



Clore Social
Leadership

#rethinkingrefugee

**A new perspective
on the resettlement
and integration of
Refugees and Forced
Migrants**

Provocation Paper for
Fuad Mahamed
Clore Social Fellow 2016



About the Author

Fuad Mahamed

Fuad came to the UK as a refugee unable to speak English and yet went on to obtain a first class degree in Engineering from Bath University followed by an MSc in Management from Lancaster Business School.

When Bristol based Euro Hostels collapsed and started evicting people, he stepped in, setting up Ashley Community Housing in 2008 in order to support the resettlement of refugees like himself. This accommodation-based refugee resettlement service now spans across 3 cities, employs 50 people and settles 700 individuals a year.

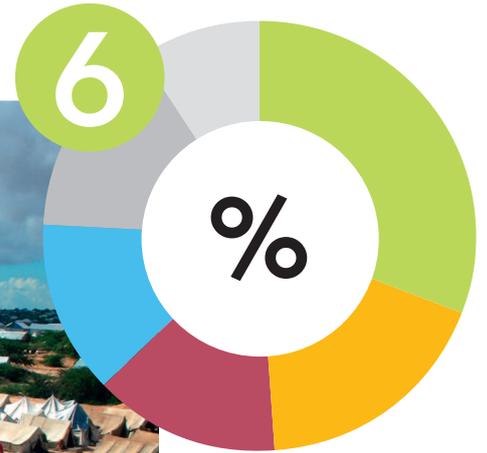
He has since graduated from executive Programmes at the Cranfield School of Management, Aston Business School, SAID business School of Oxford University and is currently a 2016 Clore Social Fellow for Refugee and Migrant communities. Together with his colleagues at ACH, Fuad has argued for a new approach to refugee assistance and integration based on holistic view of supporting refugees from arrival to integration through effective employment and enterprise skills. Fuad have contributed articles to Inside Housing, 24 Housing, Bristol Evening Post and Birmingham Post. He was also interviewed by the BBC TV and radio on numerous occasions to dispel refugee myths.

He volunteered in Dadaab, the world's largest refugee camp in Kenya last summer and advised the Somali government about refugee repatriation and resettlement.

This provocation paper was written as part of his Clore Social Leadership research on Migrant and Refugees. He would like to take this opportunity to thank Paul Hamlyn Foundation which has sponsored his fellowship.



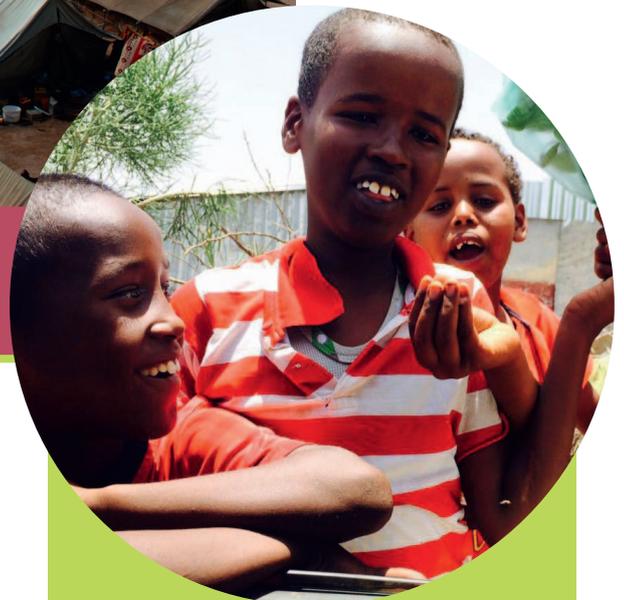
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Introduction

The last 2 years has seen the greatest changes to the situation facing refugees and forced migrants at least since Second World War. The unprecedented scale of movement across Europe during 2015 and belated political responses has now been followed by a vote for the UK to leave the EU. Although refugees were not specifically a major element of this, wider migrant flows were and the decision places further uncertainty over the policy environment we work within.

Where once refugee matters were discussed in the periphery in most countries, including in the UK, today it is at the centre of international political thinking. The ongoing wars in the Middle East and the global scramble to find solutions to turn the tide of desperate refugees escaping from this violence is only further evidence of the prevalence of this matter. It would seem likely that this will be the case for some time to come. The UK Government have responded to the crisis by proposing to accept 20000 Syrian refugees to resettle in UK by 2020.

Ashley Community & Housing (ACH) is a **leading refugee resettlement service and a training provider building bridges with mainstream UK society** with offices in the West of England and West Midlands. ACH has been operating since 2008 and now works with 2500 refugees per year to help them with accommodation and the support services which are necessary necessary to assist them move on with their lives.

In this paper I will argue how we need to unlock the untapped economic potential of refugees. Our Rethinking refugee campaign calls upon recognising the skills, talents and aspirations of refugees and how they can contribute to our economy and communities especially with our aging population and Brexit.

Ultimately, any credible response to the crisis must address its principal causes which include lack of security, drought and lack of economic opportunities. These causes are indeed, the primary cause of irregular migration, more than the allure of a new world. **Majority of the youth fleeing from fragile countries need economic opportunities to be developed in their home country to stop them making the dangerous journeys into Europe.** Some of the UK aid budget will be well spent to directly address this issue. As much of the research and available academic literature suggests, prevention is better than cure.

When the refugees arrive in the UK, they go through a very challenging asylum system. The UK government faces an imperative to invest significant resources into

improving asylum procedures, repatriation mechanisms, and integration systems. Beyond the legal and humanitarian arguments, making these improvements is in the country's economic self-interest.

In the past the UK has struggled to integrate refugees, and repeating this mistake could have adverse consequences for the refugees and their host economies alike. Refugees face the risk of isolation, unemployment, and poverty, while destination communities might experience strained welfare systems and segregated societies.

We hope to turn the current humanitarian challenges into sustainable opportunities for the refugees and all stake holders

Against a backdrop of aging populations and persistently low economic growth, the UK government is not doing enough to help refugees move from low-skilled market entry jobs and into decent work. **Our Rethinking refugee campaign calls for the need to make sizeable investment in refugee labour market integration.** The cost of non-integration is in far excess of the cost of integration. By attempting to understand the best ways to resettle refugees we hope to generate new ideas which can turn current humanitarian challenges into sustainable opportunities for the refugees and all stake holders, including their new communities.

