wales, planning is already underway in other subject areas (History and Creative Writing) with the aim of bringing undergraduate students and migrants together to collaborate on work that aims to be of value and benefit to all.

The implications of this experience are clear. Firstly, it is that higher education / third sector collaboration should be promoted and encouraged. The National Assembly of Wales Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee report (2017) acknowledges that universities should play a greater role in supporting refugees and asylum seekers. Yet what is argued here is that not only should access and admissions to universities be examined, but also that policy makers and university managers should endorse and possibly incentivise the type of educational collaborations described in this account. That is to say, university award leaders, academic managers and faculty heads should be assisted in reaching out and making connections with third sector organisations in order to explore the educational possibilities that are present.

Secondly, efforts should be made to alert both public and private sector funding agencies to the impact that can result from such collaborations. Universities can use their research expertise to evidence and demonstrate examples of good practice and thus assist third sector organisations in securing desperately needed funding. Acquiring financial support and influencing government policy is more likely where data can be gathered, analysed and presented to support arguments. For example, the funded study that has emerged from this collaboration aims to publish an action plan for improving refugees’ access to education and employment across Wales, not just in Cardiff.

Finally, it is important to point out that creating opportunities for university students, and staff, to regularly visit and work with organisations such as the Refugee Council is hugely beneficial in alerting refugees and asylum seekers to the educational options that may be available. Refugees in Wales are now treated as home students, with a number of universities offering financial support for pre-sessional language development as well as a range of bursaries and scholarships. Such collaborations are an ideal way to publicise and help refugees in pursuing these educational opportunities. Funded support for partnerships, as well as a drive from policymakers and university management, may well enable far more collaborations to have the chance to thrive and prosper and thus help to remove, at the very least, some of the barriers that prevent refugees from becoming fully active members of society.

Note

One of the trainee teachers can be observed talking about her experience on the link below. The collaboration also won the 2016 NIACE award – a national prize for best community collaboration project: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTT55kK90aw>.

All of the quotes, data extracts, reflective accounts and so on that are included in this article have been given with permission. To protect anonymity, all names have also been changed.

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Yasmeen Akhtar, Meg Henry and Stephanie Longson, The Linking Network

The Schools Linking Programme

5



1 Introduction

There is a compelling need to create opportunities for children to have meaningful contact with others.

The reality is that across England there are children growing up in isolated and segregated schools or communities, where there are limited opportunities for sustained social mixing and for developing positive relations with others from different communities.

Segregated circumstances can exist in many kinds of schools. Opportunities for children and young people to mix socially with others from different backgrounds enable them to successfully relate to people and understand the world around them.

The Linking Network (TLN)¹ offers a Schools Linking programme which is endorsed and supported by the Department for Education (DfE), the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), and the Pears Foundation. The structured year-long Schools Linking Programme brings together pairs of classes or groups who would otherwise not meet, and in so doing, contributes to integration in the local area. This process supports integration by facilitating meaningful encounters between people from different backgrounds to one-another.

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) conducted a rigorous evaluation of the impact of schools linking based on a quantitative surveys and qualitative research methods of students, teachers and local authorities taking part in schools linking across England.² The NFER's evaluation (2011) found that schools linking can have ‘a positive impact on many aspects of pupils' skills, attitudes, perceptions and behaviours, particularly their respect for others, their self-confidence and their self-efficacy, as well as broadening the social groups with whom pupils interact'. It also found ‘evidence that school and local authority staff also benefit from involvement in the intervention.’ The benefits of social mixing, however, are only realised if interactions are meaningful, respectful and take place over a sustained period of time. Linking schools requires thoughtful planning and careful preparation.

In 2001 the independent review, *Community Cohesion in Britain* led by Ted Cantle, wrote of ‘a series of parallel lives’ and that ‘meetings are one thing, an open and honest dialogue are quite another’ and recommended ‘the promotion of cross cultural contact between different communities at all levels, [to] foster understanding and respect, and break down barriers.’

The review also recommended ‘All schools should be under a statutory duty to promote a respect for, and an understanding of, the cultures in the school and neighbouring areas, through a programme of cross-cultural contact. [...] Schools should not be afraid to discuss difficult areas.’ ‘This duty would also entail twinning between schools to compensate for lack of contact with other cultures in the school environment. This should embrace both curriculum and non-curriculum areas and should be recognised as a demanding but, potentially very worthwhile, requirement.’³

In 2016 the Casey review stated, ‘There is strong evidence around the benefits that can derive from high levels of meaningful contact between people from different backgrounds. Social mixing can: reduce prejudice; increase trust and understanding between groups (with a knock-on effect that allows negative perceptions of other groups to be challenged); lead to a greater sense of togetherness and common ground; and promote resilience to extremist ideologies and provide a challenge to dangerous world views. Whereas, a lack of mixing can reinforce ethnic segregation, even in diverse areas, and increase community tensions and risk of conflict.’⁴

A teacher shares her reflection on linking:

“What I’ve seen linking do for my class is create opportunities to meet and converse. It is a very natural process and it really is important from a very young age. For me as a Muslim girl growing up in Bradford it was when I went to University in York I realised that many people had not conversed outside their group so they had little mutual understanding. As people grow older misconceptions can grow and can grow into hatred. The Schools Linking Project addresses misconceptions – you are building the ability to respect.”

Bradford Linking Teacher 2016

In Bradford, in 2001, the Schools Linking Project was established and funded by the local authority as one response to community cohesion priorities. It started with just two primary schools, working with the local authority and staff from the local council-run Cartwright Hall Museum and Art Gallery to plan a series of thoughtful meetings for classes from both schools. The meetings were carefully planned to include dialogue and to promote curriculum achievement in the context of identity, diversity, community and equality. Over the next few years more and more schools chose to join the project funded by Bradford Council, and the Bradford Schools Linking Project was underway. The project was included in the 2007 Ajegbo Curriculum Review: *Diversity and Citizenship* report following a visit to observe the Bradford Schools Linking Project by Sir Keith Ajegbo who found there was a ‘sophisticated approach to linking’.

A major recommendation made was:

The further development of school links matched to the particular demographics of the school. Links between schools can be a powerful resource for education for diversity. We believe that schools need to work with each other across the UK so that both monocultural and multi-ethnic schools build proper partnerships, electronically and through visits.

Bradford has a sophisticated Schools Linking Project:

Established in 2001, it grew from concerns that many children were underachieving in primary schools; and growing unease about separation between different ethnic groups after the 2001 riots and 9/11, both within, but mainly between, many Bradford schools.⁵

The project evolved into a national charity, with schools linking programmes now running in Bolton, Buckinghamshire, Calderdale, Kent, London, Luton, Oldham, Pendle, Kirklees and Stockport. New local schools linking projects are currently being established with support from the Pears Foundation and backing from DCLG and DfE in Birmingham, Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley, Derby, Manchester, Sheffield, Rochdale, Rotherham and Waltham Forest. Over 90 classes from Primary and Secondary schools now participate in the Bradford linking programme including the first pair of Linking Schools, still on the programme 16 years later. A network of facilitators has formed to support schools linking to promote cohesion and many of these professionals are employed by local authorities and charities that play a role in promoting cohesion in their area.

The distinctiveness of The Linking Network’s schools linking programme is that it is rooted in the curriculum. Schools need and value effective strategies which help pupils explore identity, diversity, community, and equality on a regular basis. TLN’s provision of high quality teaching and learning activities and resources supports practitioners in creating learning opportunities where pupils’ thoughts and questions are allowed to naturally flow out in a safe environment, one that does not over simplify the difficult, and does not shy away from the uncomfortable. Pupils are encouraged to enquire and develop critical thinking skills and are supported in learning how to be at ease with themselves and others. Teacher training is essential to the effectiveness of the programme.

Over time, teachers gain confidence in their ability to facilitate difficult conversations and seize unplanned opportunities for deeper learning.

“ I genuinely feel my teaching is more effective courtesy of Schools Linking. I have been introduced to so many high-quality resources, ideas and particularly books.”

Y5 Teacher, Gorse Hill Primary School, Greater Manchester, 2017

2 The School year

The Schools Linking Programme is designed around four key questions used to structure the programme throughout the year:

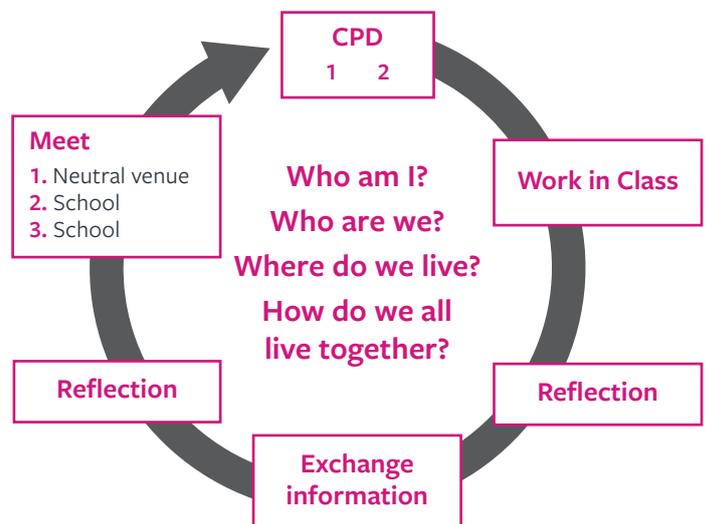
- **Who am I?** Exploring identity, including faith, as part of multiple identity
- **Who are we?** Celebrating diversity, including exploring similarity and difference, developing awareness
- **Where do we live?** Promoting community, broadening perspectives, and a sense of belonging for all, locally, nationally, globally
- **How do we all live together?** Championing equality, challenging prejudice in all its forms and promoting active citizenship and empathy

Children undertake preparation work exploring the four key questions in separate classes and this work is then exchanged with the other class and reflected upon by the receiving class. During the year, the classes send further ‘curiosity questions’ to one another around the key questions; this process gives children permission to explore in a safe environment.

The diagram below shows the sequence of activities throughout the academic year:

The linking process

Exploring Identity, Diversity, Equality, Community



In the autumn term, the linked classes focus on the first two key questions, and then meet for the first time at a neutral venue for a carefully planned collaborative day. In the spring term, the classes consider the meaning of community by exploring the third key question, and then visit one another’s schools, again carefully planned by their teachers to create a collaborative day which develops social skills. The learning over the first two terms culminates in the summer term when pupils consider the fourth key question, ‘How do we all live together?’

Throughout the year, there are regular exchanges of information between the classes, and e-linking sessions between face-to-face linking days keep the relationship between the two classes fresh and active. The process moves ‘Us vs. Them’ to a more inclusive ‘We’. At the end of the year, the children reflect upon and communicate what they have learnt, often expressing how much they enjoyed making new friends.

“Linking Schools allows children linking to communicate, understand and support each other in discussing, building on and promoting equality, diversity and individuality. Children get the unique opportunity to celebrate their personality and community by interacting on a variety of levels. Their confidence is developed on a non-confrontational platform that allows growth as a school, community and an individual person who has a voice and opinion.”

**Simit Bharaj and Sara Coates,
Linking Teachers, Bradford**

Socioeconomic differences, living in a certain area or belonging to a minority ethnic or faith group undoubtedly affect the way children and adults perceive themselves and others. This feeling of having equal status begins in the classroom and must be maintained in all the exchanges and interactions between the two classes. If the link is going to be a positive experience for all involved, practitioners must plan very carefully, and engage in open and honest dialogue throughout. It is vital that the first meeting between the two classes takes place at a neutral venue so that pupils come to it on an equal footing and neither class is on its own ‘turf’. In recommending first interactions taking place in neutral venues, we begin a mutual process of integration that carefully avoids some of the deep dynamics of power and belonging that can come up in exchanges. The CPD days delivered to teachers ensure that activities planned create meaningful interaction. Neutral venue visits are a highlight of the programme giving pupils an exciting and joyful day. Ideally a venue will be in the local authority area of both groups building a sense of shared belonging to the local community. It is critical that the education officers leading the day value and understand the fundamental aims of the project.



“The children had the opportunity to meet children with completely different cultures and backgrounds and this was good for them. They were very anxious before the first encounter but afterwards they were nothing but excited.”

Stockport Linking teacher

After the first encounter in a neutral space, schools then go on to school visits between one another's schools using the valuable resources they have in terms of staff, buildings, and grounds. Hosting and visiting each other's schools are key elements of the programme. Carefully planned class visits to both schools bring real benefit. For many pupils, it will be their first experience of going to another school and this can develop real interest and curiosity, the sense that not everyone does things the same and yet there are overlaps. It promotes the development of empathy, creates opportunities to practice the skills of hosting and being a visitor and gives the experience of encountering a new situation.

It is strategically and operationally important that the headteacher and senior management team in a school support the programme and are involved in the decision about which particular school to link with. The headteacher's support will be necessary for the ongoing sustained success of the programme, as well as to support the linking teacher as they lead this work for their school. A school will usually need to find funding for the year from within the school budget for transport and visits and when school budgets are under pressure, this requires headteacher support. Equally important is practical support that prioritises the link, for example when additional space is needed to host the link class when they visit the school.

“This school’s ‘linking project’ maintains close links with a school in inner-city Bradford so pupils acquire meaningful understanding of diversity”, Haworth Primary, Ofsted.

A key element to successful impact is that teachers meet for expert training and have access to high quality classroom resources and practical strategies for handling difficult and sensitive issues that may arise in conversation about identity, diversity, and equality. The NFER asserts that:

“The CPD is essential”, and that Schools appreciated “the access to expert training and resources.” NFER 2011

Often headteachers will notice the growth in skills and leadership developed by their teacher attending continuous professional development through linking training sessions.

“I am keen for as many of my staff as possible to lead linking over time so that they receive this high-quality training and closely engage with understanding effective ways to teach about community, diversity, identity, equality.”
Headteacher, Bradford

While a particular year group usually undertakes a School Link there are opportunities to communicate to the wider school, governors and parents through assemblies, presentations, and parents’ events. Some schools have drawn parents together from the pairs of linked schools which can further social integration across a district.

“Our linking school has not only opened our children to the richness of cultural diversity in our local area but the linking work has taken the whole community on a journey and transformed people’s views.”

Headteacher, Rural Primary School, Bradford

3 Locally led and locally managed

Every schools programme is led and managed by a local linking facilitator from a local organisation, supported and guided by The Linking Network.

The lead organisation should have a remit for promoting integration, have robust knowledge and insight about the local community and have enough of a presence in the area to be able to successfully promote, deliver and sustain the programme. It is also imperative that the organisation has a proven track record of working effectively with schools because one of the key strengths of this programme is that it is rooted in the curriculum. Whilst the NFER evaluation in 2011 found that any lead organisation working in partnership with the Schools Linking Network (as the organisation was then known) could develop ‘effective practices’, it found that programmes led by local authorities tended to more successful; however, it is also true to say that some charitable organisations have been able to sustain programmes where local authorities have not. Of the 20 linking programmes currently running, 11 are led by local authorities and 9 by charities.

“Local authorities (LAs) played a critical role in providing three days training and support.”

NFER 2011

In most sustainable projects, some core local funding has been sourced for a facilitator who has allocated time to maintain and expand the programme. The source of funding varies.

The project is most successful when centrally located in communities to avoid an isolated existence. TLN should not exist in a silo, but rather must be an integral part of a wider strategic plan to strengthen community cohesion. This is often why, local authorities are well placed to lead the programme, though charities that are well embedded in their community can also succeed. For optimum success, the Schools Linking Programme needs the support of senior council leaders to ensure that it features on key agendas and plans, not just those related to schools and education, but also high level strategic plans which incorporate the work of many different departments and organisations and are focussed on integration and cohesion across a whole local authority area.



Although the programme’s activities take place in the classroom and on linking days, the impact of the programme goes far beyond schools. For example, some schools have faced the challenge of parents who are not entirely comfortable with their children visiting the link school because of perceived notions of the link school’s locality; this uncovering of veiled, yet known, perceptions can present opportunities to address people’s anxieties and fears of the ‘other’.

The aim of aiding children and young people to enquire, think critically, reflect, and mix with others often leads to attitudinal change, not just in themselves but in others around them. A change in one individual has the potential to change a whole community and the collective impact of thousands of children within a district meeting others they would otherwise not meet is *essential to real social change in communities*. Bringing the whole community into the picture through school linking is a real strength of the programme, and a key opportunity for the lead organisation to work in partnership with a range of stakeholders such as museums, art galleries, sports centres, and other places that can serve as neutral venues for school linking days; faith or educational institutions that can help to recruit schools; organisations that can provide venue space for teacher training sessions; and local businesses that can provide funding, either by contributing to a general fund or sponsoring specific things such as catering or transport costs; as well as charities that can provide human resources. For example, Stockport Homes, the largest social housing provider in Stockport, has encouraged schools in areas with high levels of social housing, to participate in the Schools Linking Programme by offering funding because they believe that that this will have a positive impact on the local community. Involving a range of partners brings interest and investment into the programme, which is important for sustainability, provides a sense of the project being locally-owned, and focusses collective energy into a shared vision and common purpose.

