Sustainable Alternatives for Refugee Social Integration in European Communities: TimeBanking and Large-Scale Individualized Education

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Abstract

In this paper, we theorize an alternative approach to addressing refugee social integration as a grand challenge. Grounded in prior empirical organizational research, we identify sustainable alternatives for refugee social integration. These we label social empowerment practices for personal and professional aims. They help refugees to gain control of their lives by fostering the capacity to make informed choices to conquer their freedom in the community in which they live. In applying the concept of robust action to the pursuit of refugee social integration we rely on principles for Time Banking. We argue for a change of mind-set from perceiving refugees as objects of charity work, turning them into passive consumers of help, to active actors who not only receive but also contribute with their time and talents that benefit human relations and the society at large.

Keywords

Refugee social integration, time banking, grand challenge, empowerment, robust action,

Sparked by armed conflicts, we are witnessing an unprecedented displacement of people resulting in a huge influx of refugees crossing into Europe. According to data published by the UNHCR Global Trends, at the beginning of 2014, Europe gave shelter to more than 1,7 million refugees plus 11,4 million in refugee-like-situation. At the end of the same year, the number rose to 3,1 million, an increase of 74.3%, and the highest increase among all regions in the globe. At the end of the same year, the total number of forcibly displaced people worldwide went up to almost 65.3 million, which means that 1 out of 113 people on earth were displaced, the highest level since World War II. The displacement of people is not solely a European crisis; it's a global crisis.

Top hosts of refugees among the 28 European member states are Germany, Hungary, Sweden, Austria, and Italy followed by France, the Netherlands, Belgium, the UK, and Finland. However, there is an askew distribution among the European member countries not only in absolute numbers but also in relation to their population and integration capacity. For instance, Italy with more than 60 million people received 140.277 refugees and refugee-like situation whereas Sweden, with about 9 million inhabitants, received 226.158; the highest number of refugees received per capita. The arrival of such an unprecedented number of asylum seekers poses an important challenge to the European Union and its Member states, that goes beyond the humanitarian level and introduces the problem of socio-economic integration of the newly arrived refugees into their host countries. A majority comes from countries where the everyday life, norms and values are different from Sweden. Every situation is new and foreign. They may find it difficult to understand the current context, don't know what is going to happen and what is expected from them (Timlon and Possati-Figueira, 2018).

After the asylum process the refugees receive the status 'newly arrived'. In 2018, 112.000 newly arrived in the working age are to be integrated into the Swedish society (Konle-Seidl,

2017). This corresponds to 2.2. per cent of the total work force in Sweden. In Germany more than 500.000 refugees are to be integrated and in Austria 65.000 which is about one per cent of work force in these countries. However, a relatively large number of the newly arrived has never attended a school or only a few years, at the most they have elementary school education. Many cannot read or write in their own mother tongue and have difficulties to assimilate information that is not concrete and specific, in particular, if it is in Swedish. Consequently they face huge difficulties to enter the labour market; a challenge that is increasing as digitalization and automation make even simplistic jobs more knowledge intense. There is a risk for the emergence of a parallel society based on its own juridical system, capital violence and honorary culture that polarize and rift communities.

When returning is not an option refugee's hopes for the future are unknown and uncertain, when social integration involves a large array of individuals and institutions, it displays complexity and when joining the labor market is considered significant, even a crucial part of the integration; the situation can be characterized as a grand challenge. Grand challenges stem from the humble recognition that certain issues are so big and the targets are so challenges that no individual institution, government or company can provide the solution. Consequently, grand challenges are intractable and resist quick fixes. They are multidisciplinary, cutting across conventional epistemic and professional boundaries, which enable them to escape definitions as discrete economic, political or social problem (Ferraro, Etzion & Gehman, 2015).