This provocation paper was written as part of my Clare Leadership program research on Migrant and Refugees. As part of the research, I have visited world's largest refugee camp Dadaab in Kenya and Somalia.



ACH Project Details

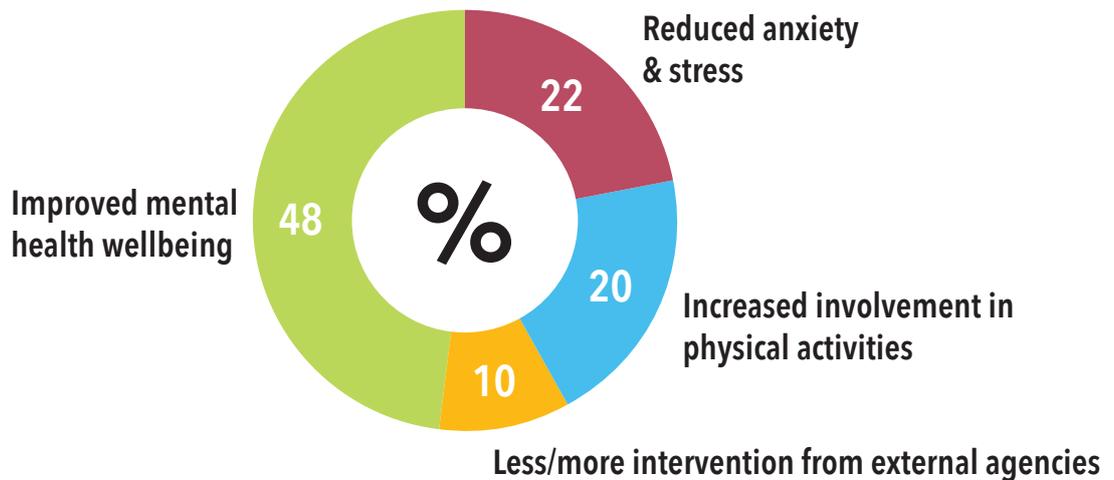
ACH IN NUMBERS

Region	Number of tenants	Number of properties
Bristol	140 tenants	30
Birmingham	210 tenants	45
Wolverhampton	50 tenants	12

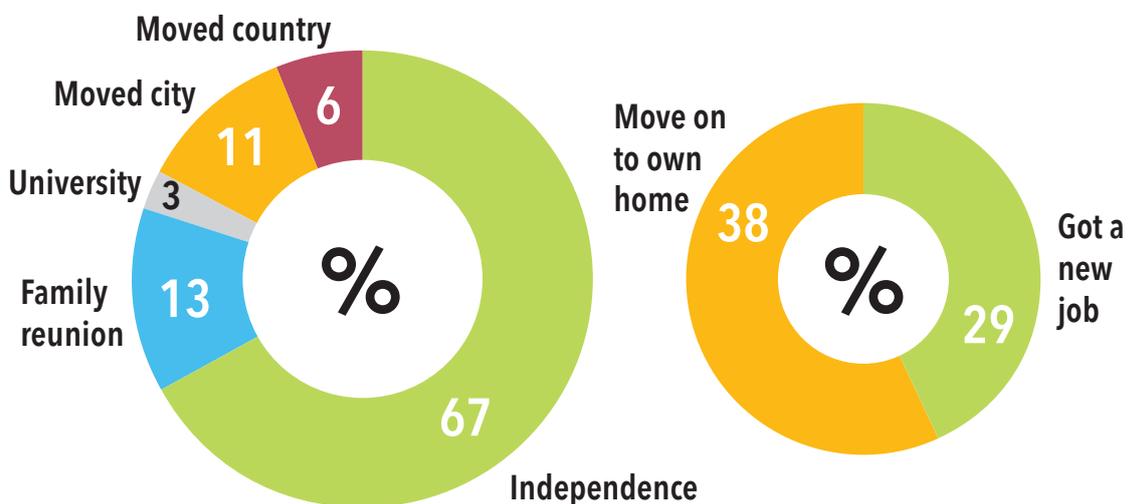
We will impact over 2500 learners and tenants combined together in 2017-18 academic year.

Region	Number of learners for academic year 2017-18
Bristol	1,200
West Midlands	600

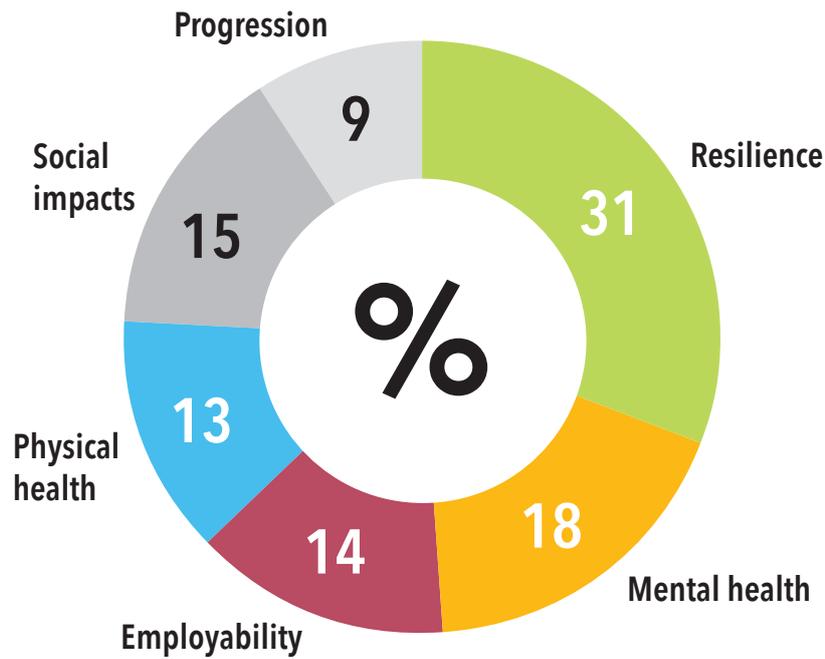
HOW OUR SERVICES IMPACTED ON OUR TENANTS