“Our children operate in a bubble and it is important that as a school we support them to leave that bubble with us and meet others.”

Calderdale Linking teacher

4 The Linking Network, national support for local programmes

TLN began in one locality, expanding its knowledge of community intricacies as it developed. We continue to be rooted in Bradford and to share our learning with other areas.

We work closely with local linking facilitators and can provide the training, resources, advice, guidance, and support needed to launch and sustain a locally-led local schools linking programme. We have found ways to ensure that the key components for success can be enhanced by local expertise as well as benefitting from national support and the connections with a network. It is nationally recognised that structured school linking promotes achievement and offers a positive, age appropriate curriculum contribution to the Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural development of pupils, British values and the Prevent Duty, and the programme for school linking has been endorsed by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Department for Education (DfE).

“It is vital that we create as many sustained interactions between young people as possible so that they can be brought out of their comfort zones. Young people need help to avoid the twin traps of hate and fear. Sadly, young people are both the most likely to be victims of hate crime and the most likely to be perpetrators of it. The only way to break stereotypes and misperceptions is to allow people to experience real moments of co-operation, common purpose and, ultimately, friendship. That is why programmes like Schools Linking are so vital.”

DCLG, 2017

5 Theory underpinning linking

The schools linking programme seeks to thoughtfully translate social contact theory about key conditions for impact into practice through a linking year.

In social contact theory, positive effects of intergroup contact occur in contact situations which have key conditions: meaningful interaction, equal status, intergroup cooperation, common goals, and support by social and institutional authorities. Intergroup contact hypothesis was first proposed by Gordon Allport (1954). Much work has confirmed the importance of contact in reducing prejudice. Research states that if key factors are in place then, the process moves 'Us vs. Them' to a more inclusive 'We.' The Linking journey is designed so that, through a linking year, pupils (and staff) move from being two separate classes, from two schools, to being a linking pair.

Translating these key factors into practice is all in the detail. It means planning activities that ensure meaningful interaction between pupils before, during and between meetings. Activities must be collaborative in nature, they must facilitate pupils relying on each other to achieve shared goals, and as far as possible avoid competitiveness. There needs to be positive institutional support from school leadership in practical ways such as space being made available to welcome visiting pupils – in practice this may mean the linking classes get the school hall for the day. Equally this support means teachers being given time to plan well. Institutional support from a local authority for schools to engage in linking makes significant difference. This can take many forms, for example in the provision of support for matching and brokering links, provision of high quality training that allows teachers to plan thoughtfully so they incorporate best social contact practice into their links in practice, strategic support in creating excellent well planned first link days in venues in the district.

Crucially throughout the process a sense of equal status between pupils is paramount. This feeling of having equal status should begin prior to the meeting in the written contact that is exchanged to prepare for the meeting, and continue through the meetings and into the follow up work. Without careful preparation time, these essential sensitivities can be left to chance which can compromise the whole process. Though researchers have found that there can be problems with getting a more prejudiced individual into the contact situation in the first place, where schools treat linking as part of the core curriculum school linking can avoid this, ensuring that all students are present and the programme is not self-selecting at a pupil level.

“As I grew up we would cross the road to avoid confrontation. Schools Linking helps children ‘cross back over the road.’”

Wahid Zaman, Head teacher,
Lapage Primary School, Bradford

Activities must be
collaborative
in nature, they must
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and as far as possible
avoid competitiveness



6 The work today

TLN directly facilitates links between 80 classes in 46 schools reaching 2,760 children in Bradford and additionally supports local schools linking in 20 local authorities.

There are currently local linking programmes in Birmingham, Blackburn with Darwen, Bolton, Bradford, Buckinghamshire, Burnley, Calderdale, Derby, Kent, Kirklees, London, Luton, Manchester, Oldham, Pendle, Rochdale, Rotherham, Sheffield, Stockport, and Waltham Forest. TLN expects to reach 13,000 children this year collectively.

The Linking Network can support local areas through:

- Providing a nationally-recognised, tested pathway for linking;
- Written, face-to-face, and telephone guidance on running a linking project;
- Structured resources for recruitment of schools onto a linking project;
- Teacher training resources;
- Bespoke classroom resources for linking;
- Support to match schools;
- Direct delivery from TLN to teachers at modest costs, or training packages that can be delivered by a local educational practitioner;
- Support from a national network of local facilitators committed to promoting cohesion and integration in their areas and learning from one another.

7 The future

With a proven methodology that works as an effective and sustainable intervention, and the significant experience we have gathered over many years, both at local and national level, we are convinced that the best way forward is to collaborate effectively, working towards a shared vision of community.

It is for this reason that we have partnered with local authorities, and organisations across the UK to share our experience, resources, and networks to get more children linking than ever before. To link with the most impact, and make meaningful long-term change, it is ideal for linking programmes to be led by local facilitators who care and are committed to tackling issues that affect their communities in effective, practical, local ways. School linking programmes benefit from engagement with local councils, businesses, and charities from across sectors. Linking can have a strong part to play in a local vision so that it works towards a resilient and relevant plan for the future, a linking programme can be an integral part of a wider strategic plan to strengthen community cohesion.

The support of senior council leaders can mean that this work features on key agendas and plans, not just those related to schools and education, but also strategic plans which incorporate the work of many different departments and organizations focussed on integration and cohesion across a whole local authority area. We have seen the importance of ensuring that Linking programmes are locally owned, responsive to local issues and context, at the same time as receiving national backing and support. In turn local areas play their part in contributing their expertise to the development of the National Schools Linking Programme Network. Of course we know the importance of the quality of the work of teachers with their pupils that creates the impact on their understanding of identity, diversity, community and equality.

We know that this work goes beyond the children whom it impacts: it challenges parents, connects communities and raises standards for integrating for success, not merely to avoid conflict. A programme such as this has implications for local champions, to engage cross-organisationally, to see the interconnectedness of change in an individual as change in the whole community, to invest in this work proactively in order to build community collaboratively, and sustainably. It benefits significantly from national backing by Government, independent reviews, evaluations⁶ and funders. Linking, embraced at a strategic level and funded in a sustainable way has potential to transform communities. TLN can support new partners to build Linking into their plan for building community, and the model can be adapted and support schools to develop Linking in a way that suits the local context.

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Local Youth Led Social Engagement Programmes

6



1 Introduction

As the UK becomes more ethnically and socially diverse encouraging greater social integration is increasingly important.

Social integration is a process which works towards building positive social relations, cooperation, and cohesion between different groups in society. In encouraging greater social integration, the aim is not only to minimise social conflict but also to prevent the fragmentation of communities, minimise social exclusion and inequalities, and build a fair and open society where all people can participate equally. One key component of building social integration is the cultivation of positive attitudes towards people from groups different to one's own. Local bodies (such as local authorities, voluntary sector organisations, and local businesses) can play a key role in facilitating social integration. One action is the development and expansion of youth social and civic engagement schemes. These schemes bring together young people from different ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds to mix in positive, co-operative environments (often away from home and school), providing an effective, practical and cost-conscious means of cultivating social cohesion.

Using the UK youth National Citizen Service (NCS) as a case study I will highlight the positive impacts youth engagement can have on social integration. Engaging young people on such schemes helps foster more positive views between different ethnic and racial groups, as well as how positively young people see the diversity of their community. The benefits of participation are also durable, evident at least one year after taking part on the scheme. More importantly, however, these schemes appear especially effective at overcoming key obstacles to social integration in society; in particular, segregation across schools and communities.

Local bodies are experiencing an unprecedented squeeze on resources. Furthermore, addressing some of the longer-term obstacles to social integration, such as persistent residential segregation in some areas, requires considerable financial and political capital. Youth engagement schemes offer an immediate and relatively more affordable intervention we can make, which does not require significant changes in legislation. At a time when relations between different ethnic and religious groups feel particularly precarious, cultivating social integration and cohesion, especially between diverse ethnic groups, is critical. Not only does it lead to the full and fair participation of everyone in society but it can help build the kind of resilience, in communities and society as whole, to resist those forces which work to divide us.





2 Social mixing and social integration

Negative attitudes towards others from different ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds form a key barrier to social integration.

By this we are not just talking about prejudiced and racist attitudes, or feelings that different ethnic groups are a threat to one's economic position or way of life. We are also talking about everyday anxieties and perceptions of difference between groups that keep people apart. Such views manifest themselves in society through discrimination, race-based attacks, or social exclusion, and have crucial implications for ethnic inequalities, including adult/child health/well-being¹, social capital and cohesion², and socio-economic mobility³. Importantly, this is not only a case of how White British people view ethnic minorities. While the attitudes of the majority do form a barrier towards the integration of minority groups, negative views of ethnic minority populations towards White British, as well as towards other ethnic minority and immigrant populations, are equally important for social integration.⁴ Building positive relations between all ethnic groups is therefore crucial. The question remains, how do we accomplish this?

Positive social mixing amongst people from different backgrounds is an incredibly powerful tool for overcoming negative attitudes and anxieties towards difference. This has long been shown in research to be effective for reducing hostility and anxiety towards ethnic difference.⁵ Turning to the UK, the effectiveness of such social mixing for building positive relations has been shown in Northern Ireland where the integration of young people in mixed religious schools has been startlingly effective in reducing deeply ingrained tensions.⁶ However, the benefits of building ties across groups also extend much further than this. We live in a time when the violent behaviour of a few can spill over and toxify relations amongst the many. We know only too well the spike in race-hate attacks and the plunge in attitudes towards sections of society that follow terror related events⁷ or charged political campaigns.⁸ However, what is less known is how social ties between ethnic groups can create a sort of

'resilience' to such shocks, maintaining cohesion in the face of these pressures. One example of such resilience is that, following terrorist attacks, societal views towards particular groups tend towards greater hostility; however, people with cross-group friendships appear unaffected by this.⁹ In theory, what these social ties do is help disassociate one's views of the 'attackers' from the broader ethnic groups they come from.

There is a reassuring logic to the positive role mixing between groups can play for building cohesion. The UK is becoming more ethnically, racially and religiously diverse at a faster rate than ever before. This can bring with it growing tensions and barriers to integration.¹⁰ However, increasing diversity also brings more opportunities for social mixing. In other words, increasing diversity, while potentially divisive, can help mend these self-same divides.¹¹ Cultivating more mixing has therefore understandably become a staple part of policy frameworks for improving social cohesion.¹² However, there remain obstacles in society to realising this potential of social mixing, which are too often overlooked. Ignoring these and simply expecting contact to materialise as society grows more diverse may, at least in the short term, actually lead to more problems.

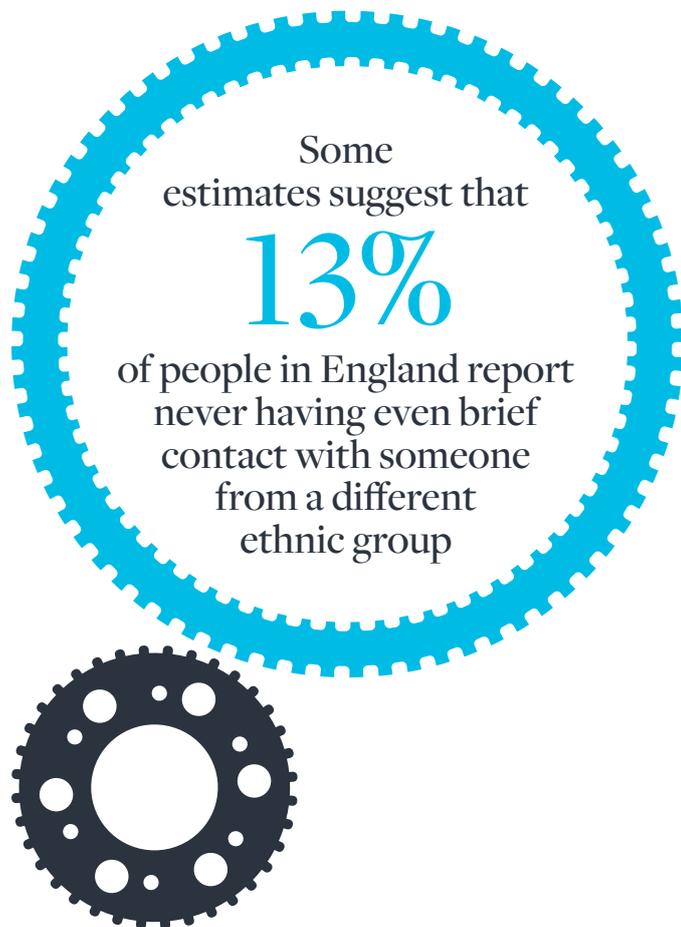
3 The limits of contact

The first main obstacle to realising mixing’s potential for integration is that not everyone has opportunities to mix with different ethnic groups.

Living and working with different groups provides more opportunities for mixing. However, parts of the UK still rarely come into contact with ethnic difference. Although data on the exact levels of contact can be difficult to find, in 2010, some estimates suggest that 13 per cent of people in England report never having even brief contact with someone from a different ethnic group¹³, while another source suggests up to 17 per cent of people in the UK only have (verbal or non-verbal) contact with a minority group less than once a month.¹⁴ Even in diverse towns and cities, where opportunities for mixing should be available, high levels of segregation severely limit how much mixing actually occurs.¹⁵ When some people don’t even have the chance for contact, or it occurs so infrequently that there’s little chance of it becoming ingrained, pejorative attitudes and anxieties can persist.

The second obstacle is that even when opportunities are available mixing doesn’t always take place.¹⁶ Anxieties about how the interaction will go, feelings that there’s a lack of common interests, or sometimes outright feelings of threat about different groups can all work against experiencing positive social contact.¹⁷ These kinds of attitudes which limit contact are, paradoxically, also the kinds of attitudes that positive mixing is so effective at changing; it is how we overcome these initial barriers to mixing that is therefore critical. A vivid example of this obstacle is in highly diverse schools. On paper, the numbers suggest the opportunities for contact at such sites are extensive. However, stepping through the doors of some of these schools and friendship groups remain startlingly homogeneous; even seating patterns in the cafeterias are highly segregated.¹⁸ Such self-segregation is concerning as it demonstrates that simply having opportunities for contact don’t necessarily translate into social mixing.

The third obstacle is that even when mixing does occur it does not always lead to positive relations. In fact, at worse, more social mixing can actually lead to negative feelings towards other ethnic groups. This is because the type of contact occurring matters. Mixing that is towards a common goal, that is co-operative, that occurs in a positive environment and under conditions of equal status is particularly effective at integrating groups.¹⁹ However, a lot of contact in society is more superficial or instrumental. Furthermore, although rarer, social contact between groups can also be negative.²⁰ Perhaps it involves a confrontation with a member of another group, or perhaps having anxiety about mixing with other groups can make the actual contact worse. Unfortunately, as diversity increases, opportunities for positive but also negative contact increase, with the potential to polarise attitudes towards difference.²¹ More social mixing alone is therefore no guarantee of improving attitudes and can actually exacerbate problems when it occurs negatively.²²



The fourth obstacle is that when social mixing happens in someone's life matters. As we age our attitudes, particularly our social and political attitudes, are believed to ossify and become harder to shift; including attitudes towards other ethnic groups.²³ While mixing amongst adults can no doubt help processes of integration, initiatives targeting adults have less capacity to affect change. For true transformative change cultivating mixing amongst young people is critical. When integration can be encouraged amongst young people the benefits may endure long into their lives.

Overcoming these obstacles, at least in the short term, is difficult. The processes driving segregation, across both neighbourhoods and schools, are multifaceted and complex, and reducing segregation requires significant political and financial capital (although the costs of not doing so to society may, in the long run, prove more onerous).²⁴ Also, any concerted effort to do so requires sustained policies, and the benefits of these can take a long time to emerge. In the meantime, measures which aim to coerce people into mixing can be viewed with scepticism and lead them to put up further walls to mixing.²⁵ In the face of these obstacles, what can local councils, businesses or voluntary sector organisations implement in their local areas, in the short term, to promote integration and social cohesion? One practical action is the growth and support of youth social and civic engagement schemes.

4 The role of Youth Engagement Programmes

Drawing young people together from different backgrounds to learn and develop new skills, away from their local areas and schools, often with a community-service element, can have a key transformative effect on their views towards difference, as well as social cohesion in general.