Most societies in the EU acknowledge their responsibility to give shelter to refugees and provide integration programs, as well as seeking to facilitate the integration process. However, refugees social integration as a grand challenge make it dynamic and nonlinear, comprised of an evolving set of interlocking issues and constraints that are context specific. Structural constraints are formal and informal rules that regulate an entire system of

interaction and the physical limitations of an environment. A set of formal and informal rules governing behaviour in a particular sphere is commonly known as "the rules of the game" and can be found in integration policy fields (Waltz, 2010). This means that structural barriers can limit and hamper the social integration of refugees. In this paper, we ask *how to build the capacity for sustainable alternatives on different levels in the society to respond to social integration of refugees as a grand challenge?*

We address the social integration of refugees, seeking a better understanding of disruption, displacement and division of communities. We take a pragmatist stance to grand challenges as it can foster the development of a genuinely pragmatic theory of social action (Whitford, & Zirpoli, 2014; Whitford, 2002). We focus on alternatives to integration programs for refuges social integration. We provide real life best practice stories from Sweden and Scotland that make sense, create solidarity and compassion, building more integrated local communities. From these stories we crystalize key concepts, principles and practices to shed light on organizing for social and institutional change in response to grand challenges.

Institutional Change as Sustainable Community Development

Grand challenges extend beyond the boundaries of a single organization onto community, affecting large populations and their welfare and well-being. However, institutional change is not the result of individual action, but rather, the efforts of multiple individuals and organizations that purposefully spearhead change and mobilize cooperation. A sustainable community emphasizes *long-term benefits* and the means to promote *informed choices about dealing with different kinds of challenges* (Flint, 2015). A long-term perspective in dealing with such matters is distinguishing a sustainable from a livable community. Sustainable community development, then, is the action of continuously improving the social and environmental quality of living. It includes human interactions among the inhabitants that, for

instance, promote physical and mental health but also environmental issues. This means that the limitations of earthly elements as well as their interconnectedness of human beings are recognized. Furthermore, equity is regarded as the foundation of a healthy community, in which all socioeconomic factors are grounded and ecological, economic, and sociocultural diversity within the community are contributing to its stability and resiliency. For the development to be conquered, Flint argues that these idealistic communities would have to continuously exercise the integration of three inseparable aspects of development – ecology, equity, and economy – establishing a balance between environmental protection, social well-being, and enrichment of human relationships and economic development that improves human welfare. Typically, evolving in a sustainable community is people's sense of well-being because there is a sense of belonging, a sense of place, a sense of self-worth, a sense of safety, a sense of connection with nature, and provision of goods and services that meet their needs within the ecological integrity of natural systems. A truly sustainable community provides for the welfare and health of the present community members as well as for future generations. Refugee integration touches upon all three pillars of sustainable community development. A distinctive feature, reflected in the case, pertains different aspects of equity, established in community in which the refugees are displaced. Here it becomes evident that people and their capacity to connect and develop together further develop a sustainable community. The result then, a kind of social capital, is created by the trust relationship that is developed among the citizens in one society (Kilpatrick et al. 2003).

Social Empowerment

Empowerment is a multifaceted construct. It can be definition as is a social process in relationships among people. Empowerment may vary according to the specific context and people involved (Bailey 1992). Empowerment also occurs at various levels, such as

individual, group, and community. This implies that the individual and community are intrinsically connected. Social empowerment can be defined as a social process that helps people gain control of their lives by fostering the capacity to act on issues they define as important and realize goals for use in the communities in which they live (Page and Czuba 1999). A prerequisite for social empowerment is individual change, creating a link to community connectedness and social change (Wilson 1996). Individual change enables the connectedness and for a community to complex issues that it is facing, such as the displacement crisis.

