

Chapter 1

From Immigration to Integration: Comparing Local Practices

by

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The integration of immigrants at the local level is principally a question of the management of change. Effective labour market integration depends on helping immigrants to manage the rapid changes which are happening in their own lives, whilst at the same ensuring that the local community itself evolves and responds to changes in its population and in its urban fabric. This has a number of implications for an effective governance response. In particular, immigrants need clear road maps to guide them between the various services which will support their transition into a new life. Local areas also need to be aware of changes in the immigrant population, and develop new techniques to maximise the opportunities brought by skilled migrants, whilst removing unnecessary barriers to the workplace. This chapter reviews the activities of local stakeholders in each of the five countries studied, highlighting innovation and good practice, while also identifying common problems, and ongoing gaps in provision.

Introduction

The integration of immigrants at the local level is a topic of significant interest for OECD countries. The growing importance of the knowledge economy means that the battle for talent is becoming as important as the battle for inward investment, and skilled migrants can offer a significant comparative advantage to local labour markets, as long as their potential is harnessed. Unskilled migrants are also in demand, as demographic change means that many localities are seeking new workers to meet labour shortages and ensure that basic services are delivered. For the potential advantages of migration to be maximised however, it is crucial that immigration is accompanied by *integration*, that is, effective mechanisms for ensuring immigrants are effectively incorporated into local labour markets.

Immigrants at all times and places have had to adapt to the host country and vice-versa. The nature of the integration process has differed from country to country and over time depending on the migration history of the country, the characteristics of arrivals, the countries overall policy towards migration, the programmes in place to assist immigrants and the host countries' general social and economic conditions. However, in light of the large numbers of immigrants who have entered OECD countries during the last decades, the question of integration seems more pressing now because: i) more countries now recognise the potential advantages that immigrants bring to their local economies and ii) integration results do not seem to be as favourable in a number of countries as they were in the past.

There is a growing body of research into the factors leading to labour market integration,¹ and among the factors under study, those pertaining to local governance are increasingly drawing the attention of policymakers. While immigration policy is often determined, designed and funded at national level, its impact on immigrants and society is strongly manifested at the local level where other policies interact. In this regard, the efficacy of the local implementation of national policies or of initiatives taken locally is a central issue for integration policy.

There are a number of reasons why the integration of immigrants into the labour market is a particularly "local" issue. Firstly, it is apparent that migration has a relatively uneven geography. Within the migrant population, different groups are likely to migrate to particular countries, following political, economic and language ties and the previous migrations of friends

and relatives (immigrants to Spain are most likely to come from Latin America for example). Within countries, while certain agricultural areas attract large numbers of temporary migrants, immigrants are more likely to settle in urban areas and within those urban areas to certain “gateway” cities, particularly capital cities. This leads to local variations in both the size and the structure of the immigrant population. In the city of Toronto, for example, 49% of residents were foreign born in 2001, as compared with approximately 18% of the overall Canadian population (Canadian Census, 2001). In the Netherlands, similarly, 60% of the immigrant population live in the Western conurbation, with immigrants and their offspring constituting 47% of the population of Amsterdam in 2004 (Penninx et al., 2004). Within cities, immigrants often become concentrated in certain communities, or “ethnic enclaves”, either because they have chosen to move close to friends, relatives and known employment opportunities, or because they are excluded from living in other areas due to differentials in the cost of living. In the neighbourhood of North Etobicoke on the northwest side of Toronto, for example, 74.7% of residents over 15 years of age are first generation Canadians (Canadian Census 2001); partly because low accessibility means that house prices are relatively affordable in the neighbourhood. There is also local variation in the labour markets in which immigrants hope to integrate. Labour market contexts can vary to a greater extent between urban areas than they do between countries,² and local policy makers in capital cities, for example, often find it more useful to benchmark themselves with policy makers in other world cities, as opposed to those in smaller towns within their own country.

Local areas have a great deal to gain from the effective management of migration, and a great deal to lose if things go wrong. Sassen (1994) and Harris (2003) both emphasize that migrants are becoming essential to cities in a global economy where skills are increasingly specialised and trade relies on global interconnections. Companies are acquiring components of human capital from all over the world, with countries focusing on exporting certain kinds of education and training. This results in a decline in self sufficiency at the local level, with cities competing for foreign labour in addition to foreign based companies and their technologies. It is not just the highly skilled that are in demand. Sassen (*op. cit.*) describes how cities are also competing for unskilled and medium skilled migrants, as lower value labour and services are needed to optimise the value provided by the skilled.

