Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: University of Birmingham

Unit of Assessment: UoA 20, Social Work and Social Policy

Title of case study: Refugee integration: Changing policy and practice

Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2006-2020

Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:

Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Jenny Phillimore	Professor of Migration and Superdiversity	1998-present
Lisa Goodson	Lecturer	1999-present

Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2015-2020

Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No

1. Summary of the impact

Professor Jenny Phillimore and Dr Lisa Goodson have **transformed refugee integration policy and practice** and **contributed to more effective integration of refugees** into host societies through:

a) **re-framing the UK Government's Indicators of Integration**, the framework used to shape integration policy, practice and measurement by Government departments including the Home Office and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government;

b) **improving the design, quality and efficacy of the Community Sponsorship Scheme**, the UK Government's flagship scheme to support the resettlement of vulnerable refugees and demonstrating the viability of the sponsorship model within Europe;

c) **improving the experience of refugees through upskilling of practitioners**, transforming the evidence base, building organisational capacity and improving access to services, and influencing co-production practices outside of the UK.

2. Underpinning research

The population of refugees in the UK and across Europe has expanded over the past four decades. At the end of 2019, there were 133,083 refugees and 61,943 pending asylum cases in the UK (UNHCR 2020). The aim of refugee integration is to enable refugees to achieve their potential, protect their human rights, prevent marginalisation and foster social cohesion. The challenges of integrating refugees are significant and require substantive financial investment: the UK Government alone spent over £300 million on integration from 2008–2018, while the EU's European Refugee Fund III (2008–2013), just one of multiple EU-wide and national programmes, was valued at €628 million.

Following a two-decade long programme of research conducted with civil society, policy and academic partners, Professor Jenny Phillimore and Dr Lisa Goodson have challenged the conventional wisdom shaping integration policy and practice: that integration is the sole responsibility of refugees. Their programme of research has identified good practices, whilst uncovering what does not work. Additionally, it has provided insight into how to improve integration policy and practice, and associated outcomes [R1], and has changed practices in organisations working with refugees [R2]. Goodson's development of a Community Practitioner Research Methodology established criteria for building the capacity of organisations working with refugees to collect evidence to support the development and effectiveness of refugee integration services [R2].

Key research findings

F1. The ability of refugees to settle depends upon host communities' willingness to interact with them [R3]. Integration is undermined when refugees are not welcomed, experience racist harassment and/or are excluded from decision-making processes [R1, R2], and a lack of social

networks leads to high levels of isolation and poor outcomes (health, employment, language progression). By contrast, refugee integration is more successful when host communities offer ready-made social networks [R4, R5]. Employment provides a ready-made social network and a mechanism to practise language skills [R6].

F2. Social and personal networks, with 'people like me', are key to the successful integration of refugees [R3]. Rather than social bonds *between* refugees being anti-integrative (as per the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Integrated Communities Strategy 2019), *lack* of such networks undermines refugee integration [R3, R4]. Such networks are a vital source of social support for new refugees, and integration outcomes are better if refugees can form reciprocal relationships with other refugees [R5]. Supportive relationships between refugees improve access to services, enable emotional support and overcome language barriers [R1, R3, R5].

F3. The Community Sponsorship Scheme (CSS), the UK Government's flagship scheme to enable communities to sponsor the resettlement of vulnerable refugees, is sustainable in rural and urban areas. Sponsorship by communities provides a viable model for introducing refugees into new parts of the UK and Europe [R4], offering benefits for volunteers and the wider community [R4]. In less diverse areas, CSS enables contact between refugees and local people, and has the potential to transform attitudes to refugees and local organisational practice [R4].

F4. Community Sponsorship volunteers offer refugees social capital that supports refugee participation in education, language learning and employment. Volunteers are motivated by different emotional drivers [R4] and reciprocity between volunteers and refugees underpins successful refugee integration [R5]. Recommendations to improve the outcomes of CSS covered areas include matching families to appropriate groups, improving volunteer support and streamlining application processes [R4].

F5. Initiatives designed for and with refugees improve the likelihood that integration outcomes will be successful [R1, R3, R6] by ensuring that new and complex needs are fully understood [R2]. Local organisations are invaluable in supporting refugee integration [R2, R3, R5] and building their capacity through community research as a community engagement method can enable collation of local and experiential knowledge to form 'community knowledge'. Such knowledge can be used to build organisational capacity to improve integration outcomes, bridging gaps between refugees, service providers and policymakers, and ensuring refugee needs are designed into policy and practice.

