



A NEW BEGINNING

Refugee Integration in Europe



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Outcome of an EU funded project on Refugee Integration Capacity and Evaluation (RICE)



European Refugee
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Commission

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Cover Photo: Asylum seekers centre in Winterswijk, the Netherlands,
for refugees who have recently received a residence permit. At
Winterswijk they start preparations for their integration into Dutch
society, by taking language courses and learn computer skills.

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Translations: all English translations of national legislation, decisions and reports are unofficial translations by the researchers unless otherwise indicated.

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Executive Summary

For the majority of refugees in Europe integration is the most relevant durable solution and European Union (EU) Member States have placed integration high on the policy and political agenda particularly since the mid-1990s. In many of those countries significant investment has been made in programmes and associated support to facilitate immigrant integration and to identify effective practice. In addition, an increasing awareness has developed of the importance of being able to evaluate immigrant integration using measurable indicators to help assess the effectiveness of policy and programming and form understandings of the factors that influence migrant integration trajectories.

In the specific case of refugees, integration is based on the rights flowing from the Qualification Directive (2011). There is however no specific EU integration policy instrument. While national approaches vary significantly within the EU, most programmes are mainstreamed into existing integration efforts. The specific situation of refugees and the barriers or facilitators to their integration thereby risk being overlooked and the expert support needed to assist this group in becoming economically productive, self-reliant and to ensure dignity may be diminished. As such, this study has prioritized their specific situation, asking what refugee integration looks like.

The aim of this study was to review trends in the development of policy areas relevant to integration, to highlight already-used measurable integration indicators and the methods of evaluating integration, and to highlight factors that influence integration outcomes for refugees. Four project countries took part in the research: France, Sweden, Ireland and Austria. In addition, an overview was done of three other countries which have made significant moves toward refugee integration policy and programming: Canada, United Kingdom and Germany.

Through this research, the presence or absence of refugee-specific knowledge and statistical data in the literature on integration was identified, and refugee-specific barriers or facilitators to integration were identified through consultation with refugees and stakeholders. Within the literature review and consultations, the study considered what approaches to integration appeared to have positive or successful outcomes, and it is based on this that our recommendations are made. This report presents the research that set out to test if existing integration policy areas and indicators, and known influencing factors, are relevant in the case of refugees.

This research fills a gap in knowledge on specifically refugee integration which goes beyond the case study approach or approaches which dedicate themselves to the analysis of policy. As a broad ranging qualitative research which includes the refugee voice, this study presents evidence which can underpin future integration policy and programming and future research direction.

Key findings:

- The individuality of each person's integration process is particularly important for refugees who arrive in EU Member States from very different individual backgrounds. Challenges can only be addressed if refugees are recognized as individuals, rather than as a homogenous group for whom the same interventions are envisaged as applicable.
- There are refugee-specific concerns of family unity, reception conditions and the asylum process, documentation, and the transition period immediately after recognition which should be reflected in future integration evaluation.
- The transition from asylum-seeker to refugee is a particularly stressful time for refugees because many doors open at this point, including full rights to work, access to structured language courses, and access to housing. Pressure to leave reception centres is a significant stress for refugees at this point. At the same time, there can be delays in receiving documents proving entitlement and this forms barriers and frustration to moving on.
- Areas which cross-cut and influence each other to a significant extent and which are specific to refugees are family separation, time spent in the asylum procedure and reception, absence of documentation, the transition phase upon recognition, language and health. The connections between these are not well understood and data to quantify the effect of the connections is largely absent.
- There is a general absence of quantitative refugee data on integration policy areas and measurable indicators of integration in project countries, even when this data is well accounted for in the case of migrants. In contrast, the available qualitative research on refugees is considerable in some countries. A focus on gathering statistical data on refugees and integration would usefully highlight the challenges they face when used in conjunction with qualitative data.
- Indications from statistical data on migrants more widely and from the available literature suggest that refugees may overall have greater incidence of lower educational attainment, lower labour market participation and higher likelihood of being overqualified for their current position, and that significant gaps exist between refugees and other populations relating to poverty, social exclusion and living conditions. These impressions could be challenged or validated with the gathering of statistical data on refugees, especially longitudinal studies.
- Employment was the key concern for refugee respondents. Regarding entering the labour market, specific barriers exist for refugees in addition to challenges other migrants face. Challenges evidenced in this research include loss of identity documentation and qualification certificates, non-acceptance of qualifications or educational attainment, trauma and uncertainty, anxiety over family separation, the long period of inactivity in the asylum system, and limited social networks.
- Refugees frequently suffer under – employment. Downward professional mobility was particularly hard to cope with for those refugees with qualifications who may suffer downward social, as well as professional, status.
- Language was found to be a key influence on almost every policy area, and the level of language tuition was widely stated to be too low for practical use. Vocational language tuition was found to be useful in addition to combined work/language opportunities.
- Compared to wider migrant groups and the receiving population, refugees struggle to access appropriate, secure, suitable and affordable housing. Refugees overwhelmingly felt the pressure to leave the reception centre immediately after granting of refugee status to be highly stressful regarding housing and can often drive refugees to poor housing in disadvantaged areas, to living temporarily with friends, or to homelessness.
- Understandings of what integration is underpin government direction on integration policy and integration support and vary considerably between governments, policymakers and stakeholders. There are also differences between these understandings and refugees' understanding of what integration means to them which may lead to different perceptions of "successful" integration.

Introduction

Past, recent and projected migration into and within European Union (EU) Member States has placed integration high on the policy and political agenda particularly since the mid-1990s. In many EU countries, significant investment has been made in programmes and associated support to facilitate immigrant integration and identify good practice. In addition, an increasing awareness has developed of the importance of being able to evaluate immigrant integration and identify measurable indicators to do so. This is 1) to assess policy and programming effectiveness and 2) to understand more about migrant integration trajectories and factors that influence them.

At the same time, demographic shifts within Europe (European Commission, 2011a) show a declining and ageing population and require that the EU working population must be increased in order to support the welfare system and pension requirements of future years. Although the demographics and the degree to which a working population shortfall is predicted vary across EU Member States, it is a point of crucial concern in many countries and has been the focus of much policy attention.

Commentators identify the answer to demographic concerns as situated in increasing the labour force and the effectiveness of the labour force. One method relates to increasing labour migration particularly in specific areas which have been identified as being highly contributory, which usually means highly skilled. In consequence, immigration policy has become simultaneously more restrictive and more selective across EU Member States in the past decade and is designed to select highly skilled immigrants who are presupposed to be able to integrate well and reasonably quickly and thus contribute to the receiving society immediately and with minimal integration support.

However, reports such as the *European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals* (EC 2011b) and the EU 2020 Strategy (EC 2012) also point to another method of increasing the labour force in the EU. That is, more effectively integrating legal migrants and thereby utilizing that source of labour that is already within the EU Member States – particularly in the 21-64 age range and those of non-EU origin who the data show to be employed below their skill level. Effective integration of immigrants, including refugees, is at the heart of responding to this need.

Integration policy which complements a protection status in the EU and which allows all newcomers, including refugees, to become economically productive leads to self-reliance, dignity, and social interaction and is beneficial to individuals and the receiving society. A society with large under-productive segments will not only be economically divided, but also socially and often geographically segregated. Getting integration right is therefore key to both a successful Europe and to an effective protection system for refugees in Europe.

Refugee integration

UNHCR has been entrusted by the United Nations General Assembly with the mandate to provide international protection to refugees and, together with governments, to seek permanent solutions to the challenges of refugees. For the majority of refugees in Europe integration is the most relevant durable solution. UNHCR's interest and involvement in integration thus stems from its mandate to seek solutions enshrined in the 1951 Refugee Convention's Article 34, which sets out that states shall, as far as possible, facilitate the integration and naturalization of refugees; as well as various soft law and policy documents related to integration, such as UNHCR's ExCom Conclusion No. 104 on Local Integration and the 2009 note on strategic approaches for combating discrimination.

The logic of the Convention framework is that, with the passing of time, refugees should be able to enjoy a wider range of rights as their association and ties with the host state grow stronger. In this sense, the 1951 Convention gives refugees a solid basis on which they can progressively restore the social and economic independence needed to get on with their lives. In this regard, ExCom Conclusion No. 104 (UNHCR 2005) calls on states to facilitate, as appropriate, the integration of refugees and recalls that special efforts may be necessary to facilitate their integration.

The framework for integration of refugees has also been developed in relation to resettlement. In 2002, UNHCR together with interested states published a handbook to guide reception and integration of resettled refugees which was revised in 2011 (UNHCR 2011). Many of the core principles underpinning integration set out in the handbook, as well as some good practices, have been confirmed in this study to be relevant for refugee integration more broadly.

While refugees within the EU have rights commensurate with those set out in the 1951 Convention; support, information and advice is however often required before refugees can integrate successfully as fully included members of society.

Many countries in Europe have in recent years been working to improve integration of third-country nationals generally. Efforts have also been made to measure both social and economic impact of integration policies and support. Refugees, as part of this group, however have specific needs due to, among other factors, their loss of the protection of their country; their experiences of persecution or armed conflict; their particular difficulties obtaining documentation; and the separation and loss of family which often follows as a consequence of flight. Measuring the impact of integration policies on refugees without an understanding of their particular needs may lead to misguided policy development and to lack of crucial support needed to avoid long-term dependency, marginalization and isolation of refugees. This can in turn lead to an increase in irregular movements or challenge social cohesion in the host state.

Consideration of a direction for refugees and integration

Achieving effective integration policy and programming can be particularly challenging for states and for individuals in the case of refugees. Most have lost their means of self-reliance and find themselves unprepared in the receiving country. However, integration policy does not wholly justify the differences between refugee newcomers and other categories of migrants such as economic or family class migrants. In fact the economic downturn of recent years has led to government cuts in programming which have impacted on refugee service provision and increasingly led to refugee service provision being mainstreamed. While this can be effective in bringing refugees quickly into the services available to all, mainstreaming can produce gaps in refugee-specific services and expertise.

Despite past financial and policy investment to providing effective integration support to all migrants legally permitted to stay in the receiving country, identifying which policy and programming strategies work well remains a challenge. At the core of the challenge are the different views on which policy areas are key for integration, which measurable integration indicators are most relevant in assessing “successful” integration or levels of integration, and more fundamentally, what does “integration” mean and what is the integration “goal”?

Aims of the study

The aim of this study is to review trends in the development of policy areas relevant to integration, to highlight already-used measurable integration indicators and the methods of evaluating integration, and to highlight factors that influence integration outcomes for refugees.

The task was to identify the presence or absence of refugee-specific knowledge and statistical data on integration through a review of literature, and to explore refugee-specific barriers or facilitators to integration through consultation with refugees and stakeholders whose work relates to refugees.

Through this combined methodology this research sets out to test the assumption that existing integration policy areas, integration indicators and influencing factors are relevant in the case of refugees. The consultation component of the research set out to ask at a broad level what are the main factors which are influential (positively or negatively) in refugees’ levels of “success” in accepted integration policy areas; are there differences relating to integration which set refugees apart from other immigrant groups; are there areas which are more critical for refugees when compared with wider migrant integration; and are there indicators of integration which are significant for refugees but which are understated in policy? UNHCR is interested in “how refugees are doing” in terms of integration, and how their integration trajectories, or pathways, are impacted on (positively and negatively) and by what factors.

The study did not aim to evaluate refugee integration, nor did it aim to evaluate policies or programming relating to integration at either national or EU level. This report is therefore not an evaluation report. Within the literature review and consultations, the study considered what approaches to integration appeared to have positive or successful outcomes, and sought to identify examples of good or interesting practice which others might consider. The findings of this research which have led to our recommendations concerning refugee integration are therefore based on existing knowledge and on recent consultations. However, practices identified in this report are not the outcome of any evaluation nor are the cited examples of practice exhaustive.

The definition of integration

There is no consensus on the definition of immigrant integration in the context of developed countries and there is no formal definition in international refugee law (Crisp 2004). Broad understanding of integration as processual, individual and two-way underpins many government and academic attempts to define what integration or an integrated society looks like. In a developing country context, the term is frequently used when speaking of local integration of refugees as an alternative to voluntary repatriation and resettlement: the three durable solutions of UNHCR. In Canada, the term “settlement” is used for the immediate period after arrival when a newcomer orientates, and “integration” is used for the longer-term process of becoming a member of Canadian society.

The lack of a firm definition may reflect the subjective character of integration as a process and the way in which an individual can be integrated in one area of the receiving society but not in others. It may also reflect the way in which an immigrant can simultaneously create and maintain strong links with his or her country of origin, the receiving country and countries of transit. In the increasingly connected 21st century, migration no longer means leaving behind one set of connections and replacing them with another; each may be maintained alongside the other via a large range of instant communication technologies.¹

For some in the receiving society, such parallel maintenance of connections may be interpreted as lacking commitment to the receiving society or as an impediment to participation in, or contribution to, society. For the migrant, it may simply be a way of living which allows him or her to span geographic space and retain or create multiple belongings and affiliations which may actually assist integration by offering emotional or even financial security. Indeed, the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) has recently put forward the concept of “everyday integration” which reflects exactly this juxtaposition of the many areas in which a migrant may be integrated to a greater or lesser degree and differentiates between the “big issues” such as employment and housing and the everyday functioning of individuals and families in areas such as leisure, shopping and consumption, and childcare (Cherti and McNeil 2012). This recent publication is recognition of researchers’ long-noted observation of the way in which migrants selectively integrate and the ways in which they employ different aspects of their identity at different moments and in different social and cultural spaces in the receiving society.

The means of, and reasons for, maintaining identity and belonging in multiple non-exclusive ways are not the core focus of this report, but do form the backdrop to integration in the 21st century world where one can be integrated simultaneously in multiple locations, to a range of degrees, and for a variety of personally identified outcomes.

Defining integration is made more complex because it is not only something that happens to a passive individual over time, but is a process in which an individual may actively and selectively control certain aspects. Nonetheless, governments require newcomers to engage with certain aspects of integration in order to ensure a functioning cohesive society in which all members contribute and benefit. The range of ways in which governments do this varies from facilitation and enablement, to encouragement, to coercion. Put simplistically, the goal of integration is equality, inclusion and achievement, however disparity may intervene as governments may view integration one way, while newcomers live it another way.

¹ See, for example, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 9, November 2012, “Special Issue: Migration and the Internet: Social Networking and Diasporas”.

➤ Germany

Germany's Federal Office for Migration and Refugees refers to integration as a long-term process with the aim of including everyone in society who lives in Germany on a permanent and legal basis. Immigrants should have the opportunity to participate fully in all aspects of social, political and economic life on an equal footing in order to become part of German society. Their responsibility is to learn German and to respect and abide by the Constitution and its laws. In the brochure, *Migration and Integration*, the Federal Ministry of the Interior (2011) states that the aim of integration in Germany goes beyond facilitating communities to co-exist, calling for efforts by the migrant to learn the language and accept the basic values of the receiving society.

➤ Canada

The 2010–2011 report by Citizenship and Immigration Canada on *Plans and Priorities for Citizenship and Immigration Canada* (2010) suggests a two-way process is central to integration and considers Canada's approach to integration as "one that encourages a process of mutual accommodation and adjustment by both newcomers and the larger society."

➤ United Kingdom

The UK Home Office 2004 report *Indicators of Integration* (Ager and Strang 2004) suggests integration can be said to be achieved through public outcomes within employment, housing, education, health equivalent to the receiving society, through social connections and connections with services and functions of the state, and through acquiring linguistic and cultural competence and a sense of security and stability.

For the purposes of this study on refugees, integration is understood as the end product of a dynamic and multifaceted two-way process with three interrelated dimensions: a legal, an economic and a social-cultural dimension. Integration requires efforts by all parties concerned, including preparedness on the part of refugees to adapt to the host society without having to forego their own cultural identity, and a corresponding readiness on the part of host communities and public institutions to welcome refugees and to meet the needs of a diverse population (UNHCR 2005).

At the core of UNHCR's definition is the concept of integration as a two-way process and this is premised on "adaptation" of one party and "welcome" by the other. It does not however require the refugee to relinquish their cultural identity and integration therefore differs from assimilation.

Further to this, the two-way process underlies the three specific dimensions that UNHCR emphasizes as being part of the process of refugee integration:

- As a legal process: refugees are granted a range of entitlements and rights which are broadly commensurate with those enjoyed by citizens. These include freedom of movement, access to education and the labour market, access to social assistance, including health facilities, and the capacity to travel with valid travel and identity documents. Realization of family unity is another important aspect of integration. Over time the process should lead to permanent residence rights and in some cases the acquisition of citizenship in the country of asylum.
- As an economic process: refugees attain a growing degree of self-reliance and become capable of pursuing sustainable livelihoods, thus contributing to the economic life of the host country.
- As a social and cultural process: refugees acclimatize and local communities accommodate refugees to enable them to live amongst or alongside the receiving population without discrimination or exploitation, and contribute actively to the social life of their country of asylum.

Integration is, in this sense, an interactive process involving both refugees and nationals of the receiving state, as well as its institutions. The result is ideally a society that is both diverse and open, where people can form a community, regardless of differences (UNHCR 2002). A diverse and open society has been observed within current integration policy to be often “based on a vision of a society where individuals with different cultural and ethnic backgrounds can co-exist” (Bijl and Verweij 2012:34). These authors observe further that the approach to integration has narrowed in recent years to one which includes not encroaching on the fundamental values of the receiving society (Bijl and Verweij 2012:34) and this has increasingly been reflected at policy level and emphasizes the responsibility of the newcomer in the integration process.

Structure of the report

A methodology chapter describes the overall approach and highlights any national differences. This is followed by a statistical overview and an overview of trends in the development of integration indicators and of integration evaluation, then a summary review of existing literature on refugee integration. Information gathered during consultations with refugees and stakeholders is then summarized under thematic headings. This section is intended to further knowledge on the usefulness of existing policy areas and integration indicators in reflecting refugee integration. Detailed national findings are available in national reports. UK, Canada and Germany were reviewed as countries which have significant experience of receiving refugees and a less in-depth desk review is presented for each to offer some examples of good practice and the overall approach to integration in those countries. The content is not intended to be exhaustive and in all cases more detailed national findings are available in each national report. Conclusions and recommendations are presented based on the findings.

Methodology

This project report forms part of an overall project which itself consisted of two components. One was implemented in four Western European countries (Austria, France, Ireland and Sweden), the other in four Central European countries (Bulgaria, Poland, Romania and Slovakia). The Western Europe study began on 1 September 2012 with consultations taking place in each country until March 2013. The overall duration of the project is from 1 August 2012 to 31 December 2013.

In Western Europe the study did not evaluate refugee integration. Instead, in consideration of the significant existing investment within Western EU Member States in migrant integration programmes, support, evaluation and good practice, the project undertook to review approaches to integration and the evaluation methods used, with particular reference to refugees. This approach was used with a view to informing a model for longitudinal refugee integration research and evaluation, developing tools and methods for good practice in refugee integration support, and to promoting comprehensive and comparable data collection on refugee integration across all EU Member States.

In Central Europe the project is implemented over 18 months in Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia with the overall objective of improving the quality and effectiveness of refugee integration by building the capacity and expertise of the authorities responsible for integration in each of the four participating countries. To this end, the project, is piloting an online Integration Evaluation Tool (IET) developed by the Migration Policy Group (MPG) for UNHCR. Based on the data collected, the project will provide expertise, awareness, training and support to the various ministries and service providers responsible for refugee integration. This part of the project will enable the evaluation and development of effective integration programmes for refugees and persons with complementary protection in Central Europe. Regional roundtables and thematic reports will review the gaps and good practices identified through the information collected throughout the region on the various areas of integration.

The overall project combines two different methodologies which will ultimately benefit from each other and creates tools accessible to all EU Member States.

This report and the methodology outlined below relates to the Western Europe component only.

Participating countries

UNHCR has identified challenges to the integration of refugees in all EU Member States. Understanding the particular barriers and opportunities for refugee integration in each of the national contexts is therefore relevant. As such, UNHCR would ideally have provided a comprehensive review of refugee integration in all Member States. However, time and resource constraints dictated this was not possible and a selection of Member States was made. Furthermore, experiences from working with refugees in most EU Member States showed there are sufficient similarities in the barriers and facilitators impacting refugee integration to allow for a more selective approach. The four project countries were selected in order to include countries with different experiences of refugee arrivals but where commonalities can nevertheless be observed, and where some integration support is already in place and some evaluation has taken place. All four countries have substantial experience receiving asylum-seekers and with integration of refugees recognized in the national asylum systems. Nevertheless differences among the four countries in relation to refugee arrivals, language, integration strategies and integration support allow for a broader perspective to be presented.

In addition, an overview of policy, practices and trends was conducted for three additional countries which have significant experience of receiving refugees: United Kingdom, Canada and Germany. The approach of including these additional countries allows for this study to draw on policy and examples from a wider group of states and thereby provide a broader perspective on approaches to refugee integration. These examples are presented throughout.

Gathering data

This report is based on data gathered by the four Western European project countries, France, Sweden, Austria and Ireland, plus a review of existing literature and statistical data in relation to trends in integration policy and evaluation at EU level. In addition an overview of integration policy, statistical data and examples of good or interesting practices was conducted for Germany, the UK and Canada. In the national research, information was gathered with two approaches: desk research and consultation. In the consultation phase, the focus was on seeking adult refugee respondents (over eighteen years) who had come through the asylum system. In Ireland, given the high proportion of resettled refugees among the refugee population, where the project came into contact with resettled refugees their views were taken into account though not actively sought. Overall, statistical data on refugee integration specifically is very limited. In Austria, the language of the primary and secondary data was primarily German and stakeholder consultations, refugee interviews and also partly policy documents and academic research have been summarized in English. Similarly in France and in Sweden, primary and secondary data in French and Swedish has been summarized in English.

The study did not allow for a distinction between refugees and those granted subsidiary protection. Persons with subsidiary protection were included in consultations and where issues were specific to their experience this is set out. The term refugee in this report is therefore used to cover both categories unless otherwise specified.

Desk research

Each of the four national teams reviewed existing literature, knowledge and policy on specifically refugees and integration where available, and on immigrants and integration where refugee-specific information was absent or limited. Materials on evaluation and measurement of integration were also reviewed. Material reviewed included academic literature, online libraries and sources, reports, studies, communications, policy documents and statistical information of national and regional governments, EU institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society, think-tanks and other research bodies. The review of national literature builds a country-specific picture of existing knowledge and policy relevant to the integration of refugees and is presented in detail in national reports and in summary in this report.

An overview of approaches to integration, and the evaluation of integration and of developing trends at EU level complements the summary of national literature. The aim is to present a view of the developments at EU level, and form a picture of key EU policy directives in relation to integration in the last two decades and how refugees are included in these.

The overview of the UK, Canada and Germany adds to the wider picture of integration and presents some examples of interesting initiatives and practices. These overviews are intended as “snapshots” rather than as in-depth and are limited in scope to reviewing key reports and policies on refugee integration; to identifying current approaches to integration research and evaluation within those countries; and to engaging with selected government representatives and key stakeholders to identify key policy areas in those countries.

Through the literature reviews, some differences became apparent. In Sweden a large number of studies and research on integration exist, but a particular emphasis regarding refugees was research on health and labour market integration. In Ireland refugee-specific literature is sparse, whereas in France most sources reviewed were refugee-specific although these were predominantly from NGO sources as refugees and integration is under-researched in academia. In Austria, while a considerable number of refugee-relevant research exists, some are unpublished and not all government-funded research is made available to the public, resulting in research appearing limited. Each national context however had in common a limited amount of quantitative research with detail on measuring indicators for refugees.

Consultations

To complement desk research, extensive consultations comprised a Project Reference Group, four National Reference Groups (one in each country of research), stakeholder meetings, and refugee interviews, forming a multi-layered approach including different actors involved in, and affected by, refugee integration.

The Project Reference Group was established to guide the project and to draw out key issues in the integration of refugees and assisted in identifying relevant literature and the scope of the study. Representatives from Migration Policy Group (MPG), European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), and academic representation from l’Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) formed the group.

UNHCR established in each project country a National Reference Group, drawing members with extensive knowledge of, and experience in, refugee integration from central and local government, NGOs, integration agencies and academia. The National Reference Group’s role was influential in drawing out relevant national integration developments and identifying key thematic areas of particular relevance in refugee integration. National Reference Group meetings were held during the span of the research. Austria, France and Sweden each held three meetings. In Ireland, a flexible approach was used where members were consulted individually and a group meeting was held.

National Reference Groups (NRGs) and the desk review combined to inform the choice of themes for the project and for stakeholder meetings. Selected thematic areas relate closely to existing national and EU identified policy areas relating to integration which form the fundamentals of current policy direction. Two areas – housing and employment – were set for each national team, with an additional three areas country-specific to reflect national differences and priorities. While the variation in thematic area in each project country was considered crucial to reflect national contexts and priorities, the potential for comparative analysis was consequently reduced.

Thematic stakeholder meetings provided a further layer of consultation.² Stakeholders were invited according to the theme of the meeting and included those who work with refugees and have an understanding of which integration policies and initiatives work and which do not, such as NGOs, integration practitioners and service providers, academics, civil society members, local government, health professionals, teachers, and public officials. Some were representatives of generalist institutions working with migrants more widely rather than specifically refugees. Meetings aimed to provide the opportunity for discussion and analysis on barriers and facilitators of refugee integration and to identify examples of good practice.

Thematic areas were:

Austria	Employment	Housing	Social Engagement	Education			
France	Employment	Housing	Social Integration		Health	Access to Rights	
Sweden	Employment	Housing	Social Integration	Education	Health		
Ireland	Employment	Housing	Social Inclusion			Access to Information	Active Citizenship

In France a sixth consultation occurred on the theme of family reunification, although stakeholder meetings in Sweden, Austria and Ireland treated this as a cross-cutting area.

In Ireland, active citizenship had a focus on the role of the media, and social inclusion focused on racism and discrimination.

Health, language, family reunification, lack of documents and impact of the asylum procedure were included as cross-cutting issues throughout all consultations.

² Information on stakeholders is available in the national reports.

Over 120 stakeholders in France participated in the research. In Austria over 65 attended meetings, in Ireland 53, and in Sweden 40. In addition, in Austria telephone interviews and written consultations by questionnaire were conducted with stakeholders unable to attend meetings. Meetings were either half day or full day and were held mainly in UNHCR offices in Paris, Vienna, Stockholm and Dublin, however a number of regional meetings were held where logistically possible:

Stakeholder meetings

France	Austria	Sweden	Ireland
Paris, Ile de France	Vienna	Stockholm	Dublin
Rhone	Graz	Malmö	
Ille-et-Vilaine	Linz		
Haut-Rhin			
Moselle			

To assist consistency, a preliminary questionnaire was sent to participating stakeholders in France, Ireland and Austria to gather basic information and to initiate discussion. In addition, a meeting guide was followed to ensure key discussion areas were identified and broad issues were engaged with. Meetings were however sufficiently flexible to allow free discussion.

In Austria, the National Reference Group felt it important to reflect the two-way process in integration, and an additional consultation was conducted in Vienna to actively involve members of the receiving society, aiming to include personal perceptions and experiences on important factors influencing integration and possible barriers. Those with some kind of “neighbourship” and contact with refugees were invited to participate and were selected with the assistance of the National Reference Group and stakeholders. This group should not be considered as representative of Austrian society.

Refugee interviews were considered paramount in this project. An examination of the characteristics of integration as a process can only be effectively conducted by involving those who are integrating. Identifying what is needed, what works, what does not work, and determining refugees’ desires for integration or resistance to integration in whole or part, are elements upon which refugees themselves can offer invaluable insight. Furthermore, refugees’ views are rarely sought in government commissioned research. Meetings with refugees were semi-structured to allow discussion of identified integration policy areas, but also to allow refugees themselves to take discussions in the direction they felt important. That is, refugees were encouraged to raise topics they felt important to integration beyond those identified at policy level. Some areas raised by refugee respondents included time spent in the asylum process, family separation, and the transition from asylum-seeker to refugee upon receipt of status.

Both refugees and those with subsidiary protection were included as respondents. Those under 18 years were not included, and where it was possible to ascertain the difference, resettled refugees were not included. The sample includes a cross-section in terms of age, gender, time in country, country or region of origin, family status, educational and occupational background.³

³ More details of respondents are contained in national reports.

Refugee meetings

	Total Respondents	Male	Female	Age Profile	No. of Nationalities
Austria	84	46	38	Average age 34	22
France	68	45	23	17-34 years - 29 35-54 years - 38	27
Ireland	71	59	41	18-34 years – 31	26
Sweden	55	36	19	18-71 years	13

Refugees both supported by organizations at some point in time and those unsupported were sought, however respondents are predominantly from the former group. Refugees were interviewed mainly in Paris, Vienna, Stockholm and Dublin due to logistics of arranging regional interviews, however some regional meetings were conducted allowing some indication of regional differences. This is notable in France for example, where refugees were interviewed in Ille-et-Vilaine (Bretagne), Rhône (Rhône-Alpes) and Haut-Rhin (Alsace). All three departments are very different structurally, socio-economically and ethnically and welcome refugees from different countries of origin. In Sweden, one meeting was held in Bollnäs, and in Austria, regions were selected to provide refugee representation from the larger refugee communities in Austria. In Sweden, members of one group all identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex (LGBTI).

Methods of accessing refugee respondents included refugee support or community organizations, reception and temporary housing centers, language classes, religious organizations, charitable organizations, snowballing techniques, existing connections of the researcher and of UNHCR offices, translated information leaflets, local newspapers and community radio.

Refugee interviews in France, Austria and Ireland were predominantly one-to-one, but included some small and larger group meetings where this was possible to arrange. In Sweden, group interviews predominated. Two telephone interviews with one refugee each were conducted in Salzburg and Graz, Austria. Group meetings were mostly organized around a common language but in some cases interpreters assisted. Interviews took place in refugees' homes, NGO and UNHCR offices, and public places, and explored subjects relating to existing integration policy areas and indicators without being prescriptive. Verbal informed consent was obtained from each participant.

Bias and limitations

Statistical information on integration rarely disaggregates for refugees; therefore the statistical data presented in this report and in national reports is limited and is not comparable.

There is some bias in project countries related to the national context which should be highlighted:

- In Ireland, the sample size represents a larger proportion of the relatively low refugee population compared to the other project countries. Maintaining anonymity of respondents requires that differences between age groups, gender, nationality and county of residence cannot therefore be highlighted.
- In Sweden, national integration policies are the same across the country, yet local contexts do vary and the structure of society and the economy looks very different in larger cities and in small municipalities in thinly populated areas. Such differences produce varying outcomes and experiences which are not fully accounted for in consultations. Due to distances and the research base in Stockholm, optimal geographical representation was not possible. Similarly in Austria, all consultations took place in larger cities and rural areas with smaller refugee groups and different structural challenges were beyond the scope of this research although they were accounted for in the review of literature.

- In France, there is an over-representation of refugee respondents based in Ile de France. However, this is partially justified by almost 50 per cent of refugees being based in that region.
- In France and Austria, most respondents had some experience of using support organizations. However this bias is limited in France by the diversity of organizations enabling contact with respondents with very different levels of support.
- In France, there was an absence of generalist institutions, such as the employment agency or the health agency. In Austria, a few of the participants represented generalist institutions who worked with the migrant population more broadly, not with refugees as a specific target group. A broad range of representatives were invited to take part in stakeholder meetings, however some declined which seemed to be attributed to those individuals feeling unable to contribute significantly to a discussion on refugee-specific issues, partly due to relatively low refugee numbers, for instance in the case of France. Some others attended but were not able to address specific questions. Where possible, bilateral communication was held as an alternative.
- In Austria and France, levels of German and French respectively varied amongst refugee respondents, resulting in an absence of structured detailed answers in some cases. Most respondents were either French or English speakers in the case of France and Ireland respectively. Due to limited access to interpreters, interviews with refugees without friends or family to translate was limited.

Analysis

The report presents findings and analysis following identified integration policy areas, comparing and contrasting where it is possible to do so. Not all policy areas were reflected in national reports and not all national governments have adopted integration policy areas, therefore there are limitations to comparisons. Literature at EU level was gathered and reviewed in order to obtain a picture of integration generally and of refugee integration in particular. The aim was not to critique, but to present the context in which refugees integrate.

The analysis of material gathered on Canada, the UK and Germany as examples of countries with significant experience in refugee integration was intended as an overview rather than an in-depth study. Key documents and studies were reviewed in order to illustrate the present and past trajectories of refugee and migrant integration in these three countries. Significant shifts in the approach of these countries to refugee integration were identified along with examples of good and interesting practice. These are presented not as an exhaustive review or analysis, but as tools which can be drawn upon for inspiration or as cautionary examples.

At national level, refugee interviews were either recorded or notes taken and partial transcription was made. Nvivo, qualitative data analysis software, was used in France to identify emerging themes and issues. In the other project countries, analysis was conducted without the use of qualitative software. In both cases, analysis was based on the thematic areas identified in each national context through the review of literature and in discussion with NRGs, and on nationally identified integration indicator areas.

Findings from national stakeholder meetings were analyzed in a similar way, although meetings were already organized thematically. Analysis of stakeholder meetings was also concerned with identifying what works and what does not work in terms of service provision and policy and with reflecting suggestions of stakeholders aligned to integration policy areas.

Literature reviews at national level were analyzed under broad headings of identified integration policy areas, but also provided for additional important areas to emerge from the literature for refugee integration. National analyses included identification of gaps in research and policy.

Overall, findings in this report reflect those in the four national reports which themselves are presented based on the overall project research questions and objectives. Information from all strands of the consultation process plus the review of literature and statistical material form the basis of analysis.

Ethics

In research involving interviewing refugees it must be borne in mind that ethical considerations are relevant. Not only may experiences of trauma and insecurity have characterized an individual refugee's flight and journey, but such experiences often continue into the settlement context and may influence the individual's ability and desire to integrate. These experiences may also affect refugees' willingness and ability to participate in research.

UNHCR's guidance on ethics in relation to refugee engagement does not relate specifically to research of this kind; however a set of project ethical guidelines were followed by each team. The project's ethical guidelines reflected the role of the researcher as one of respect for persons, beneficence, and equity,⁴ and followed principles of transparency, confidentiality, voluntariness and avoidance of undue influence. Regarding refugee respondents, original names have not been used and some contexts were changed in order to ensure anonymity.

Finally, it should be noted that this study was not intended to be representative of all EU Member States. Nor was it intended to be a quantitative study providing extensive statistical data from which to draw generalizations. As a qualitative study incorporating consultations with government representatives, stakeholders and refugees themselves, this study's value lies in its crystallization and verification of some of the barriers and facilitators specific to refugee integration commonly experienced in the EU.

⁴ These guidelines were based on the Oral History Society ethical guidelines at: <http://www.oralhistory.org.uk/ethics.php>, the Belmont Report (1978), which offers these three basic principles; and the guidelines of the Association of Social Anthropologists at: <http://www.theasa.org/ethics.shtml> which are those followed by the Refugees Studies Centre, Oxford. Each offers guidance for undertaking research with refugees.

Statistical overview

There is a significant absence of refugee-specific statistics relating to integration in the countries reviewed, although the ELIPA study in France does include refugees. Policy areas related to integration and the measurable indicators of integration related to those policy areas are in many countries well accounted for in statistical data, but for migrants generally. It is possible on occasion to infer information on refugees and integration by looking at country of origin data, where there is a presumption that nationals from those countries are refugees. This is useful only in the absence of more precise data and is by no means a method for evaluating refugee integration. This section therefore draws from data on non-EU citizens, a group which includes refugees. Despite the lack of adequate refugee statistics, the broader data may nevertheless provide some useful information to assist discerning patterns also present in refugee integration.

The population of the 27 EU Member States⁵ was 503,679,730 at 1 January, 2012 (Eurostat 2012a).⁶ Of these, in 2011 a total of 33.3 million (6.6 per cent) were not living in their country of citizenship: 11.8 million were citizens of other EU Member States, while 20.5 million were citizens of non-EU countries. Thus 4.07 per cent of the EU population was non-EU citizens (Eurostat 2012b). This figure includes refugees, but does not disaggregate for refugees, persons with subsidiary protection or other national protection statuses.

There were 48.9 million foreign-born residents living in the EU in 2011 (9.7 per cent of the total population). 16.5 million of these were born in another EU Member State (3.27 per cent of the total population), while the remaining 32.4 million were born in non-EU countries (6.43 per cent of the total population) (Eurostat 2012b). Again, this latter figure would include refugees but does not specify.

⁵ At the time of the research Croatia had not yet joined the European Union. This report therefore refers to the EU 27 Member States only.

⁶ The inhabitants of a given area on 1 January of the year in question (or in some cases, on 31 December of the previous year). The population is based on data from the most recent census adjusted by the components of population change produced since the last census, or based on population registers.

Of the 32.4 million non-EU born residents living in EU27 at the end of 2012, or the 20.5 million non-EU citizens at the same point in time, 1,341,117 were refugees or in a refugee-like situation (UNHCR 2013). This figure is drawn from the refugee figures by country of refuge detailed in UNHCR (2013) as provided by governments.⁷

This refugee figure of just under 1.34 million refugees in the EU is the total of all refugee categories, including subsidiary protection, and does not separate those who were resettled from those who went through the asylum process.

The 1.34 million refugees in EU27 Member States at the end of 2012 represents:

- 0.27 per cent of the total EU population; or
- 4.17 per cent of non-EU born population; or
- 6.6 per cent of non-EU citizens.

While such a small percentage of the EU27 population hardly poses much challenge to social cohesion or is significant enough to influence overall government integration policy, 1.34 million refugees in the EU is a significant number, more so because refugees constitute a vulnerable population requiring specific support due to their experiences of persecution, conflict, loss and flight.

Indeed, when considering the size of the refugee presence in developed countries, it is important to recall that statistical evidence shows most refugees remain in their own region, moving across nearby borders to neighbouring countries. The major refugee-generating regions themselves host on average between 75 and 93 per cent of refugees from that same region (UNHCR 2012a:11). Also the percentage of refugees residing in developing countries has increased over the past decade. Ten years ago, developing countries hosted on average 70 per cent of the world's refugees; this figure now stands at 81 per cent. As such developing countries hosted 8.5 million refugees of the world's 10.5 million refugees at the end of 2012 (UNHCR 2013:13). The 1.34 million refugees in EU27 represent around 13 per cent of this global refugee figure.

⁷ Persons recognized as refugees under the 1951 UN Convention/1967 Protocol, the 1969 OAU Convention, in accordance with the UNHCR Statute, persons granted a complementary form of protection and those granted temporary protection. In the absence of Government figures, UNHCR has estimated the refugee population in 25 industrialized countries based on 10 years of individual refugee recognition.

There are statistics available of relevance to refugees such as numbers of asylum claimants and recognition rates. However, more detailed statistics which tell us something about the level to which, and the policy areas in which, refugees are integrating are limited. The following are some recent reports which present statistics on migrants in Europe, but not specifically on refugees. The information is useful if one views refugees as part of the non-EU born and non-EU citizen categories, but draws attention to the difficulty in statistically understanding the differences between refugees and other migrants in relation to integration.

Migrant integration statistics

The Eurostat publication, *Migrants in Europe A Statistical Portrait of the First and Second Generation* (2011a), presents comparable statistical data on foreign-born, foreign citizens, and second generation in the EU27 in relation to employment, overcrowding, risk of poverty and social exclusion and in the age range 25-54. This data includes non-EU born and non-EU citizens, but does not identify refugee specific data. This publication is based on data gathered in 2008.