Examples include courses on civic responsibility coupled with participation in local community projects,²⁶ residential retreats,²⁷ and community youth activism groups.²⁸ However, more importantly, such youth engagement projects offer a key means of overcoming those key obstacles to social mixing in society.

- **Firstly**, such schemes can bring individuals from different backgrounds together, providing opportunities to mix for those who might not normally have an opportunity.
- **Secondly**, small teams of individuals working closely together limits opportunities for self-segregation that, as seen, can occur even in highly diverse environments.
- **Thirdly**, the nature of these schemes often involves young people working together towards shared goals, in environments that occur on a more equal basis (outside of their socio-economic, educational or ethnic status), and away from peer-group norms of schools. In other words, they tick all the boxes towards fostering the kind of social mixing that has strong and persistent positive effects on views towards difference.

These schemes therefore offer a practical and feasible means of building cohesion between ethnic groups. However, just how effective are they? While there is a lot of anecdotal evidence of their positive effects, one scheme has received extensive evaluation, often using robust, quasi-experimental approaches. That is to say, we can be very confident in the outcomes of the evaluations. That scheme is the National Citizen Service (NCS).²⁹ Using the journey of adolescents through the NCS we can see how effective such youth engagements schemes are.³⁰



Youth engagement projects offer a key means of **overcoming** those key obstacles to social mixing in society



5 The efficacy of youth engagement for social integration through the case of the National Citizen Service

The NCS was established in 2011 with the aim of bringing together 15-17 year olds from different backgrounds to support their local community and their transition into adulthood through developing teamwork, leadership and communication skills.³¹

The aim of the scheme is to create a more responsible and engaged society, and improve social mixing and cohesion. Since its inception the scheme has grown in capacity and in 2016 12 per cent of all 16-17 year olds in England participated on the NCS. Given the reach of the scheme, if it does help build positive attitudes between ethnic groups the potential impact for society is significant.

The scheme itself is open to all young people in England and Northern Ireland. The NCS Trust use various means of recruiting young people, including national and local marketing directed at young people and their parents through, for example, television and social media. It also advertises in schools through assemblies and tutor groups, aiming to organise events in 85 per cent of mainstream schools.³² Participation can occur in the spring, summer and autumn, with the main thrust of participation occurring during the summer months.

The summer element involves three main phases: a period of ‘outward-bound activities’, with an outdoor residential to improve team-building skills over 5 days; a phase of ‘skills development and community awareness activities’, involving a residential away from home to learn life skills and prepare for independent living over 5 days; and a non-residential phase of ‘planning and delivery of a social action project in the local community’, which involves designing/delivering a social action project in the local community (60 hours full-time). Young people generally go through these phases in small teams of around 12 to 15 people and providers of the scheme are incentivised to maximise, as far as possible, the social mix of teams to match the wider area participants live in, thus improving chances of mixing with difference.³³ Going on to the NCS costs participants £50. However, where families experience financial constraints this cost is reduced or waived entirely.³⁴ In 2016, the average contribution was £30, due to concessions and bursaries.³⁵

The NCS provides a unique lens through which to explore the efficacy of youth social engagement schemes for integration due to the robust evaluations currently undertaken of its participants. Full details of these evaluations, including the surveys completed, can be found in Ipsos MORI (2014, 2015, 2017). Briefly, the evaluation design involves surveying a sample of NCS participants both before and after they participated to test for changes in key outcomes of interest. However, identical surveys are also completed, across the same period, by a control group of young people who expressed an interest in participating on the NCS but did not eventually take part that year.³⁶ This quasi-experimental design allows for stronger insights into how the NCS impacts young people.³⁷



Overall, adolescents passing through the NCS see crucial improvements in their attitudes towards ethnic differences in society.³⁸ After participating, young people are more likely to report feeling comfortable with a close friend or relative going out with someone from a different ethnic background and report warmer feelings towards different ethnic groups. This is coupled with improvements in their positive social mixing, with participants feeling happier reaching out for help to someone from a different ethnic background and reporting more frequent positive social experiences with different ethnic/racial groups. These improvements appear to spill over into their views of their local areas, with participants more likely to feel their local areas are places where people from different backgrounds get along well together. A key driver of this appears to be the more frequent positive social mixing that participants have with other ethnic groups.

Therefore, when looked at 3-5 months after participating on the NCS, young people are more socially integrated across a number of dimensions. What makes these findings particularly robust is that, as discussed, they are compared to a group of similar young people, who were surveyed over the same period, but who did not participate on the NCS (the control group). We can therefore be much more confident that it is participation itself actually driving these changes. Just how long do these positive effects last? Judging this can be more difficult given following up participants (as well as young people in the control group) becomes harder over time. However, evaluations show some persistent positive effects. In fact, even after a year, participants were still more likely to hold more positive attitudes towards different ethnic groups.³⁹

6 Overcoming the Obstacles to Social Integration

Using NCS participants as a lens we can thus see how effective youth engagement schemes can be for fostering social integration. However, how effective are such schemes at directly overcoming the obstacles to social mixing that we previously saw? One worry is that such schemes may simply augment the integration of individuals who already have positive attitudes and social mixing with diverse others.

One obstacle is the importance of fostering greater mixing during people's formative years, which the NCS clearly overcomes. Another obstacle is that increasing opportunities for social mixing can lead to more negative as well as positive contact experiences, which can harm attitudes towards other ethnic groups. However, participants on the NCS did not report increases in negative contact despite more opportunities for it.⁴⁰ On the whole, the scheme therefore appears to protect against negative contact experiences while increasing positive ones.

A major obstacle to mixing and social integration is the lack of opportunities that can stem from living in more homogeneous neighbourhoods or in diverse but highly segregated communities. Opportunities for mixing in such areas are lower and attitudes towards difference are sometimes already more frayed. However, initial studies of this show that young people living in more segregated communities see some of the biggest improvements in social integration.⁴¹ In other words, participating on the NCS is particularly effective for those young people with less contact with ethnic difference in their everyday lives.



7 Concluding remarks

Positive social mixing between different ethnic groups is highly effective for building social integration. However, realising its potential is hindered by certain obstacles, especially segregation in schools and communities.

In the face of these obstacles, what can local organisations do to foster more, and more of the right type, of mixing; especially given the difficulties, and financial and political capital required, to reduce segregation?

One practical intervention is the growth of youth social/civic engagement schemes. By looking at the successes of the National Citizen Service we can see the potential such schemes have to boost social integration amongst young people. Adolescents who participate see their social integration significantly improve. Perhaps most crucially, these schemes can serve as a vital bridge to overcome key obstacles in society to social integration. In particular, participation has a more positive effect amongst young people coming from more segregated areas.

Given adolescence is such a key period during which people form their views of the world, the hope is that when integration is encouraged amongst young people the benefits will endure long after participation has ended. So far, the positive changes seen among participants appear quite durable. However, how these gains might be maintained or even further developed is a critical question. There is the risk that some young people, especially in more segregated areas, may find it more difficult to maintain the benefits of participation. One possibility is encouraging participants to continue their involvement in the schemes, perhaps returning as team leaders or co-ordinators. If funds could provide some payment for their time, such continued involvement could act as a partial alternative to paid employment while continuing education. Another possibility is that after involvement on the scheme schools might take-up a role of co-ordinating further engagement with communities, providing provisions (such as time, funding, guidance) to maintain participants' involvement in civic activities, especially in their local communities.* This could even become integrated into civic classes/courses within schools, which would aim to maintain the links built between participants and their communities. Where participants came from different schools such an approach could be particularly effective at creating cross-school opportunities to help maintain the ties between participants and create further links between schools.

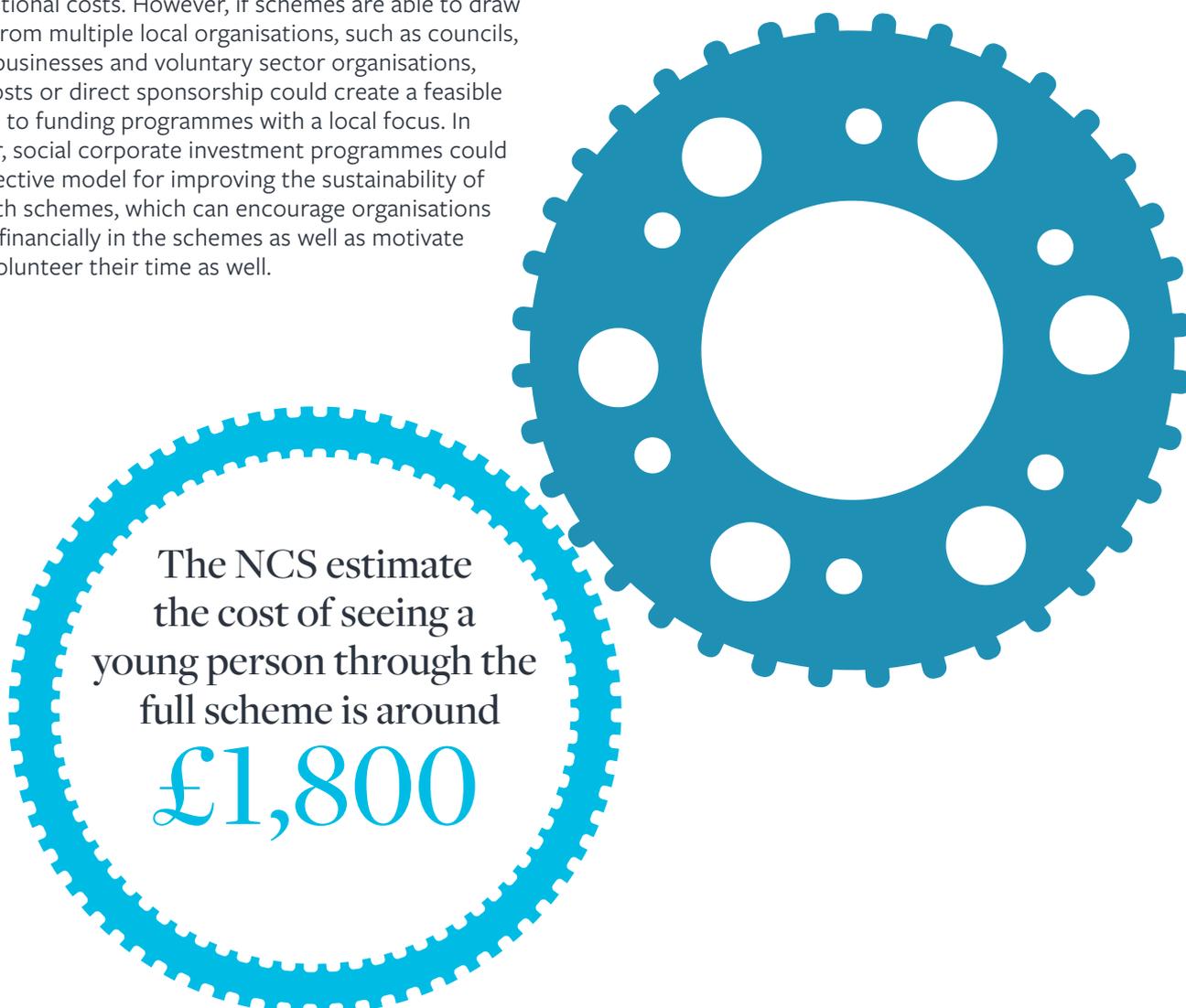


* See Ch 5 p40 by Yasmeen Akhtar, Meg Henry and Stephanie Longson

Growing and expanding youth engagement can therefore serve as a means of improving integration. Furthermore, where such local youth-infrastructure already exists, providers can be incentivised to increase the mix of their participants from different backgrounds. Similar tools in the NCS have resulted in typically more marginalised groups (such as those on Free School Meals, ethnic minorities, and those from disadvantaged communities) participating at a greater rate.⁴² More targeted investment in such schemes could also yield particular benefits when focussed in areas where everyday opportunities for mixing are lower or where inter-ethnic relations are already more negatively-charged, such as segregated and disadvantaged communities.⁴³ In this sense, such schemes may avoid just augmenting the integration of individuals who are already well integrated and instead help those individuals and communities which may benefit the most. Ultimately, however, youth engagement schemes are voluntary and the risks still exist that those who would benefit most may be less inclined to join such schemes. As such, every effort should be taken to recruit young people who may be less inclined to participate.

To be sure, such youth schemes involve a cost to providers. The NCS estimate the cost of seeing a young person through the full scheme is around £1,800.⁴⁴ How far other youth engagement schemes need to spend this amount to achieve similar benefits is not currently known. The NCS has a range of other aims besides social integration which likely adds additional costs. However, if schemes are able to draw support from multiple local organisations, such as councils, schools, businesses and voluntary sector organisations, shared costs or direct sponsorship could create a feasible approach to funding programmes with a local focus. In particular, social corporate investment programmes could be an effective model for improving the sustainability of such youth schemes, which can encourage organisations to invest financially in the schemes as well as motivate staff to volunteer their time as well.

Advocating youth engagement schemes for integration is not to say that efforts should not continue in other spheres. The reduction of socio-economic inequalities between groups, tackling deprivation in the poorest areas, promoting tolerance and acceptance within schools, or reducing segregation are all key means of building a more integrated society. Such aims, however, face considerable challenges and can take many years to emerge. What youth engagement schemes offer is a more practical, immediate and relatively more affordable intervention that does not require significant changes in legislation. Such programmes are also designed to lead to a host of other positive outcomes. In fact, the greater social mixing and positive attitudes towards difference in many ways emerge as a by-product of simply participating within these groups. Therefore, such schemes can be promoted for their multiple positive outcomes for young people, of which greater mixing and cohesion is just one.



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“If you could do one thing...” 10 local actions to promote social integration

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Community Connectedness Through the Arts

7



1 Introduction

This essay illustrates the potential of an arts-based community-led intervention for promoting community connectedness and engagement. We first provide a brief overview of the topic area and then describe the specific arts-based intervention led by People United. We describe findings from a comprehensive mixed-methods evaluation to demonstrate the effectiveness of this programme for promoting community connectedness and engagement. Finally, we outline the implications of these findings for practitioners and policy-makers.

2 Research Background

Humans are social beings and therefore we rely heavily on our connections with others in order to understand and feel confident in our social world.¹ In particular, the social groups we belong to and identify with are essential for providing social knowledge and support. Social group memberships protect against depression and boost self-esteem.² Conversely, when people feel that they do not belong, or when they feel ostracised, they become defensive, hostile, and suffer from low self-esteem.³ There are many social groups to which we may belong and identify with (e.g., a psychologist, a woman, a team member) and identification with one's community is particularly important for fostering and maintaining good relations amongst community members. In this chapter we employ the term community to refer to a group of individuals who share a physical space (e.g., neighbourhood, town, school, or workplace).⁴ Community connectedness is a broad term and encompasses the extent to which people feel like they belong, the extent to which they feel they matter to their community, the extent to which they feel their needs are met by their community, and the extent to which they believe they share history, common place, and experience with their community.⁵

“When Londoners face adversity we pull together. We stand up for our values and our way of life. We stand together.”

Sadiq Khan, London Mayor.

We consider community engagement or good relations as involving: “non-obligatory willingness to take social and practical responsibility for others. It may also involve the implicit presumption that there is a set of people who have the same willingness toward oneself. It is likely to be founded on a sense of common interest, common purpose and common identity. [It] depends on recognition that oneself and the other person are part of the same entity. [It] is part of what people do concretely to establish and maintain that entity”.⁶ Research shows that community connectedness and engagement are associated with one another as well as with increases in social empowerment and social capital.⁷ But how is this positive connectedness established or sustained? In this essay we show that the arts have a distinct and powerful ability to promote community connectedness and engagement.





Artistic practices occur cross-culturally as well as historically

The Arts’ covers a broad and inclusive range of activities. The word “art” refers to “The expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power” (Oxford English Dictionary). The key ingredients of artistic practice are creativity and self-expression, which may occur through doing and making as well as witnessing.⁸ Recently it has been contended that artistic expression is part of an evolutionary mechanism for creating and maintaining social ties or feelings of connectedness within humans.⁹ Artistic practices occur cross-culturally as well as historically. Any person in any part of the world can engage in the arts in one way or another and can hence establish shared meaning through the experience or creation of arts. Research shows that artistic engagement encourages greater social connectedness¹⁰, perspective taking and empathy¹¹, and helping behaviours¹².