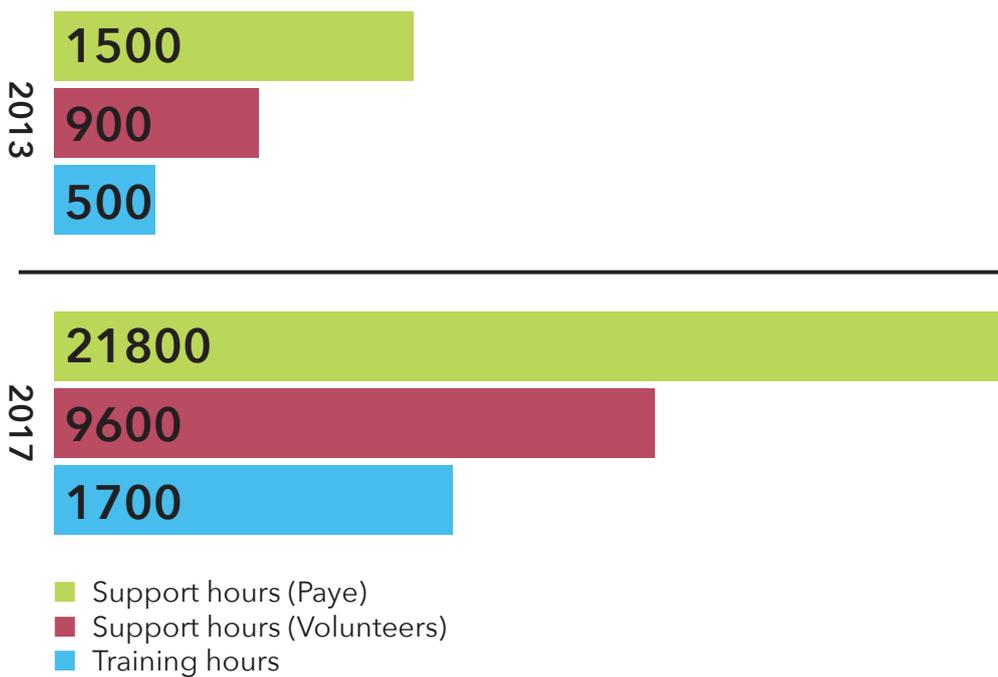
TENANT MOVE ON



WHAT IMPROVED FOR OUR TENANTS?



SUPPORT HOURS AND TRAINING OFFERING TO OUR TENANTS TO ACHIEVE MOVE ON



- Support hours (Paye)
- Support hours (Volunteers)
- Training hours

1

Origins of Refugees and Forced Migrants

1.1 To deal with the refugee crisis you have to understand the cause

We face the most serious refugee crisis in the last twenty years, with more people displaced since WW2. People migrate for many different reasons. These reasons can be classified as economic, social, political or environmental:

- **Economic migration** - moving to find work or follow a particular career path
- **Social migration** - moving somewhere for a better quality of life or to be closer to family or friends
- **Political migration** - moving to escape political persecution or war
- **Environmental** causes of migration include natural disasters such as flooding and draught

A **refugee** is someone who has left their home country due to fear of prosecution. Often refugees do not carry many possessions with them and do not have a clear idea of where they may finally settle.

Migrants are people leaving their country in search of better life.

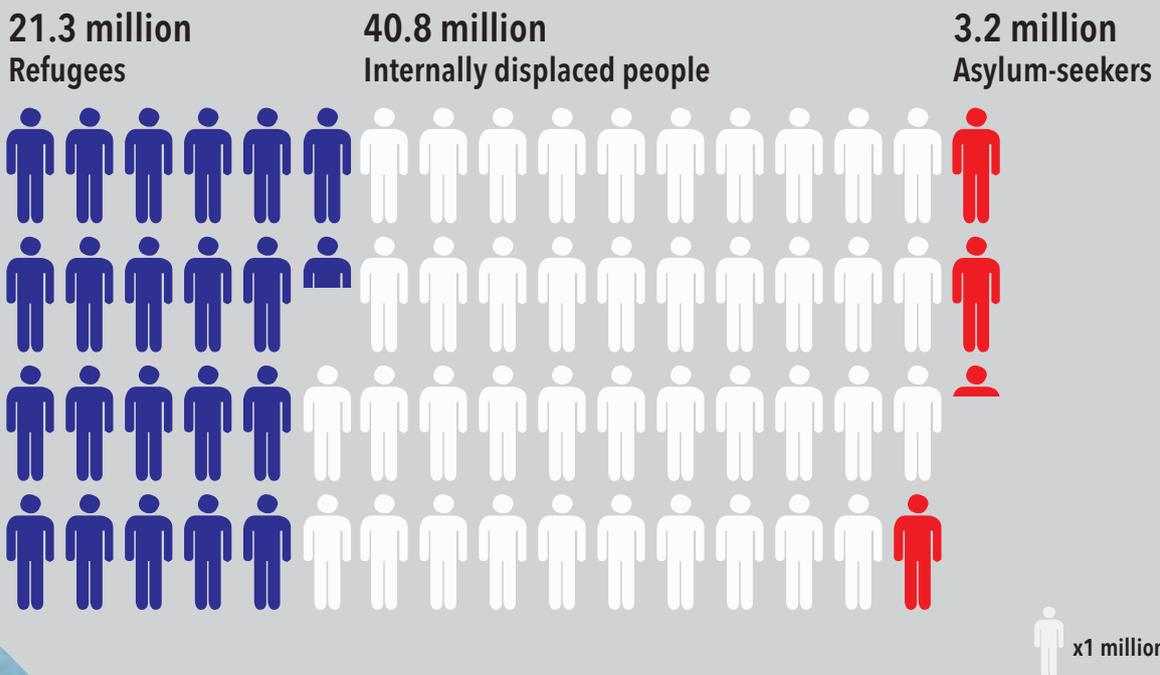
A lot of the refugees coming to the EU are people living in camps usually in neighbouring countries of their home country, where they might be safe from conflict and persecution, but few see the camps as a viable alternative to living with war, famine or under an oppressive dictatorship and thus make the journey to Europe. Others may be living in fragile countries like Somalia, Yemen, Eritrea and Afghanistan and have to flee from their country due to poverty, insecurity and lack of economic opportunities.

The work and expertise of Ashley Housing (ACH) is the most important element of our work for the many public sector organizations engaged with this crisis in the UK. However, it is pointless to focus on refugee resettlement and integration here in the UK or even in EU countries without understanding the cause of the displacement and at least attempting to

The paper will look at the whole journey starting from the original place of migration



65.3 million people worldwide are forcibly displaced - roughly the population of France



The total number of forcibly displaced people is 1 of every 113 globally

Source: United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees

provide suggestions and policy solutions as to what can be done to stop refugees migrating from their home countries and saving them making the perilous journey.