The publication draws on Eurostat migration data and the two most important surveys – EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) and EU Statistics on International Living Conditions (EU-SILC). Some general mixed trends are interesting to note relating to non-EU citizens, the group which includes refugees:

- 48.1 per cent of non-EU citizens living in the EU have citizenship of a high HDI (Human Development Index) country; 44.2 per cent are citizens of a medium HDI country; and only 7.4 per cent of non-EU citizens living in the EU are citizens of low developed countries.
- There is a greater incidence of lower educational attainment among non-EU citizens. However, those with high educational attainment are fairly evenly distributed over non-EU citizens, EU citizens and nationals of the Member State in focus.
- 85 per cent of nationals participate in the labour market, while only 77 per cent of non-EU citizens participate. However, the over qualification gap is disproportionately high among non-EU citizens: 19 per cent of nationals are overqualified in their present positions, while 46 per cent of non-EU citizens are overqualified in present positions.
- Significant gaps exist relating to poverty and social exclusion and living conditions. 20 per cent of nationals are at risk of poverty and social exclusion, compared to 38 per cent of non-EU citizens. 19 per cent of nationals live in overcrowded conditions, compared to 31 per cent of non-EU citizens. While the situation is worse for non-EU citizens, nationals are still significantly at risk.

A further Eurostat study which contains data for non-EU citizens is the pilot study (2011b), *Indicators of Immigrant Integration*.⁸ This study presents statistical information, mainly based on 2009 data, for foreign-born, EU-born and non-EU born, compared with the total population, arranged by gender and by EU Member State, and reports on four policy areas: employment, education, social inclusion and active citizenship; disaggregating for self-employment and those employed below skill level. While data for foreign-born will cover persons with protection status, refugee-specific data is not presented.

⁸ The calculations in the Eurostat report are based on EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS), EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), Eurostat's migration statistics, and OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

The report has some further information set out below which complements the information in the above report:

- In both tertiary and secondary education, among the 25-54 age range, non-EU citizens participate to a lower extent than the total population: 21 per cent versus 27 per cent in tertiary education, and 35 per cent versus 48 per cent in secondary education. However, among both non-EU citizens and total population in the same age range, women participate more than men in tertiary education: non-EU citizen men 19 per cent and women 22 per cent, and total population men 25 per cent and women 29 per cent.
- The average share of non-EU citizens who leave education or training early is 34 per cent, compared with 14 per cent for the total population. However, figures vary across EU Member States, with some states doing better than others. In the Netherlands, non-EU citizens and total population leave education early at the same rate (17 per cent), and in the UK non-EU citizens do better than the total average by 4 percentage points – 12 per cent versus 16 per cent.
- Expressed as a percentage of the median equalized disposable income of the total population, figures regarding disposable income vary considerably across EU states. Taking the 20-64 age group, Belgium shows non-EU citizens to have the lowest disposable income at 56 per cent of the average income levels for the total population, and Malta to have the highest at 110 per cent. Figures for non-EU citizen men and women are largely similar, but women do better in some Member States than others: 4 per cent better than men in the UK achieving 92 per cent of the disposable income of the total population.
- Over qualification rates vary across EU Member States, with the widest gap being Greece at 21 per cent over qualification among the total population compared with 87 per cent among non-EU citizens in the age range 25-64. The narrowest gap is in the UK with 23 per cent over qualification among the total population compared with 27 per cent among non-EU citizens in the age range 25-54.

While non-EU citizens largely do not achieve to the same level as EU citizens, the wide variation shows there are potential lessons to be learnt from certain EU Member States.

Statistical information from the national research

At a national level, in the four countries included in this research, statistics on specifically refugees and integration are similarly limited with sporadic and varying information on key policy areas identified as influencing integration. Some reports include refugees as a sub-set of other immigrant groups, while other reports do not specify refugees at all. It is therefore not attempted to make any statistical comparison. An overview of statistical data available in the project countries is provided below.

Austria

There is limited possibility to identify refugees in existing statistical data and a lack of longitudinal data in relation to evaluation of integration generally. No data exists on refugees' participation in political activities, voting patterns or participation in associations. Monthly and annual asylum statistics are published by the Federal Ministry of Interior, but there are only estimates on the number of persons with refugee status or subsidiary protection statuses. Except for indigenous ethnic minorities, ethnicity is not disaggregated in statistics but the category of "person with a migration background" in the micro-census (since 2008) comes closest (Kraler et al. 2009). Austria uses three categories for migration statistics: foreign citizens, those with a foreign background, and those with a migration background. Citizenship is the main variable used for identifying migrants, although country of birth is increasingly used in some datasets including the micro-census.

The main sources for core demographic data and migration control are maintained by Statistics Austria and the Ministry of the Interior, and include data on the legal status of immigrants. Integration-related statistics relating to employment, income, housing, health,

education and family characteristics are mainly collected and disseminated by Statistics Austria and/or relevant ministries. The central function of the Austrian population census as a source of information has been diminished by the micro-census and by register-based information such as the Central Register of Residence established in 2001 which is the basis for the Population Register on the size and structure of the Austrian population (Kraler and Reichel 2012). The micro-census itself has limitations including low sample size and consequently low numbers of immigrants and refugees.

The National Action Plan for Integration (NAP) with its defined aims, though no current measurable targets, suggests the role of statistical data will increase in future in Austria (Kraler and Reichel 2012). The launch of the Statistical Yearbook on Migration and Integration by Statistics Austria, with joint European Integration Fund and Federal Ministry of Interior funding, which collects according to NAP indicators, is such a development, although it does not include refugees. It is also worth mentioning that there is no link or interaction between state and province (Vienna) level monitoring.

France

Until recently there was no reliable data on refugees in France. Some studies included refugee surveys (Observatoire de l'Intégration des Réfugiés Statutaires 2006) but without incorporating a representative sample. However in 2010 the French Ministry of Interior funded the ELIPA survey, a longitudinal survey on the integration of 6,000 newly arrived migrants which included 600 refugees (Régnard 2011), 58.4 per cent of whom were male. The 2006 *Parcours et Profils de Migrants (PPM)* survey on migrants who have recently obtained long term leave to remain can also provide some information of relevance for refugees. Overall, the ELIPA survey suggests refugees are worse off than other newly arrived migrants, less likely to be employed or speak French, more likely to face housing difficulties, and to rely on limited social support network.

Ireland

There is an absence of statistical data on refugees in relation to integration policy areas. Services for refugees are mainstreamed and refugees are not considered separately from other groups. This may explain why there is no collection or disaggregation of refugee information from available statistical data in relation to integration policy areas. The Irish Naturalization and Immigration Service (INIS) presents some numerical information on the demographic of the refugee population. For example, numbers of refugees in Ireland are small and in the past 20 years around 10,000 have been granted refugee status and around 6,100 are thought to have naturalized. 60 per cent of refugees are male, and 4,732 family members have entered Ireland to join refugee family members. Ireland has not formally adopted integration indicators, therefore measurement is not in place at present.

Sweden

The Government agency Statistics Sweden (SCB) is the main official source of statistics in Sweden and compiles and publishes statistical data used for monitoring integration. The focus is on individuals born outside Sweden and those with parents born outside Sweden. All statistical data related to indicator areas is presented by geographic origin, gender and age, and can be analyzed by national, regional and municipal level, including urban areas identified as having widespread socio-economic exclusion (Envall 2012). SCB also produces the STATIV longitudinal individual database which includes all persons registered in Sweden and is not integration specific (Envall 2012: 323). The STATIV database records immigration status and includes the reason for immigration, the date permanent residence permit was granted, and the number of years in Sweden. STATIV can be used for a wide variety of purposes relating to integration, segregation and migration and can be useful in the case of refugees as immigration status is recorded. However little analysis of STATIV is conducted which differentiates between refugees and other foreign-born immigrants because refugees are a comparatively small group and of less interest

than the group as a whole. Not all STATIV data is made readily accessible, but can be accessed upon request by researchers and politicians. STATIV facilitates the statistical processing and monitoring by ministries, authorities, county councils, municipalities and academic researchers (SCB 2013a; SCB 2013c).

The Ministry of Employment uses further statistical analysis and qualitative studies to facilitate deeper analysis within different integration areas (Envall 2012: 317; 323-324). However, there is little other available data in Sweden that distinguishes between refugees, family members or labour migrants entering Sweden, and an indication can only be deduced through country of origin data through which refugee-producing countries can be isolated. Available statistical data concerning refugee integration is included in the following literature review where relevant, however it is worth noting that there is clear evidence that the situation of refugees improves over time in a number of the areas measured.

Germany

Following the development of the National Integration Plan for all newcomers in 2007, the Report on Integration Indicators' (2009) (Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Migration, Flüchtlinge und Integration) was the first move to systematically monitor integration at national level and present a set of indicators with which to measure integration. However, the report does not distinguish between different ethnic origin groups, although using some cross-survey data (micro-census, the Volunteer Survey and the PISA-survey), the 2009 report "allows for the assessment of the degree to which divergences between groups derive from the criterion "migrant background" or from general socioeconomic factors" (Bijl and Verweij 2012:154). Monitoring systems have however increased the data collected, albeit focusing on structural issues aimed at bringing migrant populations in line with native populations and generally improving migrant outcomes, rather than more subjective and influential factors. Germany does not measure or evaluate specifically refugee integration and monitoring integration of refugees is absent in favour of a more general migrant picture.

Other sources of statistical data include the Integration Barometer developed by the Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration (SVR). Also the micro-census is considered one of the most important surveys for monitoring integration, but neither focuses on, nor disaggregates for, refugees. The Central Aliens Register's (Ausländerzentralregister – AZR) function is to provide data to enable policy planning, and quarterly statistics are published on Integration Courses by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, but both include all newcomers.

United Kingdom

Interest in integration of refugees at UK government level led to the development of a longitudinal study of refugee integration in the UK undertaken by UKBA⁹ between 2005 and 2009. The Survey of New Refugees focused on three areas: language, employment and housing, presenting statistical analysis in *Spotlight on Refugee Integration* (2010). The Survey collected information on the characteristics of new refugees at the time of their asylum decision; and provided data on the integration of new refugees in the UK over time. The Survey (2010) presents evidence of integration happening over time: that refugees' English language skills improved, employment rates increased and the privacy and stability of accommodation also appeared to increase (email communication, Migration and Border Analysis Office, April 2013). However, since this survey, there is currently no national level monitoring of refugee integration in the UK.

The Survey on New Refugees (published in *Spotlight on Refugee Integration*, Home Office 2010) has provided much-needed data on refugees and their integration trajectory. The focus on housing, employment and language reflects that these are the three UK integration indicators which are most measurable. The focus from academia has been much wider, adding for example identity, legal aspects, social capital, and producing case studies on ethnic or national groups. The result is a large body of work on refugees.

In Scotland, the March 2013 report, *In Search of Normality: Refugee Integration in Scotland*, is the result of a three year longitudinal study focusing on housing, health, education, employment and community. Two key facilitators of refugee integration underpin the findings: language and cultural knowledge, and safety and stability based on a foundation of citizenship and rights.

⁹ UKBA was disbanded on 31 March 2013 and its operations are now under the Home Office.

The Canadian approach focuses on the integration of permanent residents as future citizens. Resettled refugees almost always arrive as permanent residents. Refugees who go through the asylum process receive a protected person status and upon granting of status may apply for permanent residence. As permanent residents refugees have almost the same rights as any other permanent resident, except they cannot return to their country of origin without risking losing their status. In addition, the Canadian integration setting is underscored by Canada's promotion of naturalization. Permanent residents can apply for citizenship after three years and refugees have one of the highest uptakes of citizenship among permanent resident categories.

The Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) website offers good general statistics on refugee numbers. Canada's integration direction, and policy areas for integration are also presented. The measurement of integration of any class of migrant including refugees is under ongoing development: Canada's desired strategic outcomes and a range of performance indicators are set out in *Report on Plans and Priorities 2013-2014* (CIC 2013) but mostly take refugees to be part of the wider newcomer group. The Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) which began collecting data from new immigrants in 2001 undercounts refugees in the sample and does not differentiate between resettled refugees and those acquiring refugee status in-country. In her review of resettled refugees in Canada, Hyndman (2011) noted the "paucity of ... refugee data" and that "not enough is known about the re/settlement outcomes." Hyndman verifies the Longitudinal Immigration Database (LIDS) to be the best current dataset relating to refugees as it combines LIDS data with tax returns that report income but not assets. Hiebert's (2002; 2009) useful analysis of refugee outcomes also uses tax return data.

The Canadian government's development of indicators to support integration policy and programmes has an outcome-based and evidence-based approach to settlement and longer-term integration for all newcomers,

including refugees. *Report on Plans and Priorities 2013-2014* (CIC 2013) presents on four Strategic Outcomes. Each outcome has a number of Performance Indicators against which newcomer outcomes are to be measured. Indicators include those which relate to labour market participation, family unity, poverty, voting rates, health, take-up of citizenship, attitudes to diversity, and the rate of social assistance. One of CIC's priorities has been to strengthen performance management because "clearly articulated program objectives and relevant measurable performance indicators allow CIC to demonstrate the impacts of programs ... [and] achieve its strategic outcomes through increased program management oversight and more effective sharing of performance information" (CIC 2012: 11). To do this, CIC developed a new Program Activity Architecture and Performance Measurement Framework aiming to improve coordination across CIC. One of CIC's key priorities is to continue to implement this Framework to build capacity for systematic data collection and programme monitoring. Preliminary data collection results guided the revision of CIC's Performance Measurement Framework in 2012-2013 to address gaps in data collection and targets. The revisions are expected to be implemented in 2013-2014.

Within the Integration Program, CIC is obliged by the Canadian Parliament to collect and analyse gender-disaggregated data, including that collected in the evaluation of programme participation and outcomes, to assess gendered impact of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) (CIC 2010:24-35) but it is unclear how much data will be collected specifically for refugees. Using tax return data has been the main means of assessing refugee outcomes in Canada (for example, Hiebert 2002; 2009) and overcomes the gaps in government refugee-specific data. It should be noted that the focus on tax returns is not solely based on the importance given to economic integration. One of the most significant reasons for focusing on tax returns is because it can be counted. Other potential areas of integration are much harder to track and obtain objective data because of privacy and mobility.

Within the three countries which this report includes as countries having significant experience of receiving refugees and of refugee integration, statistical data on refugees which is useful to assess their integration is not comprehensive, except in the UK.

Trends in the development of integration indicators and of integration evaluation

Speaking of more stable refugee situations, Crisp (1999) states that numbers play an important part in any analytical endeavour. The scholar and the practitioner will want to know how many refugees live where, how many have become self-sufficient, and what is the demographic structure of refugee populations in particular countries. Statistics are also integral to considering solutions to refugee problems and “constitute a necessary foundation for the examination of many key refugee issues.” Crisp presents examples of many relevant questions which can be answered with statistics to build not only a picture of refugee populations, but a picture of refugee needs and what enables refugees to rebuild successful, contributing lives in a receiving country. “Without addressing questions such as these, and without having access to the figures needed to answer them, it is impossible to do any meaningful analysis of refugee policies in North America and Western Europe” (Crisp 1999).

Crisp was writing in 1999. Accurate, significant, comparable data on refugees in the EU remain largely absent in 2013. The gap in statistics on refugee integration hinders measuring and evaluating. In addition a framework for integration is needed which identifies refugee-relevant integration policy areas, measurable indicators to capture performance of, and progress in, those areas, as well as identification of important variables, facilitators and barriers. These are part of the challenge of measuring integration of refugees.

These challenges are reflected in the current efforts at EU level and by different EU Member States to measure and evaluate integration and have come out in this study where the interdependency of integration policy areas have been highlighted; as have cross-cutting issues, such as the absence of family support.

Despite past financial and policy investment to providing effective integration support to all migrants legally residing in the receiving country, identifying which policy and programming strategies work well remains a challenge. At the core of the challenge are the still somewhat different national views on which policy areas are key for integration, and which measurable integration indicators are most relevant in assessing “successful” integration or levels of integration. More fundamentally, the question arises of what does “integration” mean and what is the integration “goal”?

It is therefore not at all clear what we should be measuring, as Hyndman (2011) pointed out. A moving or undefined goal presents challenges for receiving societies in measuring or creating and adjusting responsive policy and support, but is also difficult for the newcomer to attain. Therefore certain clarifications and common understandings are important for effective integration planning, whether for refugees, who are the focus of this report, or for the wider migrant population.

The review of literature suggests three areas would benefit from clarification to produce more effective integration programming. Firstly, it is important to clarify what is the integration goal when asking newcomers, such as refugees, to integrate. It is also important to determine if this is an overall goal, or several separate but interconnected goals for policy areas such as employment or housing, within which we can identify measurable indicators such as employment rates, or rates of home ownership.

Secondly, it is important to consider how we might measure attainment in these areas of integration and what it is we wish to learn or establish from such an evaluation. Do we want to know, for example, where newcomers live, what sort of housing they occupy, and if we know this, what will we learn about their integration trajectories. For example, living in a three-bedroom semi-detached house in a capital city must inform us of something about a newcomer's or refugee's actual integration if we are to measure it. Or perhaps a "scoring" system would be useful, where the aggregate is a measure of overall integration. Measuring integration (and measuring what?) must be informative on what we need to know in order to implement effective integration policy and support. In this regard the question of a national benchmark arises. Are we comparing refugee integration to levels of other migrants or with nationals? Regardless of the approach taken, how do we ensure comparability in terms of variables such as education level, health or otherwise?

Thirdly, and at the centre of the above but presenting a greater challenge, is establishing a broad common understanding of what integration is in order to set goals and measure integration "success". Widely accepted as processual, occurring gradually over time, and requiring effort from the newcomer and the receiving society, the elusiveness of a definition of integration has been cited in many reports and academic literature as problematic.

The above three points relate to all newcomers, including refugees. However the situation of refugees is often conflated with that of the wider migrant population in policy reports, literature and in the collection of statistical data, using ethnicity, religious background or nationality as a basis for discussion. Some information on newcomers and integration is useful when thinking about refugees, but omits the particularities of the refugee situation. "How refugees are doing" regarding integration is therefore difficult to discern.

This study has shown there are a number of refugee-specific issues which may influence particularly refugee integration, such as asylum procedures and flight-related factors, knowledge of family whereabouts and hoped-for family unity, and the transition phase from asylum-seeker to refugee. There is therefore a need to bring the specificity of refugees into the integration debate and to accommodate for this specificity within EU and EU Member States integration policy and programming, and in relation to the use of integration indicators to include refugee specificities when measuring refugee integration attainment.

Populations considered for integration

When we talk of integration policy it is important to consider at whom policy and support is aimed: newcomers, immediate new arrivals, or does it include those who arrived twenty years ago or more? Are second and third generation included? Is the emphasis on those from non-EU Member States or equally on those moving from one EU Member State to another? EU Member States take different approaches to these questions, but at EU level integration includes third-country nationals, and while this includes refugees, they are not focused upon in detail.

The particularity of the refugee experience is acknowledged in academic literature and in reports by refugee-specific organizations and NGOs, but refugee-specific factors are not currently adequately reflected in policy reports or in integration policy. Our national reviews of policy-related materials show an acknowledgement of refugees' situation as differing from immigrants more generally regarding integration, but do not address these differences directly through policy to the same extent that migrant integration is addressed. Much literature discusses migrant integration and where refugees are mentioned it is often only with passing reference, becoming subsumed within the wider migrant category and not exploring refugee specifics. Literature focusing on immigrant integration does so mainly without specifying what sort of immigrant the subject is. While important and relevant to refugee integration, it does not provide sufficiently specific knowledge with which to identify refugee specifics. Similarly in the case of statistical information, either refugees are not surveyed at all, immigration status is not noted during the survey, or refugee data is not disaggregated from the material. Where statistical data is available, it is mostly limited and cannot answer questions relating to "how refugees are doing" in employment, housing or health for example and rarely gather data on refugees and known integration indicators.

This report sets out below what is currently known regarding trends and approaches to integration and the development of integration indicators. It draws from a broad range of official integration policy documents, literature and reports on integration at EU level, at national level for the four participating countries, and from the three example countries. The report includes refugee-specific information where it exists, but also the wider migrant integration literature where helpful.

EU policy, declarations and directives on integration

Migrant integration is one of the key challenges currently faced by EU Member States. Since the 1999 Tampere Programme called for the EU to co-operate on the integration of non-EU nationals, integration policy and programming within the EU has received increasing attention. Since then, the development of an EU approach to integration of migrants has, in brief, been established in the following policy documents.¹⁰ In 2004, the Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy (EU 2004) provided a framework for EU policymaking in the area of integration, and in 2005 the Common Agenda for Integration moved to implement the Common Basic Principles. In 2004, the Hague Programme set out ten priorities emphasizing the importance of evaluating integration policies and adopting an holistic approach to facilitate and encourage interaction from local to EU level in order to further develop EU policy and mechanisms.

¹⁰ Extensive descriptions of these various policies since 1999 are available in Bijl & Verweij, 2012 and Eurostat, 2011a and 2011b amongst others.

With the Stockholm Programme (2009) EU Member States went a step further in the evaluation and monitoring of integration and agreed on a set of core indicators in relevant policy areas to allow national comparisons. The core list of outcome indicators with which to measure integration were identified as:

- **Employment:** employment rate, unemployment rate, activity rate;
- **Education:** share of low achieving 15 year olds in reading, mathematics and science; share of 30-35 year olds with tertiary educational attainments; share of early leavers from education and training;
- **Social inclusion:** median net income; at risk of poverty rate; health status (good/poor); property/non-property owners;
- **Active citizenship:** share of immigrants acquiring citizenship; share of immigrants holding long-term residency; share of immigrants among elected representatives.

The Stockholm Programme (2009) further called for the evaluation and monitoring of the core indicators. The Zaragoza Declaration (2010) answered this call by requesting the Commission undertake a pilot study in which proposals for common integration indicators would be examined taking account of national contexts and diversity of migrant populations across Member States. The Zaragoza Declaration would also importantly report back on the availability and quality of data needed for the measurement of such indicators.

The Stockholm Programme (2009) and the Zaragoza Declaration (2010) took a significant step toward putting in place, where it was not already, the means by which to assess and drive migrant integration through identifying and developing appropriate policy interventions. This more detailed understanding of “where we are” made it possible to set clear and informed goals for EU-wide co-operation on integration. Working within the frame of the Zaragoza Declaration, a joint EU/Eurostat report was published in 2011 which identified four key policy areas for monitoring migrant integration: employment, education, social inclusion and active citizenship.

In 2011, the European Agenda for the Integration of *Third Country Nationals* (European Commission 2011b) moved from identifying indicators to outlining the actions needed to increase the economic, social, cultural and political participation of migrants, advocating that such actions be conducted both at local and national level in order to maximize the potential of migrants and of diversity within EU Member States.

While there is clear consensus at policy level within the EU that attention needs to be paid to migrant integration, there is less concrete agreement on what “successful” integration looks like. As noted in the Introduction chapter above there is a lack of agreed definition of “integration” that can be applied throughout EU Member States. A coordinated EU-wide policy approach to integration based on an agreed idea of what constitutes integration which could be accepted at Member State level and local level is therefore not envisaged. The Common Basic Principles, however, form the cornerstone of integration in Europe. Yet collectively establishing these concepts proves elusive as shifts in social, political, economic, demographic, geographic and cultural contexts and thinking have shown.

➤ The Common Basic Principles

The Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy (2004) and the vehicle for its implementation, the Common Agenda for Integration (2005) form the basis upon which migrant integration in the EU is formulated, and viewed integration as comprising the following:

- a two-way, dynamic process;
- implying respect for values of the EU;
- employment forms a key part of integration and is central to participation;
- knowledge of the receiving society’s language, history, institutions is integral to successful integration;
- education is critical for active participation;
- access to institutions, goods and services equal to nationals is foundational to integration; interaction between migrant/citizen;
- practice of diverse cultures and religions to be safeguarded;
- participation in democratic process;
- mainstreaming integration policies;
- clear goals, indicators and evaluation mechanisms to adjust integration policy.

Despite these challenges, measuring and evaluating migrant and refugee integration is important, with clarity of vision required on what it is “we” are expecting to occur, how it should take place, and in what timeframe. Doing so through benchmarks against which to measure integration progress and effectiveness of policy and programming is particularly useful. Establishing integration indicators within key policy areas is one step towards this and many EU Member States have done this and have broadly followed EU policy documents outlined above.

In the case of refugees, testing the relevance and nuances of existing indicators and integration policy areas in light of refugee-specific experiences and needs, and gathering refugee-specific qualitative and quantitative data to do so, are further useful steps. Project consultations with stakeholders and refugees provide some qualitative insights and are discussed below.

Measuring and monitoring “successful” integration, including for Refugees

In the last decade, several EU-funded research studies have attempted to benchmark and measure integration of migrants across EU countries. Those studies aimed to define comparable indicators enabling an assessment of integration in practice in European countries (see for instance Entzinger and Biezeveld 2003; Carrera 2008).

Specifically refugee integration has not been measured at EU level, but three recent reports present a picture of immigrant integration in Europe: a joint EU/Eurostat report *Indicators of Immigrant Integration* (Eurostat 2011b) which reported on four key policy areas across the 27 EU Member States; *Settling In: OECD Indicators of Immigrant Integration* by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2012) a pan-European report which considers immigrants in 29 OECD countries; and *Measuring and monitoring immigrant integration in Europe* by Bijl and Verweij (2012) which considers integration in 17 EU Member States. These are the key reports which report on measuring migrant integration against identified indicators and policy areas.

The 2011 EU Eurostat report *Indicators of Immigrant Integration* considered four key policy areas, employment, education, social inclusion and active citizenship and drew on data sources available at the time to present comparable data across the 27 EU Member States. Working directly within the framework set by the Zaragoza Declaration and the Common Basic Principles, *Indicators of Immigrant Integration* set out to identify to what extent existing harmonized data sources are able to provide adequate data on migrant populations, but does not mention refugee populations. The report presents statistical data for different target populations by broad groups of country of birth and citizenship, by different age groups and by gender. Using the EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS), EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), Eurostat’s migration statistics, and OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), calculations are presented for each EU Member State based on the proposed common integration indicators.

The 2012 OECD report, *Settling In: OECD Indicators of Immigrant Integration* draws on Eurostat data to present how immigrants and their families are settling in 29 OECD countries. Again, the report broadly follows the policy areas identified in the Zaragoza Declaration, reporting on integration in relation to income distribution, housing, health, education of second generation children, labour market and civic engagement. The focus is to measure outcomes and progress made by immigrants over the past decade against outcomes for those born in-country. The OECD report contains few data on refugees, making specific mention of refugees only with regard to health, acknowledging that “some migrant groups, such as refugees, are particularly vulnerable and may be more likely to suffer from specific diseases or mental disorders” (OECD 2012:71).

Bijl and Verweij in their book *Measuring and Monitoring Immigrant Integration in Europe* (2012), point to increasing obligations on the migrant to integrate and increasing hurdles to jump on the pathway to integration, such as language and citizenship tests, and compulsory orientation courses, asserting this erodes the concept of a two-way process and moves policy in the direction of assimilation. The authors support this by pointing to a change in terminology in policy from “rights and duties” to “obligations” of immigrants and “own responsibility”. Increasing tests and

requirements impact the way a migrant views the receiving society's welcome and impacts on how quickly migrants are able to formally become (and feel) part of the receiving society. This consequently leads away from the joint duties of both migrant and receiving society to facilitate integration, prioritizing instead the migrant's responsibility to fit with the increasing range of requirements and limitations on when and how they integrate and interact with the receiving society. Bijl and Verweij (2012) do not focus on refugees, but the integration "climate" they describe impacts on refugees' integration perhaps more than other migrants due to their pre-existing vulnerability and often unstable personal situation.

The existing EU level reports and policy documents do not differentiate between policy for different types of migrant, beyond identifying EU and non-EU migrants. In particular, they do not differentiate between refugees and other migrants. Refugee integration is generally mainstreamed in immigration policies for third-country nationals more broadly. Nor do EU reports and policy documents factor in particular impacts on integration of relevance for refugees such as the experiences of flight, uncertainty, trauma, loss, violence, separation, and the asylum process which are widely understood to impact on refugees' ability to rebuild lives.

EU Member States agreed in the Stockholm Programme (2009) to increase focus further on evaluation and monitoring of integration and agreed on a set of core indicators. Two issues in the existing approach to integration and ongoing cooperation at the EU level could be considered:

- 1) recognition of the specific situation and integration support needs of refugees upon recognition of their status; and
- 2) enhanced data collection and analysis of refugee integration based on the normative integration framework already put forward by UNHCR and others.

In addition to EU level developments, integration of migrants has been the topic of discussion and research also by the OECD, the Council of Europe, the OSCE and by policy institutes, think-tanks and organizations. While the focus of the CoE and the OSCE has mainly been to highlight the importance of tolerance and anti-discrimination as a basis for integration, research by other institutions have followed the trend at the EU level of looking at integration across a number of countries and at specific indicators.

➤ Setting Integration Goals and Benchmarking **EUROCITIES** "INTI-CITIES" project

The INTI-CITIES project "Benchmarking Integration Governance in European Cities" used peer reviews to assess general migrant-related integration policies in European cities. The project measured policies against a benchmark of high standards to deliver expert-validated, comparative knowledge on local practices, focusing on four pillars: General Governance, Individual Empowerment, Administrative Co-operation, Working Partnerships.

A set of indicators was designed to enable peers to assess cities' progress against the benchmark standards for each governance pillar. Indicators were: Ambition, Leadership, Resources, Implementation and Evaluation. The report shares findings on eight core aspects of urban integration governance: Needs assessment and data collection, Integration in the municipality, Target-setting and evaluation, Leadership, Promoting diversity within administration, Governance co-operation, Working with partners, Empowering migrants.

Co-financed by the European Commission's INTI-Programme, INTI-CITIES brought together 12 cities from nine EU Member States. Coordinated by EUROCITIES and implemented in cooperation with the Migration Policy Group and Ethic, the project ran for 18 months during 2007-2009.

Three other approaches are those taken by the MPG in the Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX 2011), by ICMPD in the Promoting Sustainable Policies for Integration (PROSINT) project, and by UNHCR/MPG in the development of an online Integration Evaluation Tool (IET).

MIPEX

Developed by the Migration Policy Group and the British Council, the first edition of MIPEX was published in 2004 and included 15 EU Member States. This was the first time migration policies had been presented in a concise and comparable format. In 2007 the second edition expanded to include 25 EU Member States and 3 non-EU states, Canada, Norway and Switzerland. In 2010 the third edition of MIPEX was expanded to 31 countries to include Romania, Bulgaria and USA. MIPEX is an ongoing monitoring and assessment tool and produces a “score” for each country. MIPEX reveals past policy changes, allows an assessment of the impact of new policy changes, and allows the creation of scenarios to trial different ways to improve a country’s score. MIPEX utilizes 140 policy indicators within six policy areas which inform the migrant’s journey to full citizenship. The indicators allow measurement of integration across the policy areas, which are:

- labour market access;
- reunion;
- long term residence;
- political participation;
- access to nationality;
- anti-discrimination.

MIPEX uses a benchmarking method intended to facilitate the comparison of European standards of best practice in participant countries. Signatories to MIPEX agree to support the EU’s goal of granting comparable rights and responsibilities to all Europe’s residents by 2014 and to promoting an evidence-based approach to integration policy.

PROSINT

Promoting Sustainable Policies for Integration (PROSINT)¹¹ project is set against a backdrop of the increasing connection in Europe between integration policy and admission policy and the introduction of integration requirements both pre- and post-entry for third-country nationals, all of which represents a shift of approach to the integration of newcomers. The PROSINT project works with project partners in nine countries (Austria, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Denmark, Spain, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, and the UK) and aims to:

- Evaluate the impact of admission related integration policies on the integration of newcomers;
- Analyze the different logics underlying integration policy making;
- Investigate the main target groups of compulsory and voluntary integration measures.

Outputs have included a European level overview, and comparative reports, country reports, and case-study reports at national level. The project explores national, regional and local policy through literature and statistical reviews, makes analysis of parliamentary and media debates and draws on interviews with stakeholders and academics.

¹¹ For information and a list of PROSINT reports: <http://research.icmpd.org/1429.html#c5294>

Integration Evaluation Tool (IET)

UNHCR's office for Central Europe and MPG have developed a Refugee Integration Evaluation Tool (IET).¹² The tool is currently being piloted jointly by UNHCR and MPG in this project and could be a significant step toward evaluating refugee integration against known indicators and policy areas.

The IET aims to develop effective, reliable, and sustainable data collection methods and internal review mechanisms, to identify gaps and good practices as well as to build capacity of, and partnerships among, the various actors involved in refugee integration. To this end, the tool covers four major areas:

- general considerations comprising impact of reception conditions on integration, the infrastructure to mainstream refugees and their special needs into different public policies;
- legal integration comprising residency rights for refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, family unity and reunification, and access to an effective nationality;
- socio-economic integration comprising housing, employment, lifelong learning, health, public relief and social security; and
- socio-cultural integration comprising child education, language learning and social orientation, building bridges and fostering participation.

The tool uses four types of indicators to evaluate these areas: policy indicators, legal/administrative indicators, financial indicators, and outcome indicators. All require different types of expertise and all include giving voice to refugee opinions and needs. In total, 231 indicators will clarify policy goals and the data that decision-makers need to know in order to evaluate whether integration policies are working to achieve stated goals.

To date, the IET has been tested during a pilot phase in Bulgaria, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. Specifically, data has been collected on access to education, employment and lifelong learning, housing, and family reunification. Around 100 national experts contributed to gathering and inputting data to the tool and UNHCR's project partner MPG have harmonized and analyzed the data and produced summary reports. Currently, MPG is working on finalizing the larger comparative thematic reports before drafting the final report.

The rest of this chapter focuses on the four project countries, Austria, Sweden, France and Ireland, summarizing key points in policy direction and integration measurement.

The review is not intended to be exhaustive or detailed but presents the context in which refugees and refugee integration are located and highlights differences in approach. In-depth information and analysis can be found in the national reports of this project. While the migration context is different in each of the countries reviewed, similarities in relation to the integration definition are evident and follow developments at EU level.

¹² For information see: <http://iet.unhcr-centraleurope.org/account/login/> Login required and currently restricted. The data, once harmonized and scoring is completed, will be made publicly available.

Integration policy direction and measuring integration

France

Integration direction

The origin of the refugee population in France differs substantially from the wider migrant population. Most non-EU labour and family migrants are from countries with former colonial ties, such as Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. Refugees, however, have fewer past links to France. Of the five main countries of origin only Cambodia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have past francophone connections. It has to be said, however, that a constant and substantial flow of asylum-seekers originate also from former French colonies or protectorates, such as Mali, Guinea, Chad, Algeria or Haiti.

The French conception of integration bears similarities to UNHCR's definition of integration and has evolved from a focus on assimilation to an understanding of integration as a two-way process between the state and the migrant wishing to settle in France (Haut Conseil à l'Intégration, 2006) and insists on the rights and obligations of migrants. In 1989, under the French Ministry of the Interior, the *Haut Conseil à l'Intégration* (High Council for Integration) was tasked to define and give direction to France's integration policies. In 2007 the concept of multidimensional integration led to defining measurable integration indicators (Haut Conseil à l'Intégration, 2007) under the French Ministry of Interior.

The approach to integration in France has at its heart the *Contrat d'Accueil et d'Intégration* (CAI) (Reception and Integration Contract) and since 2007 all new migrants, including refugees, aiming to settle permanently in France and acquiring a permanent residence permit must sign the CAI (Haut Conseil à l'Intégration, 2004; Costa-Lascoux, 2006). The CAI requires acceptance of the founding principles of the French Republic and its values, such as *laïcité* (French secularism) and gender equality.

The change of government in 2012 placed the asylum system and integration policies on the policy agenda with the aim of better protecting, and providing for, the needs of asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants. In May 2013, the Minister of the Interior announced a consultation with civil society actors on the asylum system and procedures, and reception and housing conditions. The Minister also proposed a reform of the CAI following the release of a government-commissioned report on integration that heavily criticized French integration policies and the asylum system (Tuot 2013).

French integration policies specifically aim to tackle difficulties faced by long-term migrants in France, in particular female and elderly migrants. Through co-funding with the European Integration Fund, the French state granted 38.5 million Euros in 2013, mostly to national or local NGOs to provide language courses, access to education or employment targeting this group. Programmes at regional level are also funded through this grant.

Refugees are not directly targeted by this scheme but are supported through refugee-specific reception and integration programmes co-funded with the European Refugee Fund. 14.4 million Euros were allocated in 2013 (temporary housing, 12.2 million Euros; employment and housing support, 2.2 million Euros). In addition, those with refugee status benefit from being able to access mainstream services.

Thus refugee and migrant integration partly overlap, but also substantially diverge as the French state acknowledges refugees' different circumstances and offers a very specific set of rights and entitlements which provides beneficial conditions for refugees to re-establish themselves. The separation in 2010 of integration funding for refugees from non-refugee integration programming has contributed to differences in refugee and migrant integration.

Integration responsibility

Responsibility for integration comes under the French Ministry of Interior. Provision and delivery of the CAI is coordinated by the *Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration* (OFII) (French Office for Immigration and Integration). OFII received 11.6 million Euros to deliver the CAI in 2013. For refugees, there is no specific office with responsibility.

Measuring and evaluating integration

The French government set up the *Haut Conseil à l'Intégration* (High Council for Integration) in 1989 to define and give direction to France's immigrant integration policies. The Council sought advice from French stakeholders on defining integration indicators (*Haut Conseil à l'Intégration* 2007). France's development of integration indicators has been partly influenced by developments at the EU level, in particular by the 2004 Groningue/Groningen conference "Integration Policy: Turning Principles into Action" which aimed to consolidate long term political support for integration as an issue of European concern, with particular attention to introductory programmes and minority youth.

In a report commissioned by the French Prime Minister in 2007, the *Haut Conseil à l'Intégration* presented integration as a function of multiple indicators including language, housing or employment, civic education and sociability and the concept of multidimensional integration was formed which would lead to defining measurable socio-economic integration indicators (*Haut Conseil à l'Intégration*, 2007) in line with the European Commission's wish to evaluate integration policies. The French government has adopted seven policy areas of integration: economic integration, housing, education and schooling, access to healthcare and well-being, active citizenship, demographic indicators, and acceptance by French society. Within each of these areas, a set of indicators has been defined in order to assess migrants' progress. There are a total of 36 indicators.

Two recent government level policy-related efforts to monitor migrant integration in a quantifiable manner have been the French Ministry of Interior's *Tableau de bord de l'intégration* (performance indicators) (Département des Statistiques des Etudes et de la Documentation, 2010) which monitors

migrant progress over time against the non-migrant population, and the *Enquête Longitudinale sur l'Intégration des Primo-Arrivants* (Longitudinal Survey on the Integration of Newly-Arrived Migrants) (2010-11), also known as the ELIPA survey, which assesses integration pathways and French reception and integration programmes and included refugees as 10 per cent of the cohort of 6,000 respondents.

Regarding monitoring and evaluation of refugee integration, France Terre d'Asile in particular has played an important role, gaining funding from the European Refugee Fund to establish a think-tank aiming to document refugee integration programmes and their impact on refugees.

Apart from the information gathered on refugees in the ELIPA survey, there is little academic research on refugees and integration in France. The focus of research is mainly on asylum-seekers' experiences during the asylum process, the asylum process itself, and the aftermath for those whose asylum claim has been rejected, for example those who as a consequence become irregular migrants. Doctoral level research related to refugee integration in France has been conducted on refugee housing (Ducheny 2008), and on refugee access to employment and careers (Tcholakova 2012), but none at government level. However, some small-scale literature exists which considers refugees and integration in five policy areas: housing, employment, health, family reunification and social integration. Both Ducheny and Tcholakova attribute the lack of research to assumptions of the "smooth process" that refugees encounter after recognition of status.