Robust Strategic Action to Grand Challenges

Robust strategic action that invokes innovation and institutional change to grand challenges are purposive sets of action undertaken by focal actors. *Participatory architecture* is a structure and rules of engagement that allows diverse and heterogeneous actors to interact constructively over prolonged timespans. *Multivocal inscriptions are* discursive and material activity that sustains different interpretations among various audiences with different evaluative criteria, in a manner that promotes coordination without requiring explicit consensus. *Distributed experimentation* is iterative action that generates small wins, promotes evolutionary learning, and increases engagement, while allowing unsuccessful efforts to be abandoned. Jointly, these strategies foster sustained engagement along multiple, distributed paths of action, increasing the probability of positive field-level outcomes. (Ferraro, Etzion & Gehman, 2015).

Time Banking

Time banking, which was invented by Edgar Cahn in 1980, grew out of discontentment with the worldview on equity and opportunity regarding people in need of help and assistance as

'objects of charity', and is a way of giving and receiving to build supportive networks and strong communities by addressing unmet societal needs. Time banks are systems that offer an innovative way in which people can participate in society both as givers and receivers of services. They operate by using time as a form of currency. For every hour that some volunteers in giving services to others, they receive an hour of service in return. This amount can be used immediately, be banked for future use or donated for use by other individuals. All work is seen as equal because, regardless of its nature, it earns the same amount of hourly credits. In this way, time banking promotes equality and builds caring community economies through inclusive exchanges of time and talents with endless possibilities (Cahn 2000).

A study by Miller (2008) of the impact of time banks on the lives of older Japanese members shows how time banking groups can help senior members as well as society as a whole. The study shows that time banks could give people greater control of their lives and foster warmer community links. In this case, the benefits that older time bank members derive include formation of new friendship networks to replace those lost by retirement and the chance to use old skills and learn new ones. Furthermore, time banks can generate a new form of social capital that fosters traditional reciprocity, which in Japan is denoted as ikigai or sense of meaning in life. These groups can nurture alternate styles of human relationships in a complex society undergoing change.

Robust Action for Sustainable Alternatives for Refugee Social Integration

Grounded in prior empirical organizational research (Timlon and Possati-Figueira, 2018), in this section we provide several initiatives of refugee social integration as organizational phenomena. Refugee social integration as a grand challenge affects large populations,

encompassing individuals, organizations and communities. Moreover, they significantly and adversely affect human welfare and well-being. The initiatives are conceptualized as robust actions for refugee social integration, a set of practices, intricate networks of actions and processes, that help people gain control of their lives by fostering the capacity to make informed choices to conquer their freedom in the community in which they live. We label these as social empowerment practices for personal and professional aims (see Table 1). Below we describe each of them connectively.

Table 1. Analytical Aspects of Refugee Social Integration

Insert Table 1

Social empowerment practices for personal aims

Befriending

In Edinburgh, a Welcoming Centre provides integration opportunities for refugees. The Centre participates in a pilot project called "Peer Education", launched by the Scottish refugee council. The purpose of the project is to support the integration of refugees into the British society by connecting newly arrived with people who already live in Britain.

This project is piloted in four different parts of Scotland. The Centre, which is one of them, provides cultural integration opportunities through a welcoming Befriending program. In this program refugees are introduced and matched with people who live in Edinburgh and who have volunteers as 'befrienders'. As the work as a befriender involves ample challenges, each month the Centre gives peer support to the befrienders who then gather to share their experiences and support each other. This means that the Centre takes the responsibility to support the befrienders back.

In the beginning of 2017, with seven full-time workers and four seasonal-workers the capacity

of the Centre was stretched to its maximum to support the program. This left more than 100 people desperate who had applied at the Centre to be friends with refugees.

The interest from the local community reflects the LOHAS lifestyle where individuals are increasingly concerned with social ethics, environmental health, and morality, incorporating practical actions to their daily lives and seeking a balance between individual, environment and society.

Through the "befriending program," so far 40 matches have been made between local people and new families, in particular from Syria, who have come through the official resettlement program as well as on their own accord.