3. References to the research
R1. Phillimore, J. (2012) 'Implementing integration in the UK; lessons for theory, policy and practice', *Policy and Politics* 40(4), pp. 525-545. DOI: 10.1332/030557312X643795

R2. Goodson, L., and Phillimore, J. (eds) (2012) *Community research for community participation: from theory to method*. Bristol: Policy Press.
R3. Cheung, S.Y., and Phillimore, J. (2014) 'Refugees, Social Capital and Labour Market Integration in the UK', *Sociology* 48(3), pp. 518-536. DOI: 10.1177/0038038513491467
R4. Phillimore, J., Reyes-Soto, M., and Hassan, S. (2020) Community Sponsorship in the UK: Formative evaluation 2017. Available on University of Birmingham website
R5. Phillimore, J., Humphris, R., and Khan, K. (2017) 'Reciprocity for new migrant integration: resource conservation, investment and exchange', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44(2), pp. 215-232. DOI: 10.1080/1369183X.2017.1341709
R6. Phillimore, J., and Goodson, L. (2006) 'Problem or opportunity? Asylum seekers, refugees, employment and social exclusion in deprived urban areas', *Urban Studies*, 43(10), pp.1715–1736. DOI: 10.1080/00420980600838606

4. Details of the impact
Working closely with policymakers, civil society organisations, and host and refugee communities, Phillimore and Goodson have **transformed refugee integration policy and practice** locally, nationally and internationally in three core areas.

1. **Shaping the Home Office's Indicators of Integration framework and UK refugee integration policy**

Phillimore's research evidence **directly shaped the UK Home Office's refugee integration policy** by influencing the revision of the Indicators of Integration framework [C1a, C1b; R1, R3, R5, R6]. This is the only policy framework used by Government departments and local authorities to support approximately 20,000–25,000 refugees annually, and influences the UK government budget allocation via the Controlling Migration Fund and the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund totalling over £338 million in the UK since 2008. The framework has shaped the scope and monitoring of the UK's new £10 million refugee integration programme, the Refugee Transformation Outcome Fund [C2].

Phillimore was one of three academics invited by the Home Office Head of Research and Policy to revise the UK's Integration Indicators. She has embedded **good refugee integration practices in Home Office Policy** through co-authoring the framework's theory of change [C1c] and introducing over 100 new Indicators into the framework based on her findings [R1, R3, R5, R6]. The Indicators have become key benchmarks at national and local level, being described by the Minister of State for Immigration as "a key resource for integration practitioners at all levels, offering a common language for understanding, planning, monitoring and measuring integration, and supporting better and more tailored integration services" [C1a, C1b]. They include tackling racism [F1; R1, R3; C1a], adding social care and maternity care [R1; C1a], and including self-employment for the first time [R1, R3, R5, R6; C1a]. The Indicators now include explicit references to the importance of diverse social networks [R3, R5; F1, F2], in order to **improve refugees' social inclusion**. All additions enable users of the Indicators and associated documents to plan, provide and monitor initiatives addressing the full gamut of refugee and community integration needs [C1d]. The Head of the Home Office Policy Analysis Team emphasised the importance of Phillimore's research stating "between 2017 and 2019, we have benefitted from your knowledge and expertise [...] and your work in revising the Indicators to produce new materials to ensure that the range of new tools now available to support the development of integration strategies are […] accessible […] to a range of different stakeholders." [C1b]. Phillimore's work underpins new local and national good-practice sections for each indicator [C1a, C1b, C2] and she has subsequently co-developed an Indicators training programme with the International Organization of Migration which builds the capacity of local authorities and civil society to use the Indicators [C3]. 43 local authorities and 17 civil society organisations have attended the programme.

Following Phillimore's intervention, policymakers' understandings of integration processes have shifted to acknowledge the role of receiving communities and Government [R3, R5]. The UK Immigration Minister points out that "integration also depends upon everyone taking responsibility for their own contribution, including newly arrived residents, receiving communities and government at all levels" [C1a; R3].

2. **Improving the efficacy of civil society and practitioners at local, regional and international levels**

The programme of research **has improved the quality and efficacy of the UK's Community Sponsorship Scheme (CSS) which has led to enhanced benefits** for refugee families and associated communities. CSS is overseen by the Home Office and the charity Reset, and is funded by the Home Office and philanthropy. Reset supports charities and community groups to participate in CSS, with 500 refugees being resettled as part of CSS since 2016. Reset's Co-director stated that Phillimore's "research findings have emphasised and encouraged us to focus our efforts on a range of key issues" [C4a; R4; F3, F4]. The Home Office "immediately develop[ed] an action plan based on [her] recommendations" [F3, F4; C4b; R4], which enabled evidence-based improvements to the CSS built on Phillimore's recommendations, including **improving application processes** and **matching refugees and CSS groups** [F3; C4b].

Capacity building through sponsorship was further increased through **improvements in the recruitment, retention and training of volunteers**. New training developed by Phillimore was provided to groups involved in the UK sponsorship scheme, including a summit that reached 50% of UK groups. One group leader stated that the research "helped [them] to understand the best ways to manage a group of volunteers and […] how important it is for us to retain volunteers through building morale" [C4c; R4]. **Reset's effectiveness has also been improved** by demonstrating gains both to refugees and volunteers from sponsorship [F3] through a

programme that increased the number of sponsorship groups by 100% and thereby the capacity for resettlement. Capacity was also enhanced by Phillimore's research presented in accessible formats (e.g. 'how to' briefs) which have been used for local education and training [C4a].