The paper will look at the whole journey starting from the original place of migration and what can be done to stop them before making their dangerous journey. Secondly, we will address what is wrong with our asylum process and how the UK Government's deterrent strategy is not working and how to speed up refugee integration in to the host community. And finally, how we can positively change refugee perceptions:

1.2 Crisis of displacement

At the end of 2015, the world had 65.3 million people who had been forcibly displaced from their homes, the highest ever number on record, according to the United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees (UNHCR), also known as the U.N. Refugee Agency.

The record figures for 2015 were released on June 20, which also marks World Refugee Day, and showed an increase of 5.8 million displaced people compared to the year before. The total of 65.3 million people includes internally displaced people (those who left their homes but stayed within their own country) as well as refugees seeking asylum in other countries. About two-thirds, or 40.8 million people, were categorized as internally displaced, while almost a third, or 21.3 million, were classified as refugees. The remaining 3.2 million people were waiting for their asylum applications to be processed, mostly in Western countries. Syria is currently the single largest source for new refugees, but older conflicts, like those in Afghanistan and Somalia, continue to be big contributors as well.



The Home Office confirms there were 25,771 asylum in the year ending June 2015 of which 40% granted status on the initial decision and 60% declined. If you compare the number of refugees we have accepted by June 2015 to the number of refugees hosted by Lebanon or even Turkey, it is scandalous to call it crisis in UK or even in EU. There are an estimated 117,234 refugees living in the UK. That's just 0.18 per cent of the total population (64.1 million people).

1.3 Durable solutions for the root cause

As the world grapples with the current refugee and migrant crisis in Europe - in which over 900,000 refugees and migrants have made perilous journeys over sea and across land, it is critical that our focus turns to address **the root causes of forced displacement** and irregular migration.

Root causes are multifaceted, context-specific and require different strategic responses by states, humanitarian and development actors. In order to achieve durable solutions for displaced persons and affected populations, it is imperative that governments, humanitarian and development actors establish a more nuanced, evidence-informed understanding and dialogue on the root causes of displacement and the triggers and barriers to solutions.

From the outset, **we need to support fragile and affected countries by addressing the root causes of instability and irregular migration.** We should aim to help foster stability in the regions to respond to the challenges of irregular migration and displacement and to contribute to better migration management. More specifically, we will need to address the root causes of destabilisation, displacement

From the outset, we need to support fragile and affected countries by addressing the root causes of instability and irregular migration

and irregular migration, by promoting economic and equal opportunities, security and development.

We need to be building the capacity of refugee producing governments to manage migration more is important. This is being done by the EU through helping the source and transit states to prevent and fight human trafficking and smuggling, to improve border management. Furthermore, it is equally important to offer assistance to victims of trafficking and smuggling, or to raise awareness of the dangers of irregular migration and the alternatives to it.

Finally, **there must be greater emphasis on job creation for the youth.** We must generate an enabling environment for job creation in micro- and small enterprises development through multiple vocational education and training actions.

**“You have to understand, that no one puts their children in a boat unless the water is safer than the land”
Warsan Shire**

1.4 Tahriib: The Somali case

“You have to understand, that no one puts their children in a boat unless the water is safer than the land.” Warsan Shire

Somalia remains one of the countries with the largest and most protracted displaced communities worldwide with 1.1 million internally displaced and almost 1 million refugees in the Horn of Africa region alone. Somalia have very young population and best estimates suggest that over 60 % of the country’s near 11 million-strong population are 24 or under. Around 43% of the total population are under 14 years of age. **This could be an advantage for Somalia’s reconstruction and development, but only if the youth issues are addressed properly.**

We also need to situate the tragedy in a broader context. There is a global displacement crisis. To take the case of Syria, there are 9m displaced Syrians; 3m of whom are refugees. Most are in Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon. But countries like Jordan and Lebanon - whose capacities are stretched to breaking point - are now closing their borders and in need of international burden-sharing. These people have to go somewhere and increasingly they are travelling on to Europe in search of protection.

There needs to be broader framework based on international cooperation and sharing responsibility. The elements of a solution to the contemporary crisis has to be at a number of different levels. These include improvements in search and rescue to return to at least the capacity of Mare Nostrum and equitable burden-sharing and relocation of refugees within the European Union which currently is not the case under the Dublin Regulations which stipulates that refugees seek asylum where they land within the EU first. In addition to this, Support to build up the protection and human rights capacities of source and transit countries is crucial as refugees can flee on individual basis from their homes.

In addition to these creative solutions, additional support is needed for refugee-hosting countries in regions of origin - and we need to promote the refugees’ capacities to contribute to their host state. We need a European resettlement scheme that reflects a commitment to proportionately share responsibility for the global refugee population which either works alongside the Dublin regulations or supersedes it.

The Dublin Regulation has put much of the burden on a few Member States and annual quotas are still unpopular and not adopted. Therefore, it is important that Local Governments, service providers and other partners in the refugee discussions continue to take an active role in informing and influencing policies so that the best solutions can be found to one of the most crucial national and international challenges of our time.



Despite recent developments, majority of the young Somalis consider migration a viable option, given the lack of employment and livelihood at home. Although pockets of stability are developing and moderate growth has returned, this has yet to translate into betterment for the population. Moderate growth witnessed since 2011 is not considered enough to address poverty or inequality.

Dissatisfied youth are risking their lives to embark on 'Tahriib', the perilous migrant journey to Europe. It is often the country's brightest hopes, those with university education and career ambitions, who see Tahriib as their only way of fulfilling their ambitions.

"Most of our educated and able ones are the ones that are dying in the sea," said Mr Arteh Deputy Prime Minister of Somalia in 2016, referring to the hundreds of Somalis who have died trying to cross the Mediterranean in rickety overcrowded boats.

The cause of this irregular migration in Somalia comes down to:

- 1. Conflict and Security**
- 2. Severe Drought**
- 3. Lack of opportunities**



There is no doubt that joblessness, among other things, has induced the Somali youth to risk their lives in the high seas in search for better lives and employment.

The question is what can be done to create jobs to lower unemployment in Somalia in order to slow the number of Somali youth dying in search of work?