Bike for Refugees

Another initiative to integrate the newly arrived refugees where the Centre played an important role is Bikes for Refugees. It is an organization with an idea to collect bikes that are not being used by local people, fix them up, and then distribute them to refugees. This means that newly arrived instantly can be independent and empowered and enjoy discovering the city and have a completely free of charge way of getting about. This can lead to all sorts of other things, for instance, they can start to get connected with the cycling community in Edinburgh. One of the volunteers at the centre, who's Syrian, got a bike from Bikes for Refugees and has now joined a local group, which is called the 20 Milers. Whereas before all his activities would mainly be with the Syrian community, now he's branched off and on; he's the only Syrian in this group of cyclists and it's all thanks to Bikes for Refugees being able to get him the bike to connect him into these communities.

Social empowerment practices for professional aims

Become a Lawyer

Recently the Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh, Scotland's top lawyers, contacted the Centre, as they were interested in connecting with newly arrived refugees. Together they organized a Burns supper with a haggis, a local traditional event to celebrate the national poet Robert Burns. To the event came the newly arrived refugees, most of them from Syria, and the lawyers took on the role of volunteers.

The event provided an opportunity for a Syrian woman, enabling her to meet and speak to different lawyers. At the event one of the Syrian women, who had studied law in Syria, realized that she was in the middle of the most influential lawyers in Scotland. A collegial bond across boarders and cultures was formed.

After the event, this woman went together with a representative of the Centre to visit the faculty. This resulted in an invitation to her to participate in seminars with the possibility for her to start to study law. This young Syrian woman has now the chance to become a lawyer in Scotland thanks to the contacts, the encouragement, the kind of investment, and the generosity, creating an environment in which she can achieve her potential.

Code Your Future

Code Your Future is an initiative that started in London and has grown to Glasgow and Edinburgh. A group of IT professionals wanted to support the refugee community, and created a 6- month course that would help refugees develop professional skills to take on jobs on programming. It's worked satisfactory in London and they're just starting a course in Glasgow, which some people in Edinburgh are participating in. This initiative is not just about gaining the technical skills of programming, but it's about being connected to the community. The result: the volunteers running the course all have good jobs in the IT world, and they're able to make introductions and get people to work placements. And suddenly people have got a new career.

Social empowerment practices for educational aims

Mapping Newly Arrived Students' Knowledge

Despite the difficulties some schools have gone through, systematic development of the education for newly arrived students within their traditional quality work found a well-functioning way of working and succeeded in accomplishing increasing variety and flexibility in the education. This way of working involves *mapping of newly arrived students' knowledge and how information about the students is used.* Newly arrived students meet many teachers, student health staff, and many others during their schooling. It is common that they change between classes, groups, and schools. Here it is of utmost importance that information about the individual students is passed on in order to avoid thresholds in the schooling and that training time is lost.

Social empowerment practices for personal/educational/professional aims

Compressed, Adapted and Targeted Elementary School Education

Many municipalities in Sweden have made huge efforts when it comes to the reception of newly arrived students. Most of them receive the students within the statutory time limits. Despite shortcomings, the majority of the municipalities map the students' knowledge within 2 months. Some chief executives have argued that their organizations have been strengthened as a consequence of many newly arrived students, for instance, through competence development and new forms of cooperation. This is positive and important. However, in order for the newly arrived students to quickly receive good and equivalent education, the municipalities can do more. Firstly, the education is still not sufficiently developed to meet the newly arrived students' individual conditions and needs. Newly arrived students have very different school background, subject knowledge, language skills, and experiences. Yet many

schools apply standardized collective solutions. For instance, standard decisions are common when it comes to the placement of students in preparatory classes. In addition, when it comes to the planning of the education, students who do language introduction in the high school are offered the same schedule and student pace regardless of previous knowledge.