The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI) have used Phillimore's research [F3] to **encourage and support the adoption of Community Sponsorship internationally** [C5; R4], including:

- **Establishing and expanding community sponsorship** outside major urban areas, reducing xenophobia and improving outcomes for refugees [C5; F3];
- **Reconfiguring monitoring and evaluation approaches to sponsorship** internationally through developing an approach combining qualitative and quantitative results [F3];
- Expanding community sponsorship internationally by securing **political support at a Ministerial level in at least one European country** [C5].

The Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (2020) cites Phillimore's research [R4; F3; C6a] stating it demonstrates that the sponsorship model is viable with the Migration Policy Institute using the findings to highlight the positive impacts of resettling refugees to rural areas in Europe [R4; F3; C6b].

3. Upskilling organisations and practitioners leading to improved services for refugees
Goodson has **improved responses and support for integration and resettlement** of refugees by capacity building in local organisations and communities, and demonstrating what works. This has been achieved through upskilling practitioners and developing a rigorous evidence base. She has **supported resettlement NGOs to identify collaborative ways of working** across diverse backgrounds [F4, F5; R6]. New training for 389 professionals and volunteers from across the public, private and voluntary sectors emphasised service delivery for vulnerable groups including Syrian refugees under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS), unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) and refugee families with no recourse to public funds (NRPF). Outcomes for participants included increased confidence, improved practice and extended support networks [C7a]. The materials were later developed into a 'Syrian Refugee Toolkit' [C7b].

Goodson has also developed the capacity of local volunteers to become researchers and enhanced the evidence base through co-production [R2]. The Community and Practitioner Research Programme (CPRP) has trained 179 individuals to collect robust data which can be used to enhance policy decisions on refugee integration and specialised interventions [R2; F4; C8a–c]. CPRP research:

  i) Led to funding being secured for a new refugee Mental Health Hub at the Wolverhampton Refugee and Migrant Centre, which has **supported over 13,000 migrants** to date, ensuring that all refugees using the service are triaged for mental health and case workers are offered mental health support [C8a];
  ii) **Developed the only assessment tool** for evaluating the resettlement needs in the 'best interests' of unaccompanied children [C8b]; and
  iii) **Expanded Hope Project's legal work** [C8c], specifically in relation to client-focused interventions providing support during the process to apply for leave to remain.

CPRP approaches have been emulated internationally by universities in Europe and Australia. The University of Bochum established Stadtteillabor (City Lab) based on learning from research underpinning the CPRP approach [F5] and with the direct support of Goodson. The Director of City Lab stated that "insights about the IRiS CPRP model directly influenced the development and establishment of a similar Community Research programme at the University of Applied Health Science at Bochum" [C9], which has established "a new relationship between the university and a marginalized urban community" and which received a Ministry commendation [C10].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact
C1. Evidence of influence on Indicators of Integration:
  a. Indicators of Integration report, with Phillimore cited on page 3. [Available as PDF]

    b. Factual statement from the Head of Home Office Migration and Border Analysis Team [Available as PDF]

    c. [Theory of change for achieving integration](#) [Available as PDF]

    d. [Integrating refugees: What works? What can work? What does not work?](#) [Available as PDF]

C2. Tender for Refugee Transitions Outcomes Fund [Available as PDF]

C3. Evaluation of Indicators of Integration training [Available as PDF]

C4. Evidence of influence on Community Sponsorship:

    a. Testimony from Reset Co-director (19th October 2020) [Available as PDF]

    b. Testimony from Home Office Deputy Directors of Integration and Vulnerability (12th November 2020) [Available as PDF]

    c. Testimony from a Community Sponsorship Group- Malvern Welcomes (16th November 2020) [Available as PDF]

C5. Testimony from Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative [Available as PDF]

C6. Evidence of global impact of Community Sponsorship:

    a. [Inspectorate report on Community Sponsorship](#) [Available as PDF]

    b. Migration Policy Institute [report on rural resettlement](#) [Available as PDF]

C7. Evidence of training programme impacts:

    a. Report on evaluation of Syrian Toolkit training [Available as PDF]

    b. [Syrian Refugee Toolkit](#) [Available as a PDF]

C8. Evidence of initiatives influenced by the Community Practitioners Research Programme:

    a. Testimony from Refugee and Migrant Centre (22nd January 2021) [Available as PDF]

    b. Testimony from Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (14th January 2021) [Available as PDF]

    c. Testimony from The Hope Project (3rd March 2021) [Available as PDF]

C9. Testimony from Director of City Lab (11th February 2021) [Available as PDF]

C10. Evidence of City Lab's commendation [Available as PDF]