Neither the France Terre d'Asile platform on refugee integration nor the doctoral research on refugee housing and employment integration have attracted much interest of French policy-makers or led to policy changes, despite presenting recommendations.

Integration direction

By the early 2000s, Ireland had transformed from an country of emigration into a country of net immigration during the economic boom of the 1990s which brought prosperity to the country and attracted significant numbers of labour migrants and asylum-seekers from outside the EU. The increase in asylum applications demanded an urgent policy response from the Irish government to address the lack of infrastructure to deal with large numbers of applicants, and the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC) was established in 2000 to consider asylum applications.

In 1999, integration was defined in Irish policy as a two-way process and as the “ability to participate to the extent that a person needs and wishes in all of the major components of society without having to relinquish his or her own cultural identity” (Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform 1999:9). This definition falls within that proposed by UNHCR and of the EU Common Basic Principles.

The overall approach to integration of refugees in Ireland is one of mainstreaming. Refugees are not treated as a special case and there are no specific integration measures or support in place for refugees. Within this overall direction, there have been a number of reports which indicate a policy direction. In 2008, *Migration Nation* was published by the Minister for Integration (now OPMI), linking integration to citizenship and positioning integration within the framework of social planning and recognizing gaps in research and data on integration which would facilitate meaningful measurement of integration (Office of the Minister for Integration 2008: 24). The report commits to principles of partnership between actors and countering social exclusion.

Regarding refugee integration in particular *Integration: A Two Way Process* (Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform 1999) presented a comprehensive approach to the integration of refugees, calling for development of an Irish refugee integration strategy for targeted measures to address potential disadvantage of refugees. In 2009, UNHCR published the report *Mapping Integration: UNHCR’s Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming Project on Refugee Integration in Ireland - 2008/2009* (UNHCR, 2009b) with the aim of reviewing existing knowledge and

improving understanding of refugee integration, as well as providing a tool to those involved in refugee integration. *The Annual Monitoring Report on Integration* (McGinnity et al 2012) is the most comprehensive assessment of migrant integration in Ireland, highlighting policy areas which reflect those identified at the EU Zaragoza conference in 2010: employment, education, social inclusion and active citizenship indicators. *The Annual Monitoring Report on Integration* (2012) does not however distinguish refugees from other migrant groups.

Integration responsibility

The OPMI, formed in 2007 as the Ministry for Integration, has responsibility for developing and coordinating integration policy and structures across government departments, and for promoting integration into Irish society of legal immigrants. However, Boucher (2008; 2010) has commented that the absence of a coherent national integration policy in Ireland results in integration being largely devolved to individuals, families, local communities, relevant public bodies and NGOs.

Measuring and evaluating integration

The Ministry for Integration (now OPMI) in May 2008 indicated a proactive approach to integration, suggesting it intended to learn from experiences of other EU Member States. Ireland has yet to develop and implement strategies and means of measuring to fill the gaps in knowledge highlighted in *Migration Nation* (Office of the Minister for Integration, 2008) and in *Integration: A Two Way Process* (Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform, 1999) and does not currently gather data relating to key integration policy areas with which to assess refugee integration progress. At present no refugee specific longitudinal survey exists. In addition, the mainstreaming approach to integration of refugees to some degree conceals the effectiveness of programmes.

From the early 1990s to 2002 the number of asylum claimants arriving in Ireland rose from 15 to over 11,000 (Quinn 2007: 1), presenting Ireland with a changing immigrant profile and a challenge of understanding and managing this migrant population. In contrast to France, there was an early government level focus on refugees, however formal adoption of policy areas or integration indicators is still absent.

The most comprehensive approach to integration, until 2008, was specifically directed at refugees and articulated in the 1999 report, *Integration: A Two Way Process* (Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform, 1999). This report highlighted the absence of a coordinated national policy on integration for refugees, leading to fragmented integration policy for this group. The report stressed the need for targeted measures to address the potential disadvantage for refugees, also recommending that state services for refugees should be mainstreamed. The report concludes by stressing the need to develop a comprehensive strategy for integration in Ireland; for an organizational structure able to coordinate and implement integration policy; and linking integration to citizenship.

Nine years later, in 2008, the Office of the Minister for Integration (now OPMI) published the first Ministerial statement on integration strategy: *Migration Nation* (2008) in which the Irish government committed to important principles of integration and positioned integration within the framework of government social planning. Furthermore, *Migration Nation* states that the EU Common Basic Principles of integration are a major influence in Irish integration developments. The document

presents integration as a key challenge for both the government and Irish society and recognizes serious information gaps relating to new communities which, the report states, make measurement of integration difficult. Specific policy, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms arising from *Migration Nation* have however been limited.

The Annual Monitoring Report on Integration 2011 (McGinnity et al. 2012) is currently the most comprehensive document measuring immigrant integration in Ireland and uses a framework of assessment based on the integration indicators proposed in the Zaragoza Declaration. Focusing on policy areas of employment, education, social inclusion and active citizenship, the report links Irish policy direction to that of the EU but adds that analysis of indicators in Ireland is limited to quantitative analysis and does not include experiences of migrants' integration. The report points out that long term residency is dependent on migrants' fulfilling certain integration requirements but that no guidelines exist to measure the requirements.

The absence in Ireland of a comprehensive integration strategy for refugees specifically, and migrants generally, could explain the reason for the limited literature on refugees and integration. A small number of reports exist focusing on identifying factors contributing to refugees' success (O'Reagan 1998; Kinlen 2008; Robinson et al. 2010.) Stakeholders and officials consulted during this research suggested the small refugee population in Ireland may be a further reason for the limited government interest and small amount of literature on refugee integration.

Sweden

Integration direction

The concept of integration in Sweden usually refers to the integration of all first-generation immigrants, including refugees although native-born people with two foreign-born parents are also included in some official evaluations of integration.

Specific integration policies started to develop in Sweden in the 1960s. In 1968, the Swedish government declared the goal of integration as equality between foreign labour and the rest of the population. Before this, immigrants were

normally included in universal welfare programmes (Borevi 2010). The approach towards integration in Sweden since the mid-1980s has been to grant everyone with residence permit rights broadly corresponding to those of citizens (Borevi 2010).

In 2008, the Swedish government adopted the overall goal for Swedish integration policies as "equal rights, obligations and opportunities for all, regardless of ethnic or cultural background" (Regeringen 2010a). The Government favours

mainstreaming as a means to achieve greater integration and believes the overall integration goal should be realized by methods which benefit the whole Swedish population. Thus integration policies cover all areas of social development and are incorporated as part of all policy areas (Regeringen 2010).

Complementing the mainstreaming approach, there is recognition from the Swedish government that newcomers, including refugees, face specific challenges and barriers during the first few years in Sweden. Tailored needs-based integration support is offered to counter this and includes language support and targeted labour market support. There are also integration-targeted partnerships between central government, municipalities and urban districts which focus on preventing long-term social exclusion by strengthening, stimulating and developing areas identified by the government as 'exclusion areas' (Regeringen 2010; Regeringen 2013) which suffer housing segregation, high unemployment, low average income and low school achievement.

Integration responsibility

Regarding refugees and integration, the Establishment Reform of December 2010 comprises special measures that are aimed at refugees. The main objective of the Reform is to emphasize that labour market participation begins on the first day in Sweden. To achieve this, responsibility for introductory activities was switched from municipalities to the Swedish Public Employment Service (SPES) (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet 2011) and renamed "establishment activities".

Since 2010, the Ministry of Employment has main responsibility for coordinating integration policies at national level, including assisting refugees to establish themselves. The state, through the Public Employment Service is responsible for coordinating the targeted labour market integration services. Integration of refugees and persons with complementary protection (including resettled refugees) who have been granted residence status through the asylum system is the responsibility of the Public Employment Service and the County Administrative Boards are responsible for ensuring implementation of policies and reception at regional level. The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and regions is involved as well. In the case of resettled refugees, the Migration Board identifies a municipality to receive them and negotiates

a placement depending on the municipality's capacity. While there is specific reception provision for refugees delivered jointly by Public Employment Service and the County Administrative Boards, the Establishment Reform, and other integration-related policy, such as "step-in" jobs and "new start" jobs, do not have a refugee-focus. Instead they aim to increase immigrant participation in general in the labour market. Refugee integration is largely mainstreamed and refugees do not receive a specific focus after the two-year establishment phase. There are refugee-specific support programmes but refugees are not taken as a special case for integration monitoring purposes. Within its "society" view, somewhat contradictorily, the Swedish government often emphasizes that measures aimed at immigrants should occur only during the person's first years in Sweden, with a policy goal to reduce exclusion in society as a whole (Regeringen 2012a).

Where refugees are specifically mentioned in Swedish government integration policy is mostly regarding financial compensation to municipalities for the refugee reception and integration support programmes. This is because under the Establishment Reform, while the Employment Service has a coordinating responsibility for the targeted services provided to refugees, municipalities have important, but costly, functions in the reception and housing of refugees, Swedish language tuition (SFI) and other adult education (civic and cultural orientation), activities and care for children and young people and civic orientation of newly arrived refugees.

Measuring and evaluating integration

Integration evaluation is conducted under the Swedish government at national level, but also by regional and local authorities, NGOs and educational organizations. There are few public statistics specifically on integration of refugees and information is drawn from data as below.

Statistical data used for integration monitoring is collected from databases covering the whole population and is published by the government agency Statistics Sweden (SCB). The government uses indicators to assess achievement of its policy obligations. Data for all indicators can be disaggregated by geographic origin, gender and age allowing analysis by national, regional and municipal

level, including identified “exclusion areas”. The current focus of statistical evaluation is on differences between target groups and country of origin. The objective of current analysis is to determine differences between foreign-born and native-born population and if they even out over time. Causality and trends cannot be determined with existing data and the government includes qualitative studies for deeper analysis of some integration areas (Envall, 2012). The Statistics Sweden longitudinal individual database, STATIV, covers all persons registered in Sweden and can be used for a wide variety of purposes relating to integration, segregation and migration. The database includes reason for immigration and distinguishes between refugees and other foreign-born immigrants and could therefore be useful in monitoring refugee integration.

In the 2010 Budget Bill (Bill 2009/10) the Government identified 27 indicators to monitor the outcome of integration policies. All indicators are linked to the government’s eight prioritized areas of integration which broadly link with EU-identified policy areas. Swedish policy areas are: effective systems for reception

and introduction of (“nyanlända”) newly arrived immigrants; more jobs and more entrepreneurs; better education results and equal schooling opportunities; better Swedish language skills and educational opportunities for adults; effective anti-discrimination; a positive development in neighborhoods suffering widespread exclusion; a common set of values in a society characterized by growing diversity; and citizenship.

Responsibility for monitoring and evaluating integration policies is shared by government offices, Statistics Sweden and other relevant authorities and is conducted under the Swedish government at national level and by regional and local authorities, and educational organizations. The evaluation is made against government identified indicators to assess achievement of policy obligations. However, the Establishment Reform, which includes the targeted services provided to refugees, is still fairly new, therefore the evaluation reports currently available from the outcome of the Reform do not make possible a full assessment of its impact.

Austria

Integration direction

Migrant integration became a key policy issue in Austria in the early 1990s but can be traced back to the 1980s in terms of local practices. At the turn of the 21st century, integration became a major focus of national policymaking (Kraler and Reichel 2012:45) and concerned itself primarily with non-EU immigrants, including refugees, and the first and second generation who have settled permanently in Austria.

In 2009, the Austrian government undertook a National Action Plan for Integration (NAP), which aimed to structure cooperation among different actors. The NAP moved Austria from a focus on mandatory integration courses, language skills and related language conditions in Austrian immigration law, to a broader understanding of integration which largely corresponds to the UNHCR definition. The NAP emphasizes more the dual responsibility of integration of the migrant and receiving society, recognizing the two-way process. The NAP also added attention to increasing opportunities for migrants and countering discrimination and xenophobia (Kraler and Reichel 2012:50).

The Austrian Expert Council for Integration which supports implementation of the NAP adds that integration is the measurable “equal opportunity” to participation in central spheres of society and “successful integration” and is seen as economic self-sufficiency, trust in the receiving society and its institutions, respect and compliance with the Austrian and European legal order, value systems and the rule of law (Expert Council for Integration, 2012:12).

As the largest city in Austria and as home to 40 per cent of the foreign-born population, Vienna has a prominent voice in debates on integration and migration and has developed its own integration policy, defining integration as the incorporation of all sections of the population into central domains of society and their active participation in these domains (Kraler and Reichel 2012: 45, 59).

Integration responsibility

Integration responsibilities and competences are based on different legal bases and political structures across federal, state and community levels and is therefore somewhat fragmented. Responsibility for the overall legal framework is vested at federal level, with responsibility otherwise with the Ministry of Interior. However, due to Austrian federalism, certain responsibilities of housing, public health and welfare and their implementation are at provincial level, while employment and universities are at national level. In addition, political and administrative actors across these levels each pursue their own, often diverse integration-political agendas. (Expert Council for Integration, 2012) and there are a number of “social partners” who also have a voice in integration in Austria.

In April 2011 a State Secretary on Integration was appointed to actively address the opportunities and challenges of integration in Austria and to contribute to the concretization and more objective debate of this topic. The State Secretariat supports the “Integration through Performance” motto which prioritizes the merit principle through facilitating and acknowledging performance.

The aforementioned Austrian Expert Council for Integration was instituted at the Federal Ministry of the Interior in June 2010 with the aim to support and ensure the NAP’s implementation and pursue its recommendations.

Measuring and evaluating integration

Austria has developed 25 integration indicators in seven policy areas at the national level which are intended to measure integration progress over time and assess the impact of national and local integration policies. An assessment of policy effectiveness with input from the Federal Ministry of the Interior and the micro-census is published annually. Currently, however, no specific refugee data can be obtained from the NAP and its monitoring. A parallel integration monitoring system exists in Vienna, with currently 60 indicators, which may also help to illustrate other possible indicators specific to the evaluation of refugee integration. For example the city of Vienna collects data regarding employment based on the country of education where the qualifications were obtained rather than on the country of origin.

It also emphasizes participation and provides figures of naturalizations of recognized refugees in Vienna from 1998-2010.

Migrant integration became a major focus of national policymaking in 2009 with the implementation of the NAP, which aimed to structure integration co-ordination and to include a wider concept of integration. Structurally, integration is well accounted for in Austria, however it focuses on migrants more widely and does not produce information on refugees specifically.

Broadly following the direction of the Stockholm Programme (2009) and the Zaragoza Declaration (2010) and within the NAP, Austria developed 25 integration indicators in seven policy areas: language and education, work and employment, rule of law and values (security), health and social issues, intercultural dialogue, sports and recreation, housing and the regional dimension of integration. Some of the indicators fall under identification and subjective views of integration. A parallel integration monitoring system exists in Vienna with now 60 indicators.

Austrian national integration policy also includes a yearly assessment publication (since 2010) which includes input from the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Statistic Austria.

Within academic research, there is a significant body of work on migrant integration including research overviews, studies on development of Austrian migration policy, and in-depth analyses of citizenship policy, asylum policy, employment policy, and literature analysing the legal framework for migrant integration, as well as political integration (Kraler 2005). The majority of studies on integration indicators and influencing factors relate to migrants generally not specifically to refugees. Research specifically on the integration of refugees – in particular on indicators - is scarce, but what exists seems mainly to correspond to the major integration indicators developed for migrants at EU level. Mention of asylum-seekers and refugees is often relegated to an introductory chapter or a chapter on migration history. Others exclude refugees completely. Even those studies explicitly focusing on refugees are almost exclusively qualitative research and often remain on a descriptive level. Literature on those with subsidiary protection is equally scarce. Literature on asylum process experiences and on rejected applications are NGO studies.

It should be noted that the Austrian stance toward integration is somewhat fragmented

due to the other integration monitoring systems at province level. The most elaborate and comprehensive was developed parallel to the NAP in the city of Vienna: the “integration and diversity monitor.” The monitor, launched first in 2010, followed by a 2012 edition, focuses on ongoing integration processes, and on systematically monitoring implementation of Viennese diversity management. The monitor includes all those who have a migrant background and initially identified 75 domains,

now reduced to 60 indicators (Kraler and Reichel 2012:59). Furthermore, some civil society actors have formed an alternative “expert council on integration” and have identified their own goals, action fields and indicators. However the NAP is the functioning integration plan which covers Austria at a national level. These efforts may hamper integration as confusion may arise among service users and undermines the intended co-ordinated approach of the NAP.

➤ Germany

Integration direction

Until the late 20th century, local level integration initiatives existed but were not reflected in a national level strategy or in the approach to integration. Until then the temporary stay of immigrants was assumed. Following a change of government in 1998, policy development on integration was quickly prioritized. Germany is now instrumental in rationalizing and converging EU policy on immigration with emphasis on socio-economic and civic integration. Germany’s legislation and integration policy is aimed at all newcomers including refugees.

Integration policy in Germany is underpinned by the Immigration Act of 2005 which incorporates the Residence Act. The Immigration Act of 2005 was based on the results of an independent “Commission on Migration”, set up in 2000 by the Federal Minister of the Interior to develop a new approach on immigration and integration. The main policy document relating to integration in Germany is *Migration and Integration, Residence law and policy on migration and integration in Germany*, (Federal Ministry of Interior October 2011). The overall approach to integration has been one of ensuring the ability to participate in German society while also placing responsibility with the immigrant for their own integration. At the centre is an emphasis on language and cultural orientation. In 2007, the National Integration Plan made positive changes to improve language and skills courses, access to the labour market and education. In 2009, the government made changes to place emphasis on qualification recognition.

Integration responsibility

Since 2005 the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) has added to its tasks the overall responsibility for integration in Germany, including devising, monitoring and implementing integration projects and carrying out integration research. BAMF is also responsible for determining refugee status.

Measuring and evaluating integration

The 2007 National Integration Plan put in place 11 subject-specific dialogue forums resulting in the development of a National Action Plan on Integration in 2011 with clearly defined and verifiable goals and indicators to measure achievement of goals. There are a total of 100 indicators of integration under 12 thematic areas which roughly follow the 11 forums. Thematic areas are: 1) Legal status and demography; 2) Early childhood education and language support; 3) Education; 4) Vocational training; 5) Labour market; 6) Social integration and income; 7) Civic and political participation and equal opportunities; 8) Housing; 9) Health; 10) Media; 11) Intercultural openness of the public sector and social services; 12) Crime, violence and discrimination. The Federal government report on Integration Indicators (Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Migration, Flüchtlinge und Integration 2009) was the first move to systematically monitor integration at national level. Meanwhile, a follow-up report covering the period 2005 – 2010 has been published (Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Migration, Flüchtlinge und Integration 2012).

Germany does not measure or evaluate specifically for refugee integration. However there is a wide range of immigrant data collected, including the micro-census, the school registers, the Central Aliens Register (*Ausländerzentralregister*), employment statistics, and integration course statistics. Non-official sources include the German Socio-Economic Panel longitudinal household survey.

➤ Canada

Integration Direction

In 1971, Canada was the first country in the world to adopt multiculturalism as an official policy. This policy affirms the value and dignity of all Canadian citizens regardless of their racial or ethnic origins, their language, or their religious affiliation (CIC). Settlement services are provided to permanent residents (both immigrants and refugees) with the goal of preparing future citizens. CIC's integration programme focuses on developing policies and programmes that support the settlement, resettlement, adaptation, and integration of newcomers into Canadian society by delivering orientation, adaptation and settlement services as well as language programmes for newcomers.

The 2001 Immigration and Refugee Protection Act shifted Canada's approach to refugee resettlement from an economic to a humanitarian concern. In 2008 there were a series of significant government reforms to immigration policy in all classes plus amended rules relating to accessing citizenship. Further changes came with the Balanced Refugee Reform Act (2010) and Protecting Canada's Immigration System Act (2012). These changes, and others, represent a shift in Canada's stance to immigration. Two of the main drivers of the change were, and are, improving immigrant integration outcomes which have declined over recent years, and preventing fraud and abuse of the immigration system, including the refugee system.

Canada is in the process of developing specific integration indicators, with anticipated government publication at the end of 2013. To date, the measurement of integration and evaluation of how refugees are doing with regard to integration is absent.

Policy areas considered key to integration by the Canadian government are: two-way process, employment/economic, social participation, language and orientation, access to citizenship. No measurable indicators are currently in place.

Integration responsibility

The Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) assesses and decides asylum cases. Responsibility for settlement and integration lies with Citizenship and Immigration Canada, although under Canada's Constitution, jurisdiction for immigration is formally shared between the federal government and the provinces. Under the Canada-Quebec Accord Relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens, Quebec has control over setting its own annual immigration targets, selects immigrants that settle in the province (with the exception of refugees and family reunification), and is also responsible for providing settlement and integration services to new immigrants to the province, with partial federal funding support. The provinces of British Columbia and Manitoba previously assumed responsibility for their own settlement and integration services, but responsibility has now been transferred back to the federal government. Settlement services are delivered by the NGO sector in Canada, and newcomers are strongly represented among the staff, board and volunteers of these organizations.

Measuring and evaluating integration

Integration policy outcomes have not been very clearly defined in Canada until recently. The CIC *Report on Plans and Priorities* (CIC 2012; 2013) presents four Strategic Outcomes under which there are Performance Indicators which are used to monitor integration of newcomers. This follows CIC's new Program Activity Architecture and Performance Measurement Framework which is subject to ongoing revisions based on results.

➤ United Kingdom

Integration direction

There is little government policy specifically and directly focused on immigrants and integration. Rather, the UK government approaches integration through tangential means, only targeting immigrants directly through citizenship policy. Wider integration is facilitated through more general policy aimed at creating a cohesive and contributing society. The UK is developing a model of

integration based on civic participation and commitment of all members of society. Overall, the UK's approach to integration and society is a holistic one. The UK government's broad integration strategy is presented in a number of reports. In the latest report from 2012, *Creating the Conditions for Integration*, (Department of Communities and Local Government 2012), the approach to an integrated society is set out. This was preceded by *Citizenship: Our Common Bond* (Goldsmith 2008) and *Community Cohesion: An Action Guide* (Local Government Association 2004).

The UK is exceptional in having an integration strategy for refugees: *Full and Equal Citizens - A Strategy for the Integration of Refugees into the United Kingdom* (Home Office 2000) was followed in 2005 by *Integration Matters: A National Strategy for Refugee Integration and Working to Rebuild Lives: A Refugee Employment Strategy* (Home Office 2005). The latter was preceded by refugee-focused pilot studies with JobcentrePlus. In 2009, *Moving on Together: Government's recommitment to supporting refugees* (Home Office 2009) recognized the specific needs of refugees but emphasized the expectation that they learn English, be law-abiding and contribute to the wider community in exchange for the protection of refugee status.

Increasing barriers to gaining entry to the UK and to naturalization for those with Indefinite Leave to Remain due to an apparent lack of satisfactory integration by some sectors of society suggests a shift has occurred in the approach to immigration generally and integration in the UK. Proposals were formalized in 2009 with the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act introducing for the first time in the UK the concept of active citizenship. Saggat and Somerville (2012) note the central principle has shifted towards a loosely framed public acceptance that migrants themselves must change outlooks and behaviours in order to "fit in", and offer the label "liberal coercion" to describe the current model for integration in the UK.

Integration responsibility

The Home Office has responsibility for reception and support arrangements during the asylum process and for refugees newly receiving status until the end of the 28 day transition period. After 28 days, the Home Office's Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND)¹³ takes the lead in integration; government departments responsible for social benefits, employment, health, housing, and education (including language) are fully involved. At regional level, there are eleven consortia for Asylum-Seeker and Refugee Support, each with their own refugee integration strategies, providing a link between central and local government. The voluntary sector is integral to providing refugee support and a large proportion of integration related refugee initiatives operate through it.

Measuring and evaluating integration

There is no ongoing national monitoring of refugees regarding their integration. There are however evaluations of resettled refugees in the UK, such as the 2011 Gateway Programme evaluation. Fairly recently, between 2005 and 2009, the Survey of New Refugees, a longitudinal study of refugee integration in the UK, was undertaken by UKBA, resulting in *Spotlight on Refugee Integration* (Home Office 2010). Using identified integration indicators and focusing on English language skills, employment and housing, this survey forms the most current government evaluation of refugees and integration. Evidence collected showed seven areas to be influential in refugee integration: country of origin, time in the UK, English language skills, age and gender, health, previous education and employment, family and friends.

While not refugee specific, *Full and Equal Citizens* (2000) identified employment, housing, language and health as four key elements influential in the integration process for refugees. In terms of adopting measurable indicators, *Integration Matters* (2005) highlighted eight indicators (employment; English-language attainment; volunteering; contact with community organizations; take-up of British citizenship; housing standards; reporting of racial cultural or religious harassment; access to education) as being the most important for refugee integration and addressed them under three themes: achieving full potential; contributing to communities; accessing services.

Spotlight on Refugees (2010) focused on three of these indicator areas: English, employment and housing.

¹³ Recent structural changes have resulted in the disbanding of the IND.

Literature review

The particularity of the refugee experience is acknowledged in academic literature and in reports by refugee-specific organizations and NGOs, but refugee-specific factors are not currently adequately reflected in policy reports or in integration policy. Our national reviews of policy-related materials show an acknowledgement of refugees' situation as differing from immigrants more generally regarding integration, but do not address these differences directly through policy to the same extent that migrant integration is addressed. Much literature discusses migrant integration and where refugees are mentioned it is often only with passing reference, becoming subsumed within the wider migrant category and not exploring refugee specifics. Active incorporation and elucidation of refugees into the existing wider integration policy provision is largely absent. Much literature focusing on immigrant integration does so mainly without specifying what sort of immigrant the subject is. While important and with relevance to refugee integration, it does not provide sufficiently specific knowledge with which to identify refugee specifics. Similarly in the case of statistical information, either refugees are not surveyed at all, immigration status is not noted during the survey, or refugee data is not disaggregated from the material. Where statistical data is available, it is mostly limited and cannot answer questions relating to "how refugees are doing" in employment, housing or health for example and rarely gather data on refugees and known integration indicators.

This chapter sets out what we know from integration literature and reports on integration. Where literature on refugees and integration is lacking (which is often), the report draws on the wider literature of immigrant integration where it can be informative on refugee integration.

The chapter follows key policy areas identified at EU level because these areas were confirmed by the literature to be significant in relation to refugee integration. Those areas are: employment, education and language, social integration and inclusion, and active citizenship, including access to rights and institutions. Also included is housing because this is closely tied to social inclusion and possibilities for social integration and the need for suitable and affordable housing often coincides with the legal right to seek employment after refugee status is granted. The two-way process which is key in policy on integration, and three factors which are specific to refugees - family reunification, the asylum process and experiences associated with persecution and flight, - are treated as cross-cutting issues in the summary review below. Most integration policy areas exert influence on each other in lived experience, but in particular this study found that family reunification and the asylum process cut across all integration policy areas creating an impact on refugee integration in a variety of ways.

The review is not intended to be exhaustive or detailed but presents the context in which refugees and refugee integration are located and highlights differences in approach. In-depth information and analysis can be found in the national reports of this project. The level of refugee-specific literature varied in each country and this is reflected below. Discussions of stakeholder and refugee consultations which speak to the information set out under follow in the empirical chapter. A national overview commences, followed by thematic discussion of policy areas.

The review of literature and policy at national level took a broad sweep of material on refugees and integration in the national context. Statistical data was also reviewed, although sparse for specifically refugees and is presented above. Most Member States reviewed have identified policy areas in which integration indicators fall and broadly follow them, but also developed further the policy areas identified under the Zaragoza Declaration. Member States adhere to the Common Basic Principles, although with some important national variances. The aim of the literature review was to consider these already existing policy areas and indicators, but to look wider in order to capture the full range of literature relating to integration of migrants, and more particularly refugees, and, in so doing, establish or confirm if the literature pointed to the same policy areas and indicators which have been identified as important to integration at EU and national level, or not. The literature reviews did not confine themselves to the five or six themes chosen for stakeholder meetings in each country, however for ease of presentation national literature is summarized under policy areas.

The intended connection between local, national, and EU policy and practice is clear throughout EU policy reports and documents, however the review of literature and policy at national level does not always clearly reflect the connection.

Employment

France

There is wide acceptance in the French literature on integration that employment constitutes the biggest issue of concern for refugees (Blanco and Barou 2011) and is the issue bringing most discontent for refugees (Bourgeois and Helly 2000). However, the literature is not vast. Recent academic research on refugee labour market integration is limited, except for Tcholakova's 2012 doctoral research. There are a number of NGO studies examining refugee integration in the French labour market (Mohseni 2001; Mlati 2004b; Observatoire de l'Intégration des Réfugiés Statutaires 2006, 2008, 2010; Blanco and Barou 2011), and some government commissioned studies on migrants', but not specifically refugees', access to employment (Département des Statistiques des Etudes et de la Documentation 2010; Haut Conseil à l'Intégration 2012).¹⁴ Other information comes from ELIPA and the 2006 *Parcours et Profil de Migrants* surveys.

Employment is a key indicator of integration and a central component of measuring integration in France. Statistical information on migrants and employment can be drawn from Département des Statistiques des Etudes et de la Documentation (2010) and Haut Conseil à l'Intégration (2012). While this does not focus on refugees, refugees are included and it is useful to note these studies show migrants are more likely than nationals to be unemployed, to be in precarious or unstable employment, and to experience downward professional mobility. Migrants are also more likely than nationals to be employed in part-time positions. The statistical picture suggests refugees face particular constraints in accessing employment and generally fare worse than other migrants, who themselves face more barriers than French citizens.

Some indication of how refugees are doing in relation to the French labour market appear in a publication which draws on the *Parcours et Profil de Migrants* survey, and shows only 34 per cent of refugees were employed at the time of the survey (Direction de l'Animation de la Recherche des Etudes et des Statistiques 2011). This compares to 41 per cent of spouses of French nationals. Only migrants, principally

women, arriving through family reunification had similar difficulties to find employment (17 per cent employed), however some of these latter group were not actively seeking employment. 48 per cent of unemployed refugees were seeking employment, compared to 33 per cent of unemployed among those having arrived for family reunification.

Reasons given for refugees' low labour market integration are several. Direction de l'Animation de la Recherche des Etudes et des Statistiques (2011) suggest refugees' less developed social networks influence employment integration. For example, only 41 per cent of refugees declared knowing people in France. As a result, refugees are more likely to rely solely on institutional networks.

However, in academic, NGO and government literature studies, overall reasons for poor employment integration of refugees are attributed firstly to their level of education and/or qualification recognition, and secondly to their possible limited knowledge of French (Haut Conseil à l'Intégration 2012). Difficulties or delays in qualification recognition result in refugees being employed below their educational standard or in part-time employment and in turn lead to downward professional mobility (ECRE 1999; Mohseni 2001; Ebermeyer 2009; Blanco and Barou 2011) and is suggested to have a strong impact on refugees' mental health and self-esteem (Tcholakova 2012). This is a particular problem for refugees in comparison to work-related migrants who are often recruited on the basis of their existing qualifications. Language can be a barrier to employment as most positions, including those not requiring qualifications, require a good standard of French (Descolanges and Laurens 2008; Breem 2011 on resettled refugees).

Further barriers to refugee employment are identified in the literature as refugees' lack of professional network, poor health and potential discrimination or stigmatization by employers (Descolanges and Laurens 2008), trauma and violence during flight, length of time not working during the asylum process

¹⁴ Haut Conseil à l'Intégration 2012 refers to a number of smaller studies.

leading to poor mental health and delays commencing job-hunting (Mlati 2004b; Haut Conseil à l'Intégration 2012), a lack of familiarity with institutional job search support services (Mohseni 2001; Mlati 2004b; Observatoire de l'Intégration des Réfugiés Statutaires 2010), and navigating an unfamiliar employment system. As a result of these refugee-specific barriers, refugees often take any job in order to earn money (Bourgeois and Helly 2000:116; Blanco and Barou 2011) which may result in becoming trapped in a low income cycle.

Ireland

In Ireland there is little refugee-specific information relating to refugees' employment integration as most is presented within the general migrant literature. A number of reports on migrants and labour market integration provide general information which may apply to refugees, but none has a refugee focus.

Phelan and Kuol (2005) are among the few to include refugees in their research: their survey of refugees and persons with leave-to-remain status in Limerick city indicates 80 per cent of males and 50 per cent of females had prior professional experience before leaving their country. They also indicate that volunteering can have a positive effect in bridging the cultural and network gap when seeking employment finding that 38 per cent of their respondents indicated that they had been involved in voluntary work as a way to acquire work experience in Ireland (Phelan and Kuol 2005). One confusion which presented an obstacle to volunteering is the lack of clarity on whether refugees require Garda clearance when applying for voluntary work as do Irish citizens and other migrants. As Garda clearance requires contact with authorities in the country of origin it may be inappropriate for refugees who may fear persecution by those authorities.

Some information can be drawn from the wider migrant literature which is relevant to refugees and labour market integration. Discrimination can form barriers to employment and research indicates that non-Irish are three times more likely to report having experienced discrimination while looking for work than Irish nationals' (O'Connell and McGinnity 2008).

The literature documents that difficulty within the employment process in France is compounded for refugees by the granting of refugee status which leads to the simultaneous occurrence of 1) legally being able to begin employment, and 2) the need to acquire stable independent housing and leave temporary housing. The use of ethnic networks is often relied upon to find housing at this time (Ebermeyer 2009), therefore limited networks puts refugees at a disadvantage in this interconnected process. This is not extensively discussed in the literature yet the simultaneous need for employment and housing form a central point of stress for refugees in the French context.

This finding is supported by UNHCR research on refugees in Ireland which found one main difficulty for refugees in a job search is anticipated discrimination (UNHCR 2009).

Commenting on asylum, McGinnity et al. (2012) found that time spent in the asylum process can lead to high rates of unemployment and have negative impact on future employment prospects. Perhaps informative for refugee integration, they also found a significant gender wage gap amongst migrants from non-English speaking countries, with women earning about 15 per cent less than their male counterparts¹⁵ and that a direct relation between gender and earnings existed.

Further barriers to employment are highlighted in a 2009 report by New Communities Partnership which engaged with employers and service providers and found that employers identify serious obstacles to recruitment as: firstly the lack of clear and accurate information about Irish cultural norms and secondly, informal mechanisms for an employment search. The same report found that service providers see the main barriers as inadequate government support, lack of knowledge of local networks, discrimination, exploitation, and lack of recognition of foreign qualification. Echoing this report, the *Roadmap to Integration 2012* (The Integration Centre 2012) highlighted a lack of familiarity by migrants with recruitment processes, and O'Connell and McGinnity (2008) similarly found that lack of familiarity with local employment conditions and networks, transferability of qualifications and skills represent serious obstacles to labour market participation.

¹⁵ The research indicates that the data used does not allow for comparisons to be made between the research sample and Irish nationals nor non-Irish nationals from English speaking countries. The report *The Gender Wage Gap* in Ireland indicates that in 2003 the adjusted wage gap between men and women was just under 8 per cent (McGuinness et al. 2009).

Germany

In 2007, the National Integration Plan made positive changes to improve access to the labour market, and in 2009 the new government made further agreement on integration which included a new emphasis on qualification recognition. The language element of the German Integration Course introduced in 2005 is viewed as a key facilitator to enabling the person to proceed to employment opportunities.

The micro-census provides structural and social data on the population and the labour market in Germany. The Federal Employment Office publishes monthly employment statistics on a range of employment and labour market topics, including economic activity, unemployment, recipients of unemployment benefits and vocational support. Since 2011, information on migrant background was sampled and links integration-related issues to data on socio-economic status. The annual Panel Study on Labour Market and Social Security conducted by Institute for Employment Research since 2006 focuses on migrants and examines individual and social consequences of the long-term unemployed assistance scheme (unemployment benefit). The Panel Study includes structural and subjective factors and is useful for measuring labour market integration as it records nationality and country of birth of the migrant, their parents and grandparents.

Canada

Hyndman (2011:7) draws on academic studies to say “the economic measures of refugee “integration” show lower incomes than the Canadian average.”

The Foreign Credentials Referral Office (FCRO) and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) operate a Foreign Credential Recognition Program. The Canadian government is developing a pan-Canadian framework on foreign credential recognition and will include collecting pre-arrival information in the case of some refugee classes.

There is an online database of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland which allows comparison of foreign qualifications against Irish qualifications, but this is not legally binding nor does it regulate professional bodies. Foreign qualifications fall under the remit of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) which has an advisory role in determining how foreign qualifications compare to Irish. While the QQI provides information on the level of qualifications for general purposes, it is individual professional bodies that regulate specific professions and so there is no national jurisdiction on qualification recognition. While their existence acts as facilitators of employment integration, without being legally binding their contribution is limited.

Relevant to refugees and all migrants, the *Annual Monitoring Report on Integration 2011* found the rate of activity for non-EU nationals was at its lowest in that year. The authors identify structural barriers to self-employment and employment more generally, including English language skills, access to local business networks, difficulties in accessing finance, and lack of previous financial history in Ireland (McGinnity et al. 2012) and report that contraction in employment has been greatest amongst non-Irish, falling by 40 per cent for this group and widening the gap between Irish and non-Irish.

Recent labour market initiatives focus on the wider migrant population but are not refugee-specific. Initiatives include under the Department of Justice and Equality’s key priorities an Immigrant Investor Programme and a start-up Entrepreneur Programme for Immigrants; the OPMI’s allocation of funding to the Employment of People from Immigrant Communities (EPIC) programme which provides assistance to migrants in Dublin who do not require a work permit; and the Department of Social Protection’s integrated employment and income support service (INTREO), a mainstream initiative which appoints a case-worker to an individual to discuss training, education and support options and to agree a Person Progression Plan. Integrated Workplaces is a further initiative aimed at a range of actors dealing with cultural diversity in the workplace.

In common with many EU Member States, it is only on granting of refugee status that an individual may legally work in Ireland, and the lack of access to the Irish labour market during the asylum process can lead to high rates of unemployment and negative impact on future employment prospects (McGinnity et al. 2012).

The integration of refugees into the labour market is a top priority for the Swedish government and part of a stated policy goal to increase the labour force through immigration. Employment is therefore a central feature of indicators and measuring in Sweden. There is considerable academic literature to support this importance. A changing job market and regional variances influence migrant and refugee employment. Some scholars identify structural changes in the labour market, from an industrial to a service market, as producing fewer unskilled jobs for migrants generally (Lundborg 2012; Szulkin 2012), and others point to the higher rates of refugee employment in municipalities without universities but with more traditional labour demand (Bevelander and Lundh 2007) and in those cities with large private sector economies.

Academic literature identifies an employment gap between refugees and indigenous Swedes which falls over time (Lundborg 2012) but shows refugees receiving status through the asylum process integrate faster in employment than resettled refugees (Bevelander and Pendakur 2008; Bevelander 2011: 22). This is attributed by Hagström (2009) to the freedom of the former group in choosing where to settle which includes areas with better network prospects and lower unemployment generally. Drawing on work on Vietnamese refugees from the 1970s onwards, Rönnqvist (2009:156-7) concurs that freedom of mobility positively influences refugee employment outcomes.

Reasons for refugee unemployment or under-employment have been identified as including comparability of overseas qualifications and skills. To counter this, and for all migrant classes, the Swedish government has a policy of validation which assesses both formal qualifications where certificates exist and actual practical or theoretical skill levels where they do not. Since 2003 there has been a centralized national level validation system under the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (Yh-myndigheten). In 2013, the Swedish government assigned the Swedish Agency for Public Management (Statskontoret) to evaluate which qualification validation tools and methods were effective. A report is in process at the time of writing. In addition, the Swedish Council for Higher Education in 2013 examines methods for assessing foreign academic degrees where documentation is missing (Regeringen 2012b). A Statskonteret report (2013) finds that validation is under-utilized and not viewed in the same way by all relevant actors and proposes that SPES should be assigned to develop guidelines. Despite the priority of, and attention to, refugee and migrant employment, MIPEX shows Sweden is far behind other European countries regarding labour market integration of migrants generally (Szulkin 2012: 2) suggesting initiatives in labour market integration are less successful than in other policy areas. This is within the context of Sweden having the best integration policies of all countries included in MIPEX.