The biggest employers in Somalia today are the governmental institutions funded by international donors. However, these jobs are mostly given on the basis of "who-you-know" as long as you can produce some sort of certification or a degree regardless of its legitimacy. This unfair hiring system has discouraged many youths from staying in Somalia. To tackle this widespread nepotism the system of hiring has to become a merit based one.

To facilitate this shift, the Somalia Government (including its regional governments) should establish a ministry or high-level independent governmental entity, which should do all the hiring for the government for all the positions in the civil service. This shift will hinder or at least reduce hiring people based on "who-you-know." This approach will allow many unemployed people who nevertheless have the right education and training to get the jobs they deserve, which will increase productivity and also build-up the national morale by giving those disgruntled and disenfranchised youths hope and reason to stay.

To further ease this extreme unemployment burden at an industrial level, the Government should attract light and labour intensive manufacturing companies from around the world to increase the number of low skill oriented jobs in the country. The government should provide incentives such as accelerated paper work, land lease, loans, and partnerships to attract these companies. The Somali Government adopted a competitive and business friendly Investment law last year which aims to do this but again the challenge is the perception of insecurity in Somalia that may still deter investors.

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Furthermore, to create a creative and skilled workforce, the national and the regional governments, nongovernmental organizations and academic institutions should focus on skill transfer and financial and business literacy, and build start up incubators near educational centres. These measures will enable the young to gain skills and knowledge in financial and business literacy, which will enable young skilled entrepreneurs to start their own businesses generating employment right away. Again, this is a measure that is much discussed by the Somali Government and international organisations such as the ILO but is still not coordinated to have the maximum impact.

These measures are short-term solutions for prevalent unemployment in Somalia to slow the large part of Somali youth risking their lives in the seas. In order for Somalia to sustain continuous growth of employment, these measures will require sustained investment in the pillars of a developing economy such as infrastructure and its governing institutions to make the country attractive for all types of investors, especially, for the Somali youth.

Arriving in the UK: Asylum Seeker Stage

2.1 Challenges faced by UK Asylum Seekers

The subject of this report is innovative models for integration for refugees in the UK to their host community. However, before someone can be classified as a refugee, they go through the UK asylum process which is full of challenges.

“Asylum seekers” are people who have formally applied for asylum, but whose claim is pending. In practice, only a part of asylum seekers is granted refugee or some other form of humanitarian migrant status, while the rest have to leave the country. If people remain after being denied protection they become undocumented migrants

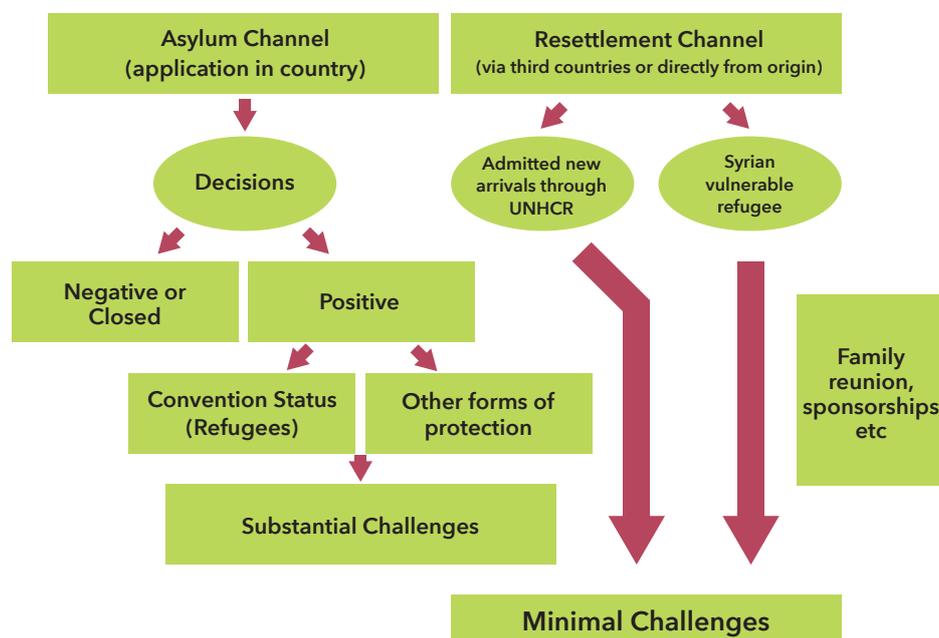
As described below, potential refugees coming to the UK come either through the asylum channel, which means requesting asylum at the UK border or in some cases making direct application to the home office whilst in the UK. The other group is recognised as refugees before they even set a foot in the UK, whilst still in their camps. This group usually come through the UNHCR Gateway program or the recent Syrian Vulnerable Program announced by the Government. Refugees coming through the Resettlement channel face fewer challenges in comparison to their counterparts coming through other routes. They are presented with immigration

papers, accommodation and welfare entitlement from day one, making their resettlement journey in the UK easier and very welcoming.

Those coming through the Asylum channel face far bigger problems including UK policy stance on welfare and employment rights for asylum seekers is among the most restrictive in Europe, with the vast majority of asylum seekers not having any form of access to paid employment.

2.2 Not permitted to work, study or volunteer

Given that asylum seekers are not permitted to work, do voluntary work or training, their lives are put on hold until decision is made about their status. Asylum seekers are restricted from supporting themselves and become at risk of exclusion, homelessness and destitution.



Only a few cases are exempted from this fate as after waiting one year for their decision, the Home Office may allow selected individuals to undertake limited training or voluntary work where qualifications are deemed important to the state. In the majority of cases therefore, **the Government in effect makes itself liable for asylum seeker's accommodation and living costs.**

2.3 Time duration to make decision

The Government can take 1 to 10 years to make the decision about an individual's status. This usually coincides the prime years of many asylum seekers effectively depriving them of opportunities and causing mental health issues. Many refugees have lost their livelihoods, homes, and possibly loved ones. They have been forced to leave behind everything that was familiar, and they may have survived harrowing journeys. **As a result, many may suffer from issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, or anxiety** – any of which makes it more difficult to tackle the challenges of learning to fit into a new country. It doesn't help this is compounded by years of not knowing whether their application will be accepted or rejected.