In their recent report¹³, People United draw on 10 years of research and learning to outline the ingredients that make the arts so powerful and unique. For example, one ingredient is that participatory arts usually involve “saying yes”. People are used to hearing ‘no’ in their daily lives, but

arts projects give people permission to try something new. Another ingredient is “sharing stories”. The arts have always told stories. Stories help people understand experiences very different from their own. A third ingredient is “building connections”. The arts enable people to create work “side by side” with others. Such a joint and creative endeavour can build connections and a sense of shared fate (“we’re all in this together”). For further detail on these ingredients see Andrews et al. (2017).¹⁴

Based on this learning and evidence we reasoned that arts-based community projects should be particularly effective for promoting community connectedness and engagement. Below we outline a recent arts-based community project which People United developed and managed in Newington. Newington was built predominantly during the 1950s and is the newest and largest estate in Ramsgate, in the south-eastern corner of the UK. Newington has increasingly acquired a reputation as being highly deprived, isolated and fragmented, and the majority of those employed being in low skilled occupations.

3 Intervention

People United specialise in developing and delivering place-based arts projects aimed at promoting community connectedness, community engagement, trust, and kindness.

‘Best of Us’ is People United’s most recent project, and was conducted in Newington between 2015 and 2017. The project was developed by People United in partnership with a resident-led group (Newington Big Local) and initiated a wide array of arts-based activities involving community members across the community. Most of the arts activities were delivered and facilitated by an artist-in-residence, Nova Marshall. The overarching aim of the project was to collect and celebrate good news stories, with a particular focus on kindness. These were gathered through a whole host of art forms including film, photography, dance, visual installations, sound, song, and urban art.

At the start of the project Nova set-up an intergenerational community group, in which members would meet weekly and would co-create art work, visit exhibitions, and would help programme the new yearly community arts festival in Newington (called Best Fest). This group was called the Creative Champions. Setting up this group helped to ensure that community members could help steer and take ownership of the project over time. Seven months

into the project People United and the Creative Champions programmed the first Newington community-wide festival, Best Fest. Best Fest is now a yearly and free community arts festival in Newington full of art, music and fun activities, and planned and organised by local residents.

As well as the Creative Champions group, an intergenerational singing group was developed from an idea by a local resident. People of all ages come together to sing a range of songs from world music to contemporary pop. Although based in Newington, residents from the surrounding area and wider community are very welcome to join in. The group also perform at community events such as Best Fest. Another important project as part of The Best of Us was the development of partnerships with local primary schools. In one particular school, People United’s successful Arts and Kindness programme led by performance artist Bob Karper helped pupils to explore kindness, courage and generosity. Pupils (in years 3, 4, 5 and 6) worked together and creatively to develop a set of kindness qualities and to create a song (GratituTune) to thank the kind people in their lives.

The Best of Us has produced over 50 art works that have been shown, residents have researched and recorded Newington histories and honoured local unsung heroes through four permanent plaques. Children and young people have made urban art boards that highlight community spaces, made zines that focus on friendship in Newington, and have produced a playful visual installation exploring courage. These are just some examples of the many activities that have taken place across Newington over the past two years. But the common theme across all activities is that they involve bringing together local residents, artists (People United worked with 23 artists from different backgrounds and art forms), and community groups to gather and explore stories of bravery, citizenship, hope, zest and persistence, to overcome difference, and to engage in positive community action. A large part of the project has involved setting-up, working with, and facilitating local arts-based groups (Creative Champions, Sing Your Heart Out). These groups not only bring people together and help create connections, but they also maximise the sustainability of the arts-based



The group also perform at community events such as

Best Fest

Newingtons, Annual Community Arts Festival





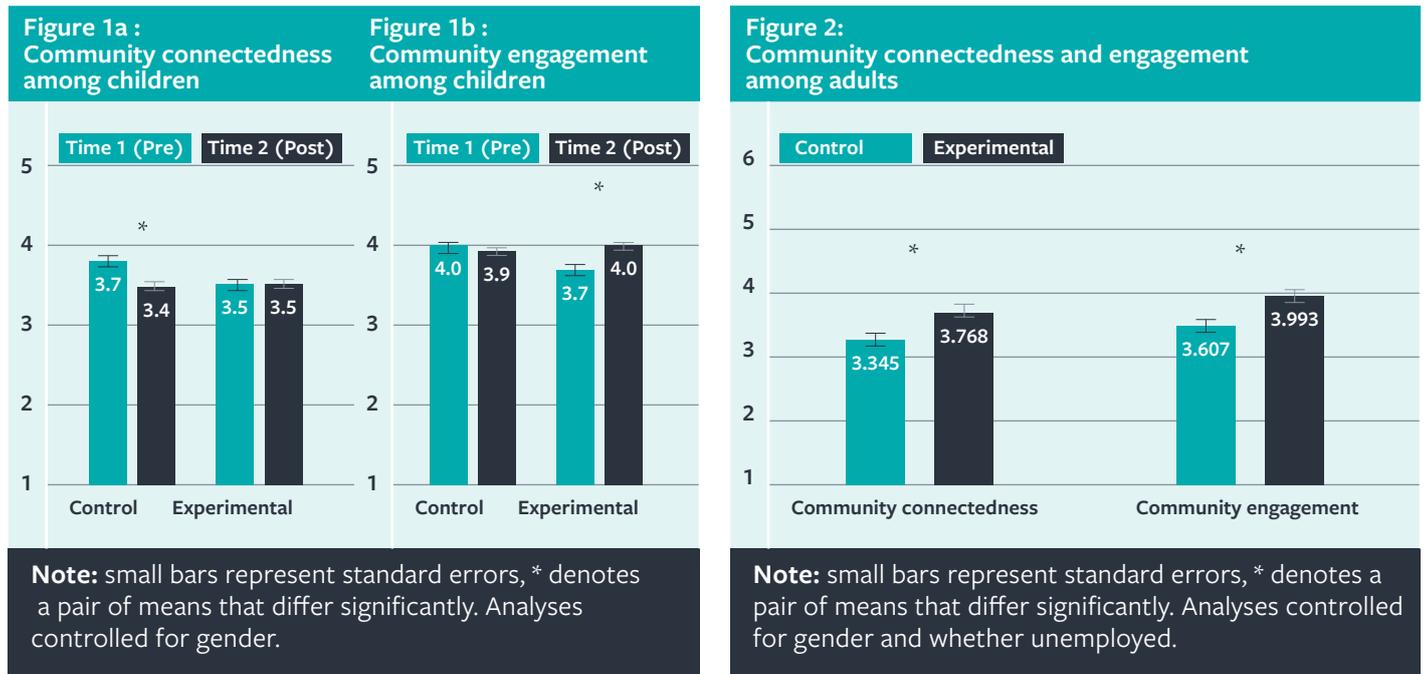
community intervention. Community members can take ownership of the project and can take it forward in the years to come, for example there are already funding applications in place to support Best Fest 2018, and the artist-in-residence will continue to work in the community for another year.

4 Research and Evaluation

We evaluated the effectiveness of People United’s arts-based community project for promoting community connectedness and engagement using a rigorous mixed methods approach.

First, we conducted a quantitative study in the local primary school in Newington. We surveyed children before and after the arts project. We also surveyed children from two schools that had not taken part in the arts project. In total, 254 children between 7 to 11 years took part. 55.1 per cent were female and 66.7 per cent were White British. We measured children’s sense of community connectedness using questions such as “I like being part of Newington” and “I feel proud to be a part of Newington”. Children responded to these using a 5-point response scale from “not at all” to “a lot”. Statistical analyses showed that whereas community connectedness declined significantly over this period in the control schools (no arts project), it sustained high levels in the experimental school (Newington; arts project), suggesting that perhaps the intervention in Newington had at least preserved children’s positive orientation.

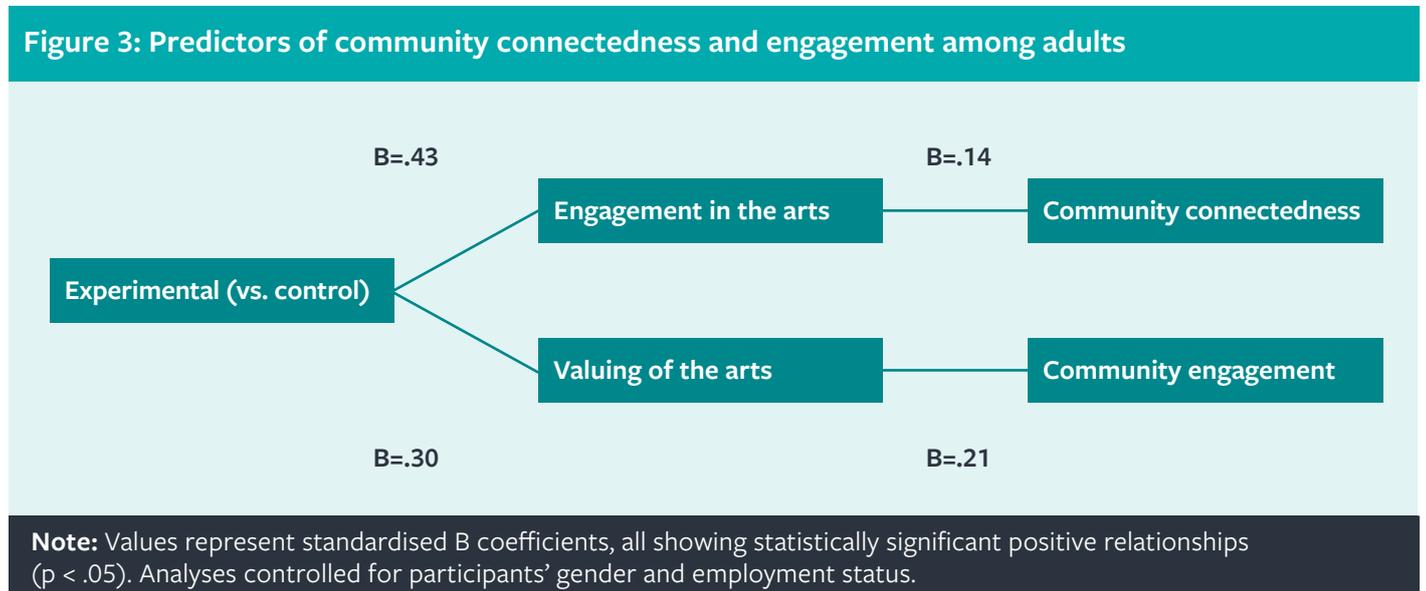
Using a more indirect, but also more sensitive, measure, we tested children’s community engagement via their general motivation to be kind to peers. Children read about 6 different scenarios and were asked whether they would assist or help in each one (e.g., “You see a child running across the park but trips over a rock and falls down. The child gets up and begins to cry. Would you go over and comfort the child?”). Children responded using a 5-point response scale from “definitely not” to “definitely would”. We found that community engagement increased significantly in the experimental school (Newington; arts project) but did not change in the control schools (no arts project). Overall the evidence supports the conclusion that the arts-based school project significantly promoted children’s community engagement and may also have buffered against reductions in children’s feelings of community connectedness (see Figure 1a and Figure 1b).



Second, we conducted a quantitative evaluation among adults in the local community in Newington. We designed the evaluation to compare participants from Newington with those from a matched town. We surveyed 190 participants (94.7 per cent White British; 81.1 per cent female) just after the first arts-based community festival in Newington, Best Fest. We recruited participants by asking local schools to share flyers with parents, which invited anyone over 18 years to take part. We measured community connectedness using questions such as “I feel proud to be part of Newington” and “I belong in Newington”. Participants responded on a 5-point scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. We measured community engagement using questions such as “I think that involvement in programmes to improve my community is important” and “I think that people should find the time to contribute to their communities”.

Participants responded using a 5-point scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. We found that community connectedness and engagement were both significantly higher in Newington than in the control town (see Figure 2).

These findings were consistent with our expectation that the stronger community connectedness and engagement in Newington arose because of the arts projects there. But we were aware the differences might also be explained by other factors. To check the validity of our reasoning, our surveys measured participants’ levels of engagement with the arts as well as their valuing of arts and creativity. We were therefore able to statistically test whether the higher level of community connectedness and engagement in Newington was associated with residents’ also experiencing higher levels of engagement in and valuing of the arts. The data showed that this was in fact the case. Newington residents’ higher levels of engagement in and valuing of the arts did statistically explain their higher levels of community connectedness and engagement, respectively (see Figure 3).



Overall, results of the evaluation of impact on adults suggest that the arts-based community project significantly promoted feelings of community connectedness as well as community engagement. A limitation is that we were not able to collect data at a second time point with our adult sample. This means that it is impossible for us to eliminate the possibility that the differences in community connectedness and engagement between the two towns may have occurred due to reasons other than the arts activities. Nevertheless, the statistical analyses depicted in Figure 3 suggest that the differences in community connectedness and engagement were explained by engagement in and valuing of arts. A further limitation of this research is that we did not statistically test whether the effectiveness of the arts intervention varied by social class or ethnicity. We did not have data to test the former and as the majority of the sample were White British, we did not have sufficient statistical power to test the latter. Nevertheless, based on recent theory and evidence¹⁵, we expect that arts-based interventions should also be effective for promoting community connectedness and engagement across group divides.

These sources of evidence were complemented by eight in-depth interviews with various stakeholders involved in Best of Us, conducted by an independent qualitative researcher, Joe Bonnell. Interviewees ranged from Creative Champions of various ages and backgrounds to the artist in residence and members of other community groups who had experienced the Best Fest event. The interviews were transcribed for analysis in order to explore participants’ experiences of Best of Us and their wider engagement with the arts. The interviews clearly illustrated how Best of Us had helped foster a sense of community connectedness and engagement among respondents (see Table 1 for interview extracts).

All interview extracts refer in one way or another to community connectedness. Specifically, respondents highlighted increases in community connectedness (e.g., Respondent Two “it does bring people together”). Reference was also made to increases in community engagement. For example, Respondent Seven demonstrates how high quality participatory arts activities can bring together people from different backgrounds to engage in a common purpose or goal. Overall, the evidence from the qualitative interviews is in line with the quantitative evidence which suggests that participatory arts can foster greater community connectedness and engagement.

“As well as the Creative Champions group, an intergenerational singing group was developed from an idea by a local resident”



Table 1: Extracts from Qualitative Interviews (Respondents 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7)

Respondent 1

“The Best Of Us’ was about caring and sharing but more about art being the route for a lot of people into finding friendship, finding confidence, lots of the things that I’d appreciated as a result of my finding art.”

Respondent 5

“I think the Best Fest went down really well. Actually, it brought people from not just Newington but maybe Margate, Broadstairs, just getting their different perspectives of what art is. So I think it went down really well, and my personal favourite was the band, I loved that band, from London, it’s got that sort of Mardi Gras feel like yeah I like it.”

Respondent 2

“Yeah. It does promote community spirit. It does make. People that’ll come in maybe that haven’t seen each other before, or may have seen each other but not spoken before, but because that’s, they’re here for that mutual interest, they sit and chat and then they might. I think there are one or two of them that have then met up and gone for coffee elsewhere, they became friends because of. It does bring people together.”

Respondent 7

“From the event that they put on, I would say that they were like middle of the road; they were aiming from every perspective they were aiming for age groups. You had the Memory Teas for the older people on the estate and we were all asked to contribute but again I don’t know if they had much come through on the day. I know they had lots of photographs. And then you had like the puppets for the really young, you had the dome for I’d say 4 years right up to 40-50 years old, even older, could be older because Gwen’s over 80. There was artwork from the schools, Dame Turner School, that they put in one of the marquees...[and] as I say The Copse was all ages as well...So there was something for everybody and some of the things were aimed at all age groups and it wasn’t as if anything was too hard for them to do either. I think that might put people off if they think ‘Oh that’s going to be too hard. I’m not going to have a go in case I make a fool of myself’. Nobody was made to feel foolish.”

Respondent 3

“My children are insular because of their autism and actually they talk now and if I walked with them and they see somebody that they met and they saw at Best Fest, they’ll be like ‘Hello’ so it’s really quite friendly so they wouldn’t be able to remember their names but they’d say to you ‘I’ve met people I’ve never met before’ so without a doubt but then so have I so they’ve got to have.”

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

This project tested whether an arts-based community intervention can promote community connectedness and engagement. Importantly, community connectedness is essential for fostering good relations and for overcoming division within communities. Indeed, social psychological research shows that when individuals from different groups (e.g., from different ethnic backgrounds) can develop a common identity, such as a community identity, their prejudices are likely to reduce.¹⁶ In other words, interventions aimed at building positive and inclusive community connectedness are absolutely vital for overcoming prejudice and division in society. The arts-based community intervention described here did exactly this. Working with members of a highly deprived, isolated and fragmented community, the program celebrated the best of humanity by gathering stories of kindness, courage, and zest through creative practice in ways that fostered new positive links across the community.