➤ Canada

Hiebert (2002, cited in Hyndman 2011) used tax return data to assess refugee outcomes with some surprising results: • refugees did better on some measures of employment earnings than did family class immigrants, especially in the first nine years of settlement in Canada; • earnings rise steeply for people who enter Canada with the ability to speak one of Canada's official languages. He particularly attributes the economic achievement of refugees to the wide range of support services available to them and not to other immigrants in the year after their arrival in Canada.

Using the same method in his 2009 study, Hiebert found further surprising results. For example: • In Vancouver, looking at the average, refugees fare better than business class principal applicants in income earnings; • a skilled worker with no official language ability and less than high school education reports roughly equal income as a refugee with the same characteristics.

His findings overall show that refugees are not the class of immigrant reporting the lowest earnings in Canada, and that refugees earn more than some skilled workers. Furthermore, his findings show that language ability does not significantly improve outcomes for refugees, but does so for family, business and skilled class immigrants. Despite this, refugees depend on welfare assistance far more than do native Canadians and Landed Convention Refugees (LCRs) depend on welfare assistance more than Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) and Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs).

Migration and integration is well-researched in Austria, but integration of refugees remains under-researched. Employment, however, is the most researched area in terms of refugees and integration in Austria. Employment is one of the main areas covered by general policy in Austria and is reflected in four of the five NAP core indicators and in the Viennese monitor. Overall, research and policy initiatives suggest key factors in employment integration of migrants are: occupation and employment in relation to educational level achieved in the country of origin; employment appropriate to the individual's qualification; occupational status and type of employment positions in Austria; and the unemployment rate including comparison to employment status in home country.

Literature notes the most highlighted measurable indicators and influencing factors of refugee integration to be education and dequalification/deskilling. A wide range of refugee-specific literature on integration includes as influencing factors lack of documentation, lack of formal education or interruption of studies, German language skills, mismatch of qualifications or skills, non-acceptance of former qualifications, Austrian employers not valuing foreign experience, the length and other aspects of the asylum process, traumatic experiences impacting on health, and discrimination. Some studies highlight gender and age differences, although this is not widely focused upon.

Some of the strands set out above can be further elaborated; lack of documents, formal education or an interruption to studies can present refugees with disadvantage in comparison to labour migrants and can result in a mismatch of qualifications and experience (ECRE 1999; Volf 2001; Schilcher 2009; Riesenfelder et al. 2011). Speaking of migrants more generally, Huber (2010) notes a mismatch between qualification and employment is particularly prevalent among family reunification migrants and that women fare worse than men in this group. One reason given for mismatch of qualifications with employment is the absence of adequate screening of those with professional backgrounds on arrival in Austria. It is therefore unknown which qualifications are in fact arriving in Austria when migrants enter and is of particular concern for refugee professionals (Gächter and Stadler 2007) for whom screening for qualifications may enable faster labour market integration. Limited language knowledge particularly influences employment chances for those who came shortly after the age of

compulsory secondary education and can present barriers to finding apprenticeships (Neuwirth 2007). The lengthy asylum procedure disrupts language acquisition and establishing, or continuing, a daily work routine which can present challenges entering regular employment, and contributes to deskilling (Volf 2001; Neuwirth 2005, 2007; Langthaler and Trauner 2009; Kraler et al. 2013). Traumatic experiences and underlying health issues can reduce refugees' ability to work. As in most EU Member States asylum-seekers do not have effective access to the labour market, and the sudden possibility to acquire legal employment upon recognition of status compounds the pressure on refugees to quickly earn money and to enter the housing market (Scheiber 2007).

One obstacle to refugee employment that is not extensively discussed in the refugee-specific literature is structural discrimination (Kucera 2001; Scheiber 2007; Fetz 2011; Kraler 2013), although this is widely discussed in the general migrant literature. Such discrimination can lead to a refugee remaining in a cycle of poorly or unpaid internships (Kraler et al. 2013) resulting again in deskilling or reducing self-esteem.

As in Ireland, other academic studies note the positive influencing value of social networks and of volunteering in improving refugee employment prospects. The latter can improve employability and counter dequalification through use of existing skills and gaining new qualifications and knowledge (Reinprecht, Gapp 2006; Schilcher 2009). Others note employment as a potentially positive influencing factor affecting psychological health through economic independence, housing, and family reunification. This generates improved future outlook through developing self-esteem and a sense of identity, and through increased interaction with members of the receiving society leading to developing language skills and cultural skills (Hoyer 2011).

Regarding assessment, the Austrian Public Employment Office (Labour market service, *Arbeitsmarktservice*) undertakes analysis and commissions research on those with migrant background and employment. A recent commissioned study which focussed on Vienna in respect of qualifications and further education, language skills and compatibility with private life, found that refugees often are in low-income employment and that 40 per cent of surveyed refugees were overqualified for the positions they held (Riesenfelder et al. 2011).

United Kingdom

Spotlight on refugee integration (2010) shows the proportion of refugees in employment increased from 34 per cent at the eight month mark of the survey to 49 per cent at the 21 month mark. However over half felt they were overqualified for their current post. Generally, employment amongst refugees was found to increase over time.

Education and Language

France

There is little refugee-specific literature on education and integration in France, but some studies report on refugees and language. Although the ELIPA survey shows migrants' language acquisition to improve over time, data shows this not to occur with refugees whose level of French generally fails to improve in the years before they obtain refugee status. Only 59 per cent of refugees felt they spoke French well compared to 69 per cent of formerly irregular migrants and 86 per cent for other migrants with over 10 years in France. Comparing refugees and other migrants, Bèque (2007) suggests refugees are furthest away from mastering French.

Different reasons for this deficit have been put forward including poor language acquisition linked to refugees originating from non-francophone countries and the general low level of education in refugee-producing countries (Le Quentrec-Creven 2011). The author suggests refugees who practiced French during childhood or at school are more likely to speak French well.

Ireland

Mainstreaming of refugees in Ireland may account for the limited refugee-specific literature, however much that exists shows language acquisition as the main barrier to accessing, or progressing in, education. Carson (2008) notes the educational context for refugees and suggests students did not have much contact with the Irish community beyond the school setting and that a lack of English language competency is a "serious obstacle which limits refugees' social involvement and access to services and institutions." In an earlier study refugee respondents themselves identified barriers to accessing education mainly to be inadequate levels of English language and insufficient financial resources (Phelan and Kuol 2005). Furthermore, 71 per cent of those respondents reported having educational qualifications from their country of origin but only 13 per cent reported having those qualifications recognized in Ireland.

More positively, Carson (2008) considers language acquisition by refugees can encourage autonomous behaviour and to lead to a responsibility transition away from the teacher toward the student. Not only does language acquisition enable learning, but some research points to the important role language acquisition plays in levels of engagement of children and parents with schools (McGinnity et al 2012) and levels of peer socialization (Smyth 2009) amongst migrants generally.

The Roadmap to Integration 2012 (The Integration Centre 2012) identifies positive progress at the level of training regarding cultural barriers, racism and discrimination but highlights the Irish language requirements for primary school teachers as a barrier that may affect migrants' and refugees' professional development and the generation of positive refugee role models.

Germany

In 2007, the National Integration Plan made positive changes to improve language and skills courses, and education.

The German Integration Course introduced in 2005 consists of language tuition and an orientation element to deliver knowledge of German government, history and society. Language acquisition is emphasized in Germany and there are special courses and assistance for youth, for those with limited or no literacy skills, and for women. There is a test at the end of the course which constitutes a step on the pathway to naturalization. The language element of the course is viewed as a key facilitator to enabling the person to proceed to education opportunities.

The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees publishes quarterly statistics on the German Integration Course. Data includes entitlement to courses, share of course repeaters, completion rates, and share of foreigners obliged to participate as beneficiaries of welfare. In 2011 the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees published *Results of a Longitudinal Study on the Effectiveness and Sustainability of Integration Courses* (Schuller et al. 2011). An Evaluation Committee oversees monitoring of Integration Courses and advises on amending curricula, teaching materials, test content and quality. An Integration Panel studies the medium and long-term effects of integration courses. Key results include: 93 per cent of course participants reported German language proficiency improved during the integration course; contact with Germans increased by the end of the course; 51 per cent reported maintaining the level of German after the course ends; 56 per cent reported attachment to Germany intensifies; and employment increased after a two-year comparison. Weaknesses identified in terms of some skills included media use and dealing with official letters and civil servants.

Sweden

It is generally accepted in Sweden that language is key to integration in order to find employment, to manage everyday life situations and to facilitate participation in society. Despite the interconnectedness of language to other areas, there is little research on education or language in relation to migrant or refugee integration. Refugees have educational barriers, usually represented by catching up with formal education or to gain Swedish exams and qualifications, but this is not emphasized in the literature which has a wider migrant focus.

Language and employment are difficult areas to separate also in Sweden. Swedish tuition for Immigrants (SFI) provides free courses to all immigrants at progressive levels aiming to provide basic functional competency, the chance of future studies, and access to the labour market (Statskontoret 2009). One study shows 29 per cent of attendees of SFI are refugees (Skolinspektionen 2010). Drawing on government statistics, limited evidence shows that after ten years in Sweden, there is a 5 per cent positive effect on employment rates among SFI participants who completed the course (Kennerberg and Åslund 2010; Statskontoret 2009). Data also shows SFI drop-out rates to be fairly high, but to vary according to the economic climate. A better economy leads to more jobs, less employer emphasis on the Swedish language and this leads to higher SFI drop-out due to participants finding work. Language and employment are further linked as SFI can be combined with employment to allow practice of Swedish in a work situation, the validation of qualifications, and participating in internships or other training (Skolverket 2012).

Validation of refugees' formal qualifications is addressed by a number of validation measures, the tools and methods for which are currently under evaluation, as noted in the discussion on employment.

The Austrian NAP views adequate language proficiency as central to participation in professional life and Austrian society. The Viennese monitor adds that language is central to social emancipation and social upward mobility. The results of the Viennese monitor indicate that persons with migration background¹⁶ are strongly represented at both the highest and lowest educational scale. Language is therefore central to integration policy in Austria. In the literature, the policy area of education is dominated by the indicator of language and only two studies also include observations on information and orientation on the receiving country (Reinprecht and Gapp 2006; Neuwirth 2007).

Factors influencing language acquisition include reception conditions, the lack of quality, structured language courses during the asylum process (Neuwirth 2005, 2007; Kraler 2013), acknowledgment and validation of foreign education and difficulties for refugees related to lack of documents (Kapeller and Sprung 2002; Scheiber 2007). Other influences on education noted to a limited degree are illiteracy, cultural and religious factors, health status, and discrimination.

Lack of access to German courses during the long asylum process leads to a series of problems on receiving refugee status, including difficulties in finding work (Neuwirth 2007) and a loss of daily structure resulting in difficulties re-adapting to normal life on receiving status. Language acquisition is an important tool for refugees in order to move on with other areas of life, and the inability to do this in a structured way in the asylum process negatively impacts refugees' futures. Furthermore, highly qualified persons may lose some of their knowledge during the long asylum process and cannot update knowledge.

Positive influences on language acquisition include linguistic experts' observation that actual learning of language occurs in "real life" with social contacts playing a crucial role. One study showed "regardless of the residential status and with almost no exception, language is viewed to be a central key feature - for enabling social interaction, gaining independence, following education and widening job opportunities" (Kraler et al. 2013). Other positive influences include volunteering which enable migrants to acquire basic knowledge of the receiving society as well as to participate in society through non-formal and informal education (Reinprecht and Gapp 2006).

Common barriers to language acquisition include the trauma impacting concentration, willpower and motivation of refugees, patriarchal family structures, the necessity for some refugees first to overcome illiteracy or learn a new script, and childcare responsibilities which are not supported by organized childcare to allow course attendance (Neuwirth 2007; Kraler 2013).

Measurable integration indicators in Austrian policy and research on education include the level of completed education, but this can be problematic for refugees and migrants generally in Austria in relation to the comparability of different education systems, and validation of educational degrees. Measuring levels of completed education or educational achievement is therefore not a level playing field. Currently, a set of initiatives are underway to facilitate the recognition of educational qualifications.

¹⁶ Migration background in Austria refers to the fact that they or at least one of their parents were born abroad or that they are foreign nationals.

➤ Germany

The German Federal government *Report on Integration Indicators* (June 2009) focused on identifying indicators and their suitability for monitoring integration rather than on analyzing integration progress itself. The report considers the degree to which divergences between different groups derive from "migrant background" or from general socioeconomic factors' (Bijl and Verweij 2012). Of interest for refugee integration, positive results were seen in language acquisition through integration courses, however those with an individual or familial history of migration are often still in an unfavourable position compared to the native population. The report does not distinguish between different ethnic origin groups which would provide more useful analysis for refugees.

➤ Canada

Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada Program (LINC) provides free basic French and English language courses to adult permanent residents. Applicants are first assessed and then placed on an appropriate course level. The CIC Integration Program aims to deliver orientation, adaptation and language programmes.

Canada has moved toward evaluation and measuring integration by developing a focus on outcomes: policies and programmes are being developed with an “outcome-based approach to settlement and longer-term integration” (CIC 2010), and through conducting evaluations of programmes such as the LINC and the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program.

➤ United Kingdom

Spotlight on Refugee Integration (2010) showed language improved over time: refugees who reported having high levels of English language skills reported a modest increase over the 21 months of the survey (26 per cent to 38 per cent). However, the proportion of refugees with a low level of English language ability decreased from 38 per cent to 15 per cent.

English Language Training for Refugees in London and the Regions (Home Office 2003) assesses the availability and quality of ESOL to refugees around the UK. Key findings were negative and included: shortage of classes, long waiting lists, recruitment of ESOL teachers, lack of provision at professional level, child-friendly class times needed, more co-ordination between ESOL/RCO to share knowledge.

An IPPR briefing document *Rethinking Integration (2012)* included a focus on supplementary education as integral to integration. Crucially, the authors argue, it is the everyday setting not the big questions contained in existing indicators that must inform policy on immigrant integration. The briefing highlights differences between what is important to individuals (based on their actions) and what policy-makers think is important.

Active Citizenship

This section also includes access to rights and to institutions and discrimination. Although often a cross-cutting issue, the French review found a focus on access to rights to be significant in refugee integration and to impact on active citizenship, and the Irish review found a focus on discrimination and racism to impact on civic and political participation. As such, they are important influencing factors to consider within active citizenship.

France

There are few studies on refugees' participation in political activities, voting patterns or participation in associations in France, although considered important for integration by stakeholders. Therefore the impact of these aspects of active citizenship on integration is not possible to determine from the literature. The literature indicates refugees primarily want French citizenship to acquire the support and protection of France should the former refugee return to their country of origin, and in order to acknowledge the protection France has afforded them. This however is countered by mixed feelings over relinquishing their original citizenship to which they are attached (Enel and Gazave 2008). Others show that acquiring French nationality provides an employment benefit in allowing application for positions reserved for French nationals and may act to counter discrimination based on nationality. However, these studies do not comment on the impact on integration of full participation, which gaining citizenship may imply (Morillon 2001; Observatoire de l'Intégration des Réfugiés Statutaires 2006).

Some studies in France argue that language acts as a barrier to accessing citizenship (Mohseni 2001) in light of increased testing, and a persistent barrier to participation may be racism or discrimination as other research suggests refugees who become French citizens feel they are still considered as foreigners by French society (Blanco and Barou 2011).

Ireland is in the frontline of countries that allow refugees to vote and stand for local elections. However civic participation is only now gaining attention in public and academic discourses in Ireland and the literature ties voting rights in referenda, national, presidential and European elections closely to citizenship.

The *Roadmap to Integration 2012* identifies political participation as an important “main block to immigrant integration in Ireland” but highlights that immigrants generally are not proportionately represented in political parties, especially their executives, which marginalizes them from the political decision-making process (The Integration Centre 2012:12). Effective exclusion of immigrants from Irish politics, which is framed as institutional racism by some, represents a challenge in achieving the active citizenship or participation of immigrants, including refugees. The lack of diversity within Irish political parties (Fanning et al. 2003) presents “clear limitations on what can be achieved through migrants’ participation in local elections in Ireland”. Furthermore, if non-Irish nationals cannot offer active political support in national elections, political parties may not view them as significant members of the electorate and policies may not take them into account. The author identifies some key barriers to political participation as delivery of information, gaps in social and political networks, inadequacy in political socialization, and voter motivation (Dobbs 2009). The impact of this on refugees’ integration in relation to full participation is difficult to measure as much is subjective, however the *Roadmap to Integration 2012* identifies fields where the progress of civic participation is measured, including: 1) Provision of Information on Cultural, Political, and Civic Life in Ireland as well as Public Services; 2) Public Service Broadcasting; 3) Representation of migrants in the media profession.

Concerning media as a conduit of participation and inclusion, the *Handbook on Integration* (2009) considers that media programme content does not reflect demographics and advocates effective media strategies to reflect a diverse population and encourages non-Irish nationals to get involved and give an immigrant perspective (OPMI 2010). This reflects Ager and Strang’s (2004:21) assertion that refugees’ frequency of accessing media in the language of the receiving country is an indicator of cultural knowledge and social connection.

While this is arguable, community radio can be instrumental in promoting participation of refugees in programming and radio production, providing a space for network development between broadcasters and different ethnic groups.

Citizenship is viewed as a route to active civic participation by governments and the EU, and for refugees themselves acquisition of citizenship is usually associated with security and stability. Since 2011 the Ministry of Justice has introduced new procedures to facilitate more efficient and faster processing of citizenship applications. As a result over 25,000 applications were decided in 2012, compared to 16,000 in 2011 and fewer than 8,000 in 2010 (Department of Justice and Equality Annual Report 2012).

Practice example – Ireland

One initiative aiming to improve levels of migrant political representation and participation is the “Opening Power to Diversity” scheme which matches volunteer migrants with a member of parliament to offer experience and insight into how politics work in Ireland.

For more information visit: http://www.livinginireland.ie/en/opening_power

In Sweden, active citizenship is closely linked with social inclusion and social integration and voting is seen as integral to this process. Thus these indicator areas are difficult to separate in Sweden's case. In this section we look at active citizenship as voting behaviour. Swedish citizenship is available to those refugees who can prove their identity and who have lived in Sweden for four years under a permanent residence permit. The right to vote in Swedish parliamentary elections is reserved for Swedish citizens, but municipal and county voting privileges are open to non-citizen residents who have been registered in Sweden for at least three years (SCB 2008). Extending political rights to non-citizens aims to increase political interest, self-esteem and influence among foreign citizens resident in Sweden (Bevelander 2010: 286). However, this strategy seems not to work as voting activity is poor amongst foreign-born citizens. In the 2010 elections to the municipal council, only 36 per cent of foreign-born non-citizens registered to vote actually used their vote. Although voting in parliamentary elections is high in Sweden (73 per cent), there is still a 14 per cent difference in election turnout between foreign-born and native-born citizens.

There is no information on refugee voting behaviour but Bevelander and Pendakur's (2008) study of voting behaviour of over 70,000 residents, including 13,000 non-citizens, finds that foreign-born Swedish citizens are far more

likely to vote in elections than foreign-born non-citizens. They use this to argue that acquiring citizenship makes a considerable difference to the probability of voting, and thereby increases formal political participation (Bevelander and Pendakur 2008). Because voting is seen as indicative of participation, and because citizenship has been shown to increase the likelihood of voting, citizenship is viewed as a pathway to becoming an active citizen in Sweden.

Participation as a representative in Swedish political and decision-making bodies points to a significant under-representation of people of foreign origin and patterns of under-representation are found at all levels of the political decision-making structure (SCB 2008; Dahlstedt et al. 2011). In 2010, foreign-born made up more than 15 per cent of the total Swedish population, but the representation in decision-making bodies was only slightly more than 7.5 per cent (Migrationsinfo 2012b).

Other factors influencing immigrant participation in voting are age at arrival, with younger immigrants more likely to vote, and location, with those in larger cities less likely to vote. Living in ethnically segregated areas, and areas with higher immigrant populations, does not by itself have a negative impact on general voter participation (Bevelander and Pendakur 2008:19-21)

➤ Canada

Canada has a Citizenship Action Plan, the intention of which is to ensure programme efficiency and to reinforce positively the meaning of Canadian citizenship through guidance provided in the Citizenship Guide for citizenship applicants. A new citizenship test is being developed.

The Canadian government also conducts "strategic research" through CIC whose active research programme provides expert evidence-based support for policy development, programme monitoring, performance measurement and evaluation. In 2012–2013, CIC plans include continuing research on immigrant and refugee labour market participation and economic outcomes.

➤ United Kingdom

The Scottish report *In Search of Normality: Refugee Integration in Scotland* (2013) was the result of a three year longitudinal study focusing on housing, health, education, employment and community. Underpinning the findings is that key facilitators of refugee integration are safety and stability based on a foundation of citizenship and rights, and language and cultural knowledge. A further review document from the Scottish government on refugee integration strategy is due later in 2013.

There has been little research attention given to civic participation or active citizenship of refugees in Austria. Despite this, participation in political processes is an integration indicator in Austrian society.

Drawing on the limited literature, in a small survey in Styria, refugee respondents showed a relatively high political interest (Kapeller and Sprung 2002:77-78), even though before acquiring Austrian citizenship refugees have no right to vote. The same study showed refugees held no membership of political parties, connecting this with experiences of political systems in countries of origin and flight experiences, and only a small number of newer refugees engaged in associations or institutions.

Civic engagement may occur through community organizations and/or volunteering. A report on third-country nationals, which

included refugees, identified volunteering and involvement with migrant organizations as indicators of integration. The report states these two areas generally contribute to empowerment of third-country nationals and to a capacity for self-help although the report also states there are barriers to volunteering to overcome (Reinprecht and Gap 2006). Migrants reported neighbourhood help as their main volunteering activity, which suggests migrant volunteering may be under-reported as volunteering is often conceptualized as occurring in an organized setting.

Access to nationality with its high financial requirement is argued as being socially selective and some third-country nationals and refugees believed they could not achieve citizenship even though it was their goal (Kraler et al. 2013).

Social Integration and Social Inclusion

Building, and enabling the building of, a cohesive and well-functioning society where all members can be equally involved is central to governments' concepts of integration. While it is usual for members of society to move in their own chosen circles rather than be connected with all parts of that society, it is widely accepted that it is important to empower migrants and refugees to access those parts of society that the individual wishes to participate in at the moments they wish to do so. Moreover, individuals should be encouraged to bridge cultural, ethnic, and social divides as a means to counter discrimination. In the understanding of integration put forward by UNHCR this is referred to as a social and cultural process whereby refugees acclimatize and local communities accommodate the refugee to enable refugees to live amongst or alongside the receiving population without discrimination or exploitation, and contribute actively to the social life of their country of asylum.

France

Research in France on social integration of refugees is limited. The study on refugee integration in selected French departments (Observatoire de l'intégration des réfugiés statutaires 2008) conducted by France Terre d'Asile focused on refugees' relationships with their national or religious community, with school parents and with neighbours. Refugee responses indicate their friends or acquaintances originate principally from the time spent in a reception centre, childrens' school or the church. While the time spent in reception centres is not wholly favourable to integration, there are some benefits such as forming connections with other refugees and sharing knowledge of French systems and cultural norms. Whether national or religious networks have a favourable impact on migrant or refugee integration is highly debated in France. Studies that examine communities by nationality insist on the important role played by the refugees' community of origin in helping refugees to settle locally. This applies especially for large communities or communities that are highly concentrated in some specific areas,

such as the Tamils in the northern part of Paris (Etiemble 2004; Dequerez 2007) and the Lebanese community (Abdulkarim 1992; Abdulkarim 1995).

Overall, the ELIPA survey suggests refugees in France fare worse among surveyed migrants in the social integration indicator. Bèque (2007) shows that compared with other migrants, refugees are much more socially isolated and much less likely to have family or social connections in France. Drawing from the *Parcours and Profils de Migrants* survey, Breem (2011) concurs when discussing resettled refugees, arguing that limited networks results in challenges making new friends. Using the concept of "social bridges" (Ager and Strang 2004), Domergue (2011) suggests that refugees' very low level of contact with French nationals does not lead to social bridging between refugee and the wider society and has implications for refugees' future marital status as refugees are less likely than other newly arrived migrants to marry French nationals.

Practice example - Ireland

Within the framework of *Migration Nation*, and through the *National Action Plan Against Racism*, sporting associations in Ireland have, at different levels, taken action to implement plans to encourage integration through sport. Although programmes are not tailored specifically for refugees, associations and clubs have actively stimulated inclusion at regional level through an articulation of national inclusion and integration strategies. For example, the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) and the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) have produced inclusion and integration strategies. For more information visit:

<http://www.gaa.ie/clubzone/inclusion-and-integration/>

Sweden

In Sweden, the official use of the term social inclusion describes universal welfare and social protection. The main policy goals related to social inclusion have been to create more jobs and reduce social exclusion. According to Bevelander and Pendakur (2008:9), the central concept of social inclusion in Sweden is that all members of society should be able to participate as respected, contributing and valued individuals.

Bevelander and Pendakur (2008) link citizenship to social inclusion. They argue that electoral participation is a measure of social inclusion because it expresses voluntary participation, manifests an opinion and influences a societal outcome (2008). They suggest that citizenship leads to increased voting frequency and consequently is a powerful indicator of social inclusion (Bevelander and Pendakur 2008).

In addition to voting patterns, participation in Swedish political or decision-making bodies is indicative of social integration. There is no literature on specifically refugees in this respect, but several studies on immigrant participation point to a significant under-representation of people of foreign origin in Sweden (SCB 2008; Dahlstedt et al. 2011).

An important document on diversity and related closely to social integration has been produced by the Department of Sociology at Uppsala University each year since 2005 reporting on current attitudes towards diversity and is based on a survey of 1,000 randomly sampled members of the Swedish population. The “Diversity Barometer” (Mångfaldsbarometern) reports that only 5.6 per cent of those surveyed had extreme and negative attitudes toward diversity in 2012 and that the most negative attitudes are related to religion and integration.

There is evidence of racism, xenophobia and discrimination against ethnic minorities, which is an obstacle to social integration. According to research, Swedes tend to be more xenophobic in times of economic decline, low economic growth and high unemployment (Hjern and Bohman 2012: 10). But these authors also find that education and social status are factors that can counteract xenophobia, and that deep and long-lasting connections with immigrants make the majority population less xenophobic (Hjern and Bohman 2012: 10) once connections form.

Austria

There is little literature on social integration of refugees in Austria. What exists examines integration of specific communities or nationalities. Stubnig and Lackner (2007) find sport, cultural events and employment to be positive influencing factors in the formation of social networks. Others note barriers to social network formation as isolation of the asylum procedure, language, negative attitudes among the receiving society, and stereotypes including criminalization and stigmatization within reports on refugees.

Canada

The CIC Report (2010) states Canada’s approach to integration as “one that encourages a process of mutual accommodation and adjustment [two-way process] by both newcomers and the larger society.” Evaluations of two previous programmes, the Welcoming Communities Initiative and the Host Program, concluded that there is a need for programming that addresses barriers to newcomer integration, including racism and discrimination. The new Community Connections component of the Settlement Program aims at supporting locally-based approaches that facilitate settlement and integration by addressing barriers and building welcoming and inclusive communities. The benefits of newcomer interaction with Canadians are embedded across the Settlement Program. The Canadian government’s planned strategic research includes work on indicators of social integration. This is for all newcomers, not only refugees.

United Kingdom

The IPPR briefing *Rethinking Integration* (2012) cites Spencer (2007) writing on social lives of migrants and their relationships with British nationals. It was found that there is little difference between migrant and British nationals’ leisure activities, but that 25 per cent of migrants even after two and a half years in the UK spent no leisure time with British nationals, preferring to make connections with compatriots in what Putnam (2000) and Ager and Strang (2004) describe as bonding rather than bridging. Another example cited by the IPPR briefing document is COMPAS (2007) which shows religious background to play a role in leisure: non-Muslims are likely to spend their time with compatriots and other ethnic backgrounds (high level of bridging), while 75 per cent of Muslims spend their time with those of the same ethnicity and religion – either locally or at distance (phone/internet), and have little contact with Muslims from different ethnicities or with non-Muslims of the same ethnicity.

Housing

Housing is a cross-cutting issue which impacts on social integration and inclusion, on health, on employment opportunities, and therefore on future outcomes. As Ager and Strang (2004, 15) note, “housing structures much of refugees’ experience of integration”. Refugees often make housing choices related to income. However, proximity of friends or relatives or to obligations to remit money to family in the country of origin also influences housing choices. The subject of housing and refugees is, therefore, complex to understand, to create policy for, and to measure regarding how refugees are integrating because where a refugee lives may relate to other factors beyond income.

France

Statistical data and literature confirm housing to be a key factor in the integration of refugees in France, both facilitating and forming barriers to integration. Refugees suffer a more chaotic residential history characterized by instability and precariousness (Bègue 2007) a view supported by the PPM and ELIPA surveys. Only former irregular migrants can be said to experience similar chaotic residential history. Furthermore, refugees are less likely to access good housing than are migrants arriving in France through family reunification (Jourdan 2012). The ELIPA survey shows one quarter of refugee respondents lived in transitory housing such as reception centres or hostels, compared to only eight per cent of other newly arrived migrants and around one quarter live with family or friends. The survey shows less than 50 per cent of refugees live in independent housing (private or government rental or owning a home) and shows the proportion of refugees in emergency housing is higher than other newly arrived migrants and that refugees are more mobile in relation to housing than other migrants (Garcin 2011). Berger (2008) adds to the picture showing refugees are more likely to experience overcrowded housing than other newly arrived migrants. It is therefore not surprising that 57 per cent of refugees in France are dissatisfied with their housing (Bouvier 2011).

Refugees access housing through the same channels as French nationals. However, factors which specifically negatively influence refugees’ access to housing include limited personal networks (61 per cent for refugees as opposed to 86 per cent for other new migrants) (Berger 2008), limited knowledge of French and socio-cultural codes in France, and the urgency to find housing upon granting of status (Mlati and Antelme 2009). Refugees are also more likely to stay in reception centres or hostels following recognition of status, commonly considered as

transitory housing. While NGO research highlights NGOs as “rental mediators” between refugees and landlords, other studies highlight that external support may prevent refugees from seeking housing autonomously, potentially reducing independence (Ducheny 2008). Berger suggests the limited network on which refugees can rely to find housing leads to refugees having an increased incidence of being housed in transitory accommodation (Bourgeois and Helly 2000; Berger 2008; Ducheny 2008; Ebermeyer 2009).

However, primarily, accessing appropriate housing rests on having secure employment (Blanco and Barou 2011) because, in France, to rent privately a person must have an employment contract with indeterminate length equivalent to a quasi-permanent position, or at least a steady income (Mateman 1999), be able to provide a six-month deposit, and have a warranty (Observatoire de l’Intégration des Réfugiés Statutaires 2006). These conditions are viewed as particularly restrictive for refugees. While no data suggests acquiring the right to work during the asylum process would overcome this, the period of economic inactivity could reasonably be thought to exacerbate refugees’ situation.

A further barrier is the view, by landlords, of refugees as a risky population from a financial perspective, resulting in stringent conditions attached to refugees renting flats (Mlati 2004a; Blanco and Barou 2011).

Refugees’ housing integration falls within a broader structural problem of generally limited housing in France. Approximately three million people are considered to be “badly housed,” including a large proportion of migrants who are three times more likely to live in bad quality housing than French families (Département des

Statistiques des Etudes et de la Documentation, 2010). Migrants often resolve their housing problem by moving to “sensitive urban areas” (*Zones Urbaines Sensibles*) which has resulted in a social and ethnic concentration of migrants in poorer highly dense areas.

A further structural problem in France is the regional housing discrepancy between densely populated urban areas and rural areas (Sadik

and Jourdan 2008). Ile de France is home to 50 per cent (Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides 2012) of France’s refugees and offers the best opportunities for employment, emergency housing support and NGO support, but also suffers from a shortage in social housing. Only able to access emergency housing (Mohseni 2001; Mlati 2004a), this is widely viewed as delaying refugees’ stability and integration.

Ireland

There is limited information on specifically housing and refugees in Ireland. Housing services, as other services for refugees, are mainstreamed, and access to social housing is a challenge affecting all parts of the community not only refugees.

There is however some specific information on refugees. The Department of Environment, Community and Local Authority (2012) notes, of those households deemed as in need of support in 2012, 9.3 per cent (848 households) comprised refugees, those with permission to remain, and those with subsidiary protection status, and that refugees in the cities of Cork, Limerick and Galway were particularly in need.

Considering migrants generally, the report *Building Integrated Neighbourhoods* (Silke et al. 2008) identifies the housing system as a key element for integration and considers experiences of ethnic minority groups in Ireland to be worse than indigenous Irish. Influencing factors identified include income differences, access to housing information and misinformation (Crosscare, Doras Luimní and NASC 2012), discrimination, cultural differences and high purchase and rental costs in urban areas. Phelan and Kuol (2005) add that for the wider migrant community, barriers to

adequate housing are cultural problems, a lack of understanding of the Irish banking system and low rates of home ownership; however they offer no information on refugees’ situation. Limited eligibility for services and a lack of familiarity with the social welfare system were also found to shape migrants’ experiences of homelessness and their ability to move on (Focus Ireland and ICI 2012).

Barriers for refugees in particular include finding landlords who accept rent allowance (Mc Laughlin 2011), providing a security deposit and rent in advance, discrimination against refugees and those with African backgrounds (Mc Laughlin 2011). Some literature shows housing challenges propel refugees to emergency accommodation such as overnight shelters, or to live in poorer neighborhoods risking isolation (Ní Shé et al. 2007).

Refugees have equal access to housing upon being granted refugee status. However misapplication of the Habitual Residence Condition (HRC) which determines entitlement to rent supplement and eligibility to social housing from that point is reported to present difficulties and confusion for many, particularly as payments are often made on a discretionary basis.

➤ Canada

Hyndman (2011) notes that refugees have poorer housing conditions, suffer both housing instability and poor housing standards, but that the barriers refugees face are not well documented.

➤ United Kingdom

Spotlight on Refugee Integration (2010) showed a worrying trend in housing: at the time of their asylum decision, almost 50 per cent of refugees lived in accommodation provided by NASS (National Asylum Support Service). But those who lived in NASS accommodation were later more likely to be homeless or to use homeless shelters at some point. (Note: NASS is now known simply as Asylum Support and comprises a package of accommodation and financial support.)

Asylum-seekers in Sweden choose between accommodation provided by the Swedish Migration Board (SMB) or to arrange their own accommodation, often with a relative or acquaintance (Migrationsverket 2012a). The popular latter option has assisted solving the state's housing crisis but places a burden on municipalities particularly in Malmö, Gothenburg, Södertälje, and Botkyrka. Research shows that those choosing the latter option have slightly better housing and employment integration over time compared to those who are placed in a municipality with the assistance of the SMB during the asylum process (Boverket 2008).

Housing can impact on employment opportunities and integration generally of refugees because of the way SMB housing support (should that option be chosen) operates in relation to restrictions under the Establishment programme, under which a refugee is virtually unable to transfer to another location until completion of the programme (Myrberg 2012). This can result in missed opportunities, frustration through infringement of choice and overcrowding as refugees feel obliged to house relatives or friends but are themselves unable to relocate until their Establishment programme is completed. Overcrowding and consequent impacts on health and education are frequently highlighted in the literature (Boverket 2009; Molina 2006; Myrberg 2012) and mostly highlight causes as structural and political rather than refugee-related.

Refugees more often live in private rented housing and less often in privately owned homes (BråmÅ et al. 2006; Boverket 2009) and in 2009 over 85 per cent of all refugees lived in rented housing. This is higher than labour immigrants (61 per cent) and study migrants (49 per cent), but lower than resettled refugees (90 per cent) (Boverket 2009).

The weak economic integration of refugees in recent decades partly explains the high proportion of rented share among refugees even for those established many years in Sweden (Boverket 2009: 8-9). To enter the housing market, refugees face a range of financial and selection hurdles, including reported discrimination (Molina 2006), high competition for rental apartments (Boverket 2005: 31-35) and employment and income criteria (Boverket 2009: 8-9) that are difficult for refugees to fulfil, although one in nine of the Swedish population also fail to meet these criteria (Metro 2013). Additionally, there is a shortage of both private and public rental apartments in many parts of Sweden, particularly in the larger cities (Migrationsverket 2013: 28; Migrationsverket 2012b: 42). The overall shortage of rental apartments is a barrier to refugee integration, particularly low cost studio apartments and larger apartments suitable for reuniting refugee families (Migrationsverket 2012b: 42). The result has been a doubling of residential segregation during the last 20 years (SvD 2012). What was previously merely described by the government as social polarization and class segregation is today considered an issue with ethnic dimensions (Government 2008; Andersson et al. 2010: 249).

Research on migrants generally suggests many seek out fellow countrymen and other immigrants for social networks and, after five years in Sweden seem more segregated than on arrival (Migrationsinfo 2012). Possible reasons relate to social and economic resources, but it is unclear if immigrants would actually choose to live elsewhere if they possessed higher levels of social and/or economic capital (Migrationsinfo 2012). Research also shows that where individuals have moved out of poorer areas, the migrants who replace them tend to be poor, more likely to be unemployed and dependent on social benefits. Andersson et al. (2010:251) argue this acts to maintain the lower socio-economic profile of the area. This trend is repeated across Sweden with the sharpest segregation in socio-economically deprived suburbs of Rosengård and Rinkeby (in Malmö and Stockholm) where a large majority - more than nine out of ten residents - has a migrant background (Svd 2012).

Housing with regard to refugees is an under-researched area in Austria, but as in other project countries, the absence of secure employment has been identified as a barrier to accessing housing and leads to difficulty obtaining rental contracts (Scheiber 2007).

There is evidence that migrants generally live in poorer quality housing and may be in precarious situations which can influence wider aspects of integration such as social participation and physical and mental health (Schilcher 2009).

Positive influences on housing for refugees drawn from a range of literature include a

sometimes quick asylum process, the welfare system, “start accommodation” such as housing integration projects available for a limited time after granting of status. Barriers include a lack of social counselling, an absence of inexpensive housing, rising rents, lack of sheltered accommodation, security deposit and agency fees for private rental, and the four month time-limit to find accommodation and move to independent accommodation after granting of status. This final barrier is common to Sweden and France and presents refugees with increased anxiety at a time when many changes must occur.

In the next section, we summarize cross-cutting issues of the two-way process, family reunification, and the asylum process. In fact, the two-way process which features centrally in integration debates and policy throughout EU and national levels is challenging to extract as it affects almost all areas of integration through attitudes and perspectives toward refugees, and at social, community and political levels. However it is almost completely absent from the literature regarding to what extent it occurs and by whom, or how the concept or expectation impacts on refugee integration. The two-way process in practice was discussed in stakeholder and refugee consultations and will be explored in the next chapter.