A compressed and adapted elementary school education targeted at a specific group of newly arrived to provide the kind of competence enabling short-term educated people to qualify for a regular job. More specifically, such an education could encompass lessons in Swedish combined with everyday life and social orientation in the mother tongue in addition to lessons in mathematics and, if needed, to improve the mother tongue. Normally such an education would take 3–6 years, which is costly. However, it would be a significant improvement compared to the current situation where it takes on average 8–9 years for newly arrived refugees to start working if they do it at all. It can be speculated that the majority of the people in this category still will not be able to complete such an education. Most likely it will be the younger and the most motivated who will do it. For the majority, the optimal solution might be a combination of a somewhat even shorter, com- pressed elementary education and less qualified job.

Also when it comes to unaccompanied juveniles with an inadequate school education, it would be a benefit if they could be offered an adapted education. Today they are integrated early in regular business operations, where a majority fails. A solution could be to give them some kind of study payment slightly above the (försörjningsstöd) government support and connected to the presence at the job. Especially for women without government support, who often remain at home, this could be an incentive to enter the professional life. To use current means, which today often result in fruitless activities for newly arrived refugees, for an alternative elementary school education for newly arrived who are illiterate and those with relatively low education and unaccompanied juveniles would mean huge savings of social

costs. In addition, more would be integrated and have a chance on the regular labour market in Sweden. Yet another benefit with less qualified jobs would be that the newly arrived would have a job to go to and then become a positive role model for their children.

A Model of Robust Action for Sustainable Alternatives for Refugee Social Integration

Participatory architecture

The case stories illustrate different kinds of circumstances, conditions, degrees and manners of a participatory architecture that enables diverse and heterogeneous actors to constructively interact over a prolonged timespan. For instance, in the Befriending case there are two kinds of actors: the newly arrived and the befrienders who have volunteered. The circumstances are that armed conflicts have caused an unprecedented displacement of people resulting in a huge influx of refugees crossing into Europe. After a careful screening process, the refugees have come to Scotland to resettle in different communities across the country, such as Edinburgh. The befrienders are local people who have volunteered to help newly arrived to settle in Edinburgh. The rules of engagement to ensure legitimacy, innovation, and meaningful interaction (Mena & Palazzo, 2012) are that the volunteers are considered appropriate for this task. A volunteer from the local community with a LOHAS lifestyle is considered appropriate as this person is concerned with the social ethics and morality, incorporating practical actions in the daily lives. A common denominator for all the volunteers who come into the welcoming Centre is that they have had an international component to their lives, for instance, growing up abroad or working abroad before coming back to Scotland.

The Welcoming Centre that provides the social integration opportunities for the newly arrived is a kind of hybrid forum ((Ferraro, Etzion & Gehman, 2015). Its organizational architecture

facilitates the engagement of the newly arrived and the befrienders in a series of temporal and spatially interconnected events that sets an on-going process in motion. For instance, every month the befrienders gather at the Centre to share their experience and support each other. This means that the Centre supports the befrienders back.

The centre creates a space where these actors can meaningfully engage not only with counterparts but also among themselves. At the centre the newly arrived are supported by staff and from volunteers but also other newly arrived give much support to them.

The key challenge for the Centre is to prevent premature termination and to sustain engagement. Critical to the success of a particular participatory architecture is the ability to forestall disengagement, which can easily ensue in these contexts given the diversity of interests and concerns (Ferraro, Etzion & Gehman, 2015). The emphasis does not have to be on reaching consensus, but on sustaining engagement, and in fact expanding the network of participants. Due to the lack of resources and the rule of engagement that put limitations on the architecture's capacity to provide social integration opportunities, leaving over 100 local people desperate to be befrienders, the Centre has not been able to meet this challenge. Still, this elaborated, formalized, organizational structure ensures continuous engagement and enables meaningful collaboration; so far 40 matches have been made between newly arrived and local people.

