THE CHURCHILL FELLOWSHIP MIGRATION PROGRAMME

LEARNING FROM ‘LIVING WELL TOGETHER’
Executive summary

29 Churchill Fellows travelled around the world to learn about the best policies and practices on migration, integration and inclusion – including how we can live better together in communities across the UK.

They brought back their learning to the UK and are now working to implement new programmes and innovations.

This brief sets out shared learning across eight thematic areas and opportunities for influence at a policy and practice level. The key themes are:

1. Migration and integration policy making
2. New approaches to refugee resettlement and welcome
3. Creating a shared narrative of inclusion
4. Building welcoming spaces
5. Development of English language and other skills as pathways to integration and employment
6. Harnessing the skills of communities and diasporas and empowering lived experience leadership
7. Improving access to services for newcomers, both targeted and mainstream
8. Professional development for integration practitioners

In 30 seconds

Migration and integration policy making

Whilst acknowledging the diversity of policy areas and requests for change, analysis of the reports found striking areas of consensus.

There were some important requests for central government policy change and integration policy making.

Some were specific. For example, lifting the ban on working asylum seekers. Other recommendations were more general, such as changing the tone of communications on migration and integration.

However, it is striking the extent to which a place-based and devolved approach is advocated across reports covering very different policy areas. Many of the policy changes sought are structural and focused on integration.

These include the need to:

- Improve infrastructure for integration
- Build better professional and peer support networks across professions and disciplines
- Improve lived experience leadership
- Draw in new partners
- Improve resourcing and the conditions of this resourcing

Many of the case studies in the report highlight grassroots and community-led action as a place where change can flourish, both in the UK and internationally.

A key recurring challenge for Fellows was, how can we recreate the conditions for this kind of change, and how can we replicate it at scale?

Creating a shared narrative of inclusion

While UK public opinion on migration has become more positive, there’s a perception of a very divided public, not helped by a sometimes highly negative media environment.

Fellows looked at approaches for using strategic communications as a way of building consent for migration, highlighting that:

- Creating shared spaces and stories can be a policy tool to build consent for migration and integration – for longer-term communities as well as migrants
- Narrative approaches can help normalise the idea of mobility, but there are challenges. These include the need to avoid othering people, presenting them as a problem to be solved, whilst also bringing new people into the movement so it doesn’t feel like an echo chamber
- Storytelling approaches can bring the arts, culture and heritage as a way of telling shared stories and creating community and belonging – including the importance of commemorating and telling stories for diaspora communities.

Developing English language and other skills as pathways to integration and employment

There was a strong consensus across many Fellows’ reports of the lack of capacity within integration policy making in the UK – this was identified as a significant gap.

Despite pockets of good practice, innovations are often stymied by a lack of resource, capacity, political will and ambition to transform them into the type of interventions which can have transformative impact at scale.

Fellows identified:

- The need for cross-sectoral integration planning, with a clear policy framework and for a UK-wide body for policymaking on integration
- The importance of developing a place-based approach, grounded in local leadership and responsive to local need
- The need to focus on towns and rural areas as well as core cities
- The importance of ending the ‘postcode lottery’ of funding for integration, moving beyond project support to core resources and reducing competition
- Supporting community grant-making approaches for radical civil society innovation at a local level
- The need to involve all members of society in this work, not just migrant groups and their advocates
- International networks can provide an opportunity for shared learning and innovation.

New approaches to refugee resettlement and welcoming

Refugee resettlement and community sponsorship is a policy area which has developed significantly in the UK since many of the Fellowships discussed here were completed.

The UK has opened new resettlement routes including a form of community-led welcome through the Homes for Ukraine programme. Many Fellows visited Canada (a leader in Community Sponsorship) and Germany (learning from its experiences in welcoming many Syrian refugees post-2015). Fellows noted that:

- Community sponsorship marks a significant opportunity for innovation in resettlement as a complementary pathway
- The importance of developing wider social and community infrastructure as a means of supporting resettlement (and vice versa)
- Resettlement should focus on a ‘day one’ approach, allowing for the orientation of newcomers to allow them to understand UK responsibilities and culture.

Building welcoming spaces

Grassroots and shared spaces are the bedrock of integration and inclusion practice and this shone strongly through the reports and themes.

Even when they are in radically different sectors of contexts a commitment to creating shared, accessible spaces where people can meet and mix was at the heart of much of Fellows learning.

Approaches include:

- Welcome Centres in Canada – community consultation on development of welcoming spaces
- Mobilising large scale reception in Germany – from ambitious crisis response, to move on and longer-term community integration
- Museums and cultural institutions as places of community intersection
- Integration through sport and community
- Facilitating dinners to bring new and longer standing communities together
- Building faith spaces, including mosques, to encourage non-Muslim communities to also visit and develop their own British vernacular
- Focus preventive mental health interventions on activities that children enjoy, and prioritising new spaces where children can meet and interact safely.