While the policy areas discussed above influence each other (for example, social integration influences active citizenship, and housing or location influences employment opportunities or skills training, and language acquisition influences employment and housing), other areas are thoroughly interwoven between each other and with the policy areas above. Furthermore, while levels of migrant and refugee integration can be assessed and measured in line with identified indicators for the policy areas, it is far less easy to do so for family reunification and the asylum process. How does one measure, for example, the emotional or psychological long and short term impact of the asylum process on the later ability and desire to integrate, a matter which is highly subjective and individualized? We can know instinctively that it affects later integration, as all life experiences influence what comes next, but how do we quantify it? Similarly the absence and uncertainty, and then the presence again, of family members impacts on all areas: engaging in training, employment or language training, deciding where to live, emotionally desiring to become part of a new society and making friends. The challenge in measuring or quantifying such effects, perhaps allows these issues to slip from policy view.

Family Reunification

The value of family unity is accepted through all EU Member States. For example, *Integration: A Two Way Process* considers reunification of the family unit as playing a role in “easing the sense of isolation which refugees can experience” (Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform 1999: 32). This is a common policy stance through European states and beyond.

Family reunification is a right in the EU Family Reunification Directive,¹⁷ with varying conditions applying, for those with refugee status. Preferential conditions apply for refugees who do not need to comply with financial and housing criteria in most cases.

Family separation affects the ability to engage in many aspects of the integration process: education, employment, putting down roots and generally moving on, while its absence impacts negatively and for a long time on physical and emotional health. Mostly, family reunification is the first intention refugees have upon receiving status. This is well-noted in the literature in France (Rezai 1998; Mlati and Duarte 2005; Belaïsch and Petersell 2010; Blanco and Barou 2011) and is a widely accepted understanding based on the often traumatic conditions of separation and flight endured by those who seek asylum and the unknown whereabouts and well-being of their family members. The limited literature in Austria on this subject notes the importance of contact with family for refugees and how during the time of separation, family reunification becomes the life goal for refugees. Constant worry about ones family who stayed behind in the country of origin accompanies them in their everyday life. (Frick 2009).

Research on the subject has highlighted different aspects of family separation and reunification. Studies in France emphasize the detrimental impact on refugee integration of lengthy family reunification procedures (Mlati and Duarte 2005), others show the positive impact once the family is reunited (Blanco and Barou 2011; Huddleston and Dag Tjaden 2012), while others still show some neutral and negative impacts of family reunification. Changed family dynamics and gender roles in the receiving country can clash with familial and gendered expectations after family reunion, resulting in disruption, division and divorce (Blanco and Barou 2011; Rezai 1998). Although limited on the subject of refugees specifically, Irish literature also notes this latter point as separation, and the length of the separation impacts on the ability to readjust and rebuild relationships upon reunion.

A report written by the Swedish Red Cross and Sociala Missionen also notes the detrimental impact on refugee integration of lengthy family reunification procedures, adding that long separation can lead to deep feelings of injustice and powerlessness (Sociala Missionen and Röda Korset 2012: 29). Literature in Ireland concurs, although processing times have reduced as reported in *Family Reunification: a barrier or facilitator of integration?* (Becker et al. 2013). The impact of family separation is further reported in Ireland regarding the emotional burden of lone parenting in cases when the partner of a refugee is not entitled to be reunited under Irish statutory provisions (Cosgrave 2006; Feldman et al 2008). Becker et al (2013) also highlight the lack of information and bureaucracy as a stressor in the family reunification application process in Ireland. This latter point has particular relevance to refugees for whom the required documents may be left behind in countries of origin or are unobtainable.

Available data on refugees in general and on the impact of family reunification is limited and makes assessment of the refugee situation difficult relying mostly on qualitative information. Becker et al (2013) note that the absence of disaggregated data in Ireland is not helpful in clarifying the impact on refugees of family separation compared to other migrants.

¹⁷ Council of the European Union, (2003) *Council Directive 2003/86/EC of 22 September 2003 on the Right to Family Reunification*, 3 October 2003, 2003/86/EC, at: <http://goo.gl/JaG3YR>

There is evidence that realizing family reunification for refugees in most EU Member States is cumbersome, takes a very long time and in many situations becomes impossible due to practical and administrative obstacles. UNHCR has highlighted these barriers in a recent publication and made a number of recommendations to improve family reunification for refugees.¹⁸

📌 United Kingdom

The British Red Cross report *Family Reunion for Refugees in the UK: Understanding Support Needs* (2011) reinforces the importance of family reunion for refugee integration and considers whether or not needs are being met. It highlights the complexity of the application process particularly for those without personal support networks or with limited English ability or educational level.

The Scottish Refugee Council report *One Day We Will Be Reunited* (2010) analyses the application process for refugees wishing to be reunited with their families, highlighting many barriers and the need for greater recognition of the right to be reunited.

Asylum Process and Conditions

The period of the asylum process including reception conditions is addressed mostly through its impact on the emotional well-being, the employment impact and the lost opportunity to learn the new language, although the literature is not extensive.

In France, attention is mostly focused on those whose asylum claim has been rejected or who become irregular migrants after rejected asylum claims. Information is provided on asylum-seekers' experiences *during* the asylum process, but there is little research on the impact of asylum on those who then receive refugee status. Similarly in Sweden there is little research on the impact of the asylum process on integration.

Research on reception centres shows there is a significant need for psychological or psychiatric support for asylum-seekers and refugees (Wluczka, Kern and M'Jamri-Berthou 2009). This is echoed in the Irish *National Intercultural Health Strategy 2007-2012* which states that mental health is negatively impacted by social isolation (Department of Health 2008). In Austria, there is concern that the asylum process creates an additional crisis situation and re-traumatizes already traumatized individuals (Fabrik 2011).

Others in France write on the impact on health of the asylum process itself and the time spent in asylum citing the damaging effect on refugee well-being and the shock of receiving a positive decision on their asylum claim (Guillou 2005). This relates to the unpreparedness for the myriad of "next steps" that granting of status brings and which is generated by the waiting period of asylum which includes the subsequent urgent need to leave the reception centre accommodation within a certain time period and acquiring the legal right to work. Both of these factors combine to demand that refugees make decisions on what to do, where to live, how to afford housing, start learning a new language in order to facilitate work, to name just a few. A further negative impact on integration of the time spent in asylum is suggested by the French ELIPA survey and has been noted already that although language improves with time for migrants, it is not the case for refugees whose level of French generally fails to improve before they obtain refugee status. The Irish report above also finds that the process of asylum contains numerous challenges to overcome: the length of

¹⁸ *Refugee Family Reunification: UNHCR's Response to the European Commission Green Paper on the Right to Family Reunification of Third Country Nationals Living in the European Union (Directive 2003/86/EC)*, February 2012, at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4f55e1cf2.html>

time spent in the asylum process, and the lack of entitlement during the Direct Provision lead to boredom, depression and loss of self-esteem. Similar findings arise in the limited literature on the asylum process in Sweden where researchers add accumulated feelings of stress, uncertainty and anxiety, poor housing and experiences of distrust and suspicion from authorities (Gunnarsen 2000; Ginsburg 2008: 14; 26) can impact negatively on short- and long-term health and reduce the ability to plan. A study in Styria, Austria, shows reception conditions can produce dependency and the lack of privacy can negatively impact later integration where the asylum decision takes a long time. Echoing concerns for health and psychological stability, the study adds that professional skills and German language opportunities are eroded by the absence of employment and a daily personal or work routine and structure (Kapeller and Sprung 2002; Neuwirth 2007; Langthaler and Trauner 2009; Kraler et al. 2013). The latter point is of key significance according to some commentators.

Sweden has acted on the negative impact of the uncertain time in asylum and has reduced waiting times from 7.4 to 3.6 months since 2002 (Migrationsverket 2012b). However, housing shortages in Sweden have resulted in refugees receiving their positive decision, but remaining in reception centres, thereby in some way limiting the positive effect a short asylum procedure could have.

However, the period in a reception centre, can offer some advantages where asylum-seekers live independently they may experience higher isolation, whereas centres enable refugees to develop friendship networks, often with their community and speaking their own language which can facilitate later social integration. Furthermore, assistance is available to complete asylum applications (Observatoire de l'intégration des réfugiés statutaires 2008). This report also suggests that the time in French reception centres, rather than living in un-assisted accommodation, may potentially assist refugees to access housing or employment after granting of status.

The impact on integration of the long-time often spent in the asylum system is exacerbated by limited access to activities. In Ireland, during the period of asylum adult asylum-seekers are provided with limited access to educational opportunities including English language and computer classes. Language tuition for those in asylum was withdrawn in Sweden in mid-2011 and justified in the SMB annual report of 2011 as the applicant's time is largely occupied by the various steps in the asylum procedure of the SMB (Migrationsverket 2012: 37), thereby implying the applicant has little time to learn Swedish. In Austria also, language tuition is not available to most asylum-seekers resulting in informal learning and self-study without structured tuition.

This limited educational access, together with the lack of effective access to the employment market potentially reduces the readiness of a refugee to integrate on granting of status, and research suggests this aspect of the asylum process can lead to high rates of unemployment and negative impact on future employment prospects (McGinnity et al. 2012: 84). In Sweden, the strong emphasis on employment extends to asylum-seekers who may participate in the labour market and internships without a work permit if they are able to prove their identity (Riksrevisionen 2012). Research does not exist on the positive impact this may produce.

Health

There is little research on refugees and health in France and a limited amount in Ireland or in Austria. Research focuses mainly on migrants generally and much is at a descriptive rather than an analytical level, with linkages between health and other policy or indicator areas under-researched. However, some information such as the French survey by Wluczka, Kern, and M'Jamri-Berthou (2009) noted above and in the Austrian literature (Volf 2001; Frick 2009), show a significant need for psychological or psychiatric support for asylum-seekers and refugees. The French survey also shows geographic origin influences health matters, such as prevalence of diabetes and heart disease. Three Masters theses (Kucera 2001; Schilcher 2009; Fabrick 2011) also highlight psychological issues related to refugee health. The French survey further highlights that refugees and asylum-seekers find difficulty accessing healthcare in some French departments, owing to administrative hurdles, delays in obtaining the correct paperwork, and an occasional refusal to treat migrants. The latter point was also reported in Sweden (Frykman 2006; Svenberg 2011). However this and some other barriers to healthcare are shared with French nationals such as the complexity of accessing healthcare and insufficient availability of general practitioners (GPs).

Research on refugees and health is often intertwined with research on other policy areas where health becomes an influencing factor and vice versa. For example, French and Swedish research on asylum focuses on victims of torture and trauma (Centre Primo Levi 2012), emotional impact of the asylum process and sometimes even the shock of receiving a positive decision. Some research looks at mental health as a result of past violent or traumatic experiences (Vignal and Geny-Benkorichi 2012) which produce depression or disorientation (Lamour 1994). Another linked research area is housing, where research exists for instance on the impact of inadequate housing on physical and emotional health, and the impact of oversubscribed healthcare services in densely populated areas where refugees may often reside. Some suggest the lack of social networks and unfamiliarity of healthcare entitlements (Lamour 1994) influences health itself, while others suggest some pathologies originate from the migrants' socio-economic situation rather than the migration experiences (Patureau and Comiti 2005). As one may expect, language influences one's access to healthcare by forming a communication barrier and the use of an individual's children as interlocutors is well known. This may result in false diagnoses, a mere treatment of symptoms rather than the underlying problem and on occasion, problems around medication (Schilcher 2009; Kapeller and Sprung 2002).

However health itself influences the ability to learn a new language or to engage in employment or training and can in itself be responsible for poor health through inadequate care, as noted in Austria (Kapeller and Sprung, 2002). The research in Austria also highlights the intertwining of health with other areas such as insecure employment and unstable housing (Hoyer 2011), adding that experiences of torture and violence cannot be processed easily with the absence of supportive social networks, and are exacerbated by worry over safety of family members, unemployment, exclusion and experiences with racism, (Volf 2001; Kapeller and Sprung 2002; Frick 2009; Schilcher 2009). The lengthy asylum procedure and long-lasting inactivity can lead to further crisis situations and additional trauma (Volf 2001; Fabrik 2011). In some ways therefore, health can be seen as a central pivot for most other areas of integration.

While there is relatively little research on health in France and Ireland, refugee health is well-researched in Sweden with research not only on access to healthcare, but on the relationship between refugee health and policy areas such as employment, living conditions and social integration (Vogel et al. 2002; Lindencrona et al. 2006).

However, similar to both France and Ireland, consensus suggests refugees and asylum-seekers in Sweden suffer poorer mental and physical health than native Swedes and labour immigrants (Regeringen 2008b; Vogel et al. 2002) and that health impacts on other areas relevant to integration, such as the capacity to integrate, to learn a language and to enter employment. Swedish research however finds both pre- and post-migration factors to influence outcomes, but with an emphasis on the role of the latter. So, for example, while poor physical and emotional health may pre-exist prior to arrival in Sweden as the result of experiences during persecution and flight, factors such as stress related to the asylum process, uncertainty, anxiety and social isolation impact on health after arrival. Others find links between health and poor social and economic integration of refugees, finding these lead to poor health which exacerbates their social and economic position (Klinthäll 2008; Regeringen 2008a). In Austria, the literature notes those particularly at risk of poor mental health are separated families, minors and orphans. Besides a number of psychosomatic physical issues, serious psychological issues are prevalent. (Kapeller and Sprung 2002).

Stakeholder and refugee consultations

This chapter draws on information gathered during consultations with refugees and stakeholders. Separate meetings were held with refugees and with stakeholders. The former were met in non-thematic groups to discuss personal integration experiences, the latter in thematic groups based on existing key policy areas and on discussions with National Reference Groups. Discussions focused on experiences and perceptions of refugee integration based on their own professional experience. A strict comparison is not made between project countries due to the semi-structured approach of meetings with both stakeholders and refugees resulting in a wide range of views and topics. Therefore examples which are highlighted in one country do not imply a similar practice, obstacle or facilitator is not present in other countries.

The chapter begins with refugees' understandings of integration, then follows a thematic structure with the five sections identified in the review of literature: employment, education and language, active citizenship, social integration and social inclusion, and housing. Cross-cutting issues of family reunification, the asylum process, and health follow on but also are discussed as facilitators and barriers in the five sections.

Refugees' understanding of integration

While there is debate on what integration is at government level and within academia, the understanding of integration by refugees themselves is worth mentioning. Refugee respondents had not always considered what integration means. Where asked and where a view was given, refugees expressed their idea of what integration is and what influences integration.

Some mentioned integration to include learning the language and learning about the new culture and society, acquiring adequate employment and housing, and awareness of, and respect for, the laws of the receiving country. In France, for example, where there is the requirement to sign the Contrat d'Accueil et d'Intégration (CAI) and undergo training for the Contrat, some respondents linked their understanding of integration to the content of the Contrat course:

“ What is important towards integration is to know French laws and respect them. That's what we learnt at the CAI training.”

T., female Congolese refugee in France

For others, understanding one's entitlements and rights, which afford protection against discrimination or discretionary decisions, constituted integration.

However, refugees also understood that simply understanding laws and rights did not result in integration, and felt there were influences which facilitated a successful integration process. These facilitators included language, employment and housing, but also included feeling at home with family and friends, and the passage of time. Refugees also highlighted the interdependency between areas of integration, in particular employment, housing and health.

Notably, refugees often stated they didn't feel 100 per cent integrated, no matter how long they had been in the receiving country. They often stated the reason for this as the absence of one (or more) of the above facilitators and felt that in order to be and feel integrated they needed to achieve employment, housing, language and family and social life on par with nationals. While there is emphasis on citizenship of governments and links between integration and citizenship in academic discourse, acquisition of citizenship was only mentioned by some refugees as an influencing factor in refugees' sense of integration, and then in conjunction with wider factors of integration.

“ I feel integrated in France yes and no. I will feel really integrated when I have French nationality. I will be fully French. Here my papers are French, I have a birth certificate by OFPRA, but that's not yet enough.”

M., male Togolese refugee in France

For most refugees, acquisition of citizenship was more about security and protection than about integration.

Other influences on the process of integration which refugees expressed included the time spent in asylum and the period of transition after a positive decision is received. The longer the asylum process, the more negative impact it has as one respondent in France said:

“ I don't want to be dramatic, I haven't experienced integration, but I have experienced disintegration. As an asylum-seeker, I have been made to understand that I don't have the right to work, cannot move, don't have money, I have been made aware that I was nothing.”

A., male Algerian refugee in France

For some refugees, receiving their positive status was a “rebirth,” for others it was more ambivalent and signaled the start of an uncertain and anxious period of transition. Much of the uncertainty and anxiety surrounded suddenly acquiring the right to work and access language courses and simultaneously being required to move from supported housing, such as in reception centres, to independent housing. Everything happens at once and new problems replace the old ones. As one respondent in Ireland explained, integration is related to confidence:

““ When you have the language and the confidence no one asks you for your status...”

Individual interview with a refugee in Ireland

Employment

Employment, including training or re-training, was one of the two key concerns for refugee respondents, the other being housing. Most refugee respondents when asked what makes them feel integrated, the first thing they think of is to have a job. When asked what the most valuable help to achieve this is, many respondents replied that it is to get introduced to different paths that will lead to employment. For governments, employment is equally key to integration of migrants. For example, Sweden emphasizes employment from day one after arrival and the Austrian Expert Council stresses the promotion of migrant integration into professional life. At EU level, employment is central to migrants’ long term position as contributing members of European society and to countering negative demographic trends. This position includes refugees.

There are some statistics that indicate refugees are faring worse than other migrants as outlined in chapter 3; data in Sweden indicated those arriving as asylum-seekers fare worse compared to those arriving under family reunification. Data also shows that the employment gap between refugees and native Swedes generally shrink over time indicating the difficulty expressed by refugees about the initial period after the asylum process.

Integration in the policy area of employment is evaluated by data such as labour market engagement by country of origin or ethnicity, age and gender, and earnings. However overall, available statistics are insufficient to show quantitatively how refugees are doing in employment, but we can say from qualitative data that there is a problem and that refugees are doing worse than other migrants and that certain barriers exist for refugees that are in addition to challenges other migrants face and which impact negatively on refugee employment integration. For example, loss of documentation and qualification certificates, trauma and uncertainty, anxiety over family separation, and the long period of inactivity in asylum are examples of refugee-specific challenges in employment.

Also, qualitative information is crucial because as one stakeholder in Ireland suggested, statistics can be misleading. If we consider employment only in terms of un/employment rates and annual incomes, isolated from refugees’ expectations and skills, we may reach the conclusion that a refugee is fully integrated without realizing the individual is simply in employment, not in employment appropriate to their skills, experience or qualifications.

Acquiring refugee status means acquiring the full legal right to enter the labour market in the project countries. At this point, refugees are permitted to start on the path to integration and getting a job is a significant step toward that. At the same time, refugees are presented with a new set of barriers which influence the possibility to enter the labour market. Some barriers are directly employment-related, such as job availability and qualification recognition. Other barriers influence employment outcomes more indirectly, such as housing, language, health, driving licenses, absence of networks, childcare, administrative barriers, discrimination, and the asylum process. Employment as an indicator of integration, and the measuring of employment outcomes as an assessment of refugee integration, hinges on a range of influencing factors – both positive and negative - and this section will explore key influences in turn.

Employment trajectories

Research in the project countries shows that compared to native populations, refugees are more likely to be unemployed, have temporary jobs and lower income. Stakeholders in Sweden noted that in times of economic difficulties, when there are high levels of unemployment and hence high competition among the labour force, refugees tend to be more disadvantaged in this respect than Swedes. The majority of respondents referred to the instability they suffered with regard to employment, oscillating between brief periods of declared or undeclared employment, unemployment, underemployment (a few hours per week or month) and longer-term employment periods. Coupled with this, accepting work at a level lower than their existing skills, previous employment or educational attainment, characterized employment for many refugees in France and was expressed in other project countries as a concern. Refugees and stakeholders cited driving forces behind this as the urgent need to find independent housing after receiving refugee status, as a way to forget the long idle time spent in asylum, and as the wish to become financially independent. Some refugees suggested entering any employment at all may lead to better job opportunities later and thus viewed it as a strategy on their employment trajectory. Others felt they became trapped in a low socio-economic cycle by entering employment at a low level.

French stakeholders identified two refugee profiles in relation to employment: qualified refugees, and those without qualifications. For the first category, experiencing downward professional mobility was particularly difficult to cope with and depending on age and perceptions of the French employment market some hoped to re-qualify or put their efforts into their children's futures. By comparison, unqualified or less qualified refugees with more limited expectations were generally satisfied with their position even though conditions, pay and travel may not be ideal.

Downward professional mobility often directed refugees to hard-to-fill positions such as in the care sector, cleaning, catering and construction, or menial jobs such as washing dishes and clearing tables and unskilled warehouse work. In rural regions of France, refugees were also oriented towards slaughterhouses, agriculture or forestry. Academic stakeholders in Austria noted the impact of visible difference on job functions, stating that refugees can mostly be found in back-office functions and in the cleaning sector, while one academic researcher stated that Muslim women wearing a headscarf would often work in kitchens or storage. Another Austrian stakeholder noted that while refugees often worked in the food sector, they were rarely found in front-of-house positions. These positions all have in common the generally low level of skills required and the tough conditions of work. Indeed refugees and stakeholders in France stated refugees were often directed to hard-to-fill positions by employment agencies:

““ At Pôle Emploi, they always offer jobs in the construction sector. Straight away, the advisor offered me a job in the construction sector because “that’s what works”. And even if I say that I’m not very good with my hands, he told me with fatalism that there is no other choice.”

Z., male Algerian refugee in France

This same scenario was reported by two refugee respondents in France, one an IT specialist, the other an artist, and was backed up by stakeholders' professional experiences, indicating that employment agencies took little notice of refugees' prior level of qualifications or experience but placed them instead on a well-rehearsed trajectory. Similar pre-conceived notions of what refugees can, or should, do were discussed by stakeholders who highlighted that some authorities viewed refugee women from developing country backgrounds to prefer to be housewives or to work part-time. This refugee in Ireland gives his example of being directed to unskilled work:

““ When I tell people about what I want, I feel they don’t understand me. Why not going to SPAR and work? [I] don’t mean to be arrogant but I don’t want to do just anything.... All those [professional] skills, do I put them in the bin? I want to give something back to the Irish people.”

Individual interview with a refugee in Ireland

Practice example – Germany

The Immigration Advice Service (*Migrationsberatung*) co-ordinated by the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees has an annual budget of around 26 million Euros. The service supports a large number of centres run by NGOs (for example German Red Cross and the *Arbeiterwohlfahrt*) across Germany to provide counselling and set up individual “advancement plans.” Advice is provided on a range of issues, including accommodation, work and education and the immigrant is required to fully cooperate in the realization of the advancement plan.

Refugee women in Sweden however appear to overcome preconceived notions because, although their labour market integration is slower than men (Bevelander 2009), immigrant women overall do better after 11 years in Sweden than in any other EU Member State. Stakeholders suggested reasons as the presence of social policy measures for all women, such as subsidized child day-care and generous parental leave.

Refugees’ labour market integration varies between rural and urban areas. Stakeholders in Sweden stated that most refugees who settle in northern municipalities of Sweden, where there are more traditional labour demands, do not have an academic degree, whereas those settling in cities in southern Sweden have a mixed background.

The resilience of refugees and their desire to work was noted by French stakeholders who saw these qualities as assets for future employment, setting refugees apart from other unemployed groups. Refugees in Sweden themselves emphasized their desire to work and not to be dependent on welfare payments which many viewed as degrading. This was linked with feelings of pride, acceptance by the receiving population and giving back to the receiving country. Many refugees in Ireland felt being unemployed gave a poor example to their children, and conversely Swedish stakeholders said that creating positive role models can facilitate a positive spiral of integration over time. Therefore, while refugees face barriers to engaging in the employment market, they are nonetheless keen to do so and are often willing to start from the bottom.

Suggestion - France

Stakeholders suggested capitalizing on refugees’ specific competencies and adaptability by looking into opportunities in the industrial sector. This has the added advantage that most heavy industries are based outside the Ile de France region where housing is a problem but where the majority of refugees settle.

Factors which influence refugee employment

LANGUAGE

Several stakeholders in France reported that applicants are often expected by employers to speak and write French, even for unskilled positions that do not technically require written French. Importantly, teachers of French as a Foreign Language reported that the six month *Contrat d’Accueil et d’Intégration* (CAI) language training that migrants in France receive was not preparing migrants for job market integration as it did not tackle some of the key requirements for work. Related to the teaching/learning situation, some project stakeholders said the ability or inability of individual refugees to follow an educational course posed an obstacle to teaching and to the learning experience of other refugees. With high unemployment and an economic recession, course places are not plentiful and teachers in Ireland expressed becoming frustrated by students who could not fully participate due to language skills.

Additionally, timing and level of language training was noted as problematic. For example, in France, delays in commencement of CAI of between six months and a year after receiving status are common and courses take migrants only to levels A1 or A2 on the European Common Reference

Framework. In Austria, funding often takes refugees only to level B1, higher than in France, but still not adequate for a good labour market entry according to Austrian stakeholders.

Language challenges often focus on spoken language, however written language abilities are equally necessary to fully function in a European society. Work contracts and paper and online application forms each present challenges for refugees. Stakeholders in Ireland pointed out that constant form-filling presents challenges for some, especially if they have no, or low, literacy skills, and while many organizations assist refugees with this, limited resources result in limited support.

Miscommunication or dual standards around language and employment have also been reported in France. Some respondents mentioned that while *Pôle Emploi* told them that their French was sufficient to seek employment, employers told them the opposite. Both refugees and stakeholders in France reported this as frustrating, not only because of the opposing views, but because having a job enables the individual to practice and improve their French in a work-relevant environment, engaging with colleagues and listening to instructions. Austrian respondents added that dialect can be a problem in a work environment and dialect difficulties led one respondent to fear losing his job. Although dialect was not mentioned in other project countries, language training addressing dialect was suggested by stakeholders as necessary for use in daily life in Austria.

The link between employment and language was confirmed by a Swedish respondent who said participating in the Swedish “Step-In” job programme enabled him to work and take language classes simultaneously and had resulted in a positive work experience. Therefore, while language acquisition positively influences employment prospects, employment positively influences language acquisition.

This study shows the language barrier may have a stronger impact on qualified refugees than on unskilled refugees. Difficulties in mastering language prevented several professional respondents, such as a qualified dentist from Iraq, from pursuing their former careers as they had quickly become aware that their hopes of continuing their career were misplaced.

Some refugees stated that language represented less of a barrier for employment during the asylum process, when they were working illegally in undeclared jobs:

““ For some jobs, you don’t need to speak the language, when you work undeclared, you don’t need to speak French.”

R., male Afghan refugee in France

Similarly, for refugees working in ethnic businesses, the requirement to master the language appeared to be less pronounced.

➤ Practice example - France

Forum Réfugiés provides workplace-relevant French as a second language where social enterprises agree to employ refugees. For more information visit: <http://goo.gl/KySE0x>

➤ Practice example - Sweden

“**Step-in jobs**” (“**integsjobb**”) aims to facilitate employment for immigrants on condition that the employment is combined with language studies at SFI. For between 6-24 months, the employer receives 80 per cent subsidy for salary costs. For more information visit: <http://goo.gl/201iLz>

HEALTH

Stakeholders frequently returned to the health implications of employment uncertainty, and refugee respondents clearly stated the pressure to find work to be detrimental to their emotional well-being to such a degree that other matters could not be addressed. Most respondents reported some sort of mental health concern. Difficulties getting employment and barriers to continuing professional careers create stress, isolation and depression and result in demotivation, lethargy and feelings of hopelessness. However, gaining employment generates positive emotional health and filters into other areas of the individual's life.

Physical health concerns are also common, and before refugees can begin to think about employment and building a future, torture, gender-based abuse, and injuries during conflict and flight require medical attention and counselling.

Swedish literature emphasizes post-arrival factors as impacting on integration more than pre-arrival factors and Swedish stakeholders supported this view, confirming the correlation between illness and morbidity and unemployment.

RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS/EXPERIENCE

Overseas qualifications and lack of receiving country work experience were stated by refugees and stakeholders to form significant barriers to employment with most respondents in this study having worked below their level of qualification or experience. Respondents stated that formal certified skills were of some value, whereas informal or uncertified training was rarely accepted by an employer. In each project country, processes for validation of overseas qualifications were in place, some more effective than others, but validation was not the only problem refugees faced. Acceptance of validation, and general attitudes and knowledge amongst agencies and employers are also critical, as is "in-country" experience. When refugees applied for temporary employment at French agencies, they reported being systematically asked about their employment experience in France:

“ I went to temporary employment agency. First thing they asked me: ‘do you have experience in France?’ ‘No.’ Second thing: ‘Do you have a French degree?’ ‘No.’”

R., male Palestinian refugee in France

Experience of working in the receiving country was stated by stakeholders as a crucial first step to developing full labour market integration. Irish stakeholders felt this added "Irish experience" to the refugee's Curriculum Vitae and results in references for future employment.

“ Even if I apply I don't get an interview, experience from [my country] is irrelevant, and I don't have experience in Ireland ... and if you can't provide a reference they won't hire.”

individual interview with refugee in Ireland

Professionally qualified refugees such as lawyers, teachers and health professionals felt their qualifications and expertise gained overseas were overlooked and their applications were rejected due to the discrepancy between their country of origin's training and the expectations on the local job market. Consulted respondents in France related this also to digital skills. A general disillusionment was directly expressed in Austria, but which extends to other project countries, where there was a general feeling that *any* overseas qualification was under-valued, whether validated or not. In France, this resulted in the need for re-qualification should the individual wish to continue with their career, but re-qualification generally required good language skills and financial support from friends and family which many refugees lack.

“*My brother was an engineer in geophysics. He already had a Master's degree but had to start a new Master's programme in France, for two years. It wasn't easy but it was that or menial jobs.*”

G., male Iranian refugee in France

Many respondents stated that re-training, training, or re-qualifying over long periods of time, such as for university degrees, was not a viable alternative due to the pressing need to earn money. Respondents, both skilled and unskilled, preferred to look for employment, including unskilled positions, rather than invest in training which could potentially lead them to higher salaries.

Respondents in Ireland believed that one's profession is part of one's identity, but Irish stakeholders suggested that while continuing with an established career is ideal, some refugees have overly high expectations of what they can achieve in a short timeframe in Ireland and that management of expectations is crucial. One stakeholder confirmed that even if a refugee's qualifications are validated, subsequent unfulfilled expectations of entering a former profession leads to disappointment and demotivation. For example, a computer scientist from Iraq with subsidiary protection who lives in Austria explained that despite numerous applications he finally worked at McDonald's for one year before working in a warehouse.

Stakeholders in Sweden added that the Swedish Employment Service exercised limited expertise in assessing refugees' background in terms of education and experience, suggesting part of the problem lies in standardized, rather than personalized, work methods. Although a qualification validation service exists in Sweden, existing research shows there are shortcomings in the assessment and validation process resulting in many refugees being employed below their qualification or experience level. Stakeholders stressed the Swedish Employment Service must recognize refugees' human capital from the beginning and inform them about their options to validate previous education and work experiences, beginning with the questions “What would you like to do for a living in Sweden?” and “What qualifications do you have already?”. A further challenge encountered within the Swedish Employment Service was that translators were not familiarized with regulations and the system, resulting in poor information communication.

Practice example - Pan-European

ENIC-NARIC is the European Network of Information Centres – National Academic Recognition Information Centre and is represented across Europe. The ENIC-NARIC centre is an information centre on professional and academic recognition of degrees. It establishes attestations for degrees, studies and training programmes undertaken abroad but does not constitute equivalence of degrees. There is no data on the percentage of refugees undertaking this process. In Austria, if a formal validation of qualification is not required ENIC-NARIC Austria can provide, on demand, in an un-bureaucratic way (by email) a letter of assessment on foreign academic training or a diploma equivalent to Austrian standards, within 2-3 weeks and free of charge. For more information visit: <http://www.enic-naric.net>

Practice example - Ireland

Quality and Qualification Ireland (QQI) grades migrants' qualifications against the Irish framework and provides a certificate of comparability. This is free of charge.

Practice example - Austria

The Counselling Centre for Migrants works closely with Caritas and People's Aid Austria, and has developed a programme assisting refugees to access the labour market at a higher qualified point by supporting acquisition of higher level language skills, an Austrian certificate preferably related to previous skills, leading to participation in internships. Contact points with outreach to all Austrian Provinces support also refugees to be “job-ready” by offering counselling, information about qualification recognition, courses related to previous qualifications and liaising with other offices, providing required documents and covering costs for translations and notarizations. For more information visit the online platform: www.berufsanerkennung.at which provides similar comprehensive services and information.

➤ Practice example – Canada

Foreign Credentials Referral Office (FCRO): The FCRO and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) together operate a Foreign Credential Recognition Program. The Canadian government, through its Economic Action Plan (CEOP) is developing a pan-Canadian framework on foreign credential recognition which will aim to support efforts of provincial governments in developing a common approach to foreign credential recognition. This will include collecting pre-arrival information in the case of Government Assisted Refugees and Privately Sponsored Refugees, improving online access to information via a pan-Canadian Information Centre. For more information visit: <http://goo.gl/q6e6JS>

➤ Practice example - United Kingdom

Medical Profession Project: A Refugee Council programme funded by National Health Service (NHS) London supports London-based refugee doctors to re-qualify to UK standards and secure employment appropriate to their professional qualifications. PLAB (Professional and Linguistic Assessment Board) tests are the main route by which international medical graduates demonstrate they have the necessary skills and knowledge to practice medicine in the UK. The project offers a range of services to assist refugee doctors in re-qualifying, including free six week preparation courses for PLAB Part 1 and Part 2 tests and clinical attachments for doctors who pass PLAB Part 2 test. This successful project works with 50 refugee doctors each year.

There are also similar UK projects on teachers, nurses and academics.
For more information visit: <http://goo.gl/gn35o8>

➤ Practice example - France

The *Entraide Universitaire Française* (EUF) offers scholarships to more than 130 refugees each year for pursuit of their studies in France. Almost 15,000 scholarships have been given since 1945, mainly to those over 28 years of age. Refugees under the age of 28 are entitled to *Centre Régional des Oeuvres Universitaires et Scolaires* (CROUS) scholarships without conditions of minimum duration of stay in France. The *Association d'Accueil aux Médecins et Personnels de Santé Réfugiés en France* (APSR) supports healthcare professionals trained in their country of origin to integrate into the French healthcare system as professionals.

A frequent point made by respondents in Ireland but which is a common issue elsewhere, was that refugees' skills may have been acquired without formal qualification or study. In the certificate-oriented environment of the EU, this leaves the individual effectively without his or her skill unless a practical skills assessment is conducted.

There appears to be some level of negative perception amongst French employers over the value of ENIC-NARIC attestations which provide recognition of qualifications. Several respondents in France still received no interviews after a two year job search despite the attestation that their overseas degree was recognized in France. In Ireland, qualification recognition is possible depending on the comparability designated to an overseas qualification by Quality and Qualification Ireland (QQI). However, the refugee may find it better to start again if the grade allocated is low or considered an impediment to employment or higher education. Also, certain professions require the applicant to contact the profession's regulatory body and present proof of qualification. For refugees in all project countries, the lack of documentation – whether due to lost certificates or validation obstacles - can lead to the individual giving up and working below their qualification level which represents a lost resource to the individual, their family and to the Member State. The length of time needed to validate qualifications was reported as discouragingly long.

↘ Suggestion - Ireland

Stakeholders suggested matching and adapting skills with appropriate training opportunities would maximize resources and help refugees make use of existing skills. Other stakeholders called for a skills audit system of verification and validation where the refugee would prove their competence through practical exams.

MOBILITY/DRIVING LICENCE

According to stakeholders in France, the ability to drive tends to be a precondition to accessing employment in rural areas. This requires either the ability to exchange the country of origin's driving license or to pass a driving test. In both cases refugees face particular challenges, some they share with other migrants and others are more refugee-specific. A first step to passing the test is to pass the theoretical component and in this context, language often constitutes a problem for both refugees and migrants. But both stakeholders and respondents said the most problematic issue was that some French prefectures refuse to exchange driving licenses from other countries on the suspicion that the driving license was forged. Some prefectures required refugees to contact their country of origin's consulate to authenticate the license which is not appropriate for refugees who, unlike other migrants, cannot contact their country of origin's authorities. Unable to prove the authenticity of their driving license, refugees must either master the language sufficiently to pass the theoretical test or must refuse any job which requires driving or travel to the job. This is a particular problem in rural areas and contributes to the concentration of refugees in cities.

↘ Practice example - France

Some organizations, including Forum Réfugiés, offer French classes focusing on the theoretical part of the driving test to help refugees acquire the key vocabulary required to pass.

LACK OF NETWORKS

Research shows that the presence or absence of family, social, and work networks impacts on many areas of integration. Employment is no exception. Refugees' social and work networks are generally more limited than those of other new migrants and this absence was mentioned by both respondents and stakeholders in all project countries as forming a challenge to entering the labour market. Overall, stakeholders noted that women in rural areas are particularly without social networks and respondents stated they settled in bigger cities to maximize their potential for forming networks with compatriots.

Many people, migrant or not, utilize friends, colleagues and associates to gain news of vacancies, to establish where to look for jobs, and to receive introductions to prospective employers, especially in the current climate of high competition for jobs. Much of the modern job-market is about networking, and refugees lack the circle of friends and associates to do this. Networking is particularly crucial for qualified professionals such as journalists:

“ I'm a journalist. But in this field, what matters most is the network. Here it's dead, I can't work in journalism.”

A., male Chadian refugee in France

Practice example - Sweden

Between 2010-2012, nine NGOs were mandated by the government to develop vocational mentoring for refugees. Refugees were matched with mentors according to professional background to encourage maintenance of refugees' professional identities and provide access to mentors' networks. For more information visit: <http://goo.gl/L9y7rD>

Practice example - Austria

Interface in cooperation with the association *Grenzenlos* (boundary-less), mentors the migrants project *Zusammenleben* (living together mentoring for migrants) which facilitates integration of migrants including into the Austrian labour market. Focus includes building networks, language practice and support as well as empowerment.

The Chamber of Commerce Mentoring for Migrants project is a six-month partnership with experienced managers and well-connected members of the business community to support qualified persons with a migration background in their efforts to participate in the Austrian labour market. The support include identifying talent and skills, providing realistic insight into the Austrian business world, supporting job applications and establishing contacts and networks. Over 700 mentoring pairs have been formed since the start of the project and both sides report benefitting from the partnerships. For more information visit: <http://goo.gl/vP5qBm>

The jobs that were available through refugees' networks tend to be those in ethnic businesses, such as corner shops, but stakeholders in France stated these were often precarious, poorly paid, and not declared for tax.

The absence of good networks means refugees often rely on government employment agencies which cater for all jobseekers and whose service does not extend to personal service. Refugees in France expressed not understanding *Pôle Emploi*, the government agency, who they hoped would help them find a job, stating this rarely happened in practice.

One method to enter employment and create networks is through volunteering. In Ireland, both respondents and stakeholders noted volunteering as a facilitator of longer term employment and of benefit to social integration as it provides an opportunity to network for work contacts and to acquire the soft skills such as learning Irish cultural norms, the importance of eye contact and shaking hands, and to build confidence. A survey conducted in Limerick city showed 38 per cent of refugees gained Irish work experience through voluntary work. The value of learning cultural norms was also noted by an Austrian stakeholder who gave the example of a mentee from the Arab region who during a mentored job interview practice session was asked what her hobbies were. She replied that she preferred not to talk about it. This response would not work well in the Austrian context and can form barriers to accessing employment.

Stakeholders in Sweden felt the Swedish Establishment Period could assist refugees' networking and employment trajectories if it was more flexible and involved more actors from the public, private and civic sectors, giving increased opportunity for networking. Similarly, suggestions from Austrian stakeholders noted that apprenticeships and internships were useful first steps in building confidence and in-country experience.