2.4 Welfare benefits

Politicians warn that welfare benefits act as a pull factor encouraging economic migrants to pose as asylum seekers in order to enter Britain, and use this argument to limit the amount of financial support given to asylum seekers. This position has been criticised by refugee advocacy groups and refugee policy analysts, for its lack of empirical support. The level of welfare benefit given to refugees is less than 50% of Job Seekers Allowance.

Yet the public purse continues to cover the costs of asylum support in the absence of adequate state support. Since work restrictions were introduced for asylum seekers and refused asylum seekers in 2002, the number of charities registered with the Charities Commission that support destitute asylum seekers have nearly tripled. When political concerns about being tough on immigration and immigrants are set aside, the economic argument leans in favour of both lifting the labour market restrictions for asylum seekers waiting for a decision on their claim, and increasing the levels of asylum support to at least 70% of Job Seekers Allowance for both asylum seekers and refused asylum seekers.

2.5 Dispersal policies

Asylum seekers are dispersed across the country especially where there is housing available rather than matching

them against locations where their skills and social networks could make contribution. Networks with friends and family provided access to a wide range of resources. Prospects for integration are likely to be enhanced if asylum seekers can be offered the choice of dispersal locations if they can demonstrate that they have friends or family in close proximity. Alternatively friends and family could be encouraged to house asylum seekers if they were given a contribution to their upkeep. Such an approach is likely to be more cost effective than dispersal.

2.6 28 Days' notice to leave accommodation

Where asylum seekers are successful in relation to their status, they are expected to leave their asylum accommodation within 28 days of being granted immigration status paper work. In reality it takes far longer than 28 days to secure national insurance number, accommodation and benefits. After the four week period refugees are evicted regardless of whether they have secured accommodation or not. This uncertainty exacerbates their ability to think of long term career and life objectives.

After they have been evicted in 28 days, to make things worse, they are still not classified as **homeless priority**.

Finally, an early investment into the skills and economic aspirations of asylum seekers would actually be one of the most cost-effective to integrate them and enable them to fully capitalise on their formal qualification and thus contribute to society.

The UK Government should reconsider it's so called "deterrent strategy" for asylum seekers and think

of the long term benefits of asylum seekers can bring as part of potential work force. Keeping in mind the skills shortage, impact of the aging community and the consequence of Brexit, it would be wrong to adapt deterrent strategy. The UK Government should also reconsider paying better welfare benefit, offering training and work opportunities and reduce the time taken in making decisions about asylum applications.

Quick, fair, and accurate processing of asylum requests with a predictable structure and time line will improve the situation for both failed and granted asylum applications.

The economic argument leans in favour of lifting labour market restrictions for asylum seekers



#rethinkingrefugee



3

Arriving in the UK: Resettlement and Integration

3.1 Introduction to integration

After completing the asylum process successfully, those granted international protection need immediate and long term help with integration. In this chapter, we address the challenges of successful integration by identifying systemic issues and highlighting some concrete and promising strategies for solving them.

Humanitarian migrants (refugees and people with protection) differ in several aspects from other migrant groups. Humanitarian migrants are a particularly vulnerable group who clearly require targeted, co-ordinated and comprehensive policy responses. Due to the forced nature of their migration and the traumatic experiences frequently associated with it, many suffer from psychological distress.

They also face barriers over and above those encountered by other migrants in making the successful transition into employment. They generally arrive with at best very limited connections to the host country and have usually gained qualifications and work experience in very different labour market conditions. Many are not able to provide proper documentation that would clarify their level of education or skills. In the UK, integration policies are primarily focused on **humanitarian intervention** and less on **progressing refugees into employment and self-employment**.

3.2 ACH Integration model: Rethinking Refugee

Too often the refugee issue is regarded as a burden to society and at best humanitarian and a charitable matter. A humanitarian response designed for the short-term too often ends up administering long-term misery. Rather than transitioning from emergency relief to **long-term reintegration**, refugee populations too often get trapped within the system. This benefits nobody. The existing paradigm fails to adequately recognise that refugees have talents, skills, and aspirations. A rethink is urgently needed.



Here in many regions of the UK we have skill shortages, the challenge of major infrastructure projects such as HS2 in Birmingham, Hinckley in Bristol and the need to become more competitive in the face of Brexit as well as an ageing population. The skills and talents of refugees can be used to benefit these labour-intensive projects. To realise this potential benefit, we need to help refugees integrate in to their host communities and the labour market economy.

The most recent report by Dame Casey on Integration highlighted “We have got to be better at managing integration” and also states that our major cities are like “Communities living among communities.” Whilst the UK has a tradition of welcoming refugees, we have fallen behind our EU partners when it comes to integrating refugees. In general, there are four primary areas of integration which need to be addressed:

- **Housing and health integration**
- **Educational integration**
- **Social integration**
- **Labour market integration**

In ACH we have developed integration model which addresses the above four primary areas but focuses on outcome and independency living. Our model stems from almost 10 years of working with refugees. This holistic model has its heart focused on supporting refugees from arrival to integration through effective employment and enterprise skills. This process is illustrated below.

More importantly the above model makes the transition of emergency and humanitarian intervention to long term integration in to the economy and to the host community. We have found that by focusing on housing and other primary needs of the refugee communities including mental health, basic language skills and orientation helps them to resettle and may move on them to market entry jobs. There are multiple challenges in focusing on the resettlement stage of our model above including:

- **Competition with the host community:** Going for market entry jobs (examples include cleaning, admin, ware house) may put the refugees at odds with the host community.
- **Repeated homelessness:** Most of these market entry jobs lead to short-term contracts and/or limited earning abilities which makes difficult to access secure tenancy, forcing refugees into repeated homelessness
- **Warehousing:** no move on strategy.