Urban leaders are increasingly cognisant of the benefits that immigrants bring to their locality. The President of New York City Economic Development Cooperation recently claimed that immigrants constitute the “greatest comparative advantage” of his city. Forty-five per cent of the population of New York are immigrants (United States Census, 2000), and the city absorbs more immigrants every day than any other United States city other than Los

Angeles. The resulting diversity is reflected in the fact that the local emergency services answer the telephone in one hundred and seventy languages. The Federal Reserve Bank of New York has highlighted the key role that immigrants have played in contributing to the sustainability and productivity of the labour market of the city. Immigration has been particularly important in maintaining a constant population level during periods of relative decline, such as in the 1990s when approximately 1.3 million residents left the city. Without immigration it is estimated that New York would have lost 10% of its population.³ The composition of the New York labour force has dramatically changed in the last 30-40 years due to the influx of immigrants, however overall employment has risen and fallen only slightly within a band of between 3.2-3.8 million. The kinds of jobs performed have also changed substantially and output has risen sharply so that NYC labour has enjoyed good gains in real income despite the lack of job growth (Bram, Haughwout, and Orr, 2002).

With the coming retirement of aging baby-boomers in many OECD countries, the potential role of migration in supporting the sustainability of local economies, and alleviating the rise in the dependency ratio, has also been the object of a certain number of studies. It is now generally recognised that increased migration inflows cannot be expected to offset fully the projected rise in old-age dependency rates in OECD member countries: the required flows would be too large. However, it is acknowledged that migration can nevertheless play a role in alleviating the adverse consequences of ageing populations, in conjunction with other policies. At the local level, the presence of a labour supply willing to provide personal and proximity services to an ageing population is also becoming increasingly important.

In the reverse case, it is clear that if immigrants are not effectively integrated into local communities this can lead to disaffection and social unrest. The unrest which took place on the outskirts of Paris and other French cities in the second half of 2005 was an effective reminder of what can happen if populations become isolated and are not effectively integrated into society. Such disturbances, as with the riots which occurred in Bradford, Burnley and Leeds in the United Kingdom in 2001, quickly become high profile media events, and as such produce an increased awareness amongst policy makers which sometimes leads to new interventions at the local level. While increased policy attention can be helpful, the fluctuation of policy response to integration issues does not encourage sustainable approaches in the longer term. Integration is a complex issue which requires a long-term strategy and a sustained investment of resources.

Obstacles faced by immigrants to the labour market

Despite growing labour demand created by economic growth and demographic change in some countries, and the relatively high success of some highly skilled immigrants,⁴ many still experience obstacles to accessing good quality, sustainable employment. The recent OECD International Migration Outlook identified that in 2003-4 the participation rate of immigrants was on the whole lower than that of the native population (OECD, 2006a). In addition, in 2003, immigrants were more likely than nationals or natives to be unemployed in all OECD countries with the exception of Greece and Italy (OECD, 2005a).

Likewise, immigrants had a higher unemployment rate than nationals in all of the countries participating in the study (see Table 1.1). However Spain and Italy show relatively high employment rates for their foreign-born population, partly due to the relative importance of job-seekers in recent migration flows.

Table 1.1. Labour market participation and unemployment of foreign- and native-born populations in participating countries, 2004

	Participation rate (%)			Unemployment rate (%)		
	Natives	Foreign-born	Differential	Natives	Foreign-born	Differential
United Kingdom	75.7	68.4	7.3	4.3	7.3	-3
Spain	67.6	76.8	-9.2	10.8	13.8	-3
Italy	62.3	70	-7.7	7.9	9.3	-1.4
Canada	77.9*	73.5*	4.4	6.2*	8.7*	-2.5
Switzerland	81.7	78.8	2.9	3.1	8.3	-5.8

* Data only available for Canada for 2003.

Source: OECD (2006a).

OECD migration experts have recently stressed that, globally, there is increasing diversity in the economic performance of immigrants in the labour market. For example, within the overall figures above, it is noteworthy that there are different employment rates amongst immigrants from different countries and different ethnic groups. In London, for example, disaggregation of data on employment rates of working age residents by country of birth shows that while those born in high income countries outside the United Kingdom have an employment rate of 75% (exceeding the London average of 73.9%), the employment rate for those from developing countries is only 61.4%. Data from the United Kingdom 2001 Census allowing disaggregation by country also reveals that while employment rates for those from Australia and South Africa exceed 83%, for those from Somalia the employment rate is a mere 16.4%. Different legal categories of immigrant also experience different

unemployment rates, with refugees being particularly vulnerable. The Department for Work and Pensions in the United Kingdom, for example, estimates that refugees have an unemployment rate of 36% – more than six times the national average (House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee, 2005). The OECD International Migration Outlook (2006a) also points out that the young, older workers and women encounter specific difficulties in the labour market.

There are a considerable number of factors which both directly and indirectly impact on the ability of an immigrant to find a job. The issues effecting immigrants who have difficulty accessing employment in many ways mirror the problems that are experienced by other unemployed groups – inappropriate skills and qualifications for the jobs on offer; a lack of skills in navigating the labour market; difficulties handling family responsibilities and other commitments, social and psychological barriers to work. However within each of these areas, immigrants are likely to face particular issues.