CHILDCARE

Female respondents and stakeholders particularly in France and Austria repeatedly mentioned the issue of childcare as a barrier to employment or training. This is a challenge in many Member States and is particularly so for single women. These respondents often have very limited networks and, compared to other single women, could not rely on family members or friends to look after their child. As a result refugee women were demotivated and found themselves at the bottom of the labour market, particularly those with young children. In Vienna, public free-of-charge childcare places are available with priority for mothers in employment and, to enter employment mothers need to attend language classes which they cannot do without childcare. Stakeholders noted the variance in childcare provision across Austria, stating it was strongest in Vienna, and noted also that employers often enquired about children and childcare during interviews.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND INFORMATION

Refugees in France experienced delays in receiving their 10-year leave to remain, instead receiving multiple 3-month temporary leave to remain (*récépissé*) while waiting. The initial three-month *récépissé* is standard, followed by a subsequent *récépissé* in case of administrative delays to establish a residence permit. This period immediately after receipt of status represents a period of transition during which the authorities and the refugee move on. Both refugees and stakeholders in France gave examples of cases where such delays had prevented access to employment:

“ When I still didn't have my leave to remain, I only had my *récépissé*, and even though it was written that I was allowed to work, my [job] application was refused for that reason. I feel like I lost an opportunity. The person in charge of HR told me that she couldn't be sure because she had already been confronted with forged *récépissés*. ”

M., male Sudanese refugee in France

Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection were more at risk of refusal when presenting one-year leave to remain rather than the more stable 10-year leave to remain. Refugee respondents in France felt abandoned by mainstream services just at the point where their lives are supposed to improve:

“ What I want to say is that from the point where we get an answer from OFPRA, the person is left to his/her own devices. You're abandoned. Sure you have your status, but nothing else. You have to fend for yourself. ”

A., Chadian refugee in France

Administrative challenges were compounded in France where there were family members to include in welfare entitlements. Problems occurred in particular due to delays incurred by OFPRA in communicating the family records required to add children to their parents' social security number resulting in delayed payment of family benefits.

United Kingdom

28-day transition period - Upon receiving status, refugees are given 28 days to transition from asylum-seeker support to mainstream services as a refugee. This time is intended to engage with employment, language training, and independent housing, for example, and includes fast-track processing of National Insurance numbers and Child Tax Credits. While there are some challenges, one stakeholder noted the 28 days as “a godsend.” However, overall stakeholders said 28 days can be insufficient especially if there are delays from the Home Office in sending crucial documents to the refugee which are needed for moving on with practical matters and planning ahead. Another challenge is that after the 28 days, the new refugee enters mainstream services with Local Authorities, which are not refugee specific or sometimes not geared for the refugee context.

Practice example – France

France Terre d'Asile - CAP'I Accompagnement Programme – targets unsupported refugees and organizes information sessions post-recognition of status for refugees with full introduction to some of their main entitlements and obligations.

Practice example - Austria

Interface Vienna - Starting Aid for recognized refugees or those holding a subsidiary protection status. This service offers individual counselling on issues such as obtaining housing, childcare, employment, (further) education and language courses. Focus on initial stabilization and creating independence. Caritas, Diakonia and Austrian Red Cross offer similar programmes.

Caritas project “Armin plus” - assists recognized refugees and those granted subsidiary protection in Vienna with integration into the labour market. Offers a package of modules covering job searches, applications, internships, and acquisition of profession-specific language skills. Focus on skilled manual and social work. Successful because employers are able to liaise with Caritas.

Stakeholders in Austria cited employers' poor knowledge of basic legal aspects and confusion over residence cards for persons with subsidiary protection, despite the Public Employment Office (Labour Market Service – Arbeitsmarktservice – AMS) employing specialized staff to raise awareness amongst employers. Stakeholders in France said local and national administrations lacked knowledge on refugee rights and entitlements and gave examples of some Prefectures and other administrations' practices of asking refugees to contact their country of origin's authorities to obtain birth certificates or confirmation of driving license, thus contravening the Geneva Convention.

In Austria, stakeholders identified the lack of structured support for refugees at the start of the integration process as a barrier to integration, compounded by the general lack of information of which respondents complained. In France, respondents stated that the relief and happiness of receiving refugee status was quickly followed by a feeling of confusion and disorientation over what was to come next.

HOUSING INSTABILITY

While employment influences housing, housing (or location) also influences employment chances and training opportunities because resources and support services may be limited in areas where refugees are able to secure housing.

Refugees who stay in reception centres while their asylum claim is being processed experience an urgency to relocate once refugee status is granted. Throwing the individual or family into panic and confusion has a negative impact on their ability to concentrate on seeking work or on training programmes:

“ How could I attend a training course given that I didn't have housing? I was in such a precarious state that I didn't manage to concentrate on the training programme.”

A., male Chechen refugee in France

Limited availability of employment in rural or smaller urban areas often led refugees to move to the city where they anticipated improved prospects for employment. In Austria, refugees who make this move to the city of Vienna need to apply for means-tested minimum welfare support, which can take some time for their claim to be examined. The struggle for existence after moving can lead to a precarious housing situation and threatens homelessness which in turn impacts on a refugees' ability to focus on job searches or to focus on work when they find it. Stakeholders confirmed that an insecure housing situation resulted in refugees being unable to focus on employment and the threat of homelessness pressured refugees to accept jobs at lower levels.

DISCRIMINATION

There was a focus placed on discrimination by the National Reference Group in Ireland, but this issue is not confined to Ireland. Refugee respondents in Ireland directly attributed barriers to employment as discriminatory practices and racism by employers, but stakeholders tempered this with a view that in some cases refugees may lack understanding of the Irish job culture and knowledge on how to “sell” their skills to employers.

As in Ireland, stakeholders in Austria more clearly identified discrimination as a factor stopping refugees entering employment. Particularly visible differences, such as skin colour or Muslim women wearing a hijab, was felt to dissuade employers from offering work to those individuals. Those whose skin colour could be described as black appeared to experience this most frequently according to stakeholders. Consulted members of the receiving community in Austria agreed, suggesting there was a hierarchy linked with discrimination and that black migrants and refugees were the least in contact with receiving society members and the most discriminated against. Stakeholders also felt that foreign sounding names had the same effect. However, it was not only Austrians who discriminated: one stakeholder had frequently observed situations in which asylum-seekers had been discriminated against by well-established migrants and identified the construction industry as a particular environment for this. Refugees tended to prefer to work for an Austrian company rather than a migrant-owned or managed company.

Several respondents in France expressed distress at the constant refusals they received despite their strong motivation and desire to work. Although not generally attributed to discrimination, a few respondents felt this could be a factor.

ASYLUM PROCESS

Refugee respondents said that getting into employment – any employment – quickly was a way to leave behind the wasted time of the asylum process during which they were prevented from working, to overcome the disorientation of flight and relocation, and to demonstrate their skills and motivation in their new country.

“ I was so happy, I was staying on the Pôle Emploi’s website for hours because I thought I was going to find work that way. At that moment I was ready to do anything, I just wanted to work, frankly anything...”

R., male Palestinian refugee, France

However that happiness transformed to frustration as refugees encountered the many obstacles in their way. Obstacles identified by stakeholders included the often long time spent in the asylum process which stakeholders said creates gaps in the Curriculum Vitae while awaiting a decision on an asylum application. Employers see this gap as negative because the individual has been away from the work environment for some time and because skills decline without use. To overcome this gap, many organizations direct clients to further education and training. Respondents themselves attested to this, stating that skills decline and self-confidence is eroded during the period in asylum and impacts on performance in job interviews and subsequent employment. Respondents in Austria stated the asylum period left them in doubt as to their future and was extremely frustrating and demoralizing. They referred to asylum as “living on stand-by”.

📌 Suggestion - Ireland

Stakeholders suggested induction courses for new refugees to provide clear, accurate and relevant information about pathways to information and about rights and entitlements in Ireland as well as obligations.

Another aspect of time spent in the asylum process in Ireland, which impacts refugees, is the “residence requirement” to access higher education and accessing the “back to education allowance”.¹⁹ Access to the allowance is permitted after 78 days and 234 days of unemployment for second- and third- level education respectively but the time spent in Ireland during the asylum process does not count. Refugees wishing to take up education must therefore wait, while remaining unemployed. Higher education grants can be

accessed, but only for those having lived legally in Ireland for three out of the five previous years. Again, this is problematic for refugees and may act as a barrier to higher education and channels them into lower qualifications or into the unskilled job market.

An indirect effect of the asylum process impacts on the employment possibilities of refugee women whose husbands can fall into depression, alcoholism, and violence during the unproductive asylum process as a result of the loss of their traditional role as father and husband. During this period, men’s family responsibilities may become transferred to their wives who must manage the house, the children and their husbands’ situation, leaving no time for training or work. Related to this, an Austrian stakeholder pointed out that there is some evidence that migrant girls would rather drop out of school early in order to take on household and children duties.

AGE

Age as a barrier was not a key issue raised during consultations but is worth noting. 40 per cent of Interface Austria’s refugee counselling clients were over the age of 45. While many people find age a barrier to finding, or changing, their job, age becomes one more obstacle to integration. In particular, older women find age perceptions a challenge according to one stakeholder who worked for a counselling organization, and was corroborated by several female respondents:

“*It is hard to think about a future when you are 52 and working as a cleaning lady.*”

Chechen widow in Austria, after five years subsidiary protection

¹⁹ For more information see: <http://goo.gl/S39F4>

Education and language

Education and language are individually key policy areas at national and EU level, but are so closely linked that we discuss them together in this section. Education encompasses both further and higher education in this instance but does not include school education. For refugees, learning the language is central to integration because it facilitates employment and allows the refugee to feel part of the wider society, creates a sense of belonging, enables friendships and generally facilitates day to day living. Barriers to language acquisition for this reason create frustration.

As with employment, available statistics are insufficient to show quantitatively how refugees are doing regarding education and language, mainly because data is not disaggregated for refugees. Some information is available by country of origin, but this is not sufficient to pinpoint what it is that particularly refugees face when learning a language or entering further or higher education. However, qualitative data does show that refugees struggle to access further and higher education, primarily due to lost documentation to prove existing education, to non-comparability of educational standards in many refugee-producing countries, to having to learn a new language, and to the classroom context not being conducive to practicing the new language. Refugees do worse than other migrants and this research suggests this is because the unpreparedness of flight generates documentary obstacles and because trauma related to persecution and flight produces emotional upheaval which impacts on ability to focus. Learning a new language under such pressure is a significant challenge yet is absolutely central to all aspects of integrating in the new society.

Many EU Member States provide language training for refugees. Some of the problematic areas raised by stakeholders and refugees are that course levels are not high enough to facilitate, for example, labour market entry, and that courses are sometimes difficult to access due to location or timing. Also, the centrality of language to Member States' integration programmes is not reflected in the level of understanding of what enables or prevents refugees' language acquisition. Similarly, what enables or prevents entry to further or higher education for refugees is not sufficiently explored in literature to enable informed policy response.

This section explores education and language and looks at factors that have positive or negative influence. Migrant and refugee integration in the policy area of education and language is evaluated by data such as the numbers of migrants in secondary and tertiary education to indicate achievement, the proportion completing language courses, and by an assessment of equal access to education. Such measurement of educational and linguistic attainment can produce one picture of refugee integration, but without understanding what makes it possible to enter education or what facilitates learning a language, measuring tells us what is happening without telling us why it is happening. This section offers some evidence from our consultations, beginning with a note on education and language trajectories.

Education and language trajectories

Language is an issue. We know this because refugee respondents tell us this. Typically, a refugee will arrive in the receiving country with no, or limited, language ability. Exceptions are refugees from francophone countries arriving in France or Belgium, and those from anglophone countries arriving in the UK or Ireland. Nonetheless, the majority of refugees in EU Member States must learn a new language. During asylum, there is often no, or limited, structured language training made available and asylum-seekers rely on informal methods of learning resulting in a long period of time during which language is acquired piecemeal.

In these circumstances, refugees' existing skills, experience, knowledge, qualifications and careers are put on hold until such time as they receive refugee status and are able to participate in a course to obtain a grasp of the new language. This applies equally to unskilled, skilled and professional refugees and language acts as a leveler amongst different social and employment strata. Lack of language precludes networking, retraining, job seeking, and usually working itself; it severely restricts the ability to be self-reliant in terms of social and economic activity and is a barrier in multiple ways to finding accommodation. The individual, no matter their former status, is invariably grounded, made dependent, and isolated by their lack of language.

From receipt of refugee status onwards, language affects everything: employment, training, securing housing, social interactions, pathways to citizenship, dealing with officialdom. Stakeholders and respondents repeatedly came back to language as a cornerstone. Securing or not securing language at the earliest possible stage influences when integration is possible to begin properly. After receiving status, refugees participate in language courses which offer training to basic levels and enable some communication. The level of courses in Member States differ, but refugees and stakeholders both note that they do not go far enough for employment purposes or higher education. Again, informal methods of improving language are relied upon.

As has been discussed under employment in relation to re-qualification, further and higher education is often out of reach for refugees due to pressure to earn money and the cost and time required for courses. Refugees generally participate in the lower level of education, such as basic or general level IT courses. Often these are insufficient to prepare them for higher level employment or higher education. Refugees therefore often find themselves stuck at lower levels and sacrifice their own futures, focusing instead on the future of their children. Those refugees who do enter higher education do so at high personal cost, often working at multiple jobs to achieve their potential.

Integration trajectories of women are particularly influenced by language. Where women engage with language and orientation courses, it has a stabilizing and strengthening effect on their self-perception and aspirations. Women who were insecure and disoriented at the start of a course experience a significant increase of self-confidence and self-organization.

In Ireland, it was highlighted that without command of the language simple tasks can seem gigantic making education particularly challenging.

“ [It] was very hard [going back to school] because I didn't even know what assignment was. I asked the teacher 'what's assignment' ... the first three months were very hard ... I didn't tell anyone but I was very upset ... but I worked hard, and studied, and got help from teacher ... [now] I'm qualified ... because of teachers and God ... at the time I was thinking of giving up, I had no friends, I couldn't make assignment...”

Individual interview with a refugee in Ireland

Factors which influence refugee language and education:

EMPLOYMENT

There is considerable anecdotal evidence to show that while language facilitates employment, employment facilitates language acquisition. Sweden provides a good example, where migrant and refugee students on the Swedish SFI language and cultural course are entitled to combine language classes with employment. The positive effect of being able to practice the new language outside the classroom is considerable and is noted by many refugees in this study as giving confidence and building friendships. This refugee combined SFI language studies with a part-time job in a canteen:

“ It's a good combination to study and learn at school and then practice my language skills at work. This combination of working and learning at the same time makes learning much easier.”

Man of Eritrean origin. Interview in Spånga, Sweden

While variances between schools and regions in Sweden mean the combined programme is not always able to operate well, the value is clear. Respondents in all project countries found practical use of the new language in a work situation helpful.

However, the opposite can also occur and respondents in Austria highlighted the point, stating that working in low-skilled jobs with predominantly foreign colleagues whose grammar is not good, can lead to a deterioration of the language level previously acquired in courses.

United Kingdom

Employment projects that work well are those that work one-to-one to understand the labour market and get placements for refugees. There is nothing large scale in the UK that works well (conversation, Employability Forum, April 2013).

It is not only work-based language practice that is helpful, but general conversation puts language classes into action and enables the individual to take part in the new society, facilitating improvement of language ability and maximizing the benefit of formal learning. An evaluation by AMS in Austria of its German language courses illustrates the point. In 2002 AMS found that many of its courses had to be repeated because there was a lack of opportunity for participants to practise their German skills.

Practice example - Sweden

The Swedish Red Cross is part of a long tradition of Swedish NGOs who provide language training activities. “Practice Swedish” groups operate in 100 locations, with 7,000 participants annually. *Internationella Bekantskaper* (International Acquaintances) operate a similar programme in Stockholm, *Medpratare* (conversation partners), focusing on suburbs with large foreign populations, offering SFI and SAS students conversation practice. For more information visit: <http://bekantskaper.se/aktiviteter-2/medpratare>

AGENCY SUPPORT AND PROVISION OF INFORMATION

Attitudes and approach of officials or agency workers appeared as a challenge to varying degrees in each project country. In Austria, while experiences differed, several refugees reported that when they approached the Employment Service (AMS) to inquire about funding for German language courses, they were told to seek a job rather than aim to learn German. One refugee paid for a follow-up German course himself. A female refugee described how she approached her AMS counsellor about further education to improve her employment chances and was told to look for a job. Education stakeholders felt in certain cases the pressure placed by AMS on recipients of the needs-based Minimum Welfare Support to be available for the labour market, and choosing education or improving qualification acts against this.

Respondents in France found that some agency workers were unhelpful and made assumptions based on their own need rather than on that of the refugee client. For example, some agents refused to speak to refugees who had not brought with them an interpreter:

““ At the Prefecture and sometime at Pôle Emploi, when you ask for an appointment, they want an interpreter, even if you understand a little bit. But they don't have interpreters. So we have to find someone, but it's difficult because people are busy.”

I, Somali refugee in France

This lack of flexibility may put refugees at risk, including losing entitlements, but also acts to reduce refugees' confidence at speaking the new language in an official setting.

The absence of interpreters and the unhelpful approach of officials could result in effectively withholding information which is crucial to refugees wishing to access language training or education as noted by Swedish stakeholders. Austrian stakeholders added that the absence of a structured, coordinated approach to information dissemination was also a challenge to overcome.

👉 Suggestion - Sweden

Validation is pivotal for identifying appropriate educational options, so translators familiar with the technical terms of the relevant professions should be part of the validation process. Offer shorter supplementary courses at university level, flexible admittance dates and online distance courses to refugees with academic degrees.

👉 Practice example – UK

Full and Equal Citizenship (2000) improved knowledge of the integration of refugees and resulted in action and initiatives being undertaken with practical work underpinned by academic, government and voluntary sector research. One example of practical support is the *Refugee Handbook* for English language teachers working with refugees. However, English language support is being reduced in England due to changes in the funding structure and who is eligible for ESOL (Employability Forum, 2011).

👉 Practice example – Canada

Under the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada Program (LINC) the Canadian government provides free basic French and English language courses to adult permanent residents. Applicants are first assessed and then placed on an appropriate course level. For more information visit: <http://goo.gl/m9DV>

The CIC Integration Program also supports language programmes.

👉 Practice example – Germany

The German government provides the German Integration Course for all persons expected to obtain permanent residence. The course offers 600 hours language training (on a scale A2-B1 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) and 45 hours cultural and local orientation. There are special courses for women, the illiterate and youth. Women are also offered lower threshold courses in consideration of their potentially different educational background in their home country. An Integration Certificate is awarded which may facilitate naturalization.

VALIDATION OF CERTIFICATES AND SKILLS

Entering education for many refugees is either facilitated or prevented by the absence of educational or professional certificates which show the individual's background. Documents and certificates lost or left behind in the country of origin and the task of validating comparability of certificates and skills are considerable challenges. The process of validation is often lengthy and common consequences are delayed entry to education, repeating education, upgrading skills and starting education at too elementary a level. Stakeholders and refugees agreed validation of previous certificates and experience is best performed as soon as possible to facilitate commencement of appropriate supplementary education or internships. However, the system of comparability can often lead refugees to abandoning their existing qualification because they have been graded at too low a level to be useful.

Importantly to entering education in the future, and of significant impact also to long-term employment integration, Swedish stakeholders stated there is evidence of a "lock-in" effect for highly educated immigrants who work in an unskilled sector due to being unable to validate certificates or being unable to fund university degrees to re-qualify in their same profession. The effect on education is cyclical and is amplified over time: after some five to six years working in unskilled jobs it is nearly impossible to return to the previous profession or take up further education to do so.

APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE TRAINING

Language tuition does not fully start until the individual receives refugee status. During the asylum process, limited opportunities are provided in Ireland, but most asylum-seekers begin learning during this period nonetheless, mainly through conversations with others and self-study with books given by others. As noted above, conversation is valuable practice, however without some initial structured learning this method can lead to developing poor linguistic habits. There is therefore a case for introducing structured language classes during the asylum period to prepare for acquisition of refugee status or to increase the individual's social capital should they return to their country of origin.

However, many respondents and stakeholders stated that even formal language training provided upon recognition did not take them to a sufficient level. Equally, language tuition did not focus on the individual's needs in relation to their prior knowledge or their professional requirements. Incorporating more specific elements into language training assisted motivation because the student could see the value of the course more readily. One example is the Swedish SFI programme of language and cultural training which has undergone reform in recent years to tailor SFI to individual needs. Included in the reforms is the SFX model in Stockholm which provides Swedish language teaching with different vocational profiles. The advantage is that students maintain their professional identity, establish a network of people in the same profession and learn technical terms within their field, thus providing real direction for language study. Refugee participants have so far been few, but Swedish stakeholders were very much in favour of the system and advocated for its availability to all refugees with appropriate educational and professional backgrounds. In Austria, stakeholders called for occupation-specific German courses to be offered within language training and generally felt adult education programmes are more successful when there is a strong link to the respective vocational field.

📌 Practice example - Austria

Habibi – provides language training specific to healthcare professionals and internships and job search support. One course aims to get participants through the recognition course for a foreign diploma at the AKH Hospital in Vienna. Habibi generally offers training and support to recognized refugees, those with subsidiary protection and migrants.

A further obstacle to language acquisition related to appropriate assessment of refugees by service providers and drop-out rates. While not discussed in detail in other project countries, in Austria, drop-out rates were partly attributed by stakeholders to counselors' lack of time for assessing refugees for placement on courses.

A barrier to language acquisition which is more predominant amongst refugees than other migrants and which was highlighted by all project countries is the general illiteracy or low levels of literacy which form obstacles to language acquisition in formal classroom settings. Some refugees have never held a pen before and cannot read or write in their own language. Familiarity with these basic skills is therefore absent for those refugees and other forms of tuition to enable them to catch up are often equally absent in the receiving country. In Sweden, the number of SFI students with no, or limited, literacy rose from 7,000 in 2006 to 14,000 in 2010 and put strain on existing teaching facilities.

As in other policy areas, in Austria, the question of dialect was raised by refugee respondents as a significant frustration to communication, mainly within employment and training, saying understanding different dialects was not addressed in some language courses.

AGE

Where stakeholders commented, they noted refugees over the age of 50, in particular the group with little or no previous education, find it hard to get motivated for study, while young refugees are often prepared to study for many years to reach their professional goals. Others said that time investments for older refugees prevented some from entering education.

FAMILY REUNIFICATION

Stakeholders in Sweden and France noted that refugees find it hard to focus on education or language training when they have family whereabouts and safety on their mind. This was echoed in all project countries. If the refugee's primary focus is to overcome difficulties in accessing family reunification, or if family reunification has been denied, participation in language or educational courses can seem meaningless. Swedish stakeholders who were also SFI teachers stated that discussion topics and pictures displayed in the classroom can trigger anxiety and students are sometimes overwhelmed by feelings of sadness. Their emotions make it difficult to concentrate and complete their studies. However, this is likely to be reflected more widely than just in Sweden.

ECONOMIC SITUATION

Stakeholders stressed that personal economy is a fundamental factor that decides the possibility of, and level of motivation to, study. It is not refugees alone who face this barrier, rather it arises from socio-economic conditions and not from specifically migrant background but as an Austrian stakeholder pointed out, refugees are at further disadvantage in this respect. Respondents in Sweden appreciated the opportunity to study language without cost and the financial support they received for the first two years after granting of status under the Swedish Establishment Period. However, continuing with language training or entering secondary education after the two year Swedish Establishment Period presents an economically precarious situation during which they often rely on Income Support. Several respondents described this as degrading.

“ I don't like to live on income support since the money is just enough to get around. It's something shameful about it and I prefer to not have it. If I could work I would get more money so I could pay for myself, pay taxes and send money to my family.”

Young man of Somali origin. Interview in Spånga, Sweden

Respondents expressed similar concerns, especially those with higher education, and emphasized the economic pressure of entering education, referring to the risk potential of depending on welfare benefits. Those already with higher education and those with educational aspirations often dropped their ambition due to the considerable costs involved. Austrian stakeholders returned to the issue of insufficient information on funding and educational opportunities for refugees which effectively forms a financial barrier to entering further or higher education in Austria, and described educational funding opportunities as “diverse and complex”. They also identified the crucial importance to keep service providers and counselors' knowledge updated and the detrimental effects if this does not occur.

➤ Suggestion - Sweden

Following on from the Establishment Period, offer time-limited study allowances to refugees to finish secondary education at adult college.

Some refugees in this study had used student loans as educational support, but this adds to their long-term financial insecurity as many have remittance responsibilities while others have acquired debts relating to people smuggling. These financial burdens propel refugees toward work rather than toward costly studies or training which for many remain only an aspiration.

➤ Practice example – Austria

Liese-Prokop-scholarship - *Austrian Integration Fund*. Provides about 30 student scholarships to refugees and those with subsidiary protection (and third-country nationals) for Austrian universities.

Practice example - Sweden

The Swedish Red Cross has several centres where they offer help to refugees with PTSD. Health Communicators (*Hälsokommunikatorerna*) are active in some municipalities. They meet with newly arrived immigrants at the SMB and the SFI schools to provide information on the Swedish healthcare system, PTSD and other health related issues. Health Communicators speak the same language and share the same cultural background as those receiving the information. They undergo a 6-month course in healthcare at the Karolinska Hospital in Stockholm.

Practice example - Austria

Hemayat in Vienna provides interpreter mediated psychotherapy, psychological consulting and medical support.

HEALTH

Many refugees suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms that make it difficult to concentrate on learning. PTSD was raised in refugee meetings with several respondents saying they suffered in this respect. Expert stakeholders also said it is common to feel well during the period immediately after the residence permit is secured, then to feel worse some months or years after as repressed emotions and traumatic memories return. These stakeholders' professional opinion was that unaddressed PTSD can lead to more severe mental illness. They pointed to a typical downward spiral of stress and depression leading to insomnia, which leads to other adverse health effects, including difficulties to concentrate which affect the ability to engage with education or work.

“ I have sleeping difficulties and I have a hard time to concentrate, because I think about what I have experienced. In Somalia, I was the top student in my class, but here I don't perform that well. I feel blocked when I try to learn.”

Young female Somali respondent in Sweden

ASYLUM PROCESS

According to Irish stakeholders, accessing the Irish “Back to Education Allowance” is a problem. Noted in the earlier section on employment, the system requires the refugee to be unemployed and in receipt of welfare payments in order to qualify for the allowance. This leads to periods of idleness or unrelated volunteering until the time period has elapsed thus delaying education. The matter raises issues specifically for refugees because the period they spend in the asylum process does not count toward the qualifying time period of the allowance. A similar problem arises in relation to accessing higher education, where refugees must have lived in Ireland for three of the past five years, not counting the time spent in the asylum process. As a result many refugees in Ireland take other, lower level, courses instead of entering higher education and acts to hold back refugees in their long-term integration.

Practice example - Germany

The Immigration Advice Service (*Migrationsberatung*) provides advice through a network of counselling centres on a range of issues including education as part of an obligatory advancement plan.

The transition period from Direct Provision also presents educational barriers in Ireland. Courses started while in Direct Provision under sponsorship of NGOs must be abandoned after receiving status in order for the new refugee to receive Jobseekers Allowance which is not available while on an educational course.

Stakeholders suggested the lack of English language as well as political and cultural knowledge prevents migrants from understanding political parties' policies while also preventing them from understanding the subtleties of engagement in the public and political domain.

The *Roadmap to Integration 2012* indicates that immigrants are not proportionately represented in political parties, especially their executives. Stakeholders noted that perhaps the small number of refugees in Ireland made refugees unattractive as a target group. However, in Ireland representatives and institutions are, in general, very accessible to the general public and for interested individuals becoming involved is possible and joining a political party is simple. However acquiring the soft skills necessary to be considered for office takes time.

Social integration, social inclusion and active citizenship

Understanding and measuring how refugees are doing in terms of social integration and social inclusion is particularly difficult due to the subjective character of the question. Social integration and social inclusion are often based on feelings: having a certain number of acquaintances or belonging to a sports club, for example, cannot be stated to constitute social integration or inclusion. If that were the case, social integration and inclusion would be simple to achieve.

There are however certain areas that respondents and stakeholders identified as being influential. Research suggests that refugees face challenges breaking down barriers and forming friendships or associations with members of the receiving population. This is related to language ability, cultural differences such as preferring not to socialize in pubs and bars, uncertainty of cultural norms, fear of rejection or experiences of racism, time and psychological limitations connected to concerns about finances, employment, housing and family separation, segregation in larger cities, and age. Poor emotional health arising from the range of obstacles and anxieties refugees face also negatively impacts on their ability to form social connections and, as Swedish stakeholders note, there is a considerable correlation between illness and social exclusion.

Conversely, what facilitates social integration and social inclusion are co-ethnic or co-national support networks including religious activity, age, efforts by the receiving society to proactively include migrants and refugees in activities, contacts formed in reception centres, work including volunteering opportunities, and living in smaller towns.

Social integration is not a one-way street. It must be noted that attitudes and openness of the receiving population is instrumental in facilitating social contact. Contact cannot be relied on to happen automatically. As an example from just one of the project countries, the Diversity Barometer in Sweden shows 33 per cent of Swedes never interact with non-European immigrants. Social contact may be influenced by negative views amongst the receiving society about migrant populations, and the media can play an important role in this regard.

In Austria a meeting was conducted with members of the receiving society to hear from them some reflections on integration as part of the two-way process. One participant in the meeting stated that the receiving society should recognize that integration does not mean assimilation. Several in this group said their preconceptions about refugees had changed after meeting them personally.

Some respondents in Sweden felt that socially interacting with the receiving population was not necessary in order to be integrated in the new country, relating integration more to feelings of being "at home" in the country. However, the majority of respondents in this study expressed a desire to have social contact with a wider range of people in the receiving society and felt disturbed by the varying degrees of rejection or restriction in this respect.

Active citizenship is a policy area which is spotlighted by the EU and by Member States as being desirable for “successful” migrant integration. Generally, active citizenship relates to roles and responsibilities of the individual within the state and advocates that an individual exercises their rights and fulfils their responsibilities and that the state enables one to do so. Active citizenship includes participation in civic and political processes and decision-making. However, the general understanding of what active citizenship means was unclear to refugee respondents and to many stakeholders. In consultations with stakeholders and refugees it was clear that the subject became conflated with citizenship and naturalization and many talked about citizenship as a goal. For refugee respondents, taking part in civic and political process followed citizenship as it increased the sense of belonging. With this understanding, active citizenship was seen as a facilitator of other integration policy areas such as social integration. In fact, active citizenship is less about naturalization and closer to social integration since it is about participation. However, indicators of active citizenship focus on uptake of citizenship and voting behaviour.

Uptake of citizenship does not tell us about how refugees are engaging at local or regional level or if this is more or less than those in the overall receiving society, and statistics do not exist that tell us the voting behaviour of refugees. Additionally, assessment of this element of active citizenship is challenging as statistical data in project countries does not disaggregate for refugees regarding participation in political activities, voting patterns or participation in associations. There is therefore little that can substantively be said about this topic and refugees.

Progress toward social integration, social inclusion and active citizenship trajectories

On arrival, asylum-seekers are generally without friend and family networks which results in isolation and necessitates starting-over in social terms. Strangeness and foreignness induce psychological barriers to overcome beyond building connections in the new country.

Unlike employment or housing, however, social integration starts regardless of formal status being accorded. During the period of asylum, particularly while living in reception centres, friendships are formed and the beginnings of networks are established. This may be with other asylum-seekers or with staff members or other professionals involved in service provision and support. Informal language acquisition begins during asylum and facilitates early experiences of interacting with members of the receiving society. After granting of status, formal language courses build on this beginning and cement connections. Housing location continues the refugee on the path toward social integration, either presenting opportunities or barriers for social contact. Then, gaining employment often brings the refugee into contact with a wider group of people where possibilities exist for connection. Over time, familiarity and bonds with the new society can increase. This leads the individual to build confidence and can set them on a pathway toward fully participating in society.

As an active citizen the refugee must have a willingness or ability to participate and the receiving society must demonstrate a willingness to facilitate participation. Becoming an active citizen in the receiving country rests not only on the country’s structural and social methods of engaging newcomers, encouraging and facilitating participation in voting and, later, naturalization, but it also rests on the individual. An individual who has never been interested in political participation may not become interested in their new country. Indeed, many of a country’s native population are not engaged politically and do not vote. What then is the path to active citizenship for a refugee?

The speed and degree to which refugees integrate socially or are included in society therefore depends partly on structures, partly on individuals within the receiving society and partly on the refugee themselves and their wish and ability to interact. Over time, refugees – and migrants more widely – establish a way of living within the new country. That way of living may include many friends of the receiving society, or it may not, and may include intermarriage, or it may not. What is important is that the individual feels “at home”, feels they belong, and feels free to interact in any of the spaces of the receiving society. This, respondents and stakeholders suggest, may only occur in the second and subsequent generations.

Factors which influence refugee social integration, social inclusion and active citizenship

RECEPTION CENTRES

Respondents in France who had stayed in reception centres were more content with the support structures in place for refugees. In addition to providing stability, information and advice, reception centres provided the beginnings of friendships. Respondents said others in the reception centre had helped them start learning the new language, given advice about finding work, and assisted with childcare. Reception centres also helped alleviate feelings of isolation. Indeed, in France, stakeholders reported cases where the refugee was granted status but was scared to leave the centre and the life they had developed there.

Not everyone was so content and some respondents in France reported reception centres could produce tensions between residents, while refugees and stakeholders in Ireland said there was a stigma attached to having lived in Direct Provision accommodation centres which they said was difficult to repair.

EMPLOYMENT AND VOLUNTEERING

The valuable opportunities within employment for practicing and improving language are similar to the potential for making social connections and establishing networks. However stakeholders and respondents did not emphasize this during discussions. Stakeholders noted employment makes people feel part of the community and respondents said they did not feel part of society without employment and that employment was seen a path to acceptance by others. However employment did not emerge as being key to social integration.

Voluntary work was identified by some stakeholders and respondents as facilitating social contact and participation. However, refugees in Ireland explained that during the asylum process volunteering possibilities were limited by the 19.10 Euro per week payment which did not cover transport to the volunteer venue. After granting of refugee status, there is still a barrier to volunteering because social welfare asks why the refugee is volunteering instead of working. This indicates the perception of volunteering as “helping out” rather than as building confidence and social capital and actively participating in society. An absence of childcare facilities can also be barriers to volunteering which in turn impacts on participation.

SUPPORT FROM COMMUNITY, NGOS, AND RECEIVING COUNTRY NATIONALS

Support came from various sources for refugees: from fellow nationals, from community organizations, service-providers, and nationals of the receiving country. In the absence of established networks, asylum-seekers rely heavily on institutions and charities to help them apply for asylum and find accommodation. After granting of status, limited networks continue to propel refugees to rely on these organizations.

People in vulnerable situations such as refugees often come to have high expectations of the organizations who assist them whether governments, institutions, NGOs or UNHCR. Expectations were not always fulfilled as stakeholders particularly in France reported and as a result some refugees and asylum-seekers were critical of the level of support provided.

Support also comes from ethnic community organizations and religious organizations who often work on a voluntary basis. A stakeholder in Ireland noted that religion can facilitate integration because places of congregation also function as spaces of socialization. Respondents in Ireland and France agreed, saying often the only thread of continuity between their country of origin and the new country is their religion and this provides friendship, information and support.

“ Church is the number one way to socialize and make friends. ...
Church is like a home and you meet people there ... prayer keeps you going.”

Group meeting with refugees in Ireland

United Kingdom

A strong voluntary sector provides much of the integration support and initiatives, focusing mainly on providing information and avoiding destitution. However the voluntary sector faces obstacles to longevity of successful projects. This is because most initiatives are funded for three years or less, necessitating re-application for funds or searching for new funders. This risks losing good projects and the personnel who run them (conversation, Employability Forum, April 2013).

A large number of community-based organizations serve specific needs of migrant groups. However, some specifically refugee community-based organizations have now been replaced by migrant community-based organizations which, although serving a wider audience, cannot serve specific needs of refugees which require specialist knowledge of staff members.

Also the voluntary sector, including NGOs, often operates at regional and local level. One problematic of this is that reports published at local level are rarely accessible to a wider audience as there is no central national focal point for lodging of reports. Shared learning is consequently limited. National organizations and NGOs, such as Refugee Council and Refugee Action, however, publish regularly and widely on a wide range of related topics.

“When you go to the mosque everyone is your brother and sister. We all have that connection even if we're from different countries ... religion is comforting, and keeps you focused ... when I feel sad, or miss my [family] I put down my mat, do my ablutions, and read the Quran, and you feel calmer.”

Individual interview with a refugee in Ireland

Contact with fellow nationals or with co-ethnic groups was generally felt to be helpful, although some respondents noted the ambivalent value of these networks. While some respondents felt they offered familiarity and security through a common language and culture, some respondents felt tensions could outweigh the benefits and the value depended on the country of origin and the character of the conflict.

“We don't help each other in the community, they are just looking for trouble. They say we did things we didn't do.”

T., female Congolese refugee in France

While this Congolese refugee and others from Somalia, for example, avoided contact with some of their community, Chechen, Sri Lankan and Turkish refugees in the Ile de France region depended on fellow nations for assistance with housing and employment.

“For almost a year and a half, we had not money because we were under the Dublin regulations. That's where we were helped by family and friends.”

R., male Chechen refugee in France

Contact and friendships between refugees and nationals of the receiving country can be helpful in gaining an understanding of how a society functions, including its cultural and social norms. However, throughout all project countries such contact was limited.

Opportunities for contact occurred in the workplace, in college, places of worship, bars, and on public transport. However, respondents often had few friends, if any, of the receiving country. Few respondents in France reported having French friends, respondents in Ireland reported the same, citing cultural and social spaces as challenging to negotiate. Some in Sweden felt Swedish friends were not necessary to integration, and several respondents in Austria expressed the wish for more contact with Austrians. Some in France stated they felt their lack of French friends illustrated that they were not integrated, while some in Sweden clearly felt this had little bearing on integration. It

Practice example – Canada

Host Program: Community-based service provided funds to recruit, train, match and monitor volunteers (individuals and groups, such as churches, community groups and families) to help newcomers adapt, settle and integrate into Canadian life. Initiated in 1984 through the Host Initiative, the focus was on refugees. In 1990, it expanded to include all newcomers. The programme evaluation demonstrated that participants developed a better understanding of Canadian society; had a reduced level of stress related to their settlement process; increased their confidence; and increased their knowledge of services and resources to become more independent. For more information see: <http://goo.gl/HnbgAR>

Welcoming Communities Initiative: This initiative focused on creating connections between newcomers and Canadians, eliminating barriers to integration by creating welcoming communities, and educating against racism, and supported activities including awareness-raising, outreach, tools and resource development and direct services aimed at newcomers, youth and communities. For more information see: <http://goo.gl/wk6HJV>

These programmes have since been replaced by the Community Connections component of the Settlement Program.

Practice example - France

L'Association de Parrainage Républicain des Demandeurs d'Asile et de Protection (APARDAP), in Grenoble. Asylum-seekers can be paired with French families to assist their settlement in France and give support during the asylum claim. Support is both at human and administrative level. Facilitates French nationals and asylum-seekers/refugees getting to know each other.

At the CADA run by ADOMA in Gargenville, discussion groups have been organized between female asylum-seekers and refugees and other women living in the neighbourhood. This was a way for these women to get to know each other.

should be noted this latter group in Sweden seemed small, and many respondents in Sweden and other project countries felt that establishing friendships with local people was valuable for integration and that finding friends of all nationalities, not just one group, was best, as one Afghan refugee in Sweden said.

CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE AND SPACES

In Ireland in particular, respondents identified cultural knowledge and cultural spaces as facilitating or forming barriers to informal conversation and social interaction. They found that often, at least in the early days, opportunities for this engagement were lacking.

“Part of integration is to function within this culture ... I go to the pub and I understand the language but I don't understand Irish culture. I can't follow that talk because the references to so many things that they share, so I really feel excluded.”

Individual interview with a refugee in Ireland

The pub is an important space of socialization in Irish culture. However the overwhelming majority of the respondents in Ireland did not drink alcohol. Indeed, refugees felt that if meeting in the pub was central to integration, then integration will be a long and difficult process. Without alternative opportunities for socializing outside of work, respondents said they felt isolated and lonely.

“I once was so hungry, I had 2 Euro and I had to choose buy bread or take the bus to see a social worker.... a week of delay [in rent supplement means] hunger or homelessness. ... When I got refugee status, I was happy.... I was cold and went to buy a hat. I chose the one that said Dublin on the front. I wanted to say thank you, I wanted to belong. But bad experience after bad experience, this passion of being here just disappeared and turned into disappointment after disappointment. Not everything is bad, so many things happened that are good. But I am now less likely to buy a hat that says Dublin. When you realize that we are not just that welcome, you can't integrate.”

Individual interview with a refugee in Ireland

ACTIVITIES AND SCHOOLS

Migration Nation (2008) gives a pivotal role to sporting bodies and faith-based groups as sources of information and assistance in settling in and integrating in Ireland. However, in France, service providers in reception centres and social workers reported that, for refugees, access to culture or sport as a means to build networks was not necessarily a priority. This was a common sentiment in other project countries and was due to other more pressing matters prominent in refugees' minds, such as employment, family unity, housing, negotiating the welfare and assistance system, and paperwork. Refugees' time was spent solving problems, leaving little time or energy for sport, music or other activities.

“ I used to practice a lot of sport, both boxing and football. But I don't feel comfortable to practice sport, I think too much of my future. My mind is too busy.”

F., male Afghan refugee in France

Some respondents said they were more likely to engage in volunteering as an additional activity, particularly related to supporting other asylum-seekers or refugees socially, with practical advice and with language. They said this helped take their mind from their problems and give something back to society. One unemployed Iranian refugee in Austria joined the volunteer fire-fighters saying he wanted to help the state. However, another respondent in Austria said volunteering to assist those from his own country of origin had resulted in burnout for him and he stepped back from volunteering. This challenge of burnout was encountered by a member of the receiving society group in Austria who stated he had to seek counselling after acting as a volunteer. However, volunteer support is clearly very important to newcomers overall and several respondents described how receiving help from volunteers helped them to know local people, how things work in the new country, how locals live, and helped them find friends. A respondent in Austria described this support they receive as “giving their life sense”.

For Irish stakeholders, the question “what does it mean to be Irish?” is one they felt could be answered through the common activity of a sport which steers away from very polarized discussions between “us” and “them.” Stakeholders' comments that sport is central to Irish identity was echoed through project countries, but this means that if refugees have little time for outside activities such as sport, their access to an important pathway to belonging is diminished.

Practice example – Germany

Cultural corner shops in Nuremberg: First started in 1975 as a social experiment, the cultural corner shop concept aims to provide a platform for people of all ages, nationalities, and social status for socializing and discussions. The “shops” are mainly utilized by children, young people, senior citizens, women and foreigners. Considered a success, the project was extended in 1977 and today the 11 “shops” funded by Nuremberg city play a central role in the city's cultural calendar. For more information visit: <http://goo.gl/l8Vdta>

Nuremberg – City Initiatives for Coordinating Integration Efforts: In 2002, the Lord Mayor of Nuremberg established a Committee for Integration with representatives from all political parties, members of the Foreign Citizens' Advisory Council, the Repatriates' Advisory Council. The Committee oversees all issues concerning Nuremberg citizens with a migration background. A Coordination Group ensures the topic of integration is tasked across all administrative departments, and a supervisory committee manages Nuremberg's Integration Programme. Nuremberg's Integration Programme is the result of wide social debate with those directly involved in integration and offers integration guidelines; a review of past decades' integration policies in Nuremberg; a definition of target groups; an analysis of changes in the political framework; and a description of the current situation. It includes an evaluation of statistical data, the most recent of which is from 2013.

For more information of the many integration projects in Nuremberg which range from social to cultural to educational to those for children visit:

<http://goo.gl/wdFZ7o>

Practice example - UK

Examples of outreach projects include the City of Sanctuary initiative which works to build a culture of hospitality. Represented across the UK. For more information visit: www.cityofsanctuary.org

Irish stakeholders noted that children's integration begins at school with interaction with peers and teachers where they learn social and cultural norms of the new country. They also become aware of freedoms their peers have which they may not have within their own family setting. Parents can experience difficulty negotiating these changes and children may experience difficulty understanding parental resistance in the struggle for a balance between integrating and maintaining their own cultural norms.

“ There must be a balance between mixing at school but still incorporating traditions in parenting.... there must be a limit on the child's freedom, but also a limit on the control a parent has ... it's important to maintain cultural differences.”

Group meeting with refugees in Ireland

One stakeholder noted the cultural norm of parents attending, for example, school sports days. For refugees with limited language ability this may be an opportunity to practice English and interact with other parents, but is also an area of trepidation with fear of rejection and not being understood. The result was reported as low attendance of refugee parents at school events.

“ It's hard to find people who would say hello to me in the morning when I drop them off [to school] ... it's Irish kind of mentality, they just want to know themselves and are afraid of strangers.”

Individual interview with a refugee in Ireland

Austrian sporting organizations appear more advanced in their engagement with migrants and refugees, recognizing integration challenges and developing strategies and initiatives to become more inclusive. However regarding other activity areas in Austria the issue of integration and engagement of refugees or migrants is still a recent subject according to stakeholders. Austrian mainstream associations, such as the (Voluntary) Fire Brigades, the Association of Boy Scouts and Girl Guides and Alpine Associations either hardly have any members with migration background or are not aware of such members and ethnicity or nationality is not documented. Stakeholders added that migrants may be represented within organizations without the associations and organizations being aware of it. In their view, some persons with migrant backgrounds did not want to stand out, be presented as “practice examples” or talk about integration in public. One gave the example of police officers with migrant backgrounds.

📌 Practice example - Austria

Federation of the Austrian Alpine Associations: This was first a pilot project in Upper Austria which was rolled out in other Provinces. It provides training as hiking guides for migrants.

Piramidops association for migrant women offers biking courses, including safety, traffic rules, and city orientation on bicycles. Piramidops said participants afterwards started projects and engaged themselves.

Fair and sensible: is a pilot project aiming to bring the police and Africans together to reduce prejudice.

Together: Austria (Zusammen: Österreich) funded by Austrian Integration Fund encourages voluntary integration ambassadors of migration background who have achieved success in Austria to tell their story in schools. The aims of the project are to reduce prejudices, increase positive role models and awareness as well as motivation to succeed.

📌 Practice example - Germany

For over 20 years the Federal programme “Integration through Sport” has been financially supported by the Federal Ministry of the Interior and is coordinated by the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB). For more information visit: <http://goo.gl/bScxNL>

LOCATION

In all project countries it was noted by stakeholders and refugee respondents that where someone lives influences their life chances. While this does not only apply to refugees, this group often has other disadvantages such as limited language ability, lack of knowledge of the surrounding area and of alternative available resources, and confusion regarding the “system.” These existing disadvantages compound any negative aspects of location such as limited networks, limited local authority resources in socially disadvantaged areas, and the possibility that any new networks the individual forms may be with those who are also disadvantaged and therefore who are perhaps not sufficiently knowledgeable about alternative pathways.

As in other large cities, in Malmö and Stockholm, Sweden, there are some immigrant-dense areas close to the city and many respondents in Sweden lived in those areas and reported not having much contact with native Swedes because Swedes do not live in those areas. This resulted in children of native Swedes and refugees going to different schools, socializing in separate venues, and generally led to the refugee or migrant integrating with those who they live in their area, not with the native population of Sweden. Amounting to segregation, this was raised by stakeholders and refugees as a barrier to integration. Swedish respondents said, as parents, they are concerned that the comparatively lower standard in immigrant-dense areas will give children disadvantages later in life. A young woman respondent of Bosnian origin, a substitute teacher with experience in 29 different schools in Stockholm County, described the large differences between resources in the suburbs and in the city centre and said in her view the suburbs attracted less well-qualified teachers. A male Iraqi respondent from a different suburb said very few schoolteachers in his area have Swedish as their mother tongue. Potentially affecting their later life chances, a male Bosnian respondent described how children spoke Swedish with a foreign accent.

“*In areas where there are exclusively people with a foreign background, the children don’t learn how to speak with a Swedish pronunciation. My kids learned fluent Swedish when we lived in Nyköping [a smaller town] because they had Swedish friends in kindergarten and at school. When we moved to Alby [Stockholm suburb], there were hardly any native Swedes and they suddenly began to speak Swedish with a foreign accent.*”

Man of Bosnian origin. Interview in Hagsåtra, Sweden

However there is benefit of living in immigrant-dense areas: the commonality of a refugee experience, of being a newcomer, of struggling with the language can produce supportive networks and greater understanding of challenges. Furthermore, two respondents in Sweden who live in immigrant-dense areas felt it easier to integrate in these areas compared to neighbourhoods with predominately native Swedes because migrants have more understanding and are often, at least perceived to be, more open.

In Sweden the impact of living in larger cities or smaller towns was discussed at length. Several respondents who live in big city suburbs said it is complicated to befriend Swedish people. Their explanations differed depending on how long they have lived in Sweden. Newly arrived refugees don’t speak Swedish and therefore find it hard to communicate with Swedes, while people who have lived for decades in Sweden said: “it is difficult to interact with Swedes” and “Swedes are not social people”. The possibilities are different in smaller towns. Two female respondents from Eritrea and Afghanistan had moved to the small town of Bollnäs, Sweden three years ago. Being able to walk from one end to the other in ten minutes indicates the small size of Bollnäs. The women have frequent contacts with native Swedes in the neighbourhood, both through work, and at their children’s school and kindergarten and they feel positive about their connection with Swedes.

In smaller towns, the possibilities for segregation are more limited and people are pushed together. But in the context of larger cities, Swedish stakeholders suggested responsibility lay equally with Swedes and with refugees or migrants to live in non-segregated areas in larger cities. For refugees and many migrants, economics pushes them to more disadvantaged areas. For Swedes, negative perceptions of these areas keep them away.

Practice example - Sweden

New Friendships in Haparanda: In Haparanda, a small town in northern Sweden, a locally driven integration initiative has enhanced social integration. Activities have included trips, sports, lectures, a men's group and a women's group with native Swedes and refugees. Participants have discussed cultural topics, their different backgrounds and shared experiences. One Swedish volunteer said the project contributed to bringing people together and creating new friendships. The "Integration Project" was started by local volunteers from Swedish Red Cross, Save the Children and the UN Association.

Ski into Community: In the village of Almåsa in the mountainous Jämtland County, northern Sweden, skiing is popular and refugees are encouraged to learn to ski to make friends and integrate in the local community. In 2013, Jämtland County Regional Council financed "Project Leisure". Run by County Sports Federation (Jämtland-Härjedalens Idrottsförbund) the project helps immigrants engage with associations and participate in their activities.

“ The big challenge associated with increasing housing segregation and school segregation is to get white middle class parents – who might support integration on a theoretical level but are unwilling to experiment in practice with their children – to not escape their responsibility to contribute to integration.”

Housing stakeholder, Sweden

FINANCIAL CONCERNS

Stakeholders suggested that refugees often have strain on their finances and this limits their motivation and the possibilities for social engagement. Respondents added that remittance obligations to their families in countries of origin limits the amount of disposable income available to socialize and can result in isolation.

As one aspect of integration and participation, naturalization also puts considerable strain on finances. This is an issue in all project countries, but respondents in Austria stated clearly that the conditions for naturalization was an insurmountable barrier to citizenship due to the stable level of income required and the requirement not to have relied on social assistance for three consecutive years.²⁰ As an example, one family in Upper Austria said they had avoided claiming social assistance for several years in order not to jeopardize their citizenship chances. Several others stated they worked instead of studying in order to afford citizenship. These individuals had not yet managed to acquire citizenship citing their level of income and temporariness of their employment as reasons.

AGE

Swedish stakeholders and respondents agreed there is a strong correlation between age at arrival and how well people integrate, considering generally that younger people find it easier to integrate. However, this has a positive effect on parents' own integration as children can motivate and facilitate their parents to engage more with the society and can provide help with the language. Several refugee respondents described their children had become a link to the new society. In Ireland,

²⁰ A legal amendment adopted in July 2013 and entering into force 1st August 2013 requires the necessary income for 36 months within the last six years and at least the last 6 months before the application. This should mean that a temporary reliance on social assistance would no longer hinder acquiring citizenship.

stakeholders and respondents felt that integration of particularly refugee women was something that their children can reach but not the parents, and that integration was always one generation away.

For women, stakeholders suggested this may be related to single-parenting and the lack of informal support systems which can produce social isolation.

Conversely, Swedish stakeholders saw that age produced cultural clashes between the generations. The biggest clashes were between Swedish culture and cultures of the country of origin and often occurred within the family in the private rather than the public space. Incidents of honor violence and killings, forced marriages during visits to the country of origin are extreme examples. But less serious incidents, conflicts and frictions are common.

“*Parents are unable to control their children as they grow up with better knowledge of how the Swedish society works and may use their better knowledge against the parents.*”

Interview in Vällingby, Sweden

This respondent suggested more support and information about Swedish culture and social codes may help parents who are insecure about how to raise their children in the new society and how Swedish society may influence their children. Better information about the Swedish culture and norms in general was requested by most respondents. One Assyrian Turkish man added that the younger generation must be encouraged to feel they belong in both the Swedish and the Assyrian community.

PRIOR EXPERIENCES AND FAMILY SEPARATION

Stakeholders suggested that particularly in the case of victims of torture and refugees fleeing war-torn countries, previous personal experiences impact significantly on refugees' ability and willingness to become socially involved with the receiving society. Respondents themselves added that political participation does not happen in a state of isolation from previous experiences in countries of origin, nor from advice received during and after the asylum process. Fear of persecution in countries of origin may have coloured refugees' prior experience of politics, and respondents in Ireland stated they feared reprisal.

“*I was advised that if I apply for citizenship I should stay away from any kind of political activities ... I'm staying away from a lot of things. ... involvement in politics could cause problem.*”

Individual interview with a refugee in Ireland

For respondents in Ireland, acquiring citizenship led to a degree of anonymity.

Similarly, the waiting time for family reunification led to withdrawal or resistance toward socializing and participating, and to depression and isolation.

“*I applied [for Family Reunification]. [One year later] I sat on my bed and thought 'I'll hang myself' ... I can't go to them and they can't come to me ... but then you think 'don't be stupid' so you sit watching ... TV with your housemates.*”

Individual interview with a refugee in Ireland

RACISM, DISCRIMINATION AND REPRESENTATION

With a focus on discrimination and racism in stakeholder meetings, both stakeholders and respondents in Ireland felt racism and discrimination were common, but varied with geographical area and were strongest against those who are visibly different, such as by skin colour or clothing. Incidents occur in all sectors of the public sphere such as at football matches, attacks in the street, and by some public representatives. Although the Garda Racial Intercultural Diversity Office takes a strong line toward racism, stakeholders said refugees generally do not report incidents, citing reasons such as lack of trust or dislike of the police, having previously been a victim of torture or of police abuse in their country of origin, or a wish not to have their name on the police system. In the

experience of a large number of stakeholders, refugees prefer to deal with racism themselves rather than reporting it.

“ *When it's dark outside I go inside because I'm afraid.... My friend asks me to go out but I always find excuse not to go because I'm afraid ... there are good people as well but how to know? ... you have to open yourself, but I don't do that now.*”

Individual interview with a refugee in Ireland

Others diffuse and justify racist or discriminatory situations as being due to a lack of knowledge, ignorance, the geographical area, or the current economic climate.

In Ireland, the National Reference Group emphasized the media as a focus and a stakeholder group was established to discuss this. They found the media to be both a barrier and a facilitator to integration and that media representation of migrant and refugee groups was one main obstacle to political and civic participation. Lack of clarity when reporting on different immigration statuses, on different migratory journeys and on migrants' rights and entitlements, was cited to form a clouded picture of migrants and refugees and to perpetuate discriminatory perspectives of the receiving population and negative views of particularly African countries' ability to progress. Negative views in the media of Africa and Africans in general, according to Irish stakeholders, frame how refugees are perceived in Ireland and influence their integration prospects.

“ *This affects refugees in Ireland because we are led to believe that the refugee is that child we saw in an NGO poster 15 years ago ... if you see a black person walking around, you never think that they can be a doctor.*”

Individual stakeholder interview, Ireland

Refugee respondents reported similar social perceptions and criticized media representation of Africa as directly associated with poverty.

“ *[The media] see us as poor people, I suppose that's what makes people think we're here to take their money.*”

Individual interview with a refugee, Ireland

Irish stakeholders noted that the level to which refugees are involved in the production of media, either as staff or as guests, is indicative of refugee participation in political and civic life. Somewhat in defense of refugee under-representation in the media, some stakeholders noted that refugee numbers are small in Ireland and refugees are a minority within a minority and perhaps therefore less of a priority to programme-makers in terms of ratings. Others added that foreign accents could reduce ratings and could therefore be a barrier to representation.

Barriers to participating in the media also come from asylum-seekers and refugees themselves. Asylum-seekers expressed a fear their application will be adversely affected by speaking on camera or radio, while refugees expressed a fear their status will be revoked (even though there is no legal basis for such a scenario). A fear or suspicion of authorities and anxiety over their application were central to self-censorship. To counter this, stakeholders identified that community radio could be helpful as it exists on the margins of the media landscape and allows refugees to voice ideas and experiences in a less high profile way. Community radio also provides local opportunities for volunteering which can build self-confidence and skills and a platform for networking. As 87 per cent of the Irish population listens to the radio every day, particularly in rural areas, radio was viewed by stakeholders as an important conduit for wider participation.

Housing

As with other policy areas, there are few statistics which indicate how refugees are doing in relation to housing. In Ireland, 9.3 per cent of refugee households were in need of housing support, with those in Cork, Limerick and Galway in particular need. In France, statistics suggest that comparatively fewer refugees are able to access independent housing in the year or two after recognition of status than other new migrants and the ELIPA survey shows one third of refugees sampled live in transitory housing while only 8 per cent of other newly arrived migrants do so. ELIPA also shows the proportion of refugees in emergency housing is higher than for other newly arrived migrants and statistically shows that how refugees' access housing reflects their limited social networks. 61 per cent refugees access housing through social networks, compared to 86 per cent of other new migrants. In Sweden, over 85 per cent of refugees live in rented housing compared to 61 per cent of labour migrants and 49 per cent of student migrants. However, little more is known statistically on refugee housing status and trajectories.

Reasons why refugees struggle with accessing suitable, affordable, secure, independent housing include landlords' reluctance to rent to refugees partly due to negative perceptions, the urgency with which refugees must leave reception centres or similar temporary accommodation after recognition of status compounded by the simultaneous granting of the right to work, refugees' lack of employment and therefore of secure income particularly immediately after granting of status. Another factor is that they are often unable to provide required security deposit or work contract to landlords. Refugee respondents overwhelmingly stated that the transition period immediately after granting of refugee status is highly difficult and stressful regarding housing and employment. Due to these reasons, refugees rely heavily on social housing, of which there is a general shortage in larger cities. This increases anxiety and feelings of powerlessness.

These influencing factors impact on what refugees are able to achieve in terms of housing. Housing, in turn, can produce considerable stress impacting on emotional and sometimes physical health. For example, housing conditions related to size, condition and location, or damp or cold housing and bad sanitary conditions were stated by respondents to produce physical health problems. Stakeholders often returned to the subject of the health implications of housing instability and conditions; adding that conversely living in good surroundings generates positive emotional health and positively impacts on other areas of life. The influences above are interlinked but overall relate to employment and to personal finances. For those newly acquiring refugee status, the combination of needing to move and being permitted to work have mutual impact and the ability to achieve one affects the ability to achieve the other in this transition phase.

Housing trajectories

While awaiting refugee status, asylum-seekers live in a variety of accommodation from reception centres, to temporary or transit accommodation, or stay with friends. For those who do not live with friends, the point at which refugee status is granted is, for many respondents, the beginning of a stressful transition period where they have a limited time to vacate the supported accommodation. However, because this is also the time when refugees acquire the right to work similar to nationals, those with newly granted status have seldom had an opportunity to save the money needed for a deposit on rented accommodation and do not have employment which is often a condition of renting from a private landlord or rental agency. Refugees therefore rely mainly on social housing at this point. To overcome this difficulty, some social workers favour transitory housing, such as in France, but this accommodation is limited in all project countries and many refugees are compelled to take substandard housing. This difficult situation improves with time and respondents were more likely to have obtained social housing or private rental accommodation if they received refugee status a few years ago. But generally, closer to recognition of status, the more precarious is the housing situation.

Refugees' housing situation also depends on where they are located and in some regions refugees were able to access social housing within a year of recognition of status. Larger cities have a general shortage of housing, such as in the city of Vienna and all rental apartments in Stockholm, Malmö and Gothenburg in Sweden, and social housing in Paris in Ile de France.

Factors which influence refugee housing:

LANDLORDS AND LANDLORD REQUIREMENTS

The residence permit obtained by refugees on granting of status was generally perceived by housing stakeholders to facilitate integration because it assures landlords of refugees' stability and status. However, refugees must fulfil certain requirements as must other housing applicants. These requirements can include being in employment and having an income, and being able to supply a deposit or guarantor, bank statements and references. All project countries noted these as barriers to accessing housing. In addition, some landlords do not accept those on welfare benefits. This was emphasized by respondents in Austria in particular who believed no landlord would give a housing contract to an applicant on social welfare payment.

Some stakeholders in Ireland reported discrimination as landlords asked, "where are you from?" One stakeholder identified a "hierarchy of racism" in Ireland with African communities faring worst. Discrimination affects those receiving social welfare benefit and respondents in all project countries noted this as a barrier to acquiring stable, quality housing. Stakeholders in Ireland noted discrimination from landlords led to refugees being refused housing if in receipt of rent supplement and respondents added that where landlords do accept tenants receiving rent supplement, administrative delays with claims can lead to eviction and homelessness especially for single refugee men. Discrimination by landlords was also reported by Austrian stakeholders to be well-established. They observed that landlords or real estate agents claimed that apartments were rented once they realized the applicant was of migrant background. This was particularly the case for those with visible differences. One legal expert stakeholder reported that, in his experience, refugees were treated differently according to their language skills, legal status and race. Such stigma acted to influence refugees' access to, and quality of, housing.

It was noted that in Austria, those with subsidiary protection had very limited opportunities to access the public residential market. This is because contracts are typically three years and the one-year²¹ residence entitlement of these individuals is not sufficient to secure a contract. Furthermore, this group does not have access to municipality housing equal to refugees or Austrians in Vienna. It should be noted that regulations regarding access to social housing vary between Provinces.

In Austria, a documentary problem was highlighted regarding municipal housing. Additionally, divorce or marriage certificates that may have been lost during flight are required as proof of marital status, without which problems with the registration for municipal housing occur. Stakeholders highlighted that if a husband and wife are separated during flight and therefore will arrive in Austria later, the wife cannot yet be considered in the application for municipal housing. A further factor influencing housing for those who have succeeded in family reunification is that while a refugee established in Vienna for some years may apply for a municipal apartment in Vienna, they must wait for two years after their family has joined them before they may apply for a transfer to a suitably sized apartment.

²¹ The residence entitlement for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection will be extended to two years with a legal amendment entering into force on 1 January 2014.

URGENCY UPON RECOGNITION

Refugees housed in reception centres or temporary supported accommodation are required to move soon after acquiring status. This occurs at the same time as they are trying to find employment, in most countries for the first time, and to establish themselves in society. Where the situation before granting of status is that refugees cannot work or accumulate savings, neither can they give thought to where they may wish to live. Now, on receiving status, there is an urgency to act which leads many to accept sub-standard housing or to rent rooms from friends if no spaces in shelters or transitory housing are available. The impact on refugees' housing careers and other areas of integration is considerable. First, everything happening at one time is confusing and delays and false starts can arise from confusion. Second, moving quickly can lead refugees to deprived neighbourhoods where resources and opportunities are fewer and where housing standards are lower. Living in deprived neighbourhoods impacts on children's education, social contact and employment networking opportunities. Third, the urgency to move can, and does, result in homelessness. Overall, the urgency to move can lead refugees to a negative start to their housing careers which may be perpetuated in the long-term. This transition phase was noted by respondents as the most difficult period, and by stakeholders as the period of most risk.

United Kingdom

Asylum support, previously known as NASS, and consisting of accommodation and financial assistance or subsistence-only support, is used mostly by asylum-seekers who cannot support themselves or have no network of family or friends with whom they can live. On receiving refugee status, those in receipt of asylum support have 28 days until it is withdrawn. However, if there are any delays during this period, in particular with the provision of status documentation to enable transition to mainstream benefits, employment or private tenancy, the individual is more likely to become homeless or use shelters. The withdrawal of asylum support and accommodation, with no further specialist advice or assistance available constitutes a significant gap in support provision which threatens refugee well-being. There is a complex staged process of material support during the asylum process in the UK and this can be problematic for those who subsequently receive refugee status, creating "potential gaps to fall through and possible periods of destitution which those with family and friends willing to support them are less likely to experience.... [creating a] disruptive and dislocating process for those receiving NASS support" (conversation, Refugee Action, April 2013).

In France where refugees hosted in reception centres must move to independent housing within six months, stakeholders stated the urgent move often prevents them from securing appropriate long-term stable housing. Some NGOs, such as France Terre d'Asile and Forum Réfugiés, offer transitory housing which enables refugees to focus on securing employment without the threat of homelessness. Respondents stated they felt extremely stressed at this time and this impacted on their learning and job-hunting.

“ Here with the CAAR, I'm entitled to six months renewable once. And I keep asking myself 'and what if I haven't found housing by then?'”

A., male Congolese refugee in France

The answer is that if no housing is found the refugee takes substandard accommodation, enters a housing shelter or sleeps on the street as reported by a young couple from Afghanistan who lived on the streets in Sweden for ten days before managing to find a tiny room.

In Ireland refugees are allowed three to six weeks to leave reception centres but limited information is available to assist the transition and this was cited by respondents as their main area of concern and was echoed in all project countries.

📌 Suggestion - Ireland

Stakeholders in Ireland suggested the first steps in the post-decision process should take place while the refugee is still in a reception centre in order to avoid the urgency and vulnerability refugees often currently face.

📌 Practice example – France

Different organizations have focused on developing temporary housing for refugees in order to ensure a better rotation system in reception centres and to provide some temporary relief for refugees without housing support. They include:

DPHRS offers refugees six months shared accommodation with other refugee families, renewable, and offers support finding long-term housing.

The *Comité d'Aide aux Réfugiés* (CAAR) in Bois-Colombes offers nine refugee families six months transitory housing in return for rent at 20 per cent of their income.

Groupe Accueil et Solidarité (GAS) in Villejuif offers 20 temporary flats for refugee families for a duration of one year, renewable.

Service d'Insertion Réfugiés in the Haut-Rhin department helps around 45 households to access public or private housing.

“ I didn't have information, I didn't have a network of friends, no family. Two weeks later I became homeless. A week of delay [in rent supplement] literally [means] hunger or homelessness.”

Individual interview with a refugee in Ireland

Respondents and stakeholders noted that experiencing homelessness, sleeping in emergency shelters or relying on the goodwill of friends for accommodation after granting of status strongly impacted the early phases of integration. The poor standard of some shelters and the profile of other users disturbed refugees and produced a negative start to housing careers.

“ It's not easy because there are drunk people, beggars, it's not easy to stay there, it doesn't smell good. I don't want to go back there.”

D., male Guinean refugee in France

The same man described his precarious housing situation:

“ I'm not staying at my friend's place anymore because his wife is coming back so there is no room. So he introduced me to a friend where I can stay until the end of January and I need to pay 150 Euro. But the problem is the man is coming back every evening at one in the morning and I need to wait for him outside until he comes back.”

D., male Guinean refugee in France

Other respondents reported abuse when living in such accommodation, such as harassment or withholding important correspondence, while others reported their parental role was eroded in shelters when staff would contradict or overrule the parent.

In France, stakeholders and respondents reported many families with children are placed in hostels because reception centres lack available space. As a result, these families remain in hostels for the whole duration of the asylum claim and for several months after recognition of status, sometimes years. Generally unable to stay in the same hostel for the whole period, refugees moved from hostel to hostel. Respondents emphasized this as a barrier to integration particularly noting the detrimental effect on their children's education and the additional impact it had on family life and dynamics,

“ The problem is it's very difficult to cook when you don't have a kitchen. Our little girl was only four when we arrived. She didn't understand why it was forbidden to eat.”

I., male Chechen refugee in France

“ For my daughter ... I don't want to have to constantly change housing. In the new hostel, she started having problems again, she started hiding and closed herself to others.... The housing instability has brought her back as before.”

R., male Chechen refugee in France

EMPLOYMENT, SECURE INCOME AND PERSONAL FINANCES

The connection between employment and housing is clear. Unemployed individuals have difficulty renting housing because they have no income and some landlords do not accept tenants on welfare benefits. Conversely, if one is of no fixed abode, getting a job can be a challenge. Respondents stated the result is that many in this situation are forced to take low paid and low skill jobs, whatever their own level of skill or qualification, with or without contract, and to take housing on a sub-let (or sub-sub-let) basis which is often also short-term. This can lead the individual or family into further vulnerability and instability.

““ *The first questions if you try to rent a first-hand apartment are, "What is your income?" and "Are you employed?"*.”

Interview in Tensta, Sweden

The co-dependence of housing on employment and vice versa was noted by stakeholders in Sweden as a vicious circle that some asylum-seekers and refugees in bigger cities enter, where jobs without contracts lead to housing without contracts, which together create an unstable situation.

Stakeholders identified sub-letting of what is often short-term housing to be a barrier to integration partly because it leads to frequent moving. The move may be in the same city or not, but if it is not close by would be likely to impact negatively on employment, language classes and children's education.

Employment and income of course is the basis of secure or insecure personal finances, and weak personal economy may lead to short-term or precarious housing because securing stable long-term housing is financially out of reach. Low incomes can be supplemented by welfare benefits accessible by the general population as well as refugees. However in Sweden, for example, housing subsidies are only available to those with a housing contract. As noted above, some refugees have little choice but to sub-let, sometimes sub-letting at second or third hand, which means in Sweden's bigger cities where there are already housing shortages, those refugees cannot access housing subsidy and fall deeper into vulnerability. The financially disadvantaged position of many, although not all, refugees in relation to housing was noted in each project country. Austrian stakeholders stated that generally for refugees there is a great discrepancy between housing affordability and between the costs of housing subsidies. Irish stakeholders were concerned that rent is capped at 475 Euro per month and for those on rent supplement this results in this group often needing to top up rent from other benefits.

HOUSING SHORTAGE AND STANDARDS

Shortage of housing generally and social housing in particular in larger cities was highlighted in each project country, resulting in an increased reliance on private sector housing. Stakeholders stated the private sector is less controlled in relation to housing quality and those renting at the lower end of the price range, which may include refugees, are disproportionately affected by poor housing standards. Stakeholders also noted that the private sector can be less stable as landlords may increase rents. The private sector is also more prone to unaddressed poor housing conditions with stakeholders and respondents adding that it was not uncommon to find apartments with condensation, mould, no functional heating system and faulty windows.

Depending on location, housing becomes more or less challenging and incidences of sub-letting and precarious housing increase or decrease. Respondents had more positive experiences outside larger cities. Four respondents living in the town Bollnäs, Sweden reported having housing contracts for rental apartments provided by the municipal housing company. These respondents felt it was easier to integrate in Bollnäs compared to a big city, mainly because of the favourable housing situation. One respondent used to live in Uppsala where he waited for four years for housing before giving up and moving to Bollnäs where he agreed his lease in one week.

In France, a very high proportion of refugees live in the Ile de France region where the social housing shortage is particularly pronounced and where respondents expressed anxiety toward their housing

situation. However, respondents in other regions were generally satisfied with their housing situation and the stability it gave them to find employment. In some French regions refugees are able to access social housing within a year of recognition of status.

Generally, larger cities have shortage of housing. In Sweden there is a general shortage of all rental apartments in Stockholm, Malmö and Gothenburg. In particular, there is a shortage of studios suitable for single refugees and apartments for larger families which can often characterize refugee or migrant households. Almost all respondents in Sweden who lived in Stockholm and Malmö were unhappy with their housing situation citing overcrowding, short-term solutions without contracts, and sub-standard apartments.

In larger cities, housing segregation can occur with refugees being able to access housing only in the cheaper socially deprived areas. In the Malmö suburb of Rosengård and the Stockholm suburb of Rinkeby, more than nine out of ten residents have a background in another country. Respondents who live in Malmö and Stockholm describe the residential segregation as a problem and a failure in terms of integration.

“ Even the ambulance hesitates to go to Rosengård because of the negative image and the bad reputation of the area.”

Female respondent in Malmö, Sweden

A male respondent in Sweden considered that an area where the majority live on income support is not a good place to network and learn about employment opportunities. In Austria, stakeholders generally felt people liked to live with those of similar background. A real estate agent stakeholder expanded by noting that it was difficult to rent apartments in buildings which were home to a large proportion of African origin occupants because some other people would not like to live next to Africans. An integration stakeholder explained the rejection of the idea of social mixing by the tendency for homogenization by both receiving society members and newcomers. However, in Ireland, refugees felt safer when living in neighbourhoods with a high migrant population and offered the benefit of familiarity with the same ethnic group which facilitated bonding through social, family and marital ties.

Practice example - France

In the Maine et Loire, France, Reloref (FTDA) has secured an agreement with the Préfecture keeping 80 flats per year for refugees; in the Rhône department, refugees supported by Accelair are able to access housing within nine months (compared to 44 months for social housing applicants).

Practice example - Austria

People's Aid Austria Vienna -Flatworks Project: This project targets recognized refugees and persons with subsidiary protection and provides cooperative flats, counselling and guidance. The organization acts as mediator and helps understanding Austrian society, systems and people. Co-financing for housing is also provided which the tenant repays within two years. Respondents cited the positive impact of this project. The disadvantage of the project is that it is small with too few flats available.

SUPPORT TO FIND HOUSING

Having or not having support in accessing housing has an impact and was of influence in integration in all project countries, but varied due to the different systems. In France, where there is an annual shortfall of reception centres, fewer than 44,000 representing two-thirds of all asylum-seekers stay in reception centres. Disparities were highly pronounced between recognized refugees housed in reception centres during or after their asylum claim and those not receiving such support. Although reception centres are not without their critics, they provide a stable environment in which refugees may orientate themselves.

“ It gives them the opportunity to calm down and to find shelter. They have the opportunity to focus on the asylum claim. It gives them some moral comfort and they can work on their claim.”

Social worker, Cada Rennes, France

In this context service-providers act as mediators with landlords which helps dispel negative perceptions of refugees, and refugees can learn about how the housing market works.

Unsupported individual refugees without a family were the most at risk to experience an erratic residential history and are not considered a priority for reception centres. For some respondents this resulted in extreme instability and unsupported refugees often felt hopeless and isolated.

“ The biggest problem is housing. There are many reception centres around Paris, but I stand no chance because I'm not being helped by an organization.”

I., male Palestinian refugee in France

Shortfalls in accommodation support, such as social counselling, in Austria exist particularly in areas which are home to large refugee populations. Refugees are at risk of homelessness, due to the lack of accommodation and the lack of appropriate housing on the private rental market. General lack of information on rights, available support, methods to access housing and registering for housing after granting of status were noted as particular gaps which influence housing. The lack of information resulted in reliance on friends, acquaintances and real estate agents who spoke their language, which could lead to abuse and exploitation according to examples given by respondents.

Practice example – France

Forum Réfugiés and France Terre d'Asile, have both set up large-scale programmes (*Accélair* and *Reloref* respectively) which aim to sensitize landlords to refugee issues. The *Accélair* programme in the Rhône department supports all refugees living in or outside reception centres under close partnership with local institutions and NGOs ensuring full coverage of all recognized refugees.

Solibail, launched in 2008 in Ile de France, aims to ensure that landlords receive a monthly rent even when renting to socially disadvantaged households. Rent is paid partly by the refugee and partly by the French government.

Several organizations assist disadvantaged households to become sub-tenants initially, later rolling the lease so they become tenants (*bail glissant* system).

Practice example - Austria

Integration House/Diakonia/People's Aid - Kosmopolis project. This project targets employed refugees, those with subsidiary protection and some migrants as well as the receiving population in certain location. It provides housing and integration support, comprehensive counselling, financial advice, tenancy law, administrative procedures, buddy system, and conflict management in Vienna.

Diakonia Refugee Service Vienna - *Zukunftsraum Project* (Future Space). This project targets recognized refugees over 18 who have been previously on the Basic Welfare Support scheme in Vienna, on their first steps into a self-determined life. The project offers accommodation in integration-oriented starter flats, counselling and planning, and arranges vocational orientation and job placements. The disadvantage is that it has a long waiting list.

Similar projects exist under Caritas, People's Aid Austria and Red Cross.

Practice example - Canada

The CIC Integration Program aims to deliver orientation and adaptation programmes to provide support for the settlement and long-term integration of newcomers; to help newcomers contribute to the economic, social, cultural and civic development needs of Canada; and to encourage a range of actors to participate in creating welcoming communities for newcomers.

Support through dissemination of information can be extremely helpful according to Irish stakeholders and can reduce feelings of isolation, especially in relation to the different housing schemes available and to the complaint procedure for reporting discrimination and poor housing conditions. They also highlighted challenges accessing housing support and advice amongst those having recently been granted status, saying the process does not work well increasing the risk of especially new refugees falling into situations of indebtedness and homelessness. Other project countries noted similar experiences, calling for more specialist support to access appropriate housing. In France, the absence of specialist support led respondents to generalist social workers for assistance with housing but experienced that social workers' lack of specialist knowledge of refugee entitlements is a problem. In Ireland, stakeholders noted the presence of specialist support for refugees with post-traumatic stress and other mental health issues but noted also that these services were limited and sometimes it was not easy to access them. In Sweden, there is specialist support for PTSD but as in Ireland, access can be a challenge.

URBAN PREFERENCE

As other migrants, most refugees gravitate toward the large urban centres where, through perceptions built up prior to flight, they have come to believe there is a high level of support, good employment prospects, higher earning potential and where existing contacts may live. Encountering the reality of larger city living often comes as a shock when expectations are not fulfilled. Frustration, acute disappointment, resentment, depression, loss of confidence, and feelings of isolation and bewilderment are some experiences.

As noted above, housing shortages in larger cities are not as acute in smaller towns or in rural areas. While this can also be accompanied by fewer resources such as colleges or universities or specialist refugee support, and while the available job profiles may be less skilled, the relative ease with which secure housing can be achieved provides stability. As an example, two factors that pushed refugee respondents in Austria to the city, mainly to Vienna, were the lack of mobility in rural areas as well as seeking their own communities social networks.

However, refugee respondents often showed a general reluctance to move away from the city even though the above advantages were acknowledged. Reasons in each project country were similar, with respondents saying leaving newly formed social networks was their reason for avoiding relocating because moving may lead again to isolation and depression. Partly, refugees feared low employment in smaller towns, but partly it was the beginnings of friendships that kept them in the city and which they feared losing. For others it was the supportive connection they had established with a social worker.