In this essay we provided a case study of a participatory arts intervention in a deprived and fragmented community, Newington. Over the past 10 years we have also evaluated the effectiveness of participatory arts projects for promoting community connectedness and engagement across a range of samples and with many different artists and arts activities. We consistently find that arts engagement promotes greater social connectedness and engagement.¹⁷ Recently, using broader data from a representative sample of over 30,000 people from the UK, we analysed the relationship between people’s self-reported arts engagement and their self-reported volunteering. Volunteering is an example of community engagement. We discovered that, beyond any influence of people’s basic personality traits, demographic characteristics such as ethnicity, wealth, education, and their engagement in other social activity (sports), those who were more engaged in the arts were also more likely to volunteer. Indeed, people’s greater engagement with the arts predicted higher levels of volunteering two years later.¹⁸ In other words, using a range of methods and across a range of samples, our research consistently shows that arts engagement promotes social connectedness and engagement.

This essay contributes to the growing evidence that high quality participatory arts projects can powerfully promote positive community outcomes. We propose that any local action aimed at promoting community connectedness and engagement, whether organised by practitioners, community members, or policy-makers, would benefit from involving and listening to artists. There will inevitably be costs involved when commissioning artists. However, one way to minimise the cost is to integrate our recommendation with a planned or ongoing local action or local project. In other words, we suggest that any local action aimed at promoting positive community outcomes can be enhanced by involving an artist, and that this is a realistic and relatively low risk recommendation. If it is not possible to involve artists directly, then local actions can try to incorporate some of the “key arts ingredients” into their programmes (see Andrews et al., 2017, also outlined here in the introduction). For example, by encouraging people to share their stories and experiences with one another.

To summarise, our key message for practitioners, policy makers, and community members is that place-based arts programmes can work. They can significantly increase positive community connectedness and engagement, even within fragmented neighbourhoods. If delivered on a larger scale, across many communities, arts-based community interventions, could have a significant impact by helping to sustain and build more socially harmonious communities nationally. In terms of small and feasible practical steps, when developing any local action aimed at promoting community cohesion and integration, consider involving an artist or a participatory arts organisation. If you could do one thing to improve social integration, the evidence presented here would suggest that arts-based community interventions such as those delivered by People United could be that one thing.

Useful links

<http://peopleunited.org.uk/>

<http://peopleunited.org.uk/project/the-best-of-us/>

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“If you could do one thing...” 10 local actions to promote social integration

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Socio-Political Integration Through Diaspora Organisations and Civil Society Initiatives

8



1 Introduction

This chapter explores ways in which civil society initiatives in diverse areas may contribute to socio-political integration, by analysing Polish diaspora campaigns and their contributions.

The aims of this text are threefold: to highlight the integrative potential of civil society; to provide concrete examples of initiatives with integrative ambitions founded on the basis of ethno-national bonding, and to outline potential avenues for collaborations. Polish civil society mobilisation in the UK provides an interesting context for socio-political integration as recent initiatives have generated considerable resources by promoting new channels for communication with local authorities and decision-makers. The findings of this chapter suggest that local collaborations, on the organisational level, have much to gain by building on existing civil society initiatives and networks. Thus, opening for a *two-way integration process*, defined by some of its central components: *access, communication, participation and recognition*. Approaching social integration as a two-way process warrants a closer look at civil society initiatives and formal not-for-profit voluntary community organisations and campaigns.

Recent Polish political campaigns provide an opportunity to explore the integrative potential of diaspora campaigning and include *Red Card to Racism* (2005), *Poles are Polls* (2007), *Donate Polish Blood* (2015) and *the British Poles Initiative* (2015). These civil society initiatives highlight various new pathways and imaginative ways civil society can contribute towards socio-political integration. Notably, *diaspora engagement* produces particular relationships, networks and organisations based on nationality, religion, language, notions of ‘home’, and experiences of integration. As such, it is often discussed in terms of generating a particular form of social capital, ethnic bonding, a form of capital sometimes dismissed as a resource that keep groups away from each other. However, the findings of this chapter point to the contrary, and to ways co-ethnic organisation may achieve an intermediary role to the state by also generating bridging resources and thereby contribute towards integration.

The findings, upon which this study builds, refer to the Polish diaspora in the UK as a ‘Polish community’ since this term is used by interviewees themselves for Polish migrants and British citizens of Polish descent.

The qualitative data is based on over one hundred interviews and with representatives of different Polish organisations with different associational attachments and roles (chairs, trustees, professionals, volunteers and members, paid and unpaid representatives). This study is related to two projects: ‘To What Extent Does Homeland Matter? Diaspora in the UK’ (funded by the British Academy and the John Fell Foundation, University of Oxford) and to ‘Institutional Constraints and Creative Solutions: Polish Civil Society in Comparative Perspective’ (funded by the Swedish Research Council).

2 Resources generated by the ethnic bonding of social capital

In general terms, the resources generated by formal voluntary organisations among diaspora groups, are often characterized by a particular form of social capital, called ethnic bonding.¹

Resources on the basis of ethnic bonding and membership in co-ethnic organisations have been linked to a higher capacity for political mobilisation. Specifically, engagement and membership in co-ethnic organisations on the basis of ethnic bonds have also been associated with a stronger engagement in mainstream politics.² Co-ethnic organisations may also be able to push for increasing the political representation of migrant-origin populations and provide incentives for established parties to respond to minority concerns that, in turn, may lead to the incorporation into the local political agenda.³ Moreover, civil society initiatives formed on the basis of co-ethnic or ethno-national ties may provide a buffer from stigmatisation and a platform for protesting discrimination⁴ as well as a safety net from marginalisation through the provision of central support services.⁵



These are central considerations in times of welfare cuts. The buffering provision of support, skills and training is of special relevance for migrants from Eastern Europe and of non-European origins, who do not compete on similar terms to majority populations in Western labour markets.⁶ Polish migrants have found themselves exposed in Brexit Britain despite the financial contributions they make.⁷ Arguably, Polish organisations can be a resource to draw upon for mobilisation against anti-Polish sentiments. Whereas bonding ties (ethnic bonding of social capital) refer to strong relationships between members of the same ethnic group, family, friends and associations, bridging ties (ethnic bridging of social capital) between members of different groups have typically been described as weaker but also as positive for integration. However, these forms of social capital are not mutually exclusive and civil society organisations formed on basis of bonding ties may, in turn, generate bridging ties to other ethnic groups; to cosmopolitan intermixtures and to local authorities. This route may tell us more about different possible pathways towards integration and of civil society's potentially intermediary role promoting integration.⁸ Thus, communication with local authorities, may be created out of ethnic bonding ties that would otherwise not necessarily take place. Communication with (and links to) local councils and authorities is treated as a central mechanism for integration and civic participation and is important for all groups whether in diverse areas or elsewhere.⁹ This is not to assume the absence of competition for resources between different groups which undoubtedly exist (whether based on age, class, ethnicity, gender, nationality or sexuality) regardless of context.¹⁰



Below we turn to Polish migration into the UK and thereafter to concrete examples of the, at times, overlooked resources generated on the basis of co-ethnic organisations in order to emphasize that bonding and bridging of social capital are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

3 Polish migration and Polish civil society in Britain

The signs of Polish diaspora activity in the UK have developed alongside a unique pattern of migrant experiences of the Second World War, the Cold War and the Solidarity movement in Poland, and EU expansion,¹¹ The Polish Resettlement Act of 1947 offered citizenship to displaced Polish troops and enabled 160,000 Poles to settle in the UK.¹²

The experiences of the post-war generation of deportation, displacement, not being able to return to Poland and its loyalty to the Allied forces remain imprinted on the Polish civil society.¹³ The numbers of Polish migrants arriving 1956 – 1980s varied between a few hundred to a few thousand annually¹⁴ after years of repressive martial laws in Poland barriers were lifted after 1989¹⁵. Thus, Polish businesses (entrepreneurs, lawyers, brokers, consultants and travel agents) were established in the 1990s. By 2004, and through EU-expansion, there was an embryo of a Polish migrant industry in the UK with particular concentration in Greater London.¹⁶ Polish migration increased dramatically with EU enlargement and at a time when unemployment peaked at 21 per cent in Poland.¹⁷ The Polish group is today the largest foreign-born group in Britain. Since the referendum in favour of Brexit there has been a drop in net migration: fewer Poles are moving to Britain and more are leaving in comparison to the figures of previous years.¹⁸

In terms of civil society outputs and outcomes, the Polish diaspora is a heterogeneous group of different generations of migrants, some of who arrived relatively recently, and others long established. Such internal diversity also plays out in civil society with a richness and diversity of formal Polish organisations, community associations, clubs, financial networks and businesses and a variety of support structures including cultural, educational, occupational, political, religious and recreational organisations.¹⁹ Polish civil society in the UK has been driven by the involvement of the different migrant generations, their respective integration experiences and desires for settlement and home, and by internal diversity and division. Yet, the ethno-national umbrella holds Polish civil society together and turns it into a space for resource provision, protective ambitions for group recognition and a platform fighting devaluation.²⁰

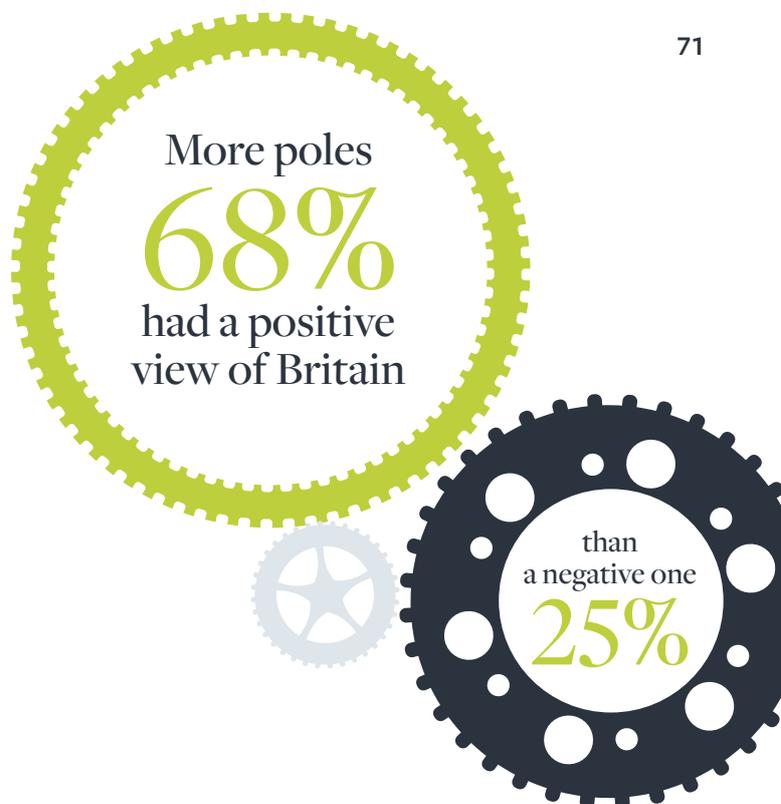
This case shows that migrant activism and migrant civil society develops as a process and we have much to learn from these initiatives.

4 Diaspora campaigns promoting integration

The Polish civil society in Britain has increased and diversified since post-EU expansion and an estimated 25 per cent of all existing Polish organisations were created after 2004.²¹ With its concentration to Greater London, signs of diversification and branching out to political campaigns have increased in recent years.²² The ambition to promote integration of the Polish communities in the UK is therefore interesting to explore and demonstrate a mobilising potential.²³

Significantly, Polish campaigns including *Red Card to Racism* (2005-), *Poles are Polls* (2007), *Donate Polish Blood* (2015) and the *British Poles Initiative* (2015) have found new channels for communication with local authorities. These campaigns and grassroots initiatives have strategically aimed for integration on the local level and are seemingly able to promote integration by influencing multiple others.²⁴ These campaigns set out to promote various elements of social integration by attempting to improve the perceived negative image of the group; encouraging direct communication with local councils and participation in local elections. Below an outline of the campaigns, the bonding and bridging ties generated, followed by a summary of the integrative strategies promoted.

Red Card to Racism – Czerwona Kartka Rasizmowi – Eastern European Association is an umbrella project originally initiated to promote community relations in Hertfordshire by combatting racism in sporting activities, such as grassroots football. The initiator, Piotr Malecki, a teacher and football coach local to Stevenage, founded Red Card to Racism in 2005, inspired by national initiatives such as Show Racism the Red Card (1996-) and Kick It Out (1993-) and after facing racial abuse with his team at a football tournament in Poland. The intended recipients of Red Card were originally the local Polish community in Hertfordshire, but the initiative quickly expanded to other Polish communities in the UK by building bridges across local communities, and between Poland and UK. One of the Red Card's annual and high-profile events is the Stevenage Cup, a tournament of 24 competing teams, predominantly Polish but including groups of other backgrounds and parts of England. The first tournament in 2012 had intended to protest against the racist incidents of the European Cup the same year. In so doing, it invited 'all communities from Stevenage and Hertfordshire to experience an event which combines sporting excitement with social values of respect, tolerance and integration.'²⁵



The integrative potential by Red Card to Racism in Hertfordshire can be easily demonstrated as it pursued clear aims and strategies. Awareness and recognition was promoted by the overt call to stop racism and by building 'the multi-cultural understanding towards other religions and the cultures' living in the UK.²⁶ Red Card built on links created by children's and adult's engagement in recreational activities, which in turn generated links between and across different communities in Hertfordshire. Red Card thereby created channels for communication and access to local councils. Some funds were secured from local councils and county councils that promoted new initiatives such as the provision of language skills training (supported by the Big Lottery Fund).

Thus, in the terminology above, the spill-over effects of the original self-funded civil society initiatives of a recreational nature built on ethnic bonding and generated bridging capital to open up links to the wider community, and created new opportunities and activities, such as language training.

The Polish Professionals, a self-funded central London-based organisation and network, initiated *Poles are Polls* a few years later in 2007. As indicated by its name, the campaign was devised to raise awareness within and outside of Polish communities, encourage political participation in local elections, and promote recognition of the group by highlighting its contributions to British society. This campaign contained central aspects of successful integration, themes reiterated also in later campaigns (see below): encouraging members to vote and working towards improving the perception of the group stands out as central. With reference to the latter, Polish Professionals distributed key statistics about Polish immigration, for example, on the high employment rates of Poles in the UK. The perception of Poles in the UK was examined by YouGov a few years ago and the figures provide a context for the Polish campaigns as more Poles (68 per cent) had a positive view of Britain than a negative one (25 per cent); more Poles found Britain unwelcoming (45 per cent) than welcoming (37 per cent); and more Poles felt British people had negative views about Poland (50 per cent) than positive ones (39 per cent).²⁷

In terms of social integration, this campaign had clear integrative ambitions and strategies. On the basis of ethnic bonding it approached integration as a two-way process. As a civil society initiative, it helps us understand group-level concerns and ways in which organisations such as Polish Professionals can take on a mentoring role by distributing information in order to facilitate participation.

The campaign *Donate Polish Blood* (2015) accentuated recognition as a central aspect of integration through the discourse of unrequited loyalty by reminding the British public about Polish loyalty and sacrifices during the Second World War. The Polish Blood campaign encouraged blood donations to the National Health Service to demonstrate its continuing loyalty to Britain. Interestingly, this campaign sprang from a proposed strike outside the Houses of Parliament to protest the discrimination facing Polish workers, and to raise awareness about their central contributions to the British labour market.²⁸ However, the strike lacked support and blood donations became a counter-campaign as 2,500 people committed themselves to donate under the motto ‘I don’t strike I save lives. Polish blood’, a campaign reported by the world-press, which also generated donations from other communities.²⁹

The participatory aspect is easily demonstrated by the *Donate Polish blood* campaign and its support for the NHS. This campaign also sprang from the desire for recognition, regrettably in the face of increasing stigmatisation and anti-Polish sentiment mentioned by interviewees of this study.

The British Poles Initiative (2015-2016) is also a self-funded umbrella organisation and network that, on the basis of ethnic bonding, took Polish campaigning to a new level by opening up for online communication with decision makers. The idea was to facilitate communication and participation by making contact easy between Members of Parliament and members of Polish communities (<http://britishpoles.uk>). British Poles created a website through which local MPs could easily be contacted during pre-election campaigning: MPs were identified by residential postcodes, which enabled direct contact and the opportunity to raise private concerns or to use a pre-written letter. One of the co-organisers of the campaign noted that the campaign reached one hundred campaigning MPs of which 45 were later elected.³⁰

The pre-written concerns brought to the local MPs follow patterns of the campaigns above and the concerns raised by the interviewees of this study: asking MPs to promote a positive image of Polish immigration and its contribution to the British economy; asking for support for Polish residents’ indefinite leave to remain in the event of Brexit; asking for Polish loyalty during the Second World War to be acknowledged and asking for help lobbying for the Polish language to remain an A-level subject. Thus, concerns were expressed along more classical lines of identity politics and the protection of rights. Now, the imaginative way

this online campaign was set up enabled easy and direct contact and thereby promoted access, communication and participation, as MPs responded, in turn, to these queries. Notably, the recurring discourse of recognition has been aligned with the annual commemorations of Remembrance Sunday, also honoured within Polish communities.