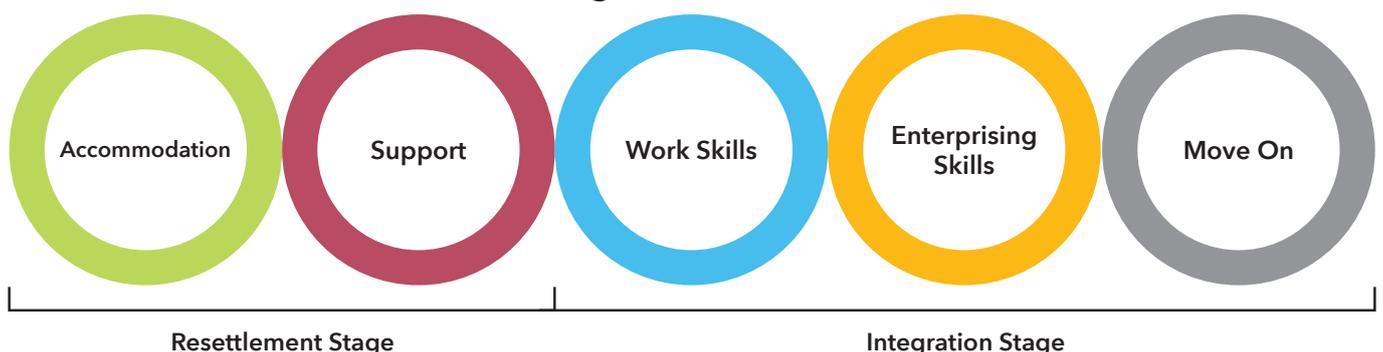


We have refined our thinking by focusing on employment and self-employment skills development. We have devised integration plan for our tenants which responds to self-career management plan and the aspirations of the individual. We want to help our clients aim medium skilled jobs. To do this, we need to have effective labour market integration strategy.

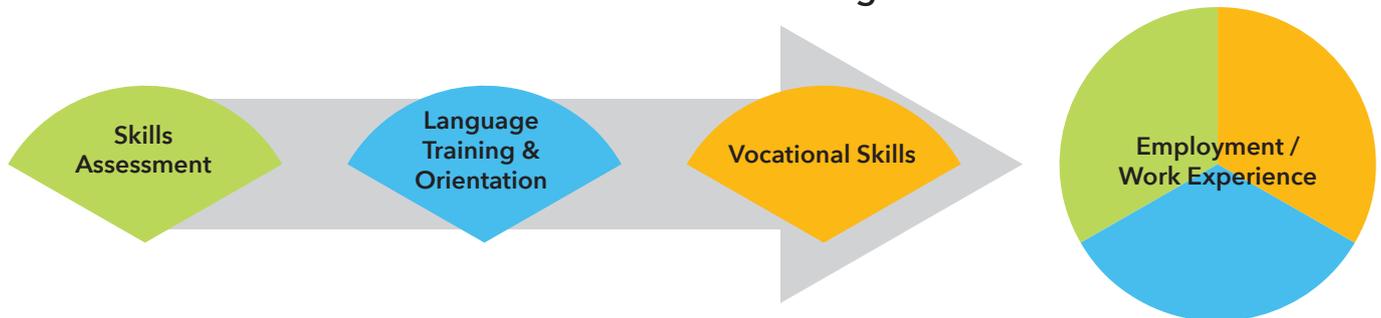
3.3 Labour market integration

According to a study conducted by UNHCR, what makes refugees feel most integrated is having a job. A recent OECD paper ‘Making Integration Work’ (2016) states that “the earlier migrants enter the labour market, the better their integration prospects in the long run”. Refugees, however, tend to have more difficulties in achieving employment integration than other migrants.

Five Stage Innovative Model



Sector focused training



Refugees in the UK, also face long periods of inactivity which lead to demotivation and de-skilling; de-skilling in turns means that refugees could only accept low-skilled jobs, remaining trapped in a low socioeconomic cycle. This impacts on their willingness and resilience to effectively commit to their integration.

Moreover, they lack knowledge of the English language and employers tend to have a discriminatory attitudes towards them reinforcing their negative perceptions of the hosting country. According to a study realized by UNHCR, qualified refugees are even more negatively affected than other migrants and they are left to find their own way in society while leaving host communities to accommodate them and provide basic support

Our aim is to explore some new perspectives concerning the integration and resettlement of refugees from our grassroots and community based approach and

experience. For actual integration to take place, we must give greater priority to **employment and economic development opportunities** if we are to provide a genuine integration and a better life opportunities to refugees and forced migrants coming to UK.

Labour market integration can be achieved through culturally sensitive support, training and sector focused employment skills. There are number of steps we have to take to achieve effective labour market integration:

3.31 Skills assessment

Assessing the skills of refugees is about getting to know them as individuals with aspirations and helping them re commence their life in the UK. It is important to assess all their formal, non-formal, and informal competencies and skills that people acquire through their everyday life and through experience.

3.32 Focused language training

Employment focused English language training is critical. Language training in the work place is seen much more useful than more general class room based English training especially if this delays labour market integration as is often the case.

3.33 Vocational Skills

To speed up accessing the job market, sector specific vocational training for priority areas of high employment growth. To improve opportunities for progression into skilled employment refugees should get vocational skills training geared towards high growth employment sectors.



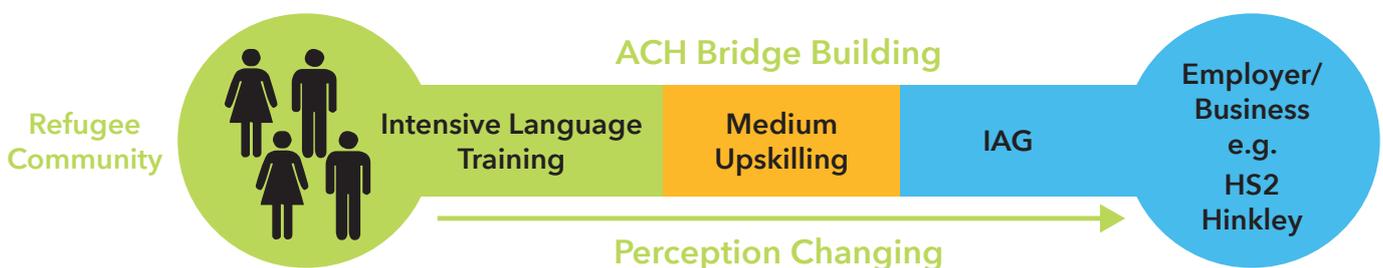
Employer Engagement

Employers are the gatekeepers of access to jobs, internships and volunteering opportunities, therefore employer engagement is crucial for improving labour market integration of refugees. We have worked hard on reducing the risk involved hiring refugees by offering professional networks, intensive language training and level 2 or 3 qualification with help in advice and guidance to refugees.

Vocational skills training paths organised in cooperation with employers offer better prospects for our client's entering labour market jobs as employers are more likely to trust the quality and results of such programs. SMEs who make up the bulk of the UK economy don't understand the value of foreign acquired qualification, skills and providing training to refugees since they may not have dedicated HR departments.

