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Migrants and Refugees: Exploring Integration Models in Canada and Norway

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For Ken

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Along with those individuals I met, I owe special thanks to the following organisations for helping to shape my understanding of how migrant and refugee integration works in Canada and Norway. In Canada: MOSAIC, Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia (ISSofBC), Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture (VAST), and DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society. In Norway: Ullern Frivilligsentral, Norway Supports Refugees, Oslo Red Cross, Bergen Red Cross, Intercultural Cities Programme, IMDi, and Papillon.

Finally, it is my hope that the findings contained in this report may be of use to those currently involved in working with migrants and refugees, whether that is through policy planning, service design or delivery. The value of travelling to other countries to explore migrant and refugee integration is that it allows for new ideas and perspectives to be brought back and applied in practice. In the spirit of Churchill Fellowships, it is by learning from other countries around the world that we can help our communities at the local level, essentially creating benefits for all of us.

3. Executive Summary

The aim of this Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship was to explore models of migrant and refugee integration in Canada and Norway. Of particular interest to the research was to investigate how each country had responded to the challenge of integration given their different socio-cultural, political and economic frameworks (and their influence on migration policies), and to find examples of best practice that can be shared with service providers and policymakers in the UK as a way to enhance service delivery.

Both countries offered unique approaches and aside from the key markers of integration, namely language and employment, tended to prioritise their focus in different ways. For Canada this was about ways that promote citizenship and belonging over a longer trajectory, strongly influenced through policy discourse, whilst for Norway this was about the promotion of volunteering and strengthening civic bonds (based on the ideology of solidarity) through their Introduction Program.

As a manager of a migrant and refugee advocacy service located in the Highlands of Scotland, the focus for the research was on exploring statutory and third sector service provision in both countries, so that the findings can be used to build agency and enhance wellbeing for migrants and refugees but also so that they can be used to build social capital and strengthen social cohesion at the local level.

Aims

- To explore existing models of migrant and refugee integration in other contexts to enhance the knowledge base
- To identify evidence of good practice that can be applied in the UK context
- To make recommendations for policymakers and services working in the integration landscape
- To establish international connections

The key dimensions of the research centred on the following:

- Wellbeing
- Social Connections
- Collaborative Working
- Employment
- Language Acquisition
- Support for Women

My Churchill Fellowship covered a six-week period from September-October 2019. The first three weeks were spent travelling and visiting various services in and around Vancouver (British Columbia province) in Canada. The second part of the trip was spent in Norway and incorporated the locations of Oslo and Bergen (diagram 1).

This report was completed just prior to the outbreak of COVID-19. The global impact of the virus has had significant implications for countries globally and their populations. This report, therefore, briefly addresses this context in relation to implementing the findings from the report in the Recommendations section at the end.

Diagram 1

3.1 Definitions

This report uses the following definitions of refugees and migrants:

Refugee: A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee their country because of persecution, war or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries (United Nations, 2020a).

Migrant: any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from their habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person's legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is (United Nations Migration Agency, 2020).

The report also refers to integration throughout, nevertheless there is currently no universally agreed consensus on what integration means. This report applies the following definition:

The process by which migrants become accepted into society, both as individuals and groups...[Integration] refers to a two-way process of adaptation by migrants and host societies....[and implies] consideration of the rights and obligations of migrants and host societies, of access to different kinds of services and the labour market, and of identification and respect for a core set of values that bind migrants and host communities in a common purpose.'

However, there is acknowledgement of the tensions with the term, notably the lack of consensus on what successful integration means or how it can be measured.

4. Introduction

The mass mobilisation of people around the globe is arguably one of the most contentious and fiercely debated issues in the contemporary age, as countries seek ways to effectively respond to its effects. The topic has gained further prominence with the advent of the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda which calls for 'orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration polices' (Migration Data Portal, 2020). In the past decade, the UK has experienced a long term and substantial upward shift of new migrants from a wider range of countries which has created tension due to a lack of adequate polices and structures in place to manage the integration (Haque, 2010). Furthermore, the complexity of the subject is compounded by its misrepresentation which has resulted in misconceptions and increased polarisation. For instance, in the UK tabloid headlines such as '*Britain's 40% surge in ethnic numbers*' and '*Workers are fired for being British*' (see Figure 1) have served to capture the public imagination and foster feelings of resentment and fear linked to rapid cultural changes and to a perceived lack of resources. 'Mass' was also the single most common way of describing immigration by media from 2006 to 2015 (The Migration Observatory, 2016). Consequently, heightened feelings of resistance and hostility have perpetuated negative discourses on migration and have reinforced the need for some to 'other' the dangerous stranger; the risk of increased racial abuse towards visible minorities is also noted (Laton, 2019).

Figure 1: Examples of media portrayals of migrants (Greenslade, 2020)

Yet migration is not an isolated phenomenon; it is contingent and shaped by political, economic, social and environmental conditions in the context of dynamic geopolitical and historical conditions (de Lima, 2019). Indeed, such conditions are exemplified in the post-Brexit landscape in the UK and the recent announcement of a points-based system for immigration. What this suggests is that in such a hyper-mobile and interrelated world, there needs to be more exploratory work on integration to identify the types of interventions that work. The evidence suggests that migrants and refugees are at increased risk of developing mental ill-health due to the multiple stressors associated with the process (Hameed et al., 2018). Furthermore, aside from the risk of social isolation (see 'Migrants Matter'), the inclusion and exclusion of migrants is increasingly predicated on narrow reductive discourses on migration, compounding the pressures of integration further. This calls for a wider focus that incorporates aspects such as wellbeing and social connections because 'for integration to be meaningful it needs to take place across all spheres of daily life' (Haque, 2010).

4.1 International Context

According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), an unprecedented 70.8 million people around the world have now been forced from their homes (UNHCR, 2020) (of whom 25.9 million are refugees); the top five countries for hosting refugees are Germany, Sudan, Uganda, Pakistan and Turkey. Of particular relevance to the UK has been the displacement of Syrian refugees, fleeing a bloody civil war (the second deadliest of the 21st century); estimates suggest the conflict has forced more than four million refugees into neighbouring nation-states and more than 50,000 Syrian children have been born 'in exile' since the start of the conflicts in 2011 (Stokes-Dupass, 2017). As an initial response to the crisis, the UK government provided humanitarian aid (part of a collective international response), and its domestic policy was to establish the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) to support the flow of some Syrian refugees into the UK. As part of the VPRS, the government committed to resettling 20,000 Syrian refugees (Home Office, 2018) and, more recently, has announced that it would extend this to an additional 5,000-6,000 in 2020-2021. (The new resettlement scheme consolidates the Vulnerable Persons' Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) and the Gateway Protection program into a global scheme (UNHCR, 2019). In Scotland, the integration of refugees is managed under the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy (2018-2022) which focuses on the key themes of needs of asylum seekers; employability and welfare rights; housing; education; language; health and wellbeing; and communities, culture and social connections (Scottish Government, 2020). Interestingly, under the VPRS, Scotland has taken twice as many Syrian refugees as the UK average (four times as many as Greater London) (Easton and Butcher, 2018), aligning with its long history of welcoming refugees and asylum seekers.

In terms of official statistics on migration, according to the Office of National Statistics (ONS), an estimated 283,000 more people came to the UK with an intention to stay 12 months or more than left in the year ending September 2018 (net migration). Over the year, 627,000 people arrived in the UK (immigration) and 345,000 people left the UK (emigration) (ONS, 2019). However, capturing official statistics on migration is complex because of the different criterion that is used to define a migrant. According to the Office of National Statistics (ONS) a long-term international migrant is someone who intends to migrate for a period of at least one year; with short-term migrants migrating for less than one year. Other criteria used to define migrant include *Country of Birth*, *Movement* and *Citizenship* (Raghuram and Erel, 2014) but each of these categories have limitations and potentially fail to capture the complex nature of migration movements.

4.2 Norway

Historically, Norway has been a country with more emigration than immigration, however, the opposite has been the case in more recent times (Cappelen and Skjerpen, 2012). In particular, the country's annual average net flow of immigration increased considerably after the EU enlargement in 2004 and reached a top in 2012 with an average of 40,500 for the period 2011-2015 (Thorud, 2018). The large influx of refugees into Europe in 2015 was also significant for Norway, with many refugees from Syria being resettled (the country initially accepted 2470 quota refugees for resettlement in 2015, 2000 of whom were from Syria (Aboagye, 2019). During that year the government also increased the budget from 836 million EURO in 2014 to

1.1 billion EURO. Yet, responding to a global crisis whilst remaining focused on state security has led to a tightening of borders and more restrictive social policies in Norway, which has had implications for refugee movements, for citizenship and, in some instances, has led to a rise in statelessness among refugee populations (Stokes-Dupass, 2017). The country was also highly criticised for seeking to pay migrants to leave (in April 2016 it was announced that the Norwegian immigration authorities would pay a $1,495.00 bonus payment to the first 500 asylum seekers who leave Norway voluntarily). However, recent figures show that immigration remains high (in 2017, 17 per cent of the population were identified as having an immigrant background (Tronstad, 2018)) and the employment rate is higher in Norway than in most other European countries among immigrants (Aboagye, 2019), making Norway a useful country for exploring integration, particularly for areas with little experience of hosting multiple refugee families (such as the Highlands of Scotland).

4.3 Canada

Canada has a long and extensive history in terms of immigration and, indeed, is referred to as ‘the land of immigrants’ since the first European colonisers of the 16th century, and in the contemporary landscape remains a consistently high immigration country. Until the second half of the 20th century, the majority of immigrants originated from Europe but more recently the demography has shifted to those from South Asia and China (Duffin, 2020). The number of immigrants in 2019 to Canada totalled 313,580 (Duffin, 2020). In terms of the Syrian crisis, the country contributed generously to international efforts and resettled 25,000 Syrian refugees (including government-supported and privately sponsored) (Government of Canada, 2020). Politically, its welcoming immigration policy is also sustained through cross-party support ensuring a stable immigration system that generally works, and indeed it has been commended for upholding refugee rights in the face of populism in more recent years. Nevertheless, a significant increase in asylum-seekers crossing the border by foot (linked to the ban on entry to the US from seven Muslim-majority countries) has resulted in the introduction of more restrictive legal measures in Canada, designed to ‘curb asylum shopping’ (BBC, 2019). The government’s open and welcoming message for refugees, therefore, has been criticised for being misleading and inconsistent. Yet, evidence suggests that most immigrant groups in Canada report high levels of life satisfaction (Frank et al., 2014) making cross-cultural learning valuable.

5. Findings

The following section presents the findings of this research from both Canada and Norway into the following five themes: Mental Health; Accessibility; Employment; Language; Empowering Migrant and Refugee Women.

5.1 Mental Health

Whilst the research uncovered many aspects that were helpful to enhancing service delivery in Scotland and the wider UK, arguably the most important was in relation to mental health and wellbeing therefore this dimension is presented here first.

5.2 Evidence

It is perhaps unsurprising that the migration experience and its causative elements that 'push' an individual (such as war, trauma, human rights violations, economic hardship or natural disaster) mean that migrant and refugee populations are at increased risk of developing mental ill-health due to the multiple stressors associated with the process (Hameed et al., 2018). There is a sizeable body of research exploring the psychological impact of war, displacement, and human rights abuses. Such research highlights that increased exposure to war trauma, witnessing scenes of killing, intense fear due to unpredictable bombardments, and forced displacement can mean that significant percentages of affected populations experience increasing symptoms of depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and symptoms of other disorders, such as generalised anxiety and somatoform (Allden, 2015). Recent studies have also demonstrated that migrants and ethnic minorities may be at higher risk of suicidal behaviour linked to factors such as language barriers, separation from family, lack of information on health care systems, loss of status, loss of social networks and acculturation (Forte et al., 2018), reinforcing the need for both more mental health provision and more research on migrant and refugee integration.

What the research points to is that symptoms of psychological suffering can compromise a traumatised individual's ability to function. Yet, surprisingly, in the UK there is a distinct lack of appropriate mental health support for migrants and refugees meaning there is a gap between need and provision. Evidence from the Highlands of Scotland found that some newcomers experienced high levels of fear and anxiety in their attempts to adapt to the new culture, further compounded by experiences from the country they had left (see 'Migrants Matter'). It is unsurprising that leaving behind familiarity and connections can mean the adaptation process is complex, challenging and ongoing but for those who have also experienced trauma, this can exert a significant compounding influence on the process.

5.3 Current Political Framework

A further element that requires mention here is the neo-liberal context within which UK policy is currently shaped and informed. At its core, the doctrine of neo-liberalism contains a series of arguments about the relationships between individuals, the market and the state. It argues that the operations of the free market should order social and economic life so that

individuals can pursue their own interests, hence its promulgation of personal responsibility. Yet, its construction of the individual as apparently without class, gender, race, age or differing disablements has served to mask the many interrelationships between such social divisions and the operations of free markets (Mooney, 2004). Furthermore, the imperative of the neo-liberal project is to reify meritocracy and individual gain over collective rights and responsibilities. Such a premise, however, ignores the power and influence of structural forces, such as forced migration, and its impact on the mental health of those who find themselves in impoverished circumstances, such as migrants and refugees. In the context of mental health, its 'work first, welfare second' (Mooney, 2004) vision and promotion of personal responsibility mean that the experience of trauma has no place.

A further point here relates to the neo-liberal transformation of citizenship and the politics of belonging. In this context, inclusion and exclusion are increasingly predicated on an individual's ability to contribute to the state's financial viability and economic competitiveness. In the context of migrants, the entrepreneurial state positions migrants as resources that can be managed for economic purposes. Consequently, those who possess human capital or expertise that is highly valued are included, whilst those with less tradable competence, or lacking in neo-liberal potential, are treated as less worthy subjects and 'constructed as excludable populations in transit, shuttled in and out of zones of growth' (Mavelli, 2018), essentially reproducing racial bias in more subtle ways (Laton, 2019). One can see this neo-liberal entrepreneurial gaze in relation to migrants, with the UK government's recent announcement to introduce a points-based system. Yet, there are clear implications in relation to mental health and wellbeing, not least in terms of the multiple pressures and demands (both short and long-term) that migrants and refugees face as they try to heal from the disruption of migration and adapt within their new communities, along with how they are positioned by neo-liberal imperatives that essentially reduce them to economic units.

Arguably paid employment can be a key marker for integration for a newcomer due to the numerous benefits it can bring such as economic, wider social networks, and language acquisition. Such dimensions can indeed help in the healing process as the newcomer seeks to recover themselves and adapt within their new environment. Nevertheless, neo-liberal imperatives make no exceptions with regards to the ways in which symptoms of trauma may manifest for a migrant or refugee in their entanglement with welfare services. For those who do require mental health support, the emphasis is on newcomers simply using the same process of referral as anyone else. Whilst in other contexts it fits with the principles of integration, i.e. the newcomer doing what others do and using services in the same way, the argument here is that mental health and migration requires a more considered response from policymakers and service providers. A further tension worth mentioning is that there are significant waiting lists to gain access to psychological services in some areas. For instance, in the Highlands of Scotland 17% of referrals have to wait over 12 months (Information Services Division, 2018). The connection between psychological symptomatology and diminished functioning is important because of the implications for people's ability to deal with adversity, to care for themselves and their family members (Allden, 2015) and to be eligible for welfare provision whilst fulfilling requirements to find suitable employment.

5.4.1 Case Study 1

Case Study 1: Specialised trauma support (Canada)
Provider: Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture (VAST)
VAST is a non-profit organisation that provides mental health support for refugee survivors of torture. Located in Vancouver, their work is essentially about providing care through individual and family therapeutic sessions, and small group sessions. The emphasis as part of service delivery is that the support groups are not therapy but instead are about psychological education and mutual support. Aside from working closely with settlement agencies and other local health services, VAST is also involved in advocacy at policy level, and providing trauma awareness training to services that work with refugees, such as border authorities and police.

The value of exploring mental health and wellbeing models as part of integration meant that VAST was a particularly useful case study for a number of reasons. For instance, the service works closely with government provided settlement services to ensure there is coherency in service delivery and to ensure that refugees are getting the most appropriate help they can upon arriving in Vancouver. The interconnected nature of settlement and mental health, i.e. the refugee experience being strongly influenced by settlement-related stressors (such as housing, employment, loss of status, lack of agency), is a strong component in their emphasis on collaboration with settlement and other community services. By implication it means that the coordination of services strengthens the referral process in regards to timely intervention – this is particularly important given the barriers to accessing support that migrants and refugees can often experience (World Health Organisation, 2019).

VAST also recognises the importance of continuity of care and long-term work which is essential for building trust and for the healing process. Indeed, their work with each individual can span a significant amount of time as VAST Director Frank Cohn noted,

> ‘we tend to get newcomers who have survived horrific violence in some way – so usually in their settlement journey it’s more about survival and getting to a safe place, then once they are in a safe place, getting set up in that safe place – getting work, figuring out how to work, figuring out how to take care of the family, and then to start doing the processing – often that comes later, *so a lot of what we do in the first weeks, months or even years when people arrive is really superficial-level trauma work in the sense that people are not ready to necessarily go all the way into their past experiences..... understanding this is key for a trauma-approach to settlement*’ (Cohn, 2019)

The three-phase approach to trauma recovery used by VAST presents the first phase as about 'safety and stabilisation' where the individual may not want to go back to the past, uncover past traumatic memories; the purpose of this early stage then is about working in the present to help the individual to regain a sense of safety in their physical body in the immediate environment, i.e. learning to self-regulate in the event of hyper-arousal or anxiety in order to help the person feel in control of their physical, emotional and cognitive environment. The second phase is about 'remembrance and mourning' whereby the individual is encouraged to make meaning of the trauma by putting words and emotions to it, and to integrate the story rather than to remain in a fight, flight or freeze response. The final stage is focused on 'reconnection and integration' whereby the person is encouraged to create a new sense of self and a new future by redefining in the context of meaningful relationships; the trauma then becomes integrated but loses the power to solely define that person (Trauma Recovery, 2020). The unfolding of these phases is key so that an individual does not feel retraumatised by going too quickly back in to dealing with traumatic experiences.

A further point that reinforces the value of their work relates to the capacity of provincial health authorities to deal with the specifics of migrant and refugee mental health, particularly in regards to trauma, '*we get all of the referrals from the provincially funded mental health clinics because their teams are not used to dealing with the cross-cultural nature of the cases and the depth of trauma that is present among survivors of war, torture, and political violence....so our agency is needed because nobody has the capacity to do the work that we're doing*' (Cohn, 2019). Such comments highlight the importance of specialised trauma support services and the need for early interventions that give dedicated time to the recovery process whilst taking account of the multiple factors associated with the adaptation process for migrants and refugees.

5.4.2 Case Study 2

Case Study 2: Getting Through It! (GTI) - Psychosocial support group for refugee claimants
Provider: VAST (Canada) • Drop-in trauma-informed psychosocial support group for refugee claimants at any stage of the refugee claimant process • Combines evidence-based and neurologically informed interventions to help remediate the impact of psychological trauma, as well as that of chronic stress associated with the refugee claimant process • Helps refugee claimants to restore, strengthen, and develop their somatic, psychological, and social resources • Promotes the mental health and resilience of refugee claimants

In terms of group support, VAST provide psychosocial support sessions for refugee claimants. The focus again is on information and education, to empower individuals through knowledge. Activities as part of how the session is delivered include moving the body, feeling connected to the group, introductions in terms of the country each participant has come from, and breathing/stretching techniques. Aside from these activities, the most powerful aspect to the session related to the comprehensive yet accessible information presented about the physiological impact of trauma. Specifically, participants are shown why certain reactions occur and why this is a normal response as the brain tries to protect the body. What this essentially does is show the person that they are not alone in how they feel; trauma creates certain responses that are linked with survival and are therefore understandable. Importantly, participants are also shown techniques, such as breathing and stretching, to help them if they feel incapacitated with fear.

This example offers an opportunity for learning for other countries. Such provision does not have to be sustained over a long period, the key is about education and awareness, essentially helping migrants and refugees to make sense of the physiological impact of stress and how to deal with it.

5.5 Crisis Support: Clinical Counselling Pilot Project

Another early contact service linked to migrant and refugee mental health is the crisis support provided by ISSofBC in Vancouver. In an interview with crisis worker Mohsen Eslami, it was noted that for refugees coming from countries with less developed mental health systems, the crisis support service provided them with the opportunity to gradually be informed about the mental health system, and to also understand more about how mental health and wellbeing is conceptualised in Canada. It was also noted that the initial wellbeing sessions allowed for assessments to be made in relation to crisis symptoms, with 1:1 support offered afterwards. The value of this is particularly powerful given the adverse experiences that many refugees undergo, not least in terms of living in refugee camps,

> ‘after the group, after this contact, they feel comfortable to talk about their feelings...it may be the first time after years that they can release their feelings to a person without the fear of such disclosure affecting their immigration status......and we know that in some cultures....they may not have had access to this type of service....there are also issues with living long-term in refugee camps.....there may also be a cultural barrier for some groups due to stigma about mental health’ (Eslami, 2019)

The service also places value on helping refugees to feel safe and supported, even after many years of being settled,

> ‘For my part, they can come back for my help even after five years – so, much longer-term...I ask them to call me whenever they need me...there’s no limitation, even if they are a citizen and need my services, they can call’ (Eslami, 2019)

Interestingly, the service has also piloted a project that provides ten free sessions of clinical counselling in first language for those who need it,

> ‘The project started about 2 years ago and we offer free of charge, in first language, 10 sessions of clinical counselling...we also help with access by providing bus tickets....it’s a research-based project which involves pre and post-test measurements – in the pre-test we identify their emotional status before getting 10 sessions and then after....we have already referred 90 people to local clinical counsellors....importantly, it integrates settlement and psychosocial support because whenever we refer clients we don’t just let them to go there, we help them through this process’ (Eslami, 2019)

Initial results have also been shown to be highly promising,

> ‘I’ve just had a preliminary analysis of the results and it’s amazing.... based on their level of anxiety, their level of depression and their level of trauma that they had, and comparing that to the post-test, it’s very unique and special.....it is a unique model to support refugees with their mental health’ (Eslami, 2019)

A further benefit of the pilot relates to strengthening collaborative working between services to ensure a more integrated response to need,

> ‘Mental health is one part of the whole picture of the person and another part is how they are connected with the community, how well they are learning language, what are their barriers to employment and so on.....the beauty of this project is that when we are connected with the clinical counsellor they come back to us with the settlement needs that the client is worried about..... so we can refer them to, for instance, an employment counsellor..... so it’s not just offering counselling, it’s about thinking about what else can be added to this service to make the person holistically feel connected, feel that he is working on his life and what he wants to achieve, not just sitting with a person and talking about the problem’ (Eslami, 2019)

The clinical counselling pilot mentioned here offers significant potential in terms of transferability, not least given the UK context of long waiting times for access to primary mental health services. Furthermore, this holistic person-centred model encourages services to work collaboratively to identify potential barriers to integration thus helping the newcomer to feel safe and supported. Finally, the promotion and prevention discourse evident in UK mental health policy is highly germane here, specifically it can be argued that it makes more economic sense to offer specific psychological support early on to those who need it rather than the person potentially becoming mentally unwell at a later date which may require costly residential care.

5.6 Art Therapy: Ullern Frivilligsentral (Volunteer Centre) Oslo

Figure 2 Ullern Frivilligsentral, Oslo

Across Norway there are different approaches to dealing with the mental health of newcomers, there are also various research projects and educational courses. In Bergen for instance, there is a centre for migration health that includes a team of health professionals such as physiotherapists that specialise in victims of torture (newly arrived refugees go through mapping in this service and are referred to more specialised help if needed). The two-year Introduction Program (see Employment section below) includes some psychosocial education to help refugees make sense of their experiences. However, as noted by one professional, there are ongoing challenges from a mental health perspective,

> 'I've done a lot of analysis on those programs...they're not necessarily adjusted to the situation the refugees are in....the emphasis largely is on becoming financially independent....the issue is that if a person is traumatised it's not just about getting a job, it's about security, feeling safe, feeling your children are safe...there are so many levels to it' (Anon., 2019)

In highlighting the challenge for older migrants and refugees it was noted that,

> 'you can't get a job when you're struggling with the language, you have children, your struggling with your mental health and you're sick all the time....younger people can handle it....they can pull themselves together....they are impressive, but the government can't make that a sort of pattern for everyone' (Anon., 2019).

However, a number of third sector organisations are informally addressing mental health concerns using various means. For instance, the local volunteer centre in Oslo runs different activities in the community that refugees can get involved in to reduce social isolation. In relation to mental health, the centre provides art therapy sessions with trained professionals as a way of facilitating the healing process. Whilst art therapy is provided in Scotland and throughout the UK it remains under-utilised despite the strong evidence base highlighting its effectiveness. In speaking with service providers at Ullern Frivilligsentral it was highlighted how powerful the sessions were for those who come to take part. Of note was the power of art to cut across language and to 'express the unexpressable' as a way to find meaning and healing from traumatic experiences. It was noted how important and valuable the sessions were for refugees given that their experiences may not always be directly relatable to others in the wider community.

5.7 Conclusion

Helping the newcomer integrate within the host country is arguably complex and multi-dimensional. Nevertheless, the mental health of migrants and refugees is a crucial component that requires more attention. Currently, there is a lack of specialised support in the UK that addresses this despite the evidence base on its detrimental impact more widely. Early

intervention trauma work may pose a challenge for already stretched community mental health services but arguably such an approach is cost-effective in the longer term; it costs more to treat a person should they become ill and potentially need residential psychiatric care. Additionally, more psychosocial education offers considerable potential in terms of helping newcomers to have a clearer understanding of the impact of severe stress on the body.

The degree to which a person feels empowered and the extent to which they can recover a sense of self are important considerations because migration can mean the loss of identity, the loss of meaning and the loss of all things familiar. Arguably, adopting a more holistic approach in regards to mental health and wellbeing offers potential in numerous ways, not least for the newcomer at the local level because it can mean increased engagement in social networks and community life, essentially helping to build social capital.

5.7.1 Key learning and benefits: My Service

The services cited above focused on education and understanding how trauma affects the body. Aside from healing, the emphasis was on knowledge and prevention (from a longer-term perspective). Key learning for my service includes developing a program of lower-level, preventative work on wellbeing and mindfulness.

5.7.2 Policy Level

The work of VAST highlights the necessity of educating migrants and refugees on how trauma affects the body. Such knowledge is vital to ensure they are equipped with the tools to help them make sense of psychological stress and its physical manifestation, and how to deal with it.

Additionally, there needs to be trauma-awareness training for services such as the police, NHS, legal bodies, and welfare services on how migrants or refugees may present in terms of their symptomatology and how this can affect, for instance, memory processing.

Finally, consideration should be given to the aforementioned pilot project that offers access to clinical counselling. As noted, the preliminary results have been promising in relation to anxiety and depression. Such ideas offer advantages in terms of promotion and prevention; as a way to address waiting times for access to primary mental health services; and using first language counsellors allows for cultural dimensions to be acknowledged within the approach as part of the healing process.

5.7.3 Art Therapy

In terms of promoting wellbeing and long-term adjustment, there needs to be greater investment in art therapy as a way to counter the more extreme effects of trauma and displacement, and as a solution to the challenge of accessing standard mental health services given the long waiting times previously mentioned.

6. Accessibility

6.1 Case Study 3

Figure 3 ISSofBC Welcome Centre

Case Study 3: Welcome Centre (Canada)

Provider: Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia (ISSofBC)

ISSofBC Welcome Centre offers essential services to newcomers including temporary housing and multilingual wellness support.

- temporary housing in 18 flexible living units for refugees
- settlement support in over 40 languages
- English language training, ranging from literacy to workplace-focused English
- employment services, including settlement at work, for newcomers of varying skills and needs
- newcomer youth hub
- a licensed preschool and a childcare centre, including an outdoor playground and family area
- medical clinic providing primary health care
- Vancity Credit Union providing bank account starts, financial literacy training and ATM service
- refugee and asylum seeker services
- multiple flexible meeting spaces
- ISSofBC corporate offices

The Welcome Centre also houses other key services by its co-tenants:

VanCity Credit Union
Vancouver Association of Survivors of Torture (VAST)
Settlement Orientation Services (SOS)
Mount Pleasant Family Centre Society
Lower Mainland Urgent and Primary Care Centre

The theme of accessibility was clearly important in relation to integration in both countries. In Canada, the IssofBC Welcome Centre is particularly useful as an example of accessibility for a number of reasons. ISSofBC is a government funded service covering the core aspects of integration such as English language classes, volunteer support programmes, child and youth work, after-school programs, summer programmes, women's support, seniors support, and so on. In regards to the Welcome Centre, this is the initial place refugees go to upon arrival and will stay for a short period of time until community housing has been allocated and services

are in place. However, what makes this particularly useful as a site of learning is the social purpose design of the building. For instance, in the initial planning stage, clients were specifically asked about the design of the living quarters, what they wanted to see, how they wanted it set up, and in regards to the youth hub, again young people were consulted about what they wanted; in this way, direct lived experience helped the functionality and flow of the building. Consultation also occurred within the neighbourhood to ensure concerns could be addressed (in response to this, the building lends itself to a more transparent feel to reduce those boundaries further). Other features of this remarkable building are that it maximises light because of the dark place that newcomers have been in, the doors feature inspirational words such as 'courage' and 'resilience', the children's play areas are thoughtfully designed, and the service prioritises keeping families together through carefully designed residential units. Finally, this centralised model also houses various key services ensuring that the disruption and disorientation of refugee movements are minimised.

6.1.1 Transferability: Place-Based Approach

There are a number of dimensions here that can be transferred to other models of migrant and refugee integration. For instance, the concepts behind it do not necessitate having a physical building *per se*; the key is thinking more objectively about what a newcomer may need and what level of interaction with government systems they may need, depending on the local context. In this way, it encourages reflection on how local systems can be created from the perspective of the newcomer (i.e. based on need) rather than solely the provider. Consequently, this ensures services are more accurately responsive to need, rather than a top-down approach which may not always be useful for encouraging timely integration within the community.

More localised and centralised services working together also brings coherency in the delivery of services that can avoid the potential for competition with regards to funding calls i.e. when designed from a service user perspective, it highlights that no one service can provide all expertise that is needed. It advocates a multipronged collaborative approach that encourages creative and open discussions between service providers. As Director Chis Friesen notes,

> 'It recognises everyone's expertise, it doesn't take away from that, but it forces these individual folks and their individual silos to look at the client from a horizontal perspective – recognising their individual expertise that begins to allow them to think differently about how they deliver services – so a good example, when a refugee claimant downstairs has an issue, and is seeing a support worker, then that support worker can just take them down the hall to the counsellor and say 'when can you see this client' or if they've just arrived they need a bank account so you just walk them down the hall make an appointment and open an account.' (Friesen, 2019)

In this way, holistic and integrated coordination of services brings benefits to service users e.g. accessing services centrally rather than, for instance, having to travel to different areas, and for service providers it allows for more creative and joined-up working that compliments and enhances integration rather than fostering competition and silo working. Such ideas are highly germane in a rural context, given that substantial travel may be involved in using (often limited) services.

A further point here relates to the community consultation that was carried out in the planning stage of the building. In terms of transferability, placing greater emphasis on community consultation is arguably key to identifying and dealing with local resistance and more extreme manifestations such as violence. Gathering the views of the community and being open about the intention of resettling families within particular localities is a sensitive process, however, the example here shows that by taking the time to address local concerns and to keep the process transparent offers potential for a smoother integration process and for helping to develop positive relations between migrant and refugee communities, and the local indigenous population.

6.1.2 Technology

With increasing numbers of refugee claimants from across the US border, ISSofBC are now exploring ways to better utilise technology which can allow them to reach more refugees with greater ease. In particular, they are now using a texting platform that allows the service to send text messages and short video clips (in multiple languages) on topics such as how to apply for benefits, how to apply for healthcare, the local transit system, and how to apply for a work permit. The aim with this is to compliment, rather than replace, face to face services. Again, there is significant potential in terms of transferabililty within the context of (rural) community integration services given the issues of accessibility previously mentioned.

Nevertheless, there are some limitations with implementation. Specifically, not all clients have mobile phones e.g. in some cases the husband may prefer the wife not to own a phone. Additionally, in rural areas network coverage can be challenging, meaning that receiving important information on benefits or work may be delayed.

6.2 Case Study 4

Case Study 4: Refugee Guide Program (Norway)

Provider: Norwegian Red Cross

Røde Kors ungdom

The Refugee Guide program:

- A buddy system where a volunteer and a newly settled refugee are brought together for a 9-month “guiding period”
- Meet regularly and engage in various activities that they both enjoy
- Mutuality: newcomers get familiar with their local community and volunteers learn about the newcomer’s life
- Both are matched using criteria such as age, gender, family situation, hobby, or profession

Norwegian society enjoys a long tradition of volunteering and civic engagement (Henriksen et al., 2019), so it is perhaps unsurprising that the Refugee Guide program is so successful. Whilst befriending schemes are commonplace in many countries, the Red Cross Refugee Guide program is important in terms of transferability to other contexts because it has a long history of success and, importantly, it is structured towards outcomes. Specifically, the program is

centred on ways that promote social inclusion, language acquisition and cultural orientation; the activities undertaken are focused specifically on these dimensions and are facilitated using both volunteer knowledge and unified organisational materials, essentially encouraging individual and standardised elements. Importantly, both the participant and the volunteer set goals for the arrangement to ensure a more structured framework that interactions can be measured against i.e. an assessment can be made at the end to see if the goals have been reached which gives a sense of achievement. In terms of activities, the participant and volunteer decide together what they would like to do (generally matched across certain criteria) but, importantly, may not always be one-to-one, it can also be family to family, two-to-one. The program is also planned in such a way that both volunteers and newcomers have access to professional support by the Red Cross i.e. there are regular sessions that bring everyone together to strengthen bonds and to allow any concerns to be shared. Finally, the newcomer is encouraged to utilise their skills and resources by becoming Refugee Guides themselves thereby strengthening agency, self-esteem and inner confidence.

The value of connecting refugees with their new environments has also led to the creation of a 'be a good neighbour' scheme. Using her extensive experience with Norway Supports Refugees, organiser Guri Wingård helps to recruit volunteers, arrange start up talks, disseminate information and match volunteers with refugees in the community. Importantly, in terms of matching people, Guri encourages the volunteer and the refugee to decide together what would be the most useful, '*I encourage the match to find out what is good for them, people need different things and you can't always know what's best...sometimes it's just a coffee or a walk*'. Such informal arrangements can be crucial for helping with gaps in knowledge, '*sometimes you just need someone to tell you about local events....show you how to pack the bag for kindergarten....how to dress for winter in Norway.....have fun in Norway*'. Importantly, by fostering ties within local neighbourhood dynamics, it also addresses the fundamental need for refugees to feel safe in their immediate environment. Guri also arranges regular gatherings that allow volunteers to come together and share experiences, listen to guest speakers, and connect to the network through a newsletter that includes useful tips and ideas.

By connecting a newcomer with a volunteer who knows the local culture and who can share their knowledge about local norms and social life, it potentially allows the newcomer to widen their social network which can enhance stocks of social capital. Fostering a sense of inclusion can also help to ameliorate some of the feelings of despondency and helplessness that can be experienced by migrants and refugees as they are forced to start all over again in an unfamiliar place.

6.3 Intercultural Cities (ICC)

The theme of accessibility and promoting more collaborative working is highly germane to the European Council's Intercultural Cities (ICC) programme. The ICC model is essentially about approaching migrant/minority integration using an intercultural lens that conceptualises

diversity as an asset and an advantage, rather than a threat, and facilitates inclusion using a variety of relevant tools. The overall framework is,

> '....a strategic engagement to develop institutional capacity ensuring equal rights and opportunities for all, promoting positive intercultural mixing and interaction, and encouraging participation and power-sharing. The model helps public authorities to achieve inclusion, equality and prosperity by unlocking the potential of diverse societies while minimising the risks related to human mobility and cultural diversity.' (Council of Europe, 2020)

The programme has developed an intercultural index so that cities can be measured across various indicators, highlighting both strengths and limitations in regards to where there needs to be a policy focus. Aside from combatting prejudice and discrimination, there are other social and economic advantages to membership (currently there are 136 cities from across Europe as well as Australia, Canada, Japan, Israel, Mexico, Morocco and the US). For instance, member cities can learn from each other via study visits; the partnerships between business, civil society and public service professionals encourages more interaction between diverse groups; higher levels of trust and social cohesion that are generated help to prevent conflicts and violence, and the increase in policy effectiveness make the member city more attractive for people and investors.

Emphasising the value of an intercultural (rather than multicultural) approach, local ICC Co-ordinator in Bergen, Sølve Sætre notes, '*Within ICC there are many projects dealing with things such as prevention of radicalisation, the dialogue between religions.....it is about promoting the positive value of several cultures living together....sometimes under difficult circumstances, as in the Middle East, how this can also be promoted through music, food – just being together and meeting others from different backgrounds.....it makes it a more interesting place to live basically – the most successful cities in the world are highly diverse*' (Sætre, 2019). The value of such projects cannot be overstated. For instance, addressing concerns of right-wing extremism (in 2011 Oslo experienced one of the worst incidents of mass murder in recent European history, with lone extremist Anders Behring Breivik killing 92 people) there are currently programmes in schools in Norway to make young people more aware and inclusive in their outlook, and links have also been made with mosques in Bergen and across Western Norway as a way to tackle Islamaphobia.

The promotion of cross-cultural learning and working together across borders is highly valuable as a solution to the tensions and upheaval currently evident in the post-Brexit landscape in the UK. Indeed, some have attributed the general rise of populism across Europe to a cultural backlash, as a reaction against 'rapid cultural changes...as a result of immigration from countries with different religious backgrounds and values' (Laton, 2019). More ominously, there is also a risk of a potential rise in racial abuse towards visible minorities. The inclusive vision of the ICC programme therefore offers significant potential as a way for cities to work together and learn from each other in a way that encourages innovative thinking, inclusivity, creativity and economic growth at the local level.

6.4.1 Key learning and benefits: My Service

In relation to accessibility and how to promote it, the key learning is about working more collaboratively with other services to enhance local delivery, support integrated working that provides a more coherent and joined-up approach and one that facilitates better information sharing.

In terms of technology, this has considerable benefits given the rural context of provision. Potential uses for technology include sending information about employment information, human rights, health services, helplines for hate speech, Women's Aid information, and local events.

Regarding mentoring schemes, the Refugee Guide offers an excellent example of a more structured, goal-orientated approach that brings benefits across a range of integration domains and is particularly useful for future service planning in relation to cultural orientation.

6.4.2 Policy Level – Enhancing Accessibility

The ISSofBC offers valuable insights for policymakers in terms of accessibility and promoting integration by utilising the perspective of newcomers. Specifically, it requires more focus on the perspective of newcomers as they are coming into the region or community. Consideration needs to be given to how easily newcomers can access the support they need and whether this is congruent with how services are currently structured. Such considerations are crucial for assessing whether service provision really promotes or hinders integration. The ISSofBC example clearly shows that centralising integration services makes it easier for newcomers. Importantly, a more holistic coordinated service delivery system encourages a client-centred model which offers numerous benefits.

Policymakers should also consider ways that encourage more collaboration between services. Specifically, in a complex welfare system there can be multiple services that deal with the same person but who may not always communicate effectively with other providers, meaning information can get lost or the care process disrupted.

Finally, the ISSofBC offers a powerful example of why community consultations should form a key part of strategic thinking on migrant and refugee integration. The consultation that was carried out in the planning stages of the building has meant that any potential build-up of hostility or suspicion has been diffused by the emphasis on openness and transparency. Aside from official consultations by Local Authorities, policymakers should also encourage more academic research that gathers the views of local communities, the findings of which can then be used as part of strategic planning.

6.4.3 Applying for ICC

Currently there are a number of cities in England that are members of the ICC programme. Given the numerous benefits outlined above, it is recommended that cities in Scotland also apply for membership as a way to build connections across borders, and to stimulate economic growth whilst enhancing integration from a 'diversity as a strength' perspective.

7. Employment

Employment is a cornerstone of integration and forms the core dimension of immigration policy planning. The centrality of the labour market is understandable; aside from economic independence, integration in the workplace helps to widen networks, improve language learning and provide opportunities for meaningful social and economic contributions (Morris and Hochlaf, 2019). Yet the transferring of qualifications can be a lengthy process that can disrupt the ability of newcomers to practice in their area of expertise, meaning that many migrants end up in low-skilled jobs (Richwine, 2018). A further point here is that, in relation to local community dynamics, economic conditions are a powerful force in shaping levels of integration and are a part of the dialogue of the ongoing journey of orderly migration, as one Canadian professional noted, 'when there's a downturn in the economy, there's a downturn on immigrants'. For instance, in Canada the economic conditions are currently favourable because of lower unemployment rates which has provided better opportunities to engage local employers (this is highly salient in rural areas given that poor economic conditions force migration to large urban centres) and to build trust.

In both countries, the challenge of internationally acquired credential recognition was an ongoing concern (as is the case globally) due to the tensions it creates. As one professional in Canada noted, on the basis of the point system, immigrants are selected and approved across a range of criterion (their ability to speak English or French, prior education, work experience, for instance) but once they arrive they cannot necessarily practice in what they have been assessed to come into the country with, causing delays and frustration. In Norway, attempts have been made to address this using a variety of methods (more generally, integration policy is increasingly focused on skill development and more effective welfare-to-work schemes). For instance, as part of a mentoring project in Bergen, links have been made with the local Chambers of Commerce which has allowed highly qualified people with migrant backgrounds to be connected to local businesses. Additionally, bridging courses are offered to refugees with a science or technology education to make them more attractive for Norwegian employers (a cooperation project a between Oslo Metropolitan University and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology) (Thorud, 2018) The government also strives to hire people with immigrant backgrounds in government agencies (Aboagye, 2019).

7.1 Case Study 5

Case Study 5: Introduction Program (Norway)
Provider: Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) • A two-year programme offered to newly arrived immigrants between the ages of 18 and 55 who need to obtain basic qualifications and who have been granted Norwegian residence permit under specific sections of the Immigration Act • The basic components of the programme are: Norwegian language training (600 hours); Norwegian social studies for adult immigrants (50 hours); Measures that prepare participants for further education or access to working life • Strategic focus: individually tailored through a systematic assessment of formal and informal skills and competences • Participants receive a monthly salary

The overarching goal of Norwegian integration policy is to provide incentives and opportunities for participation in the workforce and in community life. In this way, it encourages newcomers to contribute to and participate in their local community, to essentially be a contributing citizen (Thorud, 2019). Under the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi), the Introduction Programme is the key framework government uses as part of its integration strategy. As noted above, the key components are focused on preparing newcomers for the employment sector, language acquisition and providing knowledge on how to take part in Norwegian social life. Participants also receive a monthly income as part of the conditions for taking part. In discussions with International Director Ohene Aboagye, it was noted that the programme has been successful because it enhances opportunities for participants to rapidly find work or enter education and training; this is an important point given that newcomers may lack basic qualifications. It also means that participants have a much clearer understanding about social and cultural life in their new country, essentially helping to fill any gaps in knowledge.

Whilst the programme requires significant resource allocation (e.g.in 2016 there were 24,000 registered on the programme across Norway) it offers a number of benefits that are worth considering in terms of transferability. For instance, of those who completed the program in 2016, 62 per cent were employed or participated in education by November 2017 (Thorud, 2019). Aside from language acquisition, individually adapted plans help to accurately identify training needs and measures that are the most useful pathway for that person. Additionally, the monthly salary is paid directly into participant's bank accounts, offering benefits for women in terms of empowerment and independence. Finally, in relation to learning about Norwegian culture as part of the social studies component, participants are introduced to the value and benefits of volunteering as a way to connect with, and contribute to, the local community. Aside from advantages such as widening social networks and essentially building social capital,

a further benefit is that it has resulted in a significant increase in language acquisition. Such findings reinforce the benefits of countries investing in introduction programmes.

In Canada, there are numerous services that are focused on employment pathways for migrants and refugees. For instance, DiverseCity have tailored unique employment programs for youth, women (such as self-employment) and multi-barriered men. The programs also help with addressing need in terms of entry level positions or upgrading of credentials to what is needed in Canada. The service also offers longer-term programs that orientate newcomers to Canadian workplace culture (soft skills) such as appropriate communication and conduct, rights and responsibilities, and working in a team. Importantly, DiverseCity have woven a strong mental health component throughout many of their programs. For instance, their HEAL program provides free career services for survivors of violence and trauma (particularly women). The program offers paid occupational skills training and work experience, teaches life skills and offers trauma counselling; the emphasis here is on identifying if, and when, the person is ready to work and to facilitate the healing process through work. Additionally, their youth programs acknowledge that the challenges faced by immigrant youth that may be different to those in the mainstream (i.e. immigration and adaptation, family pressures) and have therefore embedded mental health within the program by including youth counsellors and art therapy. Furthermore, those who engage on their programs are paid a minimum wage so that they do not feel pressured to go out and look for work (many are contributing to family livelihood), thereby enhancing the potential for those youth to complete the program and develop their skills.

DiverseCity employment programs are specifically customised to identify where newcomers want to go and to help them navigate the system. As part of their delivery, ‘job developers’ reach out to local employers and seek partnerships (employers are subsidised 50% by the government). The service then shares the responsibility of supporting newcomers via job coaching, providing work clothes and tools, and they also pay for training and tuition where needed. However, the service acknowledges the ongoing challenge of credentialing. As a way to address this, they focus on transferable skills and how to upgrade them, as well as providing work experience placements.

7.2 Conclusion

The issue of securing successful pathways into labour market participation for migrants and refugees remains a challenge for countries globally. Canada and Norway are both addressing employability in unique ways that offer useful learning to other countries. In Canada, attempts have been made to address credentialing by prioritising the upgrading of skills, funding additional requirements, and working in partnership with local employers. An additional strength that offers long-term potential and economic benefits is the mental health support woven through the various programs. Specifically, this ensures psychological dimensions are equally valued as part of the support given in assisting newcomers to economic independence and integration. In Norway, the statistics on employment via the Introduction Program are impressive and certainly add weight to the value of such programs for other countries. This is particularly useful for newcomers who may lack basic qualifications. The focus on volunteering also has benefits in terms of enhancing language acquisition. However, the programme is not without limitations. For instance, it tends to focus on basic skill development

which may not be suitable for newcomers with higher education and substantial work experience.

7.2.1 Key learning and benefits: My Service

Whilst my service does not deal specifically with formal employment routes (aside from helping with applications), there is transferability in terms of youth approaches; namely developing confidence and preparedness for the workplace. Key learning, therefore, includes providing workshops that help to prepare youth for employment by focusing on soft measures such as developing confidence for interviews and developing leadership skills.

7.2.2 Policy Level – Employment

In terms of transferability, the mental health component woven in to programs in Canada is highly beneficial, both economically and for longer-term integration and community connectedness. Norway's formal Introduction Program framework also offers significant benefits economically, and in terms of language acquisition in regards to cultural orientation.

8. Language

8.1 Language Acquisition

In both Canada and Norway, state provided services to help newcomers develop language proficiency forms a core part of integration policy and planning. However, aside from formal provision, it was found that third sector organisations in both countries were doing a tremendous amount to facilitate the process. For instance, in the Multicultural Women's Support Group in Vancouver, informal ESOL forms an integral part of activities the women are involved in (see Empowering Migrant and Refugee Women below). At Ullern Frivilligsentral (Volunteer Centre) in Oslo, refugees who attend the centre are encouraged to speak Norwegian as much as possible in both practical tasks and in building social connections in the community. For instance, practical activities offered at the centre include opportunities for refugees to help with the online selling of items donated to the centre – in addition to building language skills, it helps to develop digital ones too. Aside from the Refugee Guide programme (i.e. having the opportunity to speak with a local person), the Red Cross also offers additional language support sessions to help newcomers develop their language skills. Finally, as previously mentioned, the promotion of volunteering as part of the Introduction Programme has been found to increase language acquisition significantly.

8.2 Discourses on migration

In the context of integration, the topic of language is generally focused on the ways that can help a migrant or refugee acquire the language of the host country. However, it also requires a focus on the language that is being used to define the newcomer that is embedded in the political framework. For instance, in Canada in 2001, as part of the overhaul of immigration legislation, debates emerged based on what the newcomer should be called prior to attainment

of citizenship (one of the terms suggested was 'foreign national' but this was changed to 'permanent resident'). Debates about terminology and the language that is used are important, not only at the political level, but also for civil society and the wider public; the accepted terms used and the discourses that are engaged with directly impact on any social cohesion objectives. As IssofBC Director Chris Friesen notes, '*at the end of the day integration of immigrants is about nation building and so there are issues around social and economic integration as well as social cohesion....I think that Canada has recognised the importance of this through time, of the factors and elements that promote integration versus take away from integration*' (Friesen, 2019). Indeed, in relation to nation building and language, Canada has a clear, transparent and linear pathway to citizenship that is promoted and communicated to newcomers early on. The message is clear: 'you are here now and you can be part of Canada'. Aside from promoting belonging, it also creates an atmosphere of attachment which can encourage newcomers to contribute. As Friesen notes, '*...it can encourage immigrants to contribute because they see that they are wanted and they see that there is a fair equitable process in place that will allow them, if they so choose, to obtain citizenship at the earliest opportunity and that is encouraged by government – so the language that is used ....that supports nation building, social and economic integration are all part and parcel of favourable elements that contribute to greater degrees of integration*' (Friesen, 2019). Indeed, in discussions with several refugees it was noted that feeling welcome and wanted was crucial for helping them to adjust in their new communities. A further crucial point about the types of discourses engaged in that frames discussions on migration relates to the current evidence on ageing populations and declining birth rates,

> '....it's a strange situation, we've got an ageing population which is a greater use of our social safety nets....and then you've got the declining birth rate....eventually it hits the economy, our ability to raise taxes that support the social safety net that supports the locally born or longer-term resident...it becomes a very complicated discussion and debate...In Canada, we're talking about notions of nation-building - when you talk about nation building and the economy, and how do we sustain the safety net and the benefits that have been acquired over time, in a declining revenue base, suddenly people start to connect the dots.' (Friesen, 2019)

Indeed, there is growing recognition of the need for more migrant workers. For instance, a recent report by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) advised advanced economies such as Britain and the US to open their borders to more migrant workers as a way to avoid being overwhelmed by their ageing populations (IMF, 2018). Specifically, the IMF predict that within the next few decades, working-age adults will need to support double the number of elderly people, which will put immense pressure on welfare systems and could wipe out 3% of economic output by 2050. What this points to is the need for state-level discussions on the value and benefits of migration to also be linked with need due to the challenge of ageing populations. Such discussions hold enormous potential in response to the rise of right-wing anti-immigrant movements fuelled by sentiments and feelings rather than evidence. Such considerations are even more pressing given the recent announcement by the UK government to introduce a points-based immigration system. For Scotland's remote and rural areas (such as Highland) this could potentially have a significant impact on services given existing issues

such as recruitment and retention, along with an ageing population (University of the Highlands and Islands, 2020).

The theme of language also highlights the need for developing innovative ways for different cultures to meet, the space in which dialogues can happen. Arguably, this can be difficult and complex given that there can be a significant variation between the cultural framework of a country of origin versus a host country. For example, in Norway there have been instances of families taking their children and returning to the country of origin due to fears about the influence of Norwegian culture (however, the ICDP program works with refugee families to educate and empower them to become more confident about parenting in Norwegian society). As previously mentioned, the rise of populism across Europe has been attributed to a cultural backlash as a result of immigration from countries with different religious backgrounds and values. As part of their work addressing these complex cultural dynamics, DiverseCity offers numerous services that help newcomers with cultural adaptation but in a way that gives primacy to their cultural identity and practices. For instance, the 'Healthy Self, Healthy Families' program offers emotional support and tools to help newcomer youth maintain healthy relationships, whilst dealing with complex changing family dynamics that occur as a result of migrating to a new culture. In discussions with Director Laura Mannix about the need for this type of program, it was noted that there has to be a sensitivity to cultural dimensions and identity,

> '....when a newcomer arrives, they have a holistic identity attached to them that includes spirituality and family dynamics that are engrained culturally.....so how do you acknowledge those identities as part of service delivery on sensitive topics....it could be things like building healthy relationships, so navigating the complex family dynamics during the settlement process....we acknowledge that pre-arrival trauma occurs through displacement and finally getting to Canada...the settlement process itself is just as traumatic.' (Mannix, 2019)

The potential for family relationships to fracture was also noted,

> '....there can be a sense of a loss in status for migrant men in particular. This can be a result of the immigration process due to challenges in finding meaningful work at the same level of employment they had in their home country, the role of being the provider of the family previously, the new roles partners and children take in sustaining the livelihood of the family which shifts power dynamics in the family unit, as well as losing a set social positioning within their community. This can be difficult to mitigate as there are limited spaces for men to discuss these things and to be equipped to cope with these changes. This can also sometimes result in a sense of isolation experienced by women and mothers as partners, as there can be limited encouragement of having them engage with community service supports.' (Mannix, 2019)

A key component in their work with families is about having staff who come from the same culture and have a more nuanced understanding of these dynamics in relation to adaptation. DiverseCity are also involved in trying to connect different cultural communities through practices such as community kitchens, women-specific programs, youth programs, dialogue

projects and community events. However, the challenge of this wider integration work is acknowledged, particularly regarding existing community issues; specifically, the historical experiences of First Nations people and the intergenerational trauma that occurred as a result of the Indian Residential Schools system in the late 19th century (Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2009). In response to this, DiverseCity are currently developing projects that bring refugee families and indigenous families together based on commonality relating to displacement and trauma.

Such examples reinforce the need for migration policy to focus more on the lived experience of migrants and refugees, as a way to inform policy development. Specifically, the argument here is that a migrant or refugee does not simply start at the border of their crossing, they carry their biography, their experiences, their hopes and dreams with them. By placing emphasis on lived-experience, it allows for a more nuanced understanding of need, but also importantly, it can enhance social proximity at the local level because of the focus on the different frameworks within which people's lives are, or have been, located in and how this can be used to identify commonality amongst different communities.

8.3 Conclusion

The above section on language highlights a number of important dimensions that are worth considering. Firstly, it can be seen that the work of third sector organisations are crucial in the integration landscape, not least in terms of their work that assists newcomers with language skills. A further point relates to the power of discourses on migration at state-level, and their potential to address right-wing rhetoric. Specifically, more official discussion and information that identifies migration as a solution to the issue of ageing populations, and how this directly links to the viability of welfare supports, is crucial. Finally, focusing attention on ways to promote cultural dialogues (by identifying commonality) offers tremendous potential in that it can address existing historical issues for the local population whilst also helping migrant and refugee communities.

8.3.1 Key learning and benefits: My Service

The above findings on cultural frameworks and commonality confirms previous work done by my service in this area. Specifically, a series of events was organised on the theme of 'Stories of Movement' which promoted the idea that everyone has a story of movement. The events also included an historical element from the Highland Clearances to highlight commonality in terms of forced displacement. Importantly, the language of movement can also be about daily rhythms and flows, in this way it allows for structural forces to be included in the analysis in relation to local need, i.e. the 'movement' of rural residents may relate to travelling considerable distances to access services or having to leave their homes for extended periods for employment. Such dimensions offer the potential to disrupt the current focus on migration and to widen its conceptualisation. The findings from Canada highlight the need to continue with this approach. Therefore, the service has launched a Highland Dialogues Project that will focus on enhancing social proximity as a way to disrupt 'othering' processes.

8.3.2 Policy Level

The findings demonstrate the significant contribution from third sector organisations. In the UK, continued state retrenchment has resulted in greater strain for such organisations in terms of budgets and resources, as they attempt to fill the gaps in service provision. However, language acquisition is the cornerstone of integration, therefore increased funding is needed to support those organisations in the work they are doing.

Norway's Introduction Program has been found to have a direct impact on language skills due to its promotion of volunteering and the way in which it widens networks, essentially building social capital. Consideration should be given to the implementation of a formal program.

Finally, the recent announcement of a points-based immigration system in the UK has numerous implications. There is a need for more state-level discussions that link the benefits of migration to demographics. It is also imperative that human rights discourses form the core component for framing discussions on migration.

9. Empowering Migrant and Refugee Women

A number of services in both Canada and Norway were working specifically with migrant and refugee women (MRW). This focus is important given that MRW are often the main caregivers for children and elderly family members. MRW also face specific challenges and protection risks during their transit, including family separation, psychosocial stress and trauma, health complications (particularly for pregnant women), physical harm, and the risk of exploitation and gender-based violence (United Nations, 2020b). Services that focus on empowerment and social participation for MRW are therefore crucial.

9.1 Case Study 6

Case Study 6: Multicultural Women's Support Group (Canada)

Provider: MOSAIC

Provides a space for MRW to:

- Make friends
- Share experiences
- Gain self-confidence
- Improve English skills (led by a MOSAIC volunteer)
- Learn about Canadian culture and the local community
- Discuss concerns
- Gain access to resources (community, basic legal information)
- Find group volunteer opportunities
- Go on field trips

MOSAIC is a registered charity that provides support in areas such as settlement assistance, English language training, employment programs, interpretation, and counselling. It operates across a wide geographical area around Vancouver and throughout British Columbia, as well as via online programs. As part of their work in relation to MRW, they hold weekly sessions where women can meet, learn English and share food together.

Using an observation method, it was noted that the women who attended the group developed and nurtured strong bonds of trust and friendship with each other and the staff, which was a vital part of their wellbeing and for the overall longer-term trajectory of adapting and integrating within the local community. Additionally, the informal ESOL that was delivered to the group was focused on encouraging the women to have conversations with their neighbours as a way to build connections outside of the group and as a way to feel part of the community. Furthermore, it was noted that developing trust with the group allowed the women to feel comfortable with learning English and, importantly, to feel relaxed about making mistakes as part of the learning process. The women had also developed language skills by reading together and then discussing the material, which essentially encouraged them to feel empowered about voicing their thoughts and feelings. The day trips offered by the staff were also an important dimension for the women because it allowed them to visit places that may otherwise have been inaccessible, again helping to broaden experience, strengthen bonds with the other women and overall to encourage inner confidence and resilience.

Such peer dynamics were noted to be powerful because they allowed the women to connect through the bonds of lived-experience (such dynamics have been found to play an important part in regards to outcomes within the mental health recovery paradigm). The use of food as a way to encourage friendship was also a powerful motivator for the women to stay engaged with the group and also to stay connected to their cultural identity. Finally, providing safe spaces for women to come together to develop language skills, share food and forge friendships arguably reduced the potential for social isolation which is highly germane when thinking about aspects such as MRW who are older and consequently at higher risk.

9.2 Case Study 7

Case Study 7: Young Women's Support Group (Norway)

Provider: Papillon

- Weekly meetings to support young women with cross-cultural or migrant backgrounds
- Build bridges with local community to facilitate social inclusion
- Provide advice on employment, education, future planning
- Provide a safe, non-judgemental listening space
- Organise events
- Training
- Individual mentoring

Papillon is a voluntary organisation that works with young women with cross-cultural or migrant backgrounds between the ages of 16 and 30 (including those who have newly arrived in Norway). The service seeks to facilitate belonging and develop bridging ties within the local community, and to help young women navigate the complex landscape between country of origin and Norwegian society in their journey of adjustment and adaptation. Papillon offers various services such as weekly drop-in sessions, 1:1 guidance, advise on employment, education, future pathways, along with various training packages.

The key message embedded within this service is that diversity is a strength (this is also promoted in the ICC programme previously mentioned). An essential part of their work, therefore, involves supporting young women to feel confident in the choices they make. Empowering young women in this way cannot be underestimated. In discussions with founder Leila Rossow about her own experience, it was noted that,

> '[when I arrived here] I tried to find a place where I could belong, where I could listen to other histories like mine, but it took a very long time because you have your own issues and you have to trust yourself and you have to be stable – and you have to fight your fear, but finally I was able to meet a lot of amazing women from different countries, from Africa and from the Middle East' (Rossow, 2019)

The need and value of this unique service was also highlighted,

> 'There is a need to provide support for young women so that they can have a place to talk about what they feel and what they are experiencing' (Rossow, 2019)

Empowerment and resilience are developed by encouraging the young women to perceive the different cultural frameworks they belong to as a resource:

> 'I felt that I could identify myself with the young women and they could do the same with me..... growing up in a non-Western culture, and then living here in Norway.....trying to find our way between the conflict with our family or our immediate environment, the community and the expectations of Norwegian society – it can be like, 'which way should I take?'.....so we advise the young women that they should get strength from both cultures in order to find their own way and to build their future in Norway how they want to......we tell them that the background they come from should be taken as a resource... this is what we've been working a lot on, the 'diversity is a resource' perspective. Always.' (Rossow, 2019)

The challenges and barriers faced by young MRW when they arrive in a new country was also highlighted by Arsiema Medhanie,

> 'I came here as a refugee in 2015... I had nobody, I came all alone to Norway, and had no family, no nothing, I was going to Norwegian courses and I met this group of Eritrean women and they told me about Papillon – and then I started to feel like, 'wow, this feels nice, I feel part of something...this feels like home'....it just made me feel safe, helped me to feel I belonged and made me feel confident about learning and being part of Norwegian culture and

> lifestyle.........joining this group....you get inspired, empowered and then you hear other stories and you realise that it's not just you that has been through this.......and you start to think, 'if they came a long time ago and if they lived what I am living right now and they got through this, then I can be like that too'....so they were my role models...I can honestly say that.. and then I started wanting more for my life, I had goals...I started to think, 'I want to study, so I can study, I want to do this, I can do this, I want to work, so I can work'.....you meet a lot of barriers, a lot of obstacles – the fact that you are black, that you are new to the country, the fact that you are a refugee, the fact that you don't speak the language, like every day you have a lot of barriers...this is why Papillon is so important' (Medhanie, 2019)

As a powerful example of Papillon's potential, Arseima is now helping to deliver courses for Papillon,

> 'We have developed a project called 'Generation' that address cultural taboos....in our culture lots of things are taboo such as abortion and homosexuality....so I lead the course with the women and another colleague takes the male group......the aim is to address the mental set-up that people come with and make them more openminded so that culturally embedded ideas about these topics are not repeated in the next generation' (Medhanie, 2019)

Whilst the service is relatively new (founded in 2016) its impact is being felt across Norway. For instance, they have recently been awarded the Jentepris 2019 from Plan International, in recognition of the work they do to help young minority women in the Bergen area (where Papillon is based). They have also been approached by a local university to deliver lectures. Services such as Papillon offer significant and long-term potential in the integration landscape because they are changing future dynamics i.e. young MRW feel empowered, connected and included. Their work tackling cultural taboos also offers considerable potential for disrupting certain ideas that can hinder the life trajectory for young MRW. A further dimension worth noting is with regards to governance. Specifically, it can encourage young MRW to move into decision-making roles that can inform policy about the needs and realities of MRW, thus ensuring policies accurately reflect the migration experience for women and, importantly, allow those polices to be more sustainable and responsive for future planning (United Nations, 2020b). Importantly, the approach of Papillon directly facilitates wellbeing and empowerment because they nurture dreams and aspirations, which encourages young women to find their voices, to believe in themselves and to work towards their short and long-term goals.

9.3.1 Key learning and benefits: My Service

Services that are focused specifically on migrant and refugee women are crucial given their unique needs. The services highlighted in this section are doing tremendous work to help MRW feel safe, supported and empowered, essentially helping them to thrive in their new environments. Key learning for my service includes developing a program of activities aimed specifically at women that addresses these dimensions. The work of Papillon also highlights

the importance of delivering programs to younger women in relation to the cultural landscapes they are traversing.

9.3.2 Policy Level

The power of building agency is not only relevant to MRW, however, in this context it has potential for ensuring policies more accurately reflect their experience i.e. it can encourage MRW to move into decision-making roles in areas that they have direct experience with, essentially offering wider benefits.

Furthermore, Papillon's 'Generation' project that addresses cultural taboos offers significant potential for breaking down barriers and culturally ingrained ideas, and for helping young people navigate and negotiate the different cultural landscapes they belong to thus strengthening integration and social cohesion. More targeted programs in relation to cultural taboos, that seek to empower young migrants and refugees, can bring both short-term and long-term benefits.

10. Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be seen that migrant and refugee integration is a complex issue. Countries around the world continue to respond to it in different ways, mostly driven by short-term thinking and economic imperatives which in the UK are pronounced under 'austerity'. However, exploring different models of integration and looking for evidence of best-practice is vital for informing policy and strategy because the degree to which migrants and refugees integrate and become part of their new communities has implications economically, socially and for overall nation-building and prosperity. In this regard, international evidence from Canada and Norway provides valuable learning for 'policy transfer'.

In terms of mental health and wellbeing, the evidence from this project demonstrates that such considerations are woven into Canada's service provision landscape, with newcomers often having access to trained counsellors and to providers who share the same cultural background. Services such as VAST are doing tremendous work in helping refugees make sense of their traumatic experiences, in order to heal and recover, and their emphasis on psychosocial education is particularly important in helping refugees understand how trauma effects the body. Offering trauma-awareness training is also highly valuable to ensure frontline workers are appropriately informed during their encounters with migrants and refugees. The pilot project offering access to clinical counselling is of particular interest, not least in terms of its holistic approach. In the UK context of neo-liberalism, and the tendency for reducing migrants and refugees to economic units, the idea of more holistic working is important, not least because it allows the person to feel like they are moving forward and achieving their potential (which essentially brings wider benefits). Whilst there are still issues with funding in Canada, there is a recognition of the need to address migrant and refugee mental health in a variety of ways. The overall theme here therefore offers valuable learning for other countries in terms of promotion, prevention and overall enhanced integration pathways.

In terms of accessibility, arguably this is facilitated in many different ways. The ISSofBC Welcome Centre is an excellent model of how to help refugees in some of their most vulnerable and challenging moments in ways that they find the most helpful. In terms of transferability, the 'place-based' principles can be applied in other contexts, specifically in relation to more focused consideration of local dynamics e.g. the needs of rural communities and the overall infrastructure represents something quite different to more urban settlements. In this way, holistic and collaborative working between services offers tremendous potential for supporting the complex challenges and barriers that may occur as part of the integration process. Furthermore, the community consultation that was carried out at the planning stage of the Welcome Centre reinforces the need for such considerations in other contexts because successful integration requires the support of the community. Indeed, it would be useful to gather more evidence on the opinions of local people in terms of how they feel about the integration of migrants and refugees in their communities so that concerns and resistance can be brought into the open for public discussion and reasoned debate; if not, it runs the risk that such opinions go underground and manifest in more extreme ways.

Arguably language and employment are the cornerstones of integration. For Canada and Norway, these are facilitated in a range of different ways with a variety of state and third sector

organisations. In terms of language, aside from formal language acquisition, the emphasis in this report was on the power of discourses for shaping perceptions of migrants and refugees; the types of discourses engaged in matters because it can promote inclusion or conversely 'othering'. The argument here is that more formal acknowledgement of demographics (i.e. ageing populations) is key for highlighting the two-way dynamic of migration and for countering some of the messages of the politically extreme right. A further point is that consideration needs to be given to local community issues, or historical experiences of trauma, that can be used to promote social cohesion through commonality. Additionally, it would be useful for policymakers to gather more evidence from migrants and refugees to help inform policy; the emphasis should be on lived-experience in recognition of its value and how it can enhance other forms of evidence (one can see the potential of this when considering the mental health recovery paradigm). Specifically, it would be useful to consider more research that examines place to place dynamics given that a migrant or refugee does not simply start their biography at the border. Such knowledge is crucial otherwise understanding remains partial which serves to reinforce and perpetuate dominant reductive discourses on migration. Exploratory work that gives primacy and value to the lives of migrants and refugees, and for understanding the dynamic relationship between newcomers and the places they arrive in, is essential for enhancing social cohesion at the local level and for ensuring policies more accurately reflect what migrants and refugees need to help them become part of their new communities. Such work also offers the opportunity to challenge and disrupt current accepted binaries and to transform normative ways of thinking about migration. In Norway, one can see how this approach is being utilised by Papillon to empower young women, so the suggestion here is that there needs to be a wider recognition of its value at micro, meso and macro level.

In terms of employment, again pathways are promoted in numerous ways and, indeed, the mental health and wellbeing approach that is woven within many of DiverseCity's programs (Canada) is particularly helpful. The Introduction Program offered by Norway offers numerous benefits that are worth considering for other countries. Aside from the impressive labour market statistics, the promotion of volunteering as part of its framework has enhanced language skills considerably, which offers benefits both for the individual and for the community. Bridging courses to help refugees with existing skill sets and qualifications are also useful for enhancing employment opportunities. However, whilst securing employment is important, consideration needs to be given to quality of work. The evidence suggests that too often highly skilled migrants end up in low-skilled jobs. Further consideration needs to be given to credentialing and helping migrants and refugees to achieve their full potential which, again, brings wider benefits both economically and socially.

The final theme in this report focused on empowering migrant and refugee women. The work of both MOSAIC and Papillon offer excellent examples of the value of third sector organisations and how they can foster strength and confidence for those who are potentially vulnerable. Importantly, the emphasis is on strengthening bonding and bridging ties which is building social capital at the local level. Migrant and refugee women are at risk of social isolation, especially for those who are sole carers for children, which can impact many areas of their life including language skills, health outcomes, and employment opportunities – women-only safe spaces are therefore vital. Papillon's work with younger women, their goal of nurturing dreams and fostering confidence, can influence the life trajectory in numerous positive ways; the testimony from Arseima reflects this. Their work addressing cultural taboos

also offers excellent ideas for consideration in the UK context. Again, in relation to both promotion and prevention (i.e. wellbeing) the lesson here is that there needs to be more targeted work with migrant and refugee women, and migration policies need to reflect this understanding.

The topic of migration is complex and woven with many issues. Policymakers need to ensure the safety and dignity of migrants and refugees, whilst at the same time ensuring local needs and issues are heard, this balance is key in such fast changing and shifting dynamics. However, aside from policymakers, it is incumbent on all those who work within the integration landscape to think more widely about how social proximity between the local community and newcomers can be achieved; creative ways that highlight commonality are particularly worthy of note. Whilst migration is not a new phenomenon, the larger numbers of people that are moving are and such movements across the globe involve all of us in some way. The need then is for more considered responses at state-level in terms of how this is managed by consistently utilising a human rights framework; at community level in terms of strengthened collaborative efforts to help migrants and refugees integrate so that they can contribute and feel part of local community life, and finally at an individual level by encouraging people to negate the tendency to label a person simply as a ‘migrant’ or ‘refugee’ but instead to see the human being who may need help and support to start their new life but who also may have a tremendous amount to offer back, in this way encouraging new narratives of enriching.

10.1 Overall Recommendations

1) Mental Health

My Service

Develop a program of lower-level, preventative work on wellbeing and mindfulness

Policy Level

- Providing psychosocial education to migrants and refugees on how trauma affects the body
- Providing trauma-awareness training for services such as the police, NHS, legal bodies, and welfare services
- Offer migrants and refugees access to clinical counselling for a limited period
- Greater investment in art therapy

2) Accessibility

My Service:

- Strengthen collaborative working
- Utilise technology more

- Implement mentoring scheme

Policy Level:

- More focus on consulting migrants and refugees to ensure more effective use of services
- Consider how accessible services currently for promoting integration
- Encourage a more holistic coordinated service delivery system
- More community consultation work
- Encourage cities to apply for ICC membership

3) Employment

My Service:

- Develop youth program that focuses on developing confidence and leadership skills

Policy Level:

- A more coherent introductory program framework
- A mental health component woven into employment programs

4) Language

My Service:

- Continue developing creative projects that give consideration to different cultural frameworks and encourage spaces where they meet through commonality

Policy Level:

- Increase funding for third sector organisations to help with language acquisition
- More discussion on the benefits of migration linked to demographics
- Renewed focus and discussions on human rights for framing migration

5) Empowering Migrant and Refugee Women

My Service:

- Develop a program of empowerment and wellbeing activities aimed specifically at women

Policy Level:

- More targeted interventions aimed at supporting migrant and refugee women
- Promoting work that tackles cultural taboos

COVID-19

The impact of COVID-19 has had significant implications for countries globally, along with their populations. In particular, its social and economic impact has disrupted the lives of significant numbers of people but vulnerable and disadvantaged populations continue to bear the brunt of the crisis. In response to this, much of the recommendations from this report can be implemented using technology. For instance, in terms of wellbeing and mental health, use of online videoconferencing offers an opportunity for service providers to connect with migrants and refugees in a way that allows them to remain safe but still feel supported in regards to their emotional wellbeing. Other technologies can also be used to share information (particularly in relation to practical concerns such as access to food), provide mentoring support and deliver workshops to specific groups in ways that are not resource-heavy for services that may already be struggling. The complexity of the current situation makes it difficult to assess what ‘new norms’ may emerge, however mental health and wellbeing, along with easily accessible support, should be considered a priority to ensure that migrants and refugees do not become even more disadvantaged on their integration journeys.

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