In sum, different dimensions of, and pathways to integration have been explored for their ability to create bridging channels towards local authorities and councils. The case of Polish campaigns shows that civil society is able to fill a central *intermediary role* in the pursuit of *integrative strategies* by creating *new partnerships* (as in the case of Red Card against Racism and its local council, the *Donate Blood* campaign and the NHS); by *building on mentoring and information strategies* (by promoting participation in local elections by the Polish Professionals and British Poles campaigns) and; by *facilitating channels for communication with local decision-makers* (as in the case of British Poles website for contact with local MPs). Local councils may therefore explore how they *involve and draw on the expertise of civil society representatives in the forming of new partnerships* (considering cultural, recreational social networks and organisations as well as local service providers, local businesses or placements with potential employers). Thus, *surveying existing civil society initiatives*, such as the ones above, would preferably take place when reviewing existing integration policies and strategies.

5 Concluding remarks on socio-political integration and ethnic bonding

This chapter has explored the integrative potential of civil society by highlighting its intermediary role between citizens and the state and the often dismissed resources generated by the ethnic bonding of social capital.

Overall, this study has demonstrated that civil society initiatives (migrant associations, self-organised groups and local organisations based on gender, ethnicity or socioeconomic disadvantage) have an important role to play alongside other central actors such as local councils and authorities, charities, cultural and social centres, local businesses and employers, service providers, schools and trade unions etc. With specific reference to the campaigns on behalf of the Polish communities in the UK, these have created new channels for communication with local authorities.

For the purposes of this chapter a few central points about social integration may be highlighted:

- **First**, diaspora campaigns such as the ones discussed above shed light on central principles of integration and the impact of experiences settling in the UK, the barriers faced, the resilience and coping-strategies with which such hindrances are met, the possibilities sought and the significance of attaining group recognition in face of experienced devaluation.
 - **Second**, civil society initiatives of diaspora groups can generate and mobilise considerable resources on the basis of voluntary resources that include forming new partnerships through novel channels for communication with local leaders, councils and decision-makers. These resources are not unique to the Polish communities and take different forms pending local context, local and national issues.
 - **Third**, civil society initiatives based on ethnic bonding is seemingly also able to play an intermediary role between citizens and the state e.g. by representing members' interests not dissimilar to ways the trade unions contributed towards integrating the working classes into the polity. Civil society initiatives in diverse areas may therefore provide means for creating ties by acting as intermediary between informal networks, formal organisations, civil society representatives and local institutions.
 - **Fourth**, in line with this study, civil society in diverse areas may contribute towards the buffering from negative attitudes and from marginalisation by support service provision. This buffering is of special relevance at a time when the third sector in Britain has become a focus of direct policy engagement in relation to welfare provision and tackling local socio-economic disadvantage. Moreover, a recent report on diversity and representation in the workplace found that ethnic diversity on local authority leadership levels is so low that it 'defies analysis'.³¹ London, in spite of being the most diverse area in Britain, demonstrates a 'less diverse local authority leadership than the FTSE'.³²
 - **Fifth**, with civil society's substantial growth over the last decades³³ there are considerable benefits for local councils to build on existing initiatives and expertise and to collaborate with civil society actors in diverse areas. Thus, thinking imaginatively about ways in which collaborations may be formed through new partnerships, building on mentoring strategies and promoting effective channels for information and communication between various groups and decision-makers may contribute towards meeting demands of access, inclusion, representation and participation. Local councils may hereby facilitate access and communication (to reach and be reached); encourage participation in local decision-making processes and elections (with help of existing civil society networks) and work for the increased representation and recognition on local levels drawing on the expertise of civil society representatives.
- Creating explicit integration strategies adapted to local conditions (if not already in place) taking civil society initiatives into consideration is important. That means, identifying and assessing local conditions for integration with key goals and action points out of an awareness of key local civil society initiatives and networks. It has also been suggested that local platforms are created through the recruitment of local volunteers from existing civil society groups that will help build a consultative, participatory and representative communication.³⁴ These would enable concerns being brought to the attention of local councils. Meaningful social contacts within 'informal associative circles' such as political and civil society organisations may help manage tensions.³⁵
- **Sixth**, having argued for local councils to take civil society initiatives (on the basis of ethno-national ties) seriously, it is important to recognize 'community' and 'diaspora' in the plural with shifting (and sometimes contesting) constellations. This, however, should not deter local councils from building on successful initiatives to promote integration, but success will depend on sensitivity to local constellations and conditions and ambitions to represent the diversity of the local neighborhood. Awareness of local conditions of diversity are, in any case, central to fostering equality of opportunities and civic participation.³⁶
 - **Finally**, the significance of the receiving society context (of economic and political opportunity structures and possibilities for civil society engagement) must also factor in attitudes to migrants. Challenges faced at the local level may be supported by local networks, whereas the lack of networks and communication may block more than interaction, access to decision-making forums, political representation and labour-market opportunities. Promoting communication and contact on local levels is key in reducing the distance between political candidates and the electorate; those who look for work and those who employ and recruit; those in work and those outside the labour-market.³⁷
 - **In sum**, collaborations between local authorities, councils and local civil society initiatives (be they based on age, class, ethnicity, gender or socio-economic conditions) in diverse areas, are of particular relevance since they have the potential of generate links to formal members and informal associates, and influence multiple others. Thus, local collaborations building on existing initiatives may create opportunities for a two-way integration process and promote access, communication, participation and recognition.

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“If you could do one thing...” 10 local actions to promote social integration

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Improving Employment Opportunities for Young BAME People

9



1 Introduction

The first step towards social integration is having a stake in society, as well as a sense of self-worth and belonging. There are many competing definitions of integration, but being socially integrated entails feeling you are contributing to your own independence, as well as to society. It also means attaining the education and professional markers of success of the majority population, and having access to the same opportunities.

Integration should be about mutual enrichment where ethnic diversity is cherished, valued and respected. All cultures possess in some way the dynamism to adapt positively to new economic environments. What can affect this adaptability most is the lack of opportunity and skills development, discrimination in employment, from job application name bias to slow or non-existent professional development and promotion. Equal opportunities for employment and progression should be seen as a crucial pillar of integration, given its key role in determining one's future life chances. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) individuals should be participating at all levels in the UK workforce and should not be disproportionately represented in the poverty, welfare benefits and criminal justice system statistics. Transforming workplaces and working cultures so that access and progression is based on skills, knowledge, potential and experience will lead to improved ethnic integration. Conversely, if we fail to have these discussions, BAME people remain disproportionately in poverty and on low incomes, and we will continue to see ethnically segregated communities.

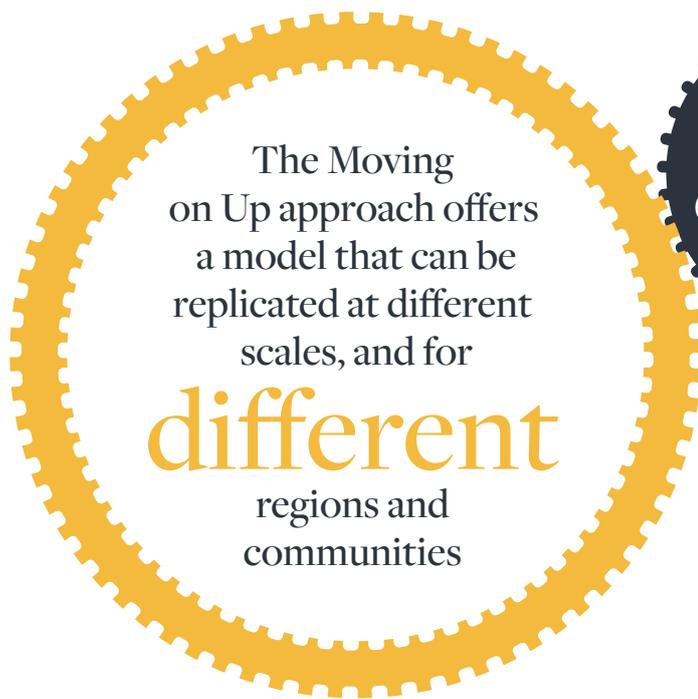
Although there may now be more ethnic minority MPs, councillors, judges and other public servants than ever before,¹ there still remain huge employment gaps for the UK's ethnic minorities. In the private sector, only 8 per cent of FTSE 100 board members are ethnic minorities² although nationally 14 per cent of the working age population come from a BAME background, and this rises to 40 per cent or more in the UK's major cities such as London, Birmingham and soon Manchester.³ 53 companies have no BAME directors at all, and only nine people of colour hold the position of Chair or CEO.⁴ BAME people occupy only 3 per cent of the 1,000 most senior posts in the UK.⁵ BAME graduates earn on average 23 per cent less than their white counterparts.⁶ In fact, regardless of education, pay gaps persist for most minority groups with very little narrowing over time – indeed the situation has worsened for some groups.⁷



This disadvantage is the continuation of a historic pattern within UK employment since the 1970s, when overt racism was more prevalent. There are key differences across different ethnic groups, but in general, Black and Asian workers have consistently faced discrimination for historically 'white collar' (today technical or professional) jobs.⁸ This is despite the knowledge that diversity is good for business. In particular, diversity both of ethnic group and gender has a strong correlation with better financial performance. Companies in the top 25 per cent for ethnic diversity are on average more likely to show returns above the national median for their given industry.⁹ There are many reasons for this – the diversity of cultural backgrounds avoids groupthink, facilitates innovation, helps to access new markets through diverse perspectives, and better represents the makeup of the target market, improving customer relations.

The Government's review into race in the workplace, spearheaded by Baroness McGregor-Smith – the first female ethnic minority CEO of a FTSE company – argues that the time for talking is over. "Employers have got to take control and start making the most of talent, whatever their background". National and regional employers must be incentivised to reflect the UK population in their workforce.

This essay – through examples of the work of the Black Training and Enterprise Group in London – provides an overview of key activities to promote greater local economic inclusion of young BAME people, with a focus on young black boys, towards professional advancement, and thus contribute to the reduction of ethnic disparities in employment. If local authorities, charities – and in particular businesses – could be encouraged to do one thing, it would be to convene employers to hold what might be considered uncomfortable discussions about race and inclusion. The logical next step is to increase mentoring, paid internships and apprenticeships for BAME young people. This is the first step towards the long-term transformation of workplaces, and ensuring that all forms of employment discrimination – including structural bias – are no longer the norm.



2 The Moving on Up partnership

The Black Training and Enterprise Group's (BTEG) focus is on young people aged 11-30 with the goal of seeing all young people, and especially young BAME people, leaving the education system with good GCSEs, A Levels and degrees, as well as securing good employment opportunities, including apprenticeships.

BTEG is a national charity committed to removing barriers to the labour market for young BAME people, and part of the current focus is to understand the experiences of one of the most socially and economically marginalised groups - young black men - and do everything possible to transform their situation. If we can find the most effective ways to integrate young black men into the workforce, we can apply this targeted approach to other marginalised groups such as Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, other BAME people, those with disabilities and learning disabilities, migrants and refugees, as well as those experiencing intersectional issues.

If we could do one thing, it would be to bring together groups of employers by their sector in a given region, city or local authority, to focus on their experiences of trying to recruit young black men, to work with them over a two- or three-year period to increase the number of young black men in their respective sector, and help to increase the BAME employment rate overall.

In 2014, Trust for London, City Bridge Trust and BTEG formed a partnership called Moving on Up to increase the employment rate for young black men in London over a two year period to match the employment rate for young white men.¹⁰ Six local employment brokerage organisations were awarded grants totalling £800,000 to help young black men into work and, importantly, to help BTEG extract 'learning' about the process of engaging and connecting young black men with employers.

We already knew a lot about the experiences of young black men in education and the process of looking for work. BTEG spoke with many of these men in London jobcentres and community groups, and they all said the main barrier for them was employer bias/discrimination, often based on negative stereotypes of young black men. At the time of this research the unemployment rate for young black men in the UK was 50 per cent, more than double that of young white men.¹¹ Even among graduates in London, the current unemployment rate for young black graduates is 18 per cent, compared to 10 per cent for white British graduate men.¹²

The Moving on Up approach to addressing this offers a model that can be replicated at different scales, and for different regions and communities. This approach involves collaboration with multiple stakeholders, effective monitoring and evaluation, a localised area-led approach, and getting the right partners involved at the local level in the first place.

Phase One of the Moving on Up programme ended in July 2017. Over the lifetime of the programme Moving on Up supported almost 300 young black men into jobs and saw the unemployment rate for young black men in London decrease from 15 per cent (for the period January to December 2014) to 11 per cent (for the period January to December 2016).¹³ We cannot determine whether Moving on Up played a direct role in this reduction, but the programme certainly identified a clear set of learning points about why young black men need additional support, what that support should look like, how it should be delivered and who needs to be involved to make this work.

Key learning from Moving on Up Phase One includes:

- **Young black men face more challenges than most other jobseekers.** They are more likely to live in low income households, have been excluded from school, lack key qualifications and to have a criminal record. Most lack social capital – the networks of personal contacts that can help young people get started in their careers. They face negative stereotyping from the media and often from employers. Most Moving on Up participants who were asked about this reported first hand experiences of discrimination in their job search or had witnessed this among their friends or family.
- **There are no quick fixes.** Many young black men lack the confidence to seek a job and the resilience to deal with the setbacks that all jobseekers encounter. Intensive and long-term support is needed to help them into employment.
- A majority of participants started the Moving on Up programme with **very high aspirations** for their future employment. Lack of aspiration is not what prevents young black men from securing good jobs.
- **A targeted approach** helped to attract and engage young black men. Many of the young men who participated took part because it was explicitly focused on young black men.
- **Engaging with** employers is essential but challenging. Employers make the decisions about who to employ, so are critical to tackling the continuing disparity in employment rates for young black men. The Moving on Up programme found that direct contact with employers helped to improve confidence and motivation, increased the young men's social capital and sometimes led to job offers. However, getting employers to engage with the programme was a huge challenge.
- **Focusing on** a distinct locality appears to be most successful for engaging and supporting young black men, for example in Hackney where the Moving on Up project operated within a place-based framework which brings together the key agencies who work with or influence outcomes for young black men. Critical local agencies include JobCentre Plus, local authorities, third sector organisations and employers.¹⁴
- **Building on** these learning points, the Moving on Up partnership is moving into a second phase of the programme. Moving on Up Phase Two, beginning in October 2017, focusses on developing collective impact partnerships at local level and establishing employer-led working groups for sectors where young black men remain particularly under-represented, including in construction and financial services.



3 Conclusions

Two years on we have learnt that employers are very reluctant to talk about young black men and it is extremely difficult to bring together a group of employers from the same sector to talk about employment and young black men.

Even in the London Borough of Hackney, where the council has made young black men one of their strategic priority groups, a call out to 22,000 employers to attend meetings about creating more local employment opportunities for young black men only drew a handful of employers. This is not an isolated example. The Government received responses from 74 of the FTSE 100 companies, but only half of those able to offer pertinent information. The vast majority simply do not collect the data.¹⁵ Part of the problem reported is that employees mistrust self-declaring ethnicity, fearing backlash and discrimination. This is not to say that once we have the data, the solutions will emerge easily.

This goes to the root of the problem around integration and tests whether our communities do have any capacity to identify shared problems and find practical solutions. In 2016, the Moving on Up partners commissioned message testing with focus groups comprised of London small or medium enterprises (SMEs).¹⁶ While the employers that participated were not a representative sample of London SMEs, they were drawn from a range of sectors, were male and female and were mainly white. The employers did provide some valuable insights in their thinking about diversity and young black men. Many of the employers when asked did not instantly associate diversity with ethnicity - gender, disability, and even skills diversity were all front of mind, whereas ethnicity had to be teased out. Even then, some viewed too much ethnic diversity in a company as bringing its own risks. There was recognition of the negative stereotypes about young black men - one employer stated that even if he were to employ a young black man, he would have to ‘work 110 per cent harder’ than anyone else to ‘prove himself’. These were companies in London, where BAME people constitute 43 per cent of the population. Young black men in London make up around 20 per cent of all young men in London.¹⁷ This is why social integration and cohesion matter so much, and why we need to move the dial on this issue.

Clearly despite half a century of legislation, codes of practice, the moral and business cases being made, and, today, the focus on unconscious bias, we still have many employers either unwilling or unable to talk confidently about BAME people and what they can do to make their companies open to ethnic diversity at all levels.