Multivocal inscriptions

The action of a hybrid forum is the result of developed routines, processes, norms, guidelines, or other inscriptions that allow for discursive and material activity that sustains different interpretations among different stakeholders in a manner that promotes coordination without explicit consensus (Ferraro, Etzion & Gehman, 2015). Social integration of newly arrived

provides an example of inscription in the context of grand challenges. Social integration of newly arrived have different meanings. A key to success resides is the ability to enable different stakeholders to interpret it in different ways (Ferrero, Etzion & Gehman, 2015). Essentially the practices illustrate alternative solutions to social integration of newly arrived in relation to traditional integration programs. In this sense they represent very different ways, for instance, an alternative elementary school education for newly arrived who are illiterate and those with relatively low education and unaccompanied juveniles.

Our initial analysis shows that social networks are important, and for newly arrived who don't have them when arriving to a new country, it is even more important to develop new ones. So, one of the most useful things that newcomers can do is start to put into place those social networks that then can serve them on their personal and professional lives. The social networks facilitated by the Befriender also come as a response strategy to the social and environmental impacts that are often disregarded by the industry. With shared vision, values, and a common objective to generating human activity and bonds, both mitigate these practical outcomes, showing the industry the importance of shifting from a transactional to a relational team structure that is people-centred.

Our initial analysis further shows how reciprocity and the dynamics of pay it forward, lead to inclusive exchange of time and talents that strengthen social empowerment and benefit human relations as alternative to official programs for refugee integration. Newly arrived are integrated when they gain control of their lives by fostering the capacity to act on issues they define as important and realize goals in the communities in which they live.

Furthermore, common for all these initiatives is that they are cost-effective, flexible, and friendly models that can adapt to the needs of the refugees. There is trust, reciprocity that facilities sharing among and contributing, a huge amount of professionalism, among people

who make things happen, resulting in a huge amount of satisfaction for doing what they're doing. There is something really important about trust and reciprocity and how social capital works both ways, everyone gets something of it, the refugees who engage get the chance to build their networks and get to know different kinds of people, but also, the volunteers get a huge amount of interest and satisfaction from meeting people from all over the world. The success of these innovative practices of social integration of newly arrived reflects a kind of solidarity.

Distributed experimentation

Aligned with a pragmatist perspective, distributed experimentation is iterative action that promotes evolutionary learning, and increases engagement, while allowing (Ferraro, Etzion & Gehman, 2015). For example, from the peer support session with the befrienders new activities have emerged. Some of the volunteering befrienders now provide mental training to support newly arrived who have experienced extremely distressful situations, such as physical torture. This means that the knowledge based of the Centre is developing and builds its capacity to further support newly arrived to be integrated into the local community.

Furthermore, redefinition of ends and means aligned with the pragmatist understanding of problems and solutions reflect an experimentalist governance structure (Sabel and Zeitlin, 2012). For instance, the Centre is dependent on funding from a Scottish government climate fund. The funds are given to organizations in order to reduce carbon emissions by helping people to live in a sustainable eco-friendly way. As a consequence, the Centre started up a new program for providing home energy advice. An adviser goes to visit people in their homes and help them to understand how to use the home heating system and how to get a good energy supply. Although it may not be the most obvious activity in terms of integration, it is linked to new arrived who are coming to Scotland as preheated systems often are very

different from those in warmer climates, such as in Syria. The newly arrived can waste a lot of money by spending poorly on home heating, but with the home energy advice provided by the Centre they can operate these systems more efficiently. In addition, the home energy advice sessions are an opportunity for the newly arrived to raise all kinds of other issues. The home energy advisor has become a kind of private counsellor. It is a way to help engage with newly arrived as the advisor enables the development of trusting relationship, opening up different opportunities to support them as well.

A reasonable question is when a newly arrived can be considered to be integrated. One aspect is related with friendship as a result of a contrived relationship through the Befriending initiative. Newly arrived might start to feel integrated when seeing and meeting friends. 'Friends make you feel at home'. Another aspect is related with having a choice to stay. For instance, in the case with the Syrian woman she had an opportunity to meet local lawyers, which made her reflect on herself and her future and whether she associated with it. It gave her a perspective and feeling of a 'future here'. This was different from feeling not to have a choice in her life as a refugee when she first arrived in Edinburgh. In this sense, social integration of newly arrived is related with a perception and feeling of having a choice to stay or not. To be socially integrated occurs when newly arrived have the capacity to make informed choices to conquered their freedom.