4.1 ACH Bridge building blocks

Employers need to see refugees as professionals and not as vulnerable people, to mitigate against this perception, which is in part consequence of negative media coverage of refugees. ACH have organized a number of rethinking refugee conferences in major cities in the UK. It is vital refugee community organizations need to work to build bridges between refugee communities and the private sector.



Department of Work and Pension (DWP) Case study

ACH received a grant from DWP to help 40 long term unemployed homeless adult refugees get back into sustainable employment. This was delivered by qualified community trainers who had the facility of being able to communicate with clients in refugee community languages.

Bristol Inner city schools have more than 50% of their students from Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) communities with high percentage being refugees. A lot of these schools struggle with securing teachers and assistant teachers who are from BME communities. We have worked with these schools to secure a number of work placements for a level two teaching assistant offered to some of the unemployed people we were working with. Over 50% of the group secured jobs with schools because we matched available jobs with their skills and aspirations.

Also the DWP made significant saving in benefits no longer needed which were well in excess of the grant we received. Each client supported into employment from our tenants represents significant savings to the taxpayer:

Supported Accommodation Charge £140 per week. JSA £71.70

This programme will realise six month savings of at least £101,616 based on 20 individuals into employment.

5

Entrepreneurship as Integration Tool

Entrepreneurship can offer a valuable alternative pathway to economic and social integration to refugees. Since refugees face challenges including language, nonrecognition of foreign qualifications, discrimination and all these pose barriers to finding a job, self-employment can be better option. Refugees taking this route also face additional challenges in registering businesses, relevant regulatory requirements and accessing banking facilities. But in spite of this, many refugees do set up small businesses.

Recent reports show that migrants (of which refugees are subset) are well represented in the business community in the UK, with 1 in 7 new businesses started by migrants and that they contribute to 14% of employment creation (Deudil 2014).

Moreover, OECD data shows that, on average, migrant entrepreneurs create 1.8 jobs (OECD 2014). However, this contribution is not only limited to the creation of growth

and employment, but also in addition is a vehicle for social integration of migrants.

Minority businesses serve as platforms for the transmission of new skills in to enter the labour market, access to new cultural, economic and social networks, and integration in the community (Zhou 2004). Migrant businesses act as a buffer against labour market exclusion the exclusionary labour markets faced by many migrants they also help revitalise neighbourhoods bringing diversity, dynamism and new services and goods to the community.

ACH is working on a ground breaking report with Birmingham University Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship (CREME). This research project explores the aspirations and capabilities of recently arrived migrants to become entrepreneurs in order to identify the constraining and enabling factors that hinder and/or facilitate migrants the realisation of their entrepreneurial aspirations.

Refugees and migrants are more likely to start business than other British born population. Accessing business supports and developing professional networks has a noticeable and positive impact on the prospects for business success. If business start-ups and sustainability is encouraged then entrepreneurship can be a significant gateway for social and economic integration for refugees.



1 in 7 new businesses are started by migrants, contributing 14% of employment creation

Summarizing the Main Points

6.1 Origins of refugees and forced migration

It is pointless to focus refugee resettlement and integration here in the UK or even in EU countries without understanding the cause of the displacement and at least attempting to make recommendations of what can be done to prevent refugees migrating from their origin countries in the first place and saving them making the perilous journey.



Building the capacity of refugee producing governments to manage migration more efficiently is important. This will be achieved by helping them to prevent and fight human trafficking and smuggling, to improve border management, to offer assistance to victims of trafficking and smuggling, or to raise awareness of the dangers of irregular migration and the alternatives to it.

Finally, there must be greater emphasis on job creation for the youth. We must generate an enabling environment for job creation in micro- and small enterprises development through multiple vocational education and training actions (both technical and managerial).

6.2 Asylum Process

Early investment in the skills and aspirations of asylum seekers would actually be one of the most cost-effective to integrate them and enable them to fully capitalise on their formal qualification and thus contribute to society.

The UK government should reconsider it's so called "deterrent strategy" for asylum seekers and think of the

long term benefits of asylum seekers can bring as part of potential work force. Keeping in mind the skills shortage, impact of the aging community and the consequence of Brexit, it would be wrong to adapt deterrent strategy. UK government should also reconsider paying better welfare benefit, offering training and work opportunities and reduce the time taken in making decisions about asylum applications.

As explained earlier in this report, quick, fair, and accurate processing of asylum requests with a predictable structure and timeline will improve the situation for both failed and granted asylum applications.

6.3 Resettlement and Integration

This provocative piece does not aim to fill the whole gap in the field of refugees' integration into society and the labour market. It aims to make contribution to a better understanding of what works in refugee integration. The available evidence from research, however, is scarce as the topic is under-researched.



Supporting refugees from arrival to integration through effective employment and enterprise skills

There is clearly no quick fix to the problem of refugees being stuck in a low skilled jobs or unemployment. Current policy thinking suggest the need for sophisticated long term monitoring programs.

In the meantime, ACH have formulated a new perspective on resettlement and integration for refugees. This holistic model has its heart focused on supporting refugees from arrival to integration through effective employment and enterprise skills.

Recommended policies include an early offer of language tuition and skills assessment to asylum seekers with good prospects of being allowed to stay, developing an individualised integration plan, recognition of foreign credentials including alternative methods of assessing informal learning and work experiences.

Financial resource for refugee integration is inevitably limited, however the cost of non-integration far exceeds the cost of integration.



6.4 #Rethinkingrefugee

ACH have pioneered the rethinking refugee campaign here in the UK. This paper presents some of the practical ways we can rethink of our old perceptions and policies regarding refugees.

Here in the UK we have skill shortages, the challenge of major infrastructure projects such as HS2, Hinckley and the need to become more competitive in the face of Brexit. The existing paradigm fails to adequately recognise that refugees have talents, skills, and aspirations which can be used to benefit our communities and economy. The key message from this provocation paper is refugees are an asset to us rather than liability.

Together, we can change policy by collaborating to aggregate the collective impact of all those working with refugees, by agreeing a joint approach to integration, driving an agenda to bend available funding to achieve positive change for refugees, and using our access to traditional and social media to show the positive impacts on the local economy and the wider community. Without a collective approach the opportunities for positive change will continue to be missed. ■