If we had to pick only one thing that Moving on Up has demonstrated about how to improve employment opportunities for BAME people in the UK, it is that employers are key. Engaging employers across the UK within similar tailored support programmes for young black men, or for other ethnic minority groups facing barriers to labour market entry and progression, would help to counter the disadvantages and lack of opportunities which BAME people encounter at every stage of their working lives. Direct involvement in this type of local initiative gives employers the confidence to talk about ethnic diversity and to take action within their own companies to open up access to networks, role models and mentors, apprenticeships, employment and leadership opportunities. The resultant labour market integration will be a vital element of social integration.

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Opportunities for Civil Society Through Race Equality Scorecards

10



1 Introduction

This chapter outlines Runnymede’s ‘Race Equality Scorecard’ project as an intervention to improve integration in Britain.

It explains the background to the project, what the Scorecard involves, challenges in implementing it, and finally how the project connects to wider debates and policies on racial inequalities and integration. In the context of the Government’s Race Disparity Audit¹, the Scorecard may be viewed as a ‘local race disparity audit’, or rather a template for how Government could progress from publishing data on racial disparities, to tackling those inequalities at a local level.

2 Background: using data to measure discrimination and integration

The UK is somewhat distinctive in Europe for collecting data on race and ethnicity. This development is directly linked to the passage of race relations legislation outlawing discrimination, especially in housing, the labour market, and the provision of public services.

Although ethnicity was not asked on the Census until 1991², following years of campaigning by Runnymede and others, the Government commissioned surveys as early as 1965 to measure the nature of discrimination³. This approach of measuring the data on racial discrimination has therefore long been a part of the British legal, as well as sociological, approach to discrimination and integration.

If it is true that without measurement we do not know the scale or nature of the problem, it is also true that measurement alone cannot explain why a problem persists, how to frame that problem, or still less what to do about it. Measurement has been particularly challenging in the case of integration, even as the proliferation of ‘big data’ as a process, and ‘data transparency’ as a policy offer opportunities for better measurement and understanding.

In response to these challenges and opportunities, Runnymede has developed its ‘Race Equality Scorecard’ project.

The Scorecard Project’s aim is to generate dialogue and accountability at a local level surrounding issues of ethnic inequality. Many of the data sets examined at a local level echo national patterns of inequality and disadvantage. However, in order to address these inequalities, action must be taken at a sub-national level. For public sector organisations to take effective action in reducing inequality they must first recognise that race is a salient actor in residents’ experiences of accessing services and their outcomes.

3 Racial inequalities as barriers to integration

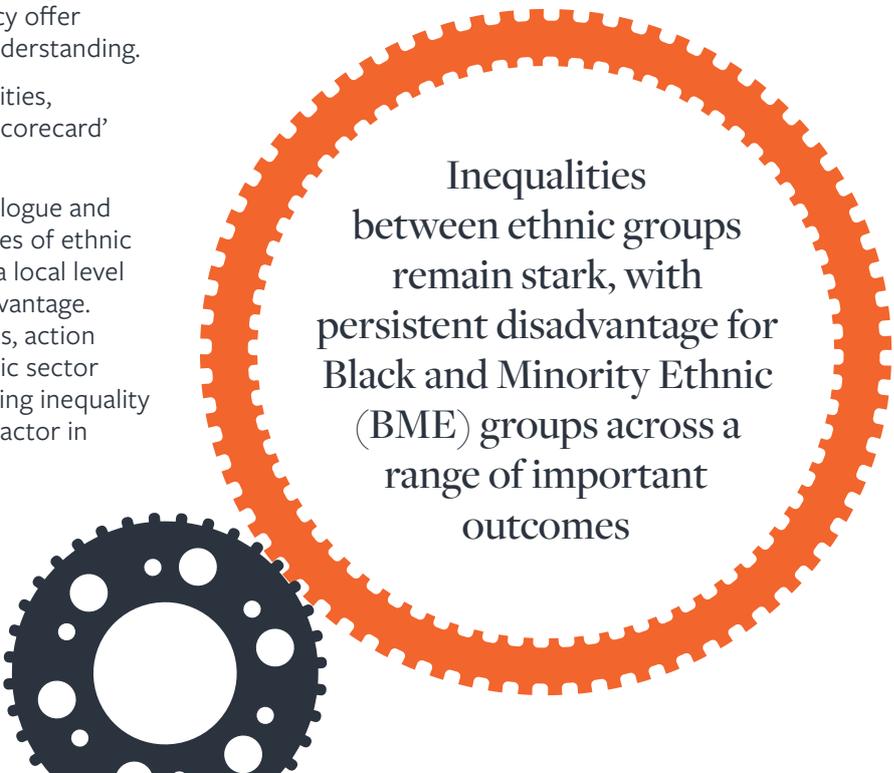
The Scorecard is explicitly designed to measure racial inequalities. This is because the evidence suggests tackling racial inequalities is the best and most sustainable route to integration.⁴

If people cannot interact as equals – where one person has greater status or otherwise determines the conditions of interaction – integration is infeasible.

This point has been historically understood by policymakers, who in response to ‘No Dogs, No Black, No Irish’ signs implemented legislation banning discrimination in housing in the 1968 Race Relations Act. It would have made little sense to ask tenants to meet landlords to see how they might break down barriers and achieve integration where those landlords refused to allow those tenants to live on their property.

While social attitudes and outcomes have undoubtedly improved over the past five decades, racial inequalities remain a major barrier to integration nationally, and limit opportunities locally.

Inequalities between ethnic groups remain stark, with persistent disadvantage for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups across a range of important outcomes. Evidence from the 1991, 2001 and 2011 Censuses of Population – an invaluable resource for exploring long-term patterns across the whole population – sheds light on the severity of these inequalities.⁵ As examples, during this period: the proportion of Indian, Pakistani and Black Caribbean ethnic groups in private rental accommodation more than doubled⁶; limiting long-term illness rates have been 10 times higher for Pakistani and Bangladeshi compared to White women⁷; and, despite improvements in educational attainment for BME groups in the period⁸, labour market disadvantages have persisted – for example, Black Caribbean and African men aged 25-49 had more than double the rates of unemployment of those of White men⁹.



Inequalities between ethnic groups remain stark, with persistent disadvantage for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups across a range of important outcomes



Such ethnic inequalities are found not just at the national level, but there are considerable local differences in BME life chances.¹⁰ This geography of disadvantage is pertinent when we explore variability in labour market outcomes.¹¹ As examples: concentrated pockets of unemployment are notable for the Black African group in most major urban areas, including in London and parts of the north of England, and in the North West for the Pakistani group. The Black Caribbean group has high unemployment in parts of London, and Birmingham and the North East. London, Birmingham and parts of several areas in northern England have particularly high rates of unemployment for the Bangladeshi ethnic group. Indeed, Birmingham features amongst the top five local authorities for unemployment for multiple ethnic groups (including Indian, Pakistani, Chinese and Black African).¹² Since deprivation, disadvantage and discrimination are experienced at the local level, greater sensitivity to these geographical differences is essential to properly understand the barriers some communities are facing.

There can be no doubt that we live in a deeply unequal society and that significant obstacles to local integration persist. While ethnic residential segregation has decreased within most local authority districts of England and Wales for all ethnic minority groups, and there is also increased residential mixing between the White British group and BME groups¹³, there remain relatively high levels of geographic clustering in some neighbourhoods. For many, these clusters will constitute ‘positive’ segregation¹⁴ shaped by the pull of familial ties and other supportive networks, and cultural and religious specialised amenities – a reflection of neighbourhood attachment, identity and belonging. However, for some, neighbourhood choice may be severely limited by inequalities of opportunity – a ‘negative’ segregation created by barriers for residential mobility brought about by poor labour and housing market opportunities, or fear of racism and intolerance outside one’s own neighbourhood. The relationships between ethnic segregation and inequalities in education, employment, housing and health are complex and vary between dimensions, and more evidence is needed on the interplay between the two.¹⁵

4 Race Equality Scorecard: what does it involve?

Undertaken at the local authority level, the Scorecard Project has three main features, designed to ensure greater impact than a mere data collection exercise.

First, Runnymede choose existing metrics that collect ethnicity data at a local level, and that are longitudinal – so change over time can be measured. Runnymede also seek to present and explain these data in a clear, accessible way.

Just as important are the second and third features, which focus on engagement. For each scorecard Runnymede seek to partner with a local race equality organisation, or a local organisation that works directly and collaboratively with BME people. Third, and finally, Runnymede seek to work with the local authority itself, requesting their assessment of the data, and possible ideas or policies for reducing any inequalities the Scorecard Project illuminates.

Working in this way is crucial not just for understanding local racial inequality data, but for enabling local people – local authorities, civil society organisations, or even local residents – to use these data effectively over the longer term, and to hold their local authority to account.

In recent years, austerity policies have led to major reductions in public spending, leading councils and other public sector organisations to make difficult financial decisions. Local authorities have a legal duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics. As local authorities develop proposals regarding the reduction of services, it is crucial that they consider the needs of all members of the community.

The Race Equality Scorecard brings together quantitative evidence on seven key indicators to help inform the decision-making process of public authorities, and equip local communities with the tools necessary to hold them to account. This is collated into a Race Equality Scorecard Report, which includes data on outcomes for different BME groups by sampling data in the following seven areas:

- Education
- Employment
- Housing
- Health
- Criminal justice
- Civic participation
- Support for the BME voluntary sector

In 2013, the Runnymede Trust ran a pilot Race Equality Scorecard Project in three London boroughs: Croydon, Kingston, and Redbridge. The purpose of the scorecard was to enable BME communities to enter into a meaningful dialogue with their local authority and partners, to assess its performance, and to help identify what the local priorities for race equality were. The Scorecard facilitated a better understanding of the pressures, identified key areas where change is both necessary and feasible, and created an opportunity to work together to make a difference.

The Scorecard Project is being further delivered in 2017 in Sutton, Barking & Dagenham, Hackney, Haringey, and refreshed in the three pilot boroughs.

Local councils are currently experiencing substantial cuts from Central Government. These cuts are having a significant impact on the role councils are playing in the provision of services. In this context, it is even more important that close attention is paid to ensuring all local residents are treated equally and are able to flourish. The Runnymede Trust’s budget briefing highlighted the ways in which the effects of austerity policies, directly or indirectly, increase racial inequality.¹⁶

In each Scorecard Report, Runnymede has provided a brief interpretation of the data in each of the seven indicators. The interpretation is followed by responses from the public sector and local stakeholders. Finally, there is discussion of the findings and a brief outline of the next steps.

Runnymede have strived to obtain the most robust data possible for the project and are indebted to numerous officials and employees for their help; these include various local voluntary organisations and local authorities, but also other public sector bodies such as the Metropolitan Police and clinical commissioning groups.



5 Impact and challenges

The Scorecard Project has been viewed very favourably by local authorities, as well as local community and race equality organisations. It has improved understanding of racial inequalities locally, but also encouraged authorities to seek to reduce these.

In Sutton, where there was a strong partnership between the Runnymede Trust, Sutton CVS and Sutton Council, the scorecard generated a wide discussion on the successes and failures of the local authority in meeting the needs of its rapidly growing BME population. This included commitments from the leader of the council and service leads to address institutional racism and coproduce innovative solutions to local problems with communities. One example is working with local faith institutions to ensure they are able to signpost communities to psychological therapy services available alongside any faith-based support being offered.

The Scorecard led to awareness of inequality, but more importantly created an opportunity to better understand the journey and experiences of BME residents. As a result, service planning can be more responsive to, and effective at, tackling racial disadvantage.

The principle behind the scorecard is not to provide a fine-grained analysis of public sector outcomes in any one local authority. Rather, it aims to highlight the salience of race in BME people's experiences and to stimulate policy solutions that respond to this reality. Individual public sector organisations are encouraged to monitor internal data sources to target their delivery better. Effective partnership with local BME organisations was crucial to ensuring the Scorecard Project was not simply a data exercise.

There have been some challenges in implementing the Scorecard. First is that publicly available data collected at local authority level by ethnicity are still somewhat limited. Second is that resource constraints pose a challenge both for local authorities but even more so for race equality organisations, few of whom now exist in the UK.

These challenges are not limited to the Scorecard Project, but extend to any local interventions on integration. If we need local authorities and people to interact locally, but the resources or forums for that interaction are weak or non-existent, then it is more difficult to see how the opportunity of localism can become a reality. And if the evidence shows that integration requires that we tackle longstanding and persistent inequalities, that challenge becomes greater still.

In response, the Scorecard can be more successful with three conditions: that there is well-resourced and sustainable civil society organisation on race equality; that local authorities have adequate policy, research and analytical understanding of racial inequalities; and, finally, that Central Government itself has a clear commitment to, and strategy on, reducing racial inequalities. The Race Equality Scorecard Project has demonstrated the extensive good will and opportunities in relation to the first two conditions, while the third is required for any integration policy – local or national – to be a long-term success.

The Scorecard Project has been designed and implemented by the Runnymede Trust, with support from the Trust for London, and can be replicated in any region. All that is required is a willingness to engage from both the public sector and local civil society organisations and regular examination of the data.



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6 Conclusion

The race relations acts that were first passed over five decades ago were necessary because English Common Law did not protect people from acts of discrimination.

Perhaps as great an innovation as the free-standing protection against discrimination was the focus on data collection to chart and ultimately combat that discrimination. Collecting these data remain necessary to understand the nature of racial inequalities locally and nationally, and to design appropriate integration policies in response. The scorecard indicates how the Government could now move from the data collection exercise of its important Race Disparity Audit, to tackling those inequalities – and linking this explicitly with its forthcoming integration strategy. Integration and community cohesion receive a lot of attention in the media, but also from Government and local authorities. The race equality scorecard shows that the persistence of ethnic inequalities and unequal outcomes or access to services is a major barrier to integration. By understanding and addressing local ethnic inequalities, the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities are better met and their life chances are improved, thus providing the conditions for successful integration.

Useful links

Race Equality Scorecard Project homepage, including links to reports: <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/projects-and-publications/parliament/scorecard.html>

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The Role of Universities in Supporting a Community Asset Approach¹

11



1 Introduction

Recent discussions around social integration have revolved around emphasising the lack of integration, especially in deprived communities; the challenges that it poses; and how to foster a sense of cohesion in local communities. Most have emphasised the lack of integration.

In this context, integrated communities are perceived almost as an ideal goal and as something that British society should aspire to, despite sometimes lacking clear guidance as to what such communities would look like. Definitions of what constitutes an integrated community are rare,² but here we use the broad concept espoused by recent policy documents that emphasise the importance of “communities [coming] together to do practical, everyday things will bridge divisions”³, “[cultivating] meaningful social contact between communities”⁴, and “[building] more cohesive communities”.⁵ While personal relationships are largely a result of individual choices, both policy stakeholders and the general public see a need to promote integration via fostering meaningful and positive interactions between different ethnic groups, established and new migrant communities, particularly at the local level.⁶

In this essay, we suggest that a possible practical action to encourage social inclusion and cohesion is the development of close collaborations between Universities and other local actors (primarily Local Authorities and Third Sector) with the aim to support a community asset approach. Already implemented in various fields (e.g. health, ageing⁷), the community asset approach “values the capacity, skills, knowledge, connections and potential in a community”⁸ and focusses on community-based resources to generate positive social change rather than weaknesses or needs. Inspired by Antonovsky’s salutogenic theory⁹, which emphasises the importance of focussing on positive viewpoints when it comes to health (e.g. resources and capabilities) rather than on more negative views of illness¹⁰, the community asset approach is not new in itself. However, the main novelty is that it transposes these ideas from individuals into communities in order to respond to a push toward recognising the importance of supporting initiatives involving local communities/local associations/local activists, in partnership with other actors, to tackle relevant social issues (e.g. public health). The community asset approach is, however, seen as an added-value to existing frameworks and structures, and not merely a replacement of investment, which is quite important to emphasise. We see a clear connection between community asset approach and social integration. By creating opportunities and spaces for people to come together and address shared relevant issues locally, the community asset approach facilitates and promotes interpersonal contacts as well as active civic engagement, which are both crucial aspects of integration, linked to feelings of belonging and identity, social mixing, acceptance and equal opportunities.¹¹

A crucial element in the community asset framework is not only the emphasis on skills that are already present in the community, but also the importance of sharing and further developing these skills and knowledge through mutual learning and capacity-building.¹² This can allow local communities to become active partners in the delivery of health and other services and feeling empowered by such activities. These assets need to, however, be mapped, built, measured, developed, examined, and appraised¹³ for the approach to be effective and/or transferable across localities or time. Thus, in order to succeed, the implementation of a community asset approach requires a large amount of knowledge, skills, capability and expertise that may not be readily available within local communities. It also raises many methodological and practical issues and challenges that need serious consideration. This is where, in our opinion, it is important to make sure that all local actors that can support the exchange of expertise and skills, including Universities, are involved. Therefore, we think that close partnerships between Local Authorities/Third Sector organisations and Universities would play a crucial role in favouring the exchange of expertise between all these different actors. It would ultimately help not only strengthen skills and knowledge, but also co-produce meaningful social research, which can be then used by local communities to come together and mobilise, as well as bridge existing gaps.