In sum, participatory architecture, multivocal inscription, and distributed experimentation are strategies for tackling a grand challenge such as social integration of newly arrived. Participatory architecture provides a means for creating the necessary structure and involvement of diverse actors, such as newly arrived and local people, and fosters long-term engagement. Multivocal inscription provides the discursive and material activity required to sustain engagement and sustainable community development; and distributed experimentation is iterative action that promotes evolutionary learning that increases engagement based on an

experimentalist governance structure.

In the pool of initiatives we see how the concept of TimeBanking arises as a sustainable alternative promoting equality and opportunities. We find that voluntary initiatives use the dynamics of pay it forward - an expression for describing the beneficiary of a good deed repaying it to others instead of to the original benefactor, which means that the recipient of help pays it back by paying it forward – to create ways to deal with the refugee crisis. We also find initiatives of adapted education to the specific needs of the refugees and scattered evidence of such large-scale efforts.

By redefining the concept of work and value of assets, it functions as a creator of social dynamic based on equality, respect and reciprocity values. A relation between two strangers has then changed to a relation that builds social networks and communities to tackle any kind of social problems. TimeBanking offers an innovative way in which people can participate in society both as givers and receivers of services, enabling refugees to work, to be productive and proud from the first moments in the country, while absorbing the culture and social dynamics.

However, these practices do not directly resolve this grand challenge. From a pragmatist perspective, robust action sparks a process of evolutionary learning that contributes to the discovery and production of new understandings and novel alternatives to refugee social integration. Amalgamated, these strategies are responses in the face of global refugee crisis and social integration of newly arrived refugees. Robust actions are a set of practices, intricate networks of actions and processes, that help people gain control of their lives by fostering the capacity to make informed choices to conquer their freedom in the community in which they live. These we label as social empowerment practices for personal and professional aims. Rather than reaching some final conclusion, the practices foster repeated participation,

inscription, and experimentation, continuously generating innovative alternatives to social integration of newly arrived, sustaining engagement on individual, organizational as well as community level.

Conclusion

Resorting to pragmatism we recognize the need to rethink how we act in a world characterized by deeper complexity, uncertainty and evaluativity. We assume that local initiatives are more innovative and more responsive to local environments, communities and economic circumstances. We therefore argue that the social integration of refugees as a grand challenge require a different perspective than advocated by integration programs provided by governments. In applying the concept of robust action to the pursuit of refugee social integration we advocate for a change of mind-set from perceiving refugees as objects of charity work, turning them into passive consumers of help, to active actors who not only receive but also contribute with their time and talents that benefit human relations and the society at large. Our contribution to the theory of social action is an empirically based model of robust action for sustainable alternative for refugee social integration in tackling one of the world's most stubborn problems. Our model of robust action, applied on social integration of newly arrived, seeks to advance research on strategic responses to great challenges. In contrast to the predominate perspective of examining grand challenges from a corporate perspective our contribution stems from the perspective of the NGO. In the context of refugee social integration as a grand challenge, our model illustrates novel and innovative institutional arrangements of organizing with social relevance.

However, our research is limited in covering the distributed effects of the experimentation as a strategic response to refugee social integration. Further research could explore this topic as when experimentation occurs on a distributed basis it enables the analysis, design and

implementation of various alternative solutions simultaneously. This means that as experiments proliferate, there is the possibility of combining different prototypical alternatives for refugees social integration in ways that complement their different strengths and weaknesses.

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Table 1.

Aspect	Description
Social Empowerment Practice for	
Personal aims:	Befriending
	Bike for Refugees
Professional aims:	Become a Lawyer
	Code your Future
Educational aims:	Mapping new arrived students' knowledge
Persona/Educational/Professional aims	Compressed, adapted and targeted elementary school education