While unemployed people sometimes experience problems with matching their skills and competencies to the local labour market, immigrants have the added difficulty that their education and qualifications were often acquired abroad, and employers find it difficult to judge the value of these qualifications within the local labour market. While all unemployed people may have trouble obtaining a good reference, immigrants may have only previously worked abroad and it is therefore not possible for employers to refer to previous employers for any assessment of their performance. While prejudice and the ascribing of false or stereotypical characteristics can affect any job seeker, racism and the negative portrayal of immigrants in the media can increase the chances that immigrants will not access a job due to discrimination. Finally, as recent arrivals in a local area, immigrants are more susceptible to the indirect factors which can prevent people from accessing work, such as isolation from important social networks, geographical isolation in cheaper housing areas and other issues which derive from relative social exclusion.

Table 1.2 sets out in more detail the types of obstacles that unemployed people may experience to getting into work, before setting out the particular issues affecting immigrants.

The quality of employment

Unemployment is not the only issue affecting immigrants. The quality of employment accessed and the prospects for career progression are equally important. While the figures appear to suggest that immigrants are relatively well integrated into the labour market in Spain and Italy, for example, many immigrants are in fact employed in temporary jobs with low incomes and poor

Table 1.2. **Barriers to the labour market**

Areas	General issues experienced by people seeking work	Specific issues facing immigrants
Skills and competencies	Lack of generic skills (communication, self-management, professionalism)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language skills • Lack of socio-cultural knowledge and understanding.
	Lack of specific competencies required for job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competencies required may be different from those required in home country. • Lack of funding and/or subsidies to access education and training locally. • Lack of local referees and lack of local work experience to prove competencies.
	Lack of specific qualifications required for job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of knowledge about the value and relevance of qualifications and experience gained in other countries.
	Lack of skills in navigating the labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of knowledge of local labour markets
Accessibility issues	Geographical isolation (distance from employers, distance from transport networks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentration of some immigrants in poorer communities and in ethnic enclaves.
	Social isolation (lack of access to social capital, social networks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of familiarity with local social networks
Availability to work	Availability of childcare and care for adult dependents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of relatives in the country may make it difficult to delegate caring responsibilities.¹
	Social and psychological issues, motivational problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigrants who come as refugees may have particular problems with overcoming trauma. • The children of migrants may experience disaffection if their parents did not succeed in the way they had expected.
	Work in the informal economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigrants often become concentrated in the informal economy where they have entered the country illegally or their work permit has expired.
Employer attitudes	Prejudice and the ascribing of false or stereotypical characteristics (for example due to social background, residence)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of normal recourse to information on an immigrants experience and qualifications • Racism, particularly as regards visible minorities. Concentration of immigrants in poorer areas which may become stigmatised

1. In European countries for which accurate information exists on reasons for remaining outside the labour force, foreigners are more likely than nationals to cite family responsibilities as a reason for not having a job (32% as against just under 20%). See OECD (2005).

Source: OECD LILM Project.

working conditions. The differential between the native and foreigner population in terms of the likelihood of holding a temporary job is particularly high in Spain, Portugal and Finland, all countries which themselves have high overall proportions of temporary employment (OECD, 2005a).

The underemployment of immigrants is also a significant issue, with immigrants often finding it difficult to find employment in fields and at levels which fully utilise their previous training and experience. The Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, for example, found that the great majority of

immigrants selected through the “skilled workers” programme operational in Canada had found employment within two years of their arrival. However, just over half had not found a job in their intended occupation (Statistics Canada, 2003). Where immigrants do find a job in their intended occupation it is generally less likely to be at an occupational level which corresponds to their qualifications. Unfortunately this has implications for longer term integration. Sweetman (2005) shows that the point of entry into the labour market is particularly important in determining long term career trajectories. The Conference Board of Canada (2001) estimates that underemployment costs the Canadian economy from CAD 3.5 to 5.0 billion annually.⁵

Another issue is that immigrants are often concentrated in particular sectors and industries. A number of sectors appear to favour immigrant labour, including construction, hotel and restaurant sectors, healthcare and social services (OECD, 2006a). Immigrants are also over-represented in unskilled services, and, in a number of countries, in domestic services.⁶ Within the above niches, they are more likely to be concentrated in jobs that native people do not want to do, i.e. those that are low paid, and reflect the “three Ds”: dirty, dangerous and difficult. The International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2004) has described how, despite the positive experience of many immigrants, a large proportion still face abusive and exploitative situations. These can include forced labour, low wages, poor working conditions, virtual absence of social protection, denial of freedom of association and union rights, discrimination and xenophobia, as well as social exclusion.

A further