The essay briefly presents results from research we conducted with policy stakeholders and members of the public about immigrant integration,¹⁴ which highlights the need for more community-based activities to be implemented to foster social inclusion at the local level. It then describes in detail a type of action that could be used to promote links between communities and Universities. This is based on our direct experience working on a project that brought together University of Manchester and Third Sector partners to co-produce a pilot programme of research methods training events specifically targeting local community organisations.¹⁵

We argue that local policy actors and Universities should partner in the implementation of a community asset approach tackling social integration. Our contribution focusses on how these different actors can, and should, be involved in this process, particularly with regard to knowledge and skills exchange programmes. We believe that given the increasing move toward localism and devolution in debates about social integration and the growing cuts to public services in a context of austerity, an approach toward community integration that involves close partnerships between various local actors and the multilateral exchange of expertise that includes and focusses on the strengths of communities rather than their failings is one way forward to foster community integration.



2 Bringing communities together: policy and public views

In the research that we undertook in 2015 with policy stakeholders and members of the public in Glasgow and Manchester¹⁶, the idea that integration happens locally rather than nationally was emphasised especially by local policy stakeholders.

Many conversations revolved around the practical implementation of integration, with local actors (quite often Local Authorities) being in charge of developing and implementing a range of actions. For some, integration is a process not only concerning individuals, but also local communities:

“ I think of integration now, not as something that involves these groups and people interacting and moving towards a different and a better place, but as something that happens to and in places. And it's not the people that get integrated it's the places that become integrated places. Cities in particular I am thinking of. But obviously, one should be able to extend this to places, localities that are not cities. (...) And, the definition of integration with which I now feel most comfortable is that we should think about places integrating, not people integrating”

**National policy stakeholder,
interviewed January 2015**

The importance of developing strategies for integration that involve local residents, communities and groups being provided with tools and resources by Local Authorities to ‘spontaneously’ enact change was also stressed. This approach resonates quite strongly with the community asset approach discussed above. In particular, what emerged here is the idea that a ‘bottom-up’ approach to integration going from local communities to local governments to national government, and where actions are not imposed ‘from above’ but generated ‘on the ground’ is a way to implement actions in a more effective, tailored and positive way.

This is not to say that this emphasis on the local was seen as the only solution. Interviewees emphasised the important role that upper levels of government play in integration (and in any other domains directly relating to it), especially with regard to, for example, the provision of financial resources:

“ There is a change in attitude of the local councils and organisations to work more, but there isn't enough money and resources to go around to do the work. So individuals have made the changes, but there isn't enough support in terms of funding and other resources from central government for the staff members to use their experience and say, okay, I would like to do this, this and this with this pot of money. But I must add that councils and other organisations are definitely trying to reach out and find the genuine need within communities and give funding to them”

**Local policy stakeholder, interviewed
January 2015**

The importance of overall strategic guidance and national-level steering (albeit in a ‘light touch’ kind of way) was also emphasised:*

“There’s no real coherence to it. It’s done very reactively. That has a big impact on the public confidence point, which is critical, I think, for integration, and it means that public services struggle and you have this situation of flare-ups in communities. So I think, yeah, that’s what you lose when you don’t have that sort of national overview.”

National policy stakeholder,
interviewed March 2015

“I think that sort of centralised top down ‘we have a British definition of integration and you’re all going to oblige and we’ll monitor you’, probably isn’t the most helpful.”

National policy stakeholder,
interviewed March 2015

Among the members of the public engaged in the focus groups, the localised approach was also keenly felt, but a community asset approach was not necessarily as clearly spelled out. Respondents, however, expressed need for local communities to incorporate common, neutral spaces where residents can come together, learn, seek advice and support, and socialise. Such spaces were seen as appropriate places either to link with people from the community, or to help facilitate contact between various individuals and groups (either via providing opportunities for and/or tools to facilitate contact). Within these proposed activities, the need for various levels of government to provide these spaces and opportunities was emphasised.

3 Engaging Universities: the ‘Knowing-how’ case study

One of the fundamental principles of the community asset approach is the idea of capacity-building. Skills and knowledge do exist in local communities. However, these have to be supported and further developed in order to give people the opportunity not only to become more aware of their own abilities and potential both as individuals and as communities, but also to help them make use of existing and new expertise to mobilise and produce social change.

Our view is that in order to maximise knowledge exchange opportunities and widen the range of skills that can be shared within communities, it is important that Universities are involved in these processes. These institutions are indeed a good source of knowledge and skills especially with regard to research methods expertise and can fit a framework of co-production. This is especially relevant given Universities’ social responsibility agendas requiring that higher education institutions act “in an ethical and transparent way that contributes to the health and welfare of society”.¹⁷

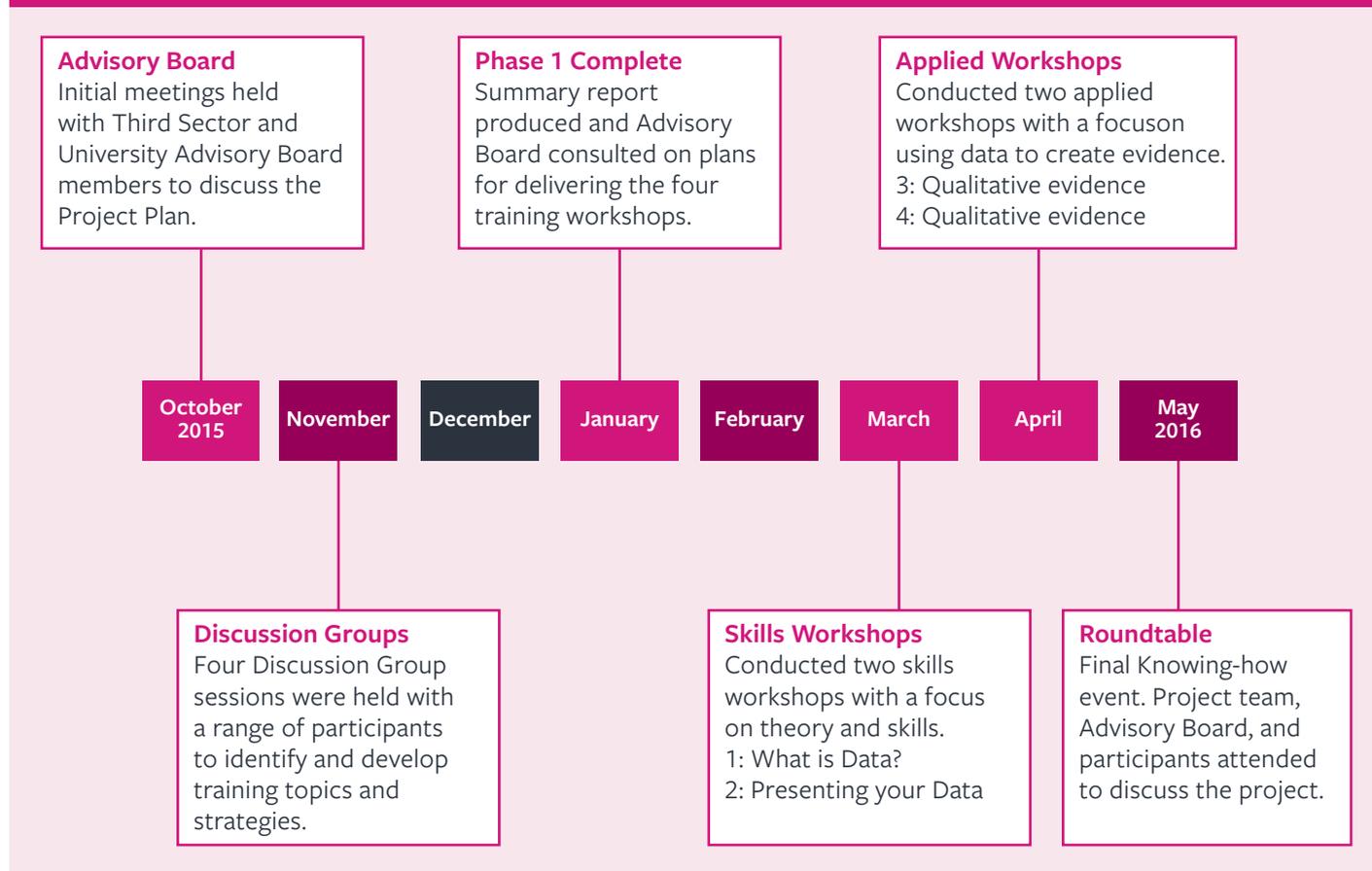
We base this argument on the *Knowing-How* project that was conducted at the University of Manchester in 2015-2016.¹⁸ This was borne out of training events organised under the umbrella of the *Unity out of Diversity* project where we introduced non-academic audiences with the (now defunct) Office for National Statistics’ ‘Neighbourhood Statistics’ website, a tool to gather various statistics about local areas.** The training was devised in order to help local organisations gain the basic skills necessary to use various statistics in their everyday work. With the *Knowing-How* project, however, we wanted to further involve local organisations in the process of building and delivering such training. As explained in the final project report, *Knowing-how*

“Brought together University expertise and Third Sector knowledge to develop and provide a series of free training events [in social research methods] specifically targeting community organisations in the Greater Manchester area. (...) At the core of the project was the aim to create and strengthen connections between and within the University and the Third Sector and, more generally, stimulate a more collaborative environment that could mutually benefit both parties and possibly create opportunities for more to be developed in the future, not only about training but also research.”¹⁹

* See Ch 1 p8 by Ted Cattle

** See Ch 10 p81 by Omar Khan and Gemma Catney

Figure 1: Timeline of the Knowing-How project²⁰



As shown in **Figure 1**, the project entailed a range of activities. During the first few months (Oct 2015-Jan 2016), we focussed on gathering as much information as possible on existing training needs among local community organisations. This exercise was developed in two main ways. First of all, we created an Advisory Board bringing together the three Third Sector partners and three University of Manchester representatives. The board meetings helped us gather expert insights into what the main needs, challenges and opportunities are for both Third Sector and the University when it comes to social research methods training. Secondly, we organised a series of discussion groups involving more representatives from local community organisations and the University (both staff and students). The groups were advertised through the University and Third Sector partners’ mailing lists and websites, and were attended by 24 participants (7 from community organisations, 16 from the University and 1 person was affiliated to both). Through these activities it was possible to collect a wealth of ideas and views about training needs, contents, techniques and methods primarily based on previous, direct experience of community organisations and academic researchers working together to carry out research or provide training.

The information gathered in the first phase of the project was then used to design four training events. These workshops took place over two days in March and April 2016 and each lasted 3 hours. Their focus was very much on practical social research skills and resources that could be used to support the work of community organisations. More specifically, we divided the four events into two Skills and two Applied events.

The main focus of the Skills workshops, which were run first, was to teach ‘skills’, “i.e. how to use the methods and resources presented”.²¹ These included an overview of methods that can be used to collect qualitative and quantitative data; online resources to access existing Census and survey data; and tools to analyse and present findings from quantitative and qualitative data (Excel, online platforms). The Applied workshops focussed on similar tools and methods but were designed to help participants “reflect on how these skills can be applied practically to actual research needs and interests”.²² In this case, we primarily used practical examples and case studies from our own research. Plenty of time was given to participants to use each tool, data and method but also to think about and discuss how these can be applied to specific needs and interests in their organisations. Given their more applied approach, these two sessions were designed in close collaboration with the Third Sector partners, and particularly GMCVO and Macc, which directly contributed to the training by explaining important concepts (such as Social Value) and how empirical evidence can be used effectively in commissioning and to support funding applications.

They also helped manage and direct the group discussion and practical exercises. Overall, 27 people attended the workshops – 12 took part in one or more workshops, with the majority participating in either only Skills or Applied events.

The final stage of the project entailed an open roundtable (Manchester Central Library, May 2016), which was attended by the academic and Third Sector advisory board members, discussion groups and training events participants, and representatives of the Cathie Marsh Institute for Social Research. This event was an opportunity to share and discuss with the audience the ideas and views collected since the beginning of the project about co-producing social research methods training as well as the experience of designing and delivering the training events.

We also faced some challenges. One is that of the resources, both in terms of time and finance, that both University and Third Sector have to put in place in order to sustain co-produced training programmes. This aspect is important for short-term initiatives, but is also likely to affect the long-term sustainability of these collaborations. Another challenge we faced is linked to the limited reach of the training workshops (i.e. relatively low numbers of participants). Further discussions with Third Sector partners highlighted the fact that this might be due to the difficulty of establishing the size and type target audience (i.e. community organisations and their training needs), as well as of devising more effective branding, marketing and dissemination strategies.

4 Evaluation

The project facilitated the creation and development of links both within and between University and Third Sector representatives.

This was made possible through the advisory board meetings, the discussion groups, the training events and the final roundtable. These events indeed helped creating a space where the project participants (university management, staff and postgraduate students; grassroots community and infrastructure organisations) had the opportunity to exchange experiences and discuss co-production of methods training and research. Feedback collected from participants at the end and 1.5 months after each training workshop also revealed that the four training events were positively received and provided participants with relevant research skills, particularly with regard to thinking about how data can be used strategically and effectively by Third Sector organisations.



Feedback revealed that the four training events were positively received and provided participants with relevant research skills

It is important to make sure that co-production is based on equal partnership which proves to be mutually beneficial for all those involved

5 Recommendations on co-producing training

Based on these successes and challenges as well as the feedback received by University and Third Sector representatives through advisory board meetings, discussion groups, training workshops and final roundtable, we were able to identify some core recommendations.²³

First of all, it is important to make sure that co-production is based on equal partnership which proves to be mutually beneficial for all those involved (Universities and Third Sector), not only in terms of training delivered/received but also with regard to developing new, strong networks between and within academic and non-academic partners. Secondly, adequate funds and infrastructures should be made available by either/both Universities or/and the Third Sector so that both parties can actively and effectively take part in the co-production process. Thirdly, co-production partnerships, particularly when it comes to training, would benefit from close collaborations with Third Sector infrastructure/umbrella organisations, given their specific expertise in supporting community organisations, and should primarily target small grassroots organisations, which generally have fewer resources available. Finally, the Knowing-how experience provides a good example of how methods training initiative could be co-produced as short-term, one-off initiatives. However, the creation of long-term programmes of collaboration between Third Sector and Universities would require the presence of a central broker based at the University and focussed on partnership working with the Third Sector.

6 Conclusion

When thinking about fostering social integration at the local level, we think that a strategy fostering local capabilities such as the community asset approach is worth looking into. This is, after all, an approach that appears to be preferred by policy stakeholders as well as the general public. As mentioned, this has been already implemented in other fields and there is thus a wide range of expertise and good practice that can be explored. We argue that fostering closer collaborations with Universities, especially with regard to providing their expertise in research methods, would be beneficial for implementing such an approach.

Of course, there are potential challenges that arise from this action. In more general terms, implementing partnerships with local groups and individuals with different interests and needs does require important investments. It is also the case, however, that such endeavours may not be easily implemented without additional financial resources, or may require mapping to see whether existing infrastructures can fulfil this need. Yet, at least as a starting point, seeing how building capacity with existing resources and commitments to engagement with local communities, especially if looking for other examples of good practice, can be explored and can be, we believe, beneficial for all.

Social integration requires involvement from many strata within British society, and working collaboratively in a way that emphasises strengths rather than weaknesses of all those involved from communities to local institutions and actors should be the way forward.



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- 18 In addition to us, the core project team was composed by Dr Jackie Carter and Patty Doran. Three Third Sector partners were: Yvonne Fox-Burmby (Programme Manager) and Susanne Martikke (Researcher) at the Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisation (GMCVO); Nigel Rose (Strategic Lead - Commissioning) at Manchester Community Central (Macc); Jennifer Rouse (Associate Director) at the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES). University of Manchester advisory board representatives included Prof Maja Zehfuss, Associate Dean for Postgraduate Research, Faculty of Humanities; Prof Ken McPhail, Associate Dean, Social Responsibility; Dr Tine Buffel, Research Fellow, Cathie Marsh Institute for Social Research/Sociology.
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- 23 It is important to note that the project report containing the final recommendations summarised here was written by the academic team at the University but reviewed and agreed by the three Third Sector partners sitting on the advisory board.

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