WHAT CHANGE ARE THE FELLOWS TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

WHAT ARE THE SHARED THEMATIC AREAS?

1. Migration and Integration policy making
2. New approaches to refugee resettlement and welcome
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available to get people into work. These included:

Education
— The importance of community-led approaches, particularly those which include volunteers such as the Fit4Life model
— The importance of language learning for pre-school children using assessment and progression tracking. Examples include welcome classes and language learning diaries from Berlin
— The need for learner-led and asset-based approaches to language learning in UK schools which builds on the UK’s linguistic diversity as the asset it is.

Employment
— The importance of the right to work and extension of the move on period for asylum seekers as a method for supporting employment as a pathway to integration
— The importance of improving community organising to advocate for improved working conditions for low paid migrant workers.

6 Harnessing the Skills of Communities and Diasporas and Empowering Lived Experience Leadership

Many Fellowships focused on the latent opportunities which sit within diaspora communities – and the potential to take these asset-based approaches and build further on them.

The very nature of the Fellowship – learning from international experiences and using it in their own community and context – highlights the need to take a ‘global’ approach to diaspora.

This included recognising the importance of lived experience leadership for particular policy issues as well as the importance of diverse and shared leadership of public services – and how to foster it effectively.

Approaches advocated include:
— Commissioning services which harness the experience and cultural understanding of existing refugee communities
— Community consultation and empowerment, through migrant community organising
— Fostering refugee and migrant democratic participation

Whilst there was a strong and consistent recognition of the need to improve representation and lived experience leadership, some reports recognised more structural questions and a need to recognise questions of inequality and racism as barriers to change and the need to confront this openly and honestly.

7 ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR NEWCOMERS – BOTH TARGETED AND MAINSTREAM

Many Fellow’s reports looked at the balance between services which were targeted at the needs of newcomers, whilst also aiming to make mainstream services as inclusive as possible to encourage the widest possible use.

The approaches in this section focus on examples of targeted services and approaches to mainstreaming provision effectively.

Targeted services included:
— Access to specialist domestic violence services for migrants
— Address major gaps in access to legal advice
— Introduce firewalls on data sharing with the Home Office where fear prevents the uptake of services

Mainstreaming highlighted the:
— Importance of early intervention and preventative approaches – for example, in mental health
— Need to provide equality of access through removing barriers such as: • Targeting communications to improve access to mainstream services used by newcomers – parks and outdoor services, for example – and improve a broader, fuller understanding of rights to services

8 Professional Development for Integration Practitioners

Integration can feel like a niche or sidelined policy region, but a strong theme came through for the need to engage professionals more widely. The aim is to meaningfully involve more on migration and integration so creating a workforce informed by – and able to lead on – this area.

Examples include:
— Movement building in access to migrant healthcare, as in Sweden
— Exploring the role of Royal College of GPs and CCGs in providing information to GPs on migrant access to healthcare, and commissioning appropriate support services
— Creating professional development standards for professionals – for example in education

• Culturally target services and language access to improve provision for mainstream services
• Advocating change in policies restricting access to services.

There is a strong consensus across many Fellow’s reports about the lack of capacity within integration policy making in the UK – this was identified as a significant gap.

How can the Lessons from the Fellows Help to Create Change?

Each of the Fellows is taking forward their own programme for change in their sector. However, several opportunities for change were identified through their analysis including:
— Putting lived experience leadership at the heart of the sector
— The need for innovation in resettlement and community sponsorship schemes
— The importance of framing integration into wider policy conversations
— The capacity to share positive, asset-based stories of interventions that work
— The opportunity offered by devolution to increase innovation at local level, particularly in relation to skills
— The need to develop the infrastructure for integration in the UK
— Opportunities to develop peer networking between Fellows as catalysts for change in this sector

About the Churchill Fellowship

The Churchill Fellowship is a national network of 4,000 dynamic individuals inspiring change in every part of UK life. Churchill Fellows discover new ideas around the world and develop new approaches to on-going challenges.

Fellows are funded to discover the latest innovations and best practice in any practical issue they care passionately about.

This approach has created a community of highly effective changemakers working on the frontlines of today’s key issues, many of whom go onto to be leaders in their fields.

The Fellowship was created as the living legacy of Sir Winston Churchill for the nation, aiming to honour his memory by reflecting his unique contribution to national life.

About the Migration Fellowship

The Migration: Living Well Together programme was developed in partnership with The Linbury Trust and ran from 2017–2019.

The programme supported 29 Fellows interested in strengthening cohesion and communication, tackling isolation and supporting engagement for migrant communities in the UK.