“ And I don't want to leave Paris because all my Tibetan friends live in Paris. We follow each other.”

D., male Tibetan refugee in France

Some refugee respondents in France added they were cautious about moving because the majority of social housing opportunities are located in socially deprived areas. Stakeholders felt this perception related to the discrepancy between reality and expectations to changes in social status.

📌 Practice example - France

France Terre d'Asile - CAP'I Mobilité programme was set up in 2007 to help refugees integrate through geographic mobility. CAP'I Mobilité aims to take advantage of the pool of social housing available in less densely populated regions. In 2011, 280 people moved to another French region.

📌 Practice example - Sweden

Östersund municipality in northern Sweden expects 320 refugees during 2013. With few vacant rental apartments, the municipality decided to rebuild existing properties in order to be able to receive more refugees. In addition, the municipal housing company Östersundshem will set aside a tenth of their vacant apartments for refugees.

Moving from larger cities can be facilitated by the positive attitude of municipalities and politicians toward refugees. One example is in Sweden where stakeholders noted the attitudes of local politicians and their willingness to receive refugees has facilitated municipality placement and where municipalities with more outspoken refugee-friendly politicians and decision-makers have, to a certain extent, been able to find housing for refugees. Municipalities in northern Sweden are experiencing population decline as younger generations leave for university and work in southern Sweden and do not return. In these areas, refugees are seen as a positive advantage in maintaining the population.

Cross-cutting issues for refugee integration

The areas discussed above are policy areas already identified as influencing integration and for which indicators of integration exist and measurement and evaluation can be put in place. However the discussion above shows these areas to be subject to individuality and to subjectivity thereby making measurement of progress and attainment of integration problematic. There are also regional differences which make a national – or more so, an EU – method of measurement and evaluation a challenge.

Most of the policy areas discussed are cross-cutting: language affects training, employment, social contact, citizenship and belonging; employment affects housing and vice versa; housing affects social contact. The interconnectedness is critical to acknowledge but serves to make outcome-related policy-making difficult.

In the case of refugees, there are many similarities with non-refugee migrants' integration challenges but certain characteristics of the refugee condition add differences which are critical to note, such as language, lack of documentation, uncertain periods in asylum and time spent in asylum process, flight-related health issues, and a fear of safety for family members. These influences on integration are specifically refugee-related and this report has presented them as part of the discussion because they are cross-cutting. However, it is worth recalling the reader's attention to these refugee-specific areas because they influence the integration "success" and integration trajectories of refugees. These areas are often overlooked within policy for wider migrant integration.

In addition, two areas which are not fully covered above within other policy areas are family reunification and the transition period from asylum-seeker to refugee. Some further data from consultations follows here.

Family reunification

Family reunification has been discussed in previous sections in relation to stress and the distraction and anxiety of separation which impacts on health, employment, language, and education possibilities. There are some other more specific barriers that are worth noting.

Family reunification is a right for refugees regulated in the Family Reunification Directive (2003) with more favourable conditions than those of other migrants, such as waivers on financial and employment requirements, however other barriers exist. For example, the challenge of negotiating the application process itself, the financial cost of the application and of transport to where the application is successful, proving family connections, repercussions on integration and on family life of a lengthy reunification process, and stress. Respondents in this study also raised concern with other rules applicable to family reunification. For example, in Sweden children over 18 years are generally not allowed reunification with their parents, and married couples who do not have biological children together or who have not co-habited for a long period before arrival in Sweden are often denied family reunification.

“ I’ve been told that since we don’t have kids, I am not allowed to take my wife to Sweden.... In order to see my wife and family members I would have to send them money to go to a neighbouring country, so that I can visit them there. This is of course impossible due to my economic situation.”

Young Somali man in Spånga, Sweden

The process for family reunification is complex and although some respondents had started the process themselves, most had finally sought assistance. A lack of information on the process, inconsistent knowledge of, and limited information from, consulates on the status of the application, and impossible requests were noted by respondents as obstacles.

“ Family reunification has been very difficult for me. During my asylum claim I said my husband had disappeared. They knew it but kept on asking me papers proving it.”

M., Rwandese refugee in France

In all project countries proving family connections was stated as the hardest and most stressful part of the process. Even where certificates exist they can present difficulties as authorities do not understand that consistency of spelling is problematic in some developing countries.

“ The biggest problem is that my last daughter hasn’t been able to join us. There was a difference of one letter between her name on the register and the birth certificate so the embassy refused.”

K., male Ivorian refugee in France

Practice example – France

The *Bureau des Familles de Réfugiés* (Ministry of Interior) guides refugees during the procedure and produces a leaflet on family reunification for refugees. As a result of this UNHCR study, OFPRA set up a link to the leaflet on its website.

Many respondents referred to the financial cost of family reunification. Many were on low wages and already remitting to countries of origin for food and medicine. Sending money for reunification associated costs, such as applications, translations, transport and documents was expressed as an added burden. Later, with successful applications, the cost of flights was often financed with loans. The impact of this on refugees’ wider integration is clear: reduced finances for rent, food, clothes and transport in the receiving country.

There is also a time cost while the application is being processed. Some stakeholders noted that during the lengthy process, older children went over the age limit and were excluded from the application resulting in permanent family separation.

Transition period

Throughout this research, the transition period between asylum-seeker and refugee has been either directly stated as highly problematic or indirectly indicated as such by reference to difficulties securing housing and employment, the urgency with which the refugee must leave reception centres and supported accommodation, and the sudden possibility of everything now being able to start. This issue is rarely addressed specifically in integration related discourse but has considerable impact on refugees, their integration, and the support that is able to be provided to them.

During asylum, the individual is restricted in terms of planning a future. On being granted status, relief and happiness is very closely followed by a further set of problems and stresses: 1) the permission to work; 2) formal language training may begin; 3) thoughts of family reunification take shape; 4) making a permanent home can begin. For those in reception centres a further stress appears; 5) a limited (varying in project countries) amount of time to find independent housing.

Not only does this causes confusion – what to do first, and how - but the paperwork necessary to move on and put in place the above is slow to appear or appears in fragments. This was stated as an issue in all project countries but was stated most clearly by French stakeholders and respondents. This case is given as an example not to highlight France but to highlight the issue at stake. According to French stakeholders a key problem in this respect relates to obtaining the *récépissé*, a three-month renewable temporary leave to remain. Refugees are supposed to obtain their first *récépissé* within eight days of granting of refugee status. However, in reality, Préfectures often fail to provide it within the required period, preventing refugees from accessing welfare benefits and entering the job market.

A second three-month *récépissé* follows, but can only follow once OFPRA, the French administration in charge of processing asylum claims and administering refugees' birth certificates, has processed the refugee's birth certificate. The second *récépissé* acknowledges the refugee has applied for the 10-year leave to remain. The 10-year leave to remain should arrive with the refugee before the second three-month *récépissé* expires. However, delays in overworked Préfectures often prevent this.

The consequent repeated renewal of *récépissé* has clear negative repercussions for refugees because its interruption amounts to an absence of a regular residence permit without which the individual cannot access employment and risks being struck off by employment, health and/or benefit agencies.

“ People end up having to go to the Restos du Cœur (Food bank) because their benefits have been cut because of the *récépissé*. ”

Social worker, CPH Massy, in France

Practice example - United Kingdom

Successful transition initiative: Refugee Integration and Employment Service (RIES) – 2008-2011 – Provided a “one-stop shop” comprehensive service covering welfare, employment, housing, training, education, and country orientation. Now discontinued, but noted by stakeholders including the Refugee Council as a successful initiative with positive outcomes. Several stakeholders highlighted the demise of RIES presents a gap as refugees must now move between various departments to access information. Although there are NGOs which provide “one-stop shop” support, stakeholders noted the importance of filling such a gap to prevent destitution and extreme cases of suffering where the most vulnerable slip through the net.

In Scotland the gap in delivering integration support and advice left by disbanding RIES may be filled by an holistic service provided by the Scottish Refugee Council (SRC) under Big Lottery funding. The SRC was previously contracted by UKBA to provide the RIES programme.

Conclusions and recommendations

Refugees rarely begin from the same starting point as other migrants. Their networks are fewer, their families may be at risk in their country of origin, their language ability is often absent or very limited, their documentation may be lost, or their health has perhaps declined due to trauma and violence. This study has prioritized refugee trajectories, asking what refugee integration looks like.

In addition, this study has acknowledged the individuality of each refugee's integration process. While there are some common structural challenges faced by refugees and migrants more widely, challenges can only be addressed if refugees are recognized as individuals, rather than as a homogenous group for whom the same interventions are envisaged.

Integration policy which allows all refugees and others with protection status to become economically productive leads to self-reliance, dignity, and social interaction, and is beneficial to individuals as well as the receiving society.

This study set out to test which integration policy areas, integration indicators, methods of evaluating integration, and influencing factors are relevant in the case of refugees.

UNHCR was interested as to which factors positively or negatively influence refugees' levels of "success" in already-identified integration policy areas; what are the main areas of difference between refugees and migrants more broadly; what impact these differences exert on short- and long-term refugee integration, and what is the typical trajectory of refugee integration and how that can be improved. The study sought to understand "how refugees are doing" in integration with a view to setting an agenda for future research to include a collection of comparable qualitative and statistical data.

A review of existing literature formed the starting point for this research. However, a crucial element was to build knowledge of refugee-specific barriers and facilitators in integration through consultation with refugees and with stakeholders whose work relates to refugees.

Findings from the literature review show that EU and participating EU Member State governments approach the integration of newcomers along broadly similar lines. Integration forms an important challenge to States and there is a clear overall commitment reflected in EU policy. Since integration was first included in the Tampere Programme in 1999 and in subsequent multi-annual programmes, EU-level integration developments have included the Common Basic Principles (2004), the Common Agenda for Integration (2005), the Zaragoza Declaration (2010), and the European Agenda for the Integration of Non-EU Migrants (2011). These developments include identifying key integration policy areas and indicators of integration, as well as outlining initiatives to increase the participation of migrants, including refugees, at the economic, social, cultural, civic and political levels.

National governments' commitment to integration, including for refugees, is also evident through existing integration support and established policy direction. This study found a wide range of integration programming and a considerable amount of integration support exists in project countries and that refugees are highly motivated to take advantage of this support, especially in the early stages. This continuing political will to "get refugee integration right" is critical to refugees (and other migrants) becoming full members of the receiving society.

Integration goals and policy areas

In the last decade, there have been many attempts to benchmark and measure the integration of migrants across EU countries using comparable indicators. The integration policy areas identified at the EU level are employment, education, social inclusion and active citizenship. These areas were generally identified in this study as relevant and have broad consensus among EU Member States as important for integration. However, countries which measure integration often have a broader framework for evaluating integration which goes far beyond these four areas. A review of policy areas and indicators has shown that while there is adherence to similar areas in project countries and the three example countries, there is also divergence. With regard to integration monitoring policy areas and indicators, all countries examined, with exception to Ireland, have developed a national approach broadly including the indicators identified at the EU level, though adding other aspects of integration to the evaluation. While France, Sweden and Austria identify a comparable number of indicators (36 in France, 27 in Sweden and 25 in Austria), the quantity of indicators in Germany and the UK differ significantly (100 in Germany and eight in the UK).

The review of policy areas and indicators conducted has shown that while the importance of emphasizing integration as a two-way process, prioritized at the EU level, is reflected in project country's policy areas, this does not come out strongly in measurable indicators and integration support. It nevertheless is reflected in some of the indicators on social inclusion. Similarly, there is no country which includes family unity in their integration framework, yet it is included in the MPG/ UNHCR Integration Evaluation Tool and in MIPEX. Other refugee-specific areas of reception and asylum, documentation, and the transition period from asylum-seeker to refugee are not reflected in project countries' integration policy areas, although in Sweden reception and introduction is one of the indicators examined.

This study's literature review and consultations jointly confirmed that the specific challenges refugees face in integrating are complex and require some special measures. Family separation, the time spent in the asylum procedure and the process of seeking asylum, absent documentation, trauma and violence-related health issues, are key refugee-specific elements which influence if and how refugees are able to integrate in their new society.

The variance of policy areas and measurable indicators demonstrates that knowing what to measure is clearly a challenge. Furthermore, the link between measuring integration and integration policy development is not always clear. There is therefore a need for clarification of the integration goals within the integration policy areas and clarity on how evidence from what is measured can and will inform integration policy.

This study has found that understandings of what integration is, which underpins government direction on integration policy and support, vary considerably. Also, differences exist between governments' and policymakers' views of integration and those of refugees' and stakeholders'. The general understanding at government level that integration is a process with learning the new language, acquiring work and housing at its heart reflects refugees' understanding. However, refugees go further, grounding their understanding of integration in understanding rights and responsibilities, the passage of time, and subjectively developing "feelings of being at home". Some refugees said they never felt 100 percent integrated no matter how long they were in their new country, indicating integration is more about subjective factors than objective factors. Therefore, governments' integration goals of equality, inclusion and achievement may be reached by refugees in ways different to government expectations or desires, and the expectation that everyone will achieve set goals does not reflect reality.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Integration policy areas supporting refugee integration should reflect the two-way process of integration and the three integration areas identified by UNHCR, those being economic, social-cultural and legal. In addition, integration policy should reflect refugee-specific concerns of family unity, reception and the asylum process, documentation, and the transition period immediately after recognition.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Where integration goals are formulated, flexibility should be considered for refugees as to how integration is understood and assessed, recognizing that integration may not occur in all policy areas in the desired timeframe.

Refugee integration data and measuring

This study found a general absence of quantitative refugee-specific data on integration policy areas and measurable indicators of integration in project countries, although this data is well accounted for in the case of migrants. It can, however, be possible on occasion to infer some information on refugees and integration by looking at country of origin information. Largely, refugee integration is mainstreamed in immigration policies for third-country nationals. At the national level, statistics specifically on refugees and integration in the project countries, while limited on key integration policy areas, do suggest significant differences between States and between integration outcomes for men and women. This may result in policies which are not helpful for refugee integration. As integration statistics are not typically collected for refugees and because the situation of refugees must often be drawn from ethnic, religious or nationality data, "how refugees are doing" regarding integration is difficult to discern.

In contrast, the available qualitative research on refugees is considerable in some countries, and is valuable in highlighting case studies through which to understand refugee experiences. Often focusing on national or ethnic groups in a particular location and on one strand of integration, such studies contribute to knowledge about barriers to refugee integration and good practice on how to overcome barriers. Even without measuring the integration of refugees, information and knowledge to support refugee integration is available. However, qualitative research rarely allows the generalized statistical analysis that quantitative research can provide.

Gaps in information and in measuring refugee integration in general, and in a number of refugee-specific issues that influence refugee integration in particular were found in this study. These areas include the time spent in asylum processes and flight-related factors, family unity, the absence of documentation, and the transition phase from asylum-seeker to refugee. Although there is a general awareness that refugees have endured trauma, disruption and upheaval, this awareness is not matched by the collection of data to measure how these factors influence integration. UNHCR finds this to be a gap in knowledge that is integral to understanding refugees' integration "success" and trajectories. There is therefore a need to bring the specificity of refugees into integration measuring and evaluation, where integration indicators are used to measure integration attainment and inform integration policy.

While collecting more qualitative and quantitative data on refugee integration is important, it is also important to explore what are the most informative means of measuring integration, starting with clarifying what is to be learned from such an evaluation and determining the questions to ask. For example, if we link housing location to refugee household economy, this may mean those households are low-earning; that they choose to live near relatives or "the community"; or it could mean those households organize their household finances in ways which are unaccounted for in the questions, for example, allocating money for remittances.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

While there is a good understanding through existing qualitative research of what works well for refugees and what are specific challenges, further studies could usefully focus on gathering data on the impact these challenges have on refugee achievement in formulated integration policy areas. Future research should place at its centre cross-cutting and interlocking areas that are specific to refugees, such as family separation, time spent in the asylum procedure and reception, absence of documentation, the transition phase upon recognition, language, and health in order to inform policy.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Measuring integration of refugees is important but not in isolation from qualitative data, which provides insights into the subjective level at which integration occurs. A combined approach involving collection of quantitative and qualitative data, preferably on a longitudinal basis, would be valuable, including, for example, age, gender, regional and educational factors. Refugees' experiences should be included in such efforts and their views considered in relation to the design and evaluation of integration support.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

In future quantitative research and statistical data on integration, it is recommended that data is collected on specifically refugees' situation. Targeted longitudinal qualitative research will also be useful to better understand refugee integration in all policy areas and to understand the nuances that statistical data cannot reveal. Indicators related to legal aspects, such as attainment of citizenship and family reunification, are therefore relevant and should be included.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

Where refugee integration is mainstreamed into overall integration of third country nationals, and where existing evidence suggests refugees have needs and experiences different from the overall migrant population, specific measures should be taken to assess and meet such needs for refugees.

Thematic findings

The four key policy areas at the EU level that were most recently identified in the Zaragoza Declaration (2010) as being important to integration and for which measurable indicators have been identified are employment, education, social inclusion and active citizenship. These areas were reflected at the national level in project countries, but with variance to accommodate national priorities and policy directions. This study included these areas in consultations and analysis, focusing on employment, education (including language), social integration and inclusion, active citizenship, in addition to housing and health. In France, active citizenship included access to rights. In Ireland, a focus on the media and discrimination was included under active citizenship and social integration respectively.

Upon analysis of the refugee and stakeholder consultations, the policy area of active citizenship had widely become conflated with social integration and discussions had often been formulated around citizenship and naturalization rather than engagement and civic and political participation. Active citizenship was therefore included under the reporting on social integration, with highlights of findings in these four areas outlined below. In addition, cross-cutting issues of family reunification, the length of the asylum procedure, documentation and health were apparent throughout discussions in most policy areas.

Employment

Employment, including training or re-training, was a main concern for refugee respondents. For governments, employment is equally key to integration of all migrants. Employment integration is evaluated by data such as labour market engagement by country of origin or ethnicity, age and gender, and earnings.

Some limited statistical evidence suggests refugees fare worse than other migrants regarding employment and that specific barriers exist for refugees in addition those challenges other migrants face. Such challenges include, for example, loss of identity documentation and qualification certificates, trauma and uncertainty, anxiety over family separation, and the long period of inactivity in the asylum system. Acquiring refugee status also means acquiring the legal right to enter the labour market without restrictions. However, this presents a new set of barriers such as job availability, familiarity with the local employment market, knowledge of the language, and qualifications recognition.

The majority of respondents referred to employment instability, oscillating between brief periods of employment, unemployment, underemployment and longer-term employment. Accepting work below skill-level or below previous employment or educational attainment characterized the employment experience for many respondents. One impetus to accept any type of work included an urgent need to find suitable and affordable housing at the point when refugee status is granted. Refugee employment success was found to worsen in a poor economic climate in relation to the native population.

Respondents reported downward professional mobility to be particularly hard to cope with for those refugees with qualifications. Refugees were often found to be in hard-to-fill positions such as the care sector, cleaning, catering and construction, and menial jobs. In rural areas, occupations included working in slaughterhouses, agriculture or forestry. This study found that employment agencies are instrumental in refugee employment.

Recognition of qualifications, skills and experience was identified as a significant challenge. Where qualification recognition procedures exist, they are sometimes inconsistent or do not offer official validation that would be accepted by employers or further education institutions. There are also only limited opportunities for an assessment of practical skills and experience. The result of this is that the resource represented by qualified and experienced refugees is lost to the state and the individual.

Language was found to be a key element to entering employment, though the level of language tuition provided was widely stated to be too low for practical use. Vocational language tuition was found to be useful, as was combined work/language opportunities that are available, for example, in the Swedish “Step In” job programme.

Administration and documentation can form a barrier to entering employment in the period after the granting of refugee status. The transition from asylum-seeker to refugee often requires specific support and attention to ensure timely access to labour market and services. Where delays or poor coordination were seen, it was found to be detrimental to refugees in a number of ways, including in entering employment. This problem was compounded by employers’ limited knowledge of refugee rights and confusion, in particular over residence cards for persons with subsidiary protection.

Those asylum-seekers supported by organizations or living in reception centres during their asylum process were more likely to receive support in securing employment information, entitlements to benefits, access to residence permits, as well as advice on healthcare and housing.

RECOMMENDATION 7:

Support employment agencies in recognizing skills of refugees and in directing them to appropriate employment. In addition, to ensure qualified or skilled refugees are recognized, practical skills assessment should be introduced as early as possible. Existing good practice from integration of resettled refugees should be considered more generally in refugee integration support.

RECOMMENDATION 8:

Combination work/language opportunities should be considered in addition to basic language training in order to facilitate labour market entry and to speed up further language development. Opportunities could include volunteering, internships, work experience and apprenticeships. The Swedish model for allowing a combination of language training and employment could be considered across EU Member States.

RECOMMENDATION 9:

Ensure close coordination between the authority granting refugee status and the authority issuing documentation to avoid delays or gaps. Ensure provision of documentation which is clear and simple so as to avoid confusion amongst employers and personnel in contact with refugees and subsidiary protection beneficiaries seeking employment. In this regard, ensure accurate and timely information about rights, entitlements and documentation is disseminated to relevant service providers and stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION 10:

Support to be provided to all asylum-seekers, whether living in reception centres or not during the asylum process, can have a positive impact also on integration. A regular point of contact for asylum-seekers living outside reception centres should be considered as good practice to ensure access to support.

Education and language

Education and language are separate policy areas at the EU level, but were considered together in this study. Language allows a refugee to feel part of the wider society, creates a sense of belonging, enables friendships, and facilitates day-to-day living. This study illustrated that language acquisition, or the lack of it, is vital to all facets of refugee integration, cross-cutting every area. Consultations showed that a lack of language skills presents barriers to networking, retraining, job-seeking, housing, employment, and severely restricts the ability to be self-reliant. Refugees quickly become isolated by their lack of language. Specific influences on language and education identified include employment, agency support and the provision of information, validation of certificates and skills, language training, age, family unity, household economics, health and the asylum process.

Integration in the area of education and language is evaluated by data such as the numbers of migrants in secondary and tertiary education to indicate achievement, the proportion completing language courses, and by an assessment of equal access to education. However, statistics are insufficient to show how refugees are doing regarding education and language, which is mainly because data is not disaggregated for refugees. Nevertheless, qualitative data does illustrate that refugees struggle to access further and higher education due mainly to lost educational certificates, non-comparability of educational standards, and the need to learn a new language. Refugees fare worse than other migrants due to certificates lost in flight and to emotional health issues around trauma and experiences of flight.

Findings show that the project countries all provide language training. However, as noted under employment, the level to which courses take the refugee are insufficient for more than basic daily use. In addition to combined language training and employment, where the positive effect of being able to practice the new language outside the classroom was clearly stated, traineeships or internships were also mentioned as a useful avenue for language learning.

Refugees often arrive in their new country with little or no language ability. During long periods in the asylum procedure, there is usually no formal language training. Language is therefore learnt informally and in a piece-meal fashion. This subsequently hindered progress for those who were granted status.

Consultations in project countries showed the crucial role played by support agency staff. Respondents reported attitudes of agency staff to be unhelpful in some cases. Repercussions included lost welfare payments, delayed appointments due to a lack of interpretation, and perceived obstruction to providing information on further education.

Personal and household economy are often the deciding factors for entering further or higher education. Stakeholders identified resources as a fundamental barrier or facilitator of education. This applied to not only vocational, professional and academic courses, but to higher language courses also.

RECOMMENDATION 11:

Higher levels of language training to be made available, and most particularly for those whose prior educational or professional background indicates a need.

RECOMMENDATION 12:

Language training should be made available as early as possible. Existing practice on language learning, also for asylum-seekers, could be promoted. This could include opportunities for practicing language also through work experiences.

RECOMMENDATION 13:

Ensure personnel who provide services or information to refugees have training on empowering clients and enabling clients to achieve their full potential.

RECOMMENDATION 14:

Loan, grant and scholarship schemes for higher education could be included in refugee integration support. Where individualized integration plans are in place, guidance on education and access to specialized funds or schemes should be promoted.

RECOMMENDATION 15:

Further information and data are needed about the relationship between household economy and course drop-out rates, as well as sustainable employment.

Social integration and inclusion

Social integration and social inclusion are often based on subjective factors. Measurement of social integration and active citizenship, which this study has taken to be closely linked, is generally by factors such as, for example, involvement in community activities, school events, religious activities, sports, volunteering, uptake of citizenship and voting behaviour.

The literature suggests refugees are often more isolated and therefore face challenges forming friendships or connections with members of the receiving population. This study found that this is related to language ability, cultural differences such as preferring not to socialize in pubs and bars, uncertainty of cultural norms, fear of rejection or experiences of racism, time and psychological limitations connected to concerns about finances, employment, housing and family separation, segregation in larger cities, and age. Poor emotional health, depression and anxiety can result from these factors and further impact an individual's ability to connect.

Social integration is not a one-way street, but this study found that many refugees did not have friends or acquaintances among the receiving society even though most desired such contact. Connections between refugees and the receiving population can occur in a variety of environments, including the workplace, in college, places of worship, bars, and on public transport. However, often uncertainty and caution about cultural norms and behaviour in unfamiliar social spaces from both the refugee and the receiving population prevents initial contact.

Participation in civic and political arenas, which falls under the active citizenship policy area, was found by this study to be somewhat ambiguous. There was some apprehension of political involvement or anything that could be described as "public", such as speaking on the radio. This was due to experiences in the countries of origin, where to speak out may have attracted a problem. There were also myths or misperceptions regarding the effect public participation may have on asylum applications and refugee status, which some feared could be revoked. In addition, not every individual – refugee or not – wishes to be involved in civic or political matters.

Active citizenship was also raised in relation to media engagement, participation in associations, volunteering and access to citizenship. The study found that becoming an active citizen rests on the country's structural and social methods of engaging newcomers, encouraging and facilitating participation, and on the individual. Discrimination and the role of the media were highlighted as areas which influence active engagement in and with society.

Stakeholders and refugee respondents in all project countries strongly emphasized that where someone lives influences their life chances. Limited resources of local authorities in some areas, discrimination amongst resident populations, and educational limitations can create areas of disadvantage. The additional challenges that refugees face are compounded by the limited personal resources, knowledge of the local area or the “system” that would enable them to overcome some of the location-related obstacles.

RECOMMENDATION 16:

More collective efforts are needed by all stakeholders to support social networking, such as mentor projects and volunteer interaction. Existing good practices in this regard can usefully be replicated.

RECOMMENDATION 17:

Strong anti-discrimination framework and promotion of intercultural dialogue should be included in strategies to promote active citizenship. Community engagement, such as sports clubs and recreational activities, should be promoted and facilitated.

RECOMMENDATION 18:

More information should be collected in relation to the links between social inclusion and active citizenship on the one hand, and citizenship and integration more generally on the other. Citizenship for refugees should be facilitated.

Housing

There is little data on refugees and housing but the literature suggests that comparatively fewer refugees are able to access suitable and affordable housing in the year or two after recognition of status than are migrants. Refugees struggle with accessing suitable, affordable, secure, independent housing. Reasons include landlords' reluctance to rent to refugees, the urgency with which refugees must find housing after recognition of status, refugees' lack of employment and therefore of secure income, particularly in the transition phase, a lack of security deposit, or work contract. Due to these reasons, refugees rely heavily on social housing, which is more problematic in large cities where there is often a general housing shortage.

This study found that refugees overwhelmingly felt the transition period immediately after granting of refugee status is highly difficult and stressful regarding housing. The pressure to leave the reception centre can drive refugees to poor housing in disadvantaged areas or to living temporarily with friends, or indeed to homelessness.

It was also revealed that location can have a positive and negative effect on integration. Larger cities, while attracting refugees with the promise of work, are sometimes more difficult in which to find appropriate housing in a reasonable timeframe. Smaller cities can provide greater opportunity to secure suitable and affordable housing in a shorter timeframe. This can facilitate faster social integration, reduced stress, and provide more opportunities to rebuild lives. However, this can be offset by a lack of ethnic networks and high unemployment. In this way, the study found that it is not only the standard of housing but geographic location more broadly that counts in the area of housing integration.

A significant barrier to refugees gaining suitable and affordable housing in all project countries was found to be private landlord requirements such as deposit, references, bank statements, work contract, refugee documents and, in some cases, non-acceptance of applicants in receipt of welfare payments. These barriers relate to personal finances, secure income and being employed, all of which require time to establish after the granting of status.

RECOMMENDATION 19:

Provide support to refugees to find suitable and affordable housing upon recognition and take measures to prevent refugees from becoming homeless.

RECOMMENDATION 20:

Take measures to create greater awareness among landlords and social housing authorities about the limitations for refugees to meet standard housing requirements. This would assist refugees in gaining access to suitable and affordable housing in a timely manner. Therefore, better information should be considered as part of integration support. Upon granting of status, a good practice could be for refugees to have access to a guarantor scheme for an initial period during which they would be able to establish themselves.

Cross-cutting areas

The complexity and interdependency of integration areas with almost all other integration areas was strongly confirmed by this study. It was also found that the influences of and on different policy areas is not always well reflected in integration literature and studies, and can hamper knowledge about refugees. In particular, family separation, the asylum process and time spent in the asylum system, lack of documentation, language, health and the transition period from asylum-seeker to refugee are important cross-cutting areas arising from consultations conducted in this study.

Family separation

Family reunification was not found to be in the project countries' integration framework but the significance of this area on integration was expressed strongly by refugees. In all project countries, respondents stated reuniting with their family was their first priority after arrival in the receiving country. However, this study shows achieving family unity is not without its challenges, including the application process itself, financial costs, proving family connections, impact on family life of a lengthy separation and then reunification, and high levels of general stress.

It is impossible to measure how family reunification, or the lack of it, impacts on refugees' performance in policy areas such as housing, employment, language and education, active citizenship and social integration because so much is subjective. It is, however, clear that the impact is great because both stakeholders and refugee respondents referred to the impact of family separation on refugees' ability to think, to plan, to concentrate and to build a future throughout this study.

Family separation affects all areas previously discussed: the ability to learn a language, to re-train, to negotiate bureaucracy and officialdom, to search for work, to look for housing, and to build friendships. Enduring isolation and grief in the absence of family reduces an individual's ability to function.

Despite the EU Family Reunification Directive (2003) Member States apply a variety of rules relating to family reunification, such as which family members are included, the ages of included family members, the presence or absence of biological children with the married couple. The rules are complex and frustrating, and when viewed over a long application process, can be exclusionary as some children pass the age of 18 before the process is complete.

RECOMMENDATION 21:

The very limited knowledge that exists on the impact of family unity, or the lack of it, on integration should be improved through future research. This would enable an understanding of family unity in relation to refugees' integration trajectories and 'success'.

RECOMMENDATION 22:

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

Time in the asylum process

This study found that assistance during the asylum process, the length of the asylum process, and the dignity and respect experienced in the asylum process were areas which could be improved upon and where gaps in knowledge of the impact on integration exist. Reception conditions and experiences are not represented in policy areas, with the exception of Sweden, but the impact on feelings of belonging, of feeling welcome, and having a future were voiced strongly by refugees. Most significantly, the period of asylum was seen as wasted time: the time wasted, as refugee respondents expressed it, is time lost. Often extending for years, the period of asylum is also largely a time of inactivity but also of uncertainty and of hope.

EU Member States generally offer very limited services to asylum-seekers which support subsequent integration on the basis that they may not be staying in the country. However, there is an argument against this strategy; one that is both practical and human.

Firstly, throughout this research, many stakeholders and refugees in all project countries felt language would be best taught during the asylum stage to establish language proficiency for those later receiving status. It may also provide human capital for those who are unsuccessful and who later return to their country of origin.

Secondly, restrictions of EU Member States regarding accessing employment during the often long duration of the asylum procedure creates dependency, not dissimilar to that existing in camp situations. A system of counting, rationing and restricting erodes the very thing the receiving society later seeks to encourage through integration: independence and self-sufficiency. Access to work has been shown above to improve language skills, increase confidence, increase social connections, in addition to the obvious benefit of reducing costly reliance on welfare benefits.

Again, for those who are granted status, having access to work can prepare refugees for subsequent integration. For those who are not granted status, they have gained in terms of skills, confidence and finances, and this can be translated to improve life-chances on their eventual return to their country of origin.

RECOMMENDATION 23:

Considering the negative impact on both integration and the ability to return following prolonged time spent in asylum procedures, efforts should be made to ensure efficiency in asylum procedures.

RECOMMENDATION 24:

Conditions, practices and support during the asylum process should promote dignity and aim at empowering the individual asylum-seeker. This should include preparing the individual for future integration for those in need of protection, or for return. As such, ways in which asylum-seekers could be brought into the employment market or benefit from language or vocational training should be considered.

Documents

Not all refugees lack documents on arrival, but those who do often cannot obtain copies or originals. Lack of documents impacts upon many areas of fundamental daily living. Identity documents from the country of origin, lack of documents for family reunification, lack of documents for validation of experience or qualifications, all slow or hinder the process of 'moving on' in the new country.

From an emotional perspective, the repercussions of lack of documentation can influence how the individual perceives the receiving country, their place in it and how welcome they feel. Encountering constant barriers can erode self-confidence and create negative feelings about themselves and the receiving society.

RECOMMENDATION 25:

Service providers and others working with refugee integration should be informed about the particular challenges for refugees in obtaining documents. As part of individualized integration support, a lack of documents should be noted and official attestations or other support to facilitate access to services could be provided. Existing good national practice in this area should be documented and replicated where possible.

Transition

Throughout this study, the transition period between asylum-seeker and refugee has been directly and indirectly stated as highly problematic relating to securing housing and employment, the urgency with which the refugee must leave reception centres and supported accommodation, and the sudden possibility of everything now being able to start. This issue is rarely addressed specifically in integration related discourse and is not reflected in policy areas, but has considerable impact on refugees, their integration, and the support that is able to be provided to them. Stakeholders stated delayed paperwork and documentation often led the individual refugee to wait beyond the grace period allowed for moving out of reception centres. The urgency and the lack of timely documentation leads to anxiety, confusion, delayed labour market entry and sometimes homelessness.

RECOMMENDATION 26:

Initial targeted integration support to beneficiaries of protection upon recognition should be considered in all Member States as a good practice. Existing national good practice on individualized integration support and refugee empowerment in the transition phase should be promoted.

RECOMMENDATION 27:

Integration approaches and support need to recognize the individual character of integration. This could be support for individualized plans for refugees or a personal point of contact for the individual refugee where information on practical and logistical aspects of living in the receiving society can be obtained. Good management of the transition period from asylum-seeker to refugee is crucial for integration, including prompt issuance of documents and access to effective services.

Health

There is not much research exclusively on refugees' health and integration. Existing research focuses mainly on migrants generally and much is at a descriptive rather than an analytical level. The available research existing on refugees and health is often interconnected with research on other policy areas where health becomes an influencing factor in those areas, and vice versa. For example, with regard to housing, there exists research on the impact of inadequate housing on physical and emotional health, and the impact of oversubscribed healthcare services in densely populated areas where refugees may often reside.

Other examples are the influence of past violent or traumatic experiences leading to depression and disorientation, and the impact that the asylum process has on health. Health was found to be a cross-cutting issue influencing other areas as well. For instance, health influences the ability to learn a new language, and intertwines with employment and housing. Research found that asylum-seekers often suffer poor mental and physical health, including depression, stress or anxiety.

In all project countries, health was noted throughout all discussion areas as both a barrier and facilitator to integration, and as an outcome of flight, asylum, and of the many concerns refugees have upon receipt of status. The period during the asylum claim is also one of uncertainty and unfamiliarity which can lead to mental suffering and psychological distress. Also, family separation has a considerable psychological impact, especially on parents separated from their spouse and/or children, while concerns about the safety of family members also causes considerable stress. Additionally, physical health concerns are common, and before refugees can begin to think about building a future, torture, gender-based abuse, and injuries during conflict and flight require medical attention and counseling. Obstacles to healthcare and medication would clearly impact upon an individual's ability to function in everyday life. While there is a significant need for mental health support for refugees, such structures are often insufficient to meet such needs.

RECOMMENDATION 28:

Refugees' health should be understood as a cross-cutting issue influencing many aspects of the integration process. As such, more research should be undertaken to understand their needs and the impact of different policies on refugees' health and therefore their integration. Existing good practice on responding to refugees' health, including the impact of trauma or gender related health issues, should be promoted.

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List of abbreviations

AMS	Labour Market Service (Arbeitsmarktservice), Germany
APSR	Association d'Accueil aux Médecins et Personnels de Santé Réfugiés en France
AZR	The Central Aliens Register (Ausländerzentrale), Germany
APARDAP	L'Association de Perrainage Républicain des Demandeurs d'Asile et de Protection
BAMF	Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration and Flüchtlinge), Germany
CAAR	Committee for Aid to Refugees (Comité d'Aide aux Réfugiés), France
CAI	Reception and Integration Contract (Contrat d'Accueil et d'Intégration), France
CEOP	Community Economic Opportunities Program, Canada
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
COMPAS	Centre on Migration Policy and Society, UK
DPHRS	Dispositif Provisoire d'Hébergement des Réfugiés Statutaires
ECRE	European Council on Refugees and Exiles
ELIPA	Longitudinal Survey on the Integration of Newly-Arrives Migrants (Enquête Longitudinale sur l'Intégration des Primo-Arrivants), France
EPIC	Employment of People from Immigrant Communities, Ireland
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
EU	European Union
EU-LFS	European Union Labour Force Survey
EU-SILC	European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions
Eurostat	European Statistical Database
Excom	Executive Committee of the High Commissioner 's Programme
FCRO	Foreign Credentials Referral Office, Canada
FTDA	France Terre d'Asile
GAR	Government-Assisted Refugee
HDI	Human Development Index
HRC	Habitual Residence Condition, Ireland
HRSDC	Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development

IET	Integration Evaluation Tool
IND	Immigration and Naturalisation Service (Immigratie en Naturalisatiedienst), the Netherlands
INIS	Irish Naturalization and Immigration Service
INTI-CITIES	Integration Governance in European Cities
INTREO	Department of Social Protection's integrated employment and income support service, Ireland
IPPR	Institute of Public Policy Research, UK
IRB	Immigration and Refugee Board, Canada
IRPA	Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, Canada
LCR	Landed Convention Refugee
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex
LIDS	Longitudinal Immigration Database, Canada
LINC	Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada
LSIC	Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants Canada
MIPEX	Migration Integration Policy Index
MPG	Migration Policy Group
NAP	National Action Plan for Integration, Austria
NASS	National Asylum Support Service, UK
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRG	National Reference Group
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFII	French office for Immigration and Integration (Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration), France
OFPRA	French Office for Protection of Refugees and Stateless (Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides), France
OPMI	Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration, Ireland
ORAC	Office of the Refugee Application Commissioner, Ireland
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment, Germany
PLAB	Professional and Linguistic Assessment Board, UK
PPM	Parcours et Profils des Migrants, France

PROSINT	Promoting Sustainable Policies for Integration
PSR	Privately Sponsored Refugee
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
QQI	Quality and Qualification Ireland
RCO	Refugee Community Organisation, UK
RICE	Refugee Integration Capacity Evaluation
RIES	Refugee Integration and Employment Service, UK
SCB	Government Agency Statistics Sweden
SFI	Swedish for Immigrants
SFX	Swedish for professionals
SMB	Swedish Migration Board
SPES	Swedish Public Employment Service
SRC	Scottish Refugee Council
STATIV	Statistics Sweden longitudinal individual database
SVR	Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration (Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration), Germany
ULB	Free University of Brussels (l'Université Libre de Bruxelles), Belgium
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for the Refugees
UKBA	United Kingdom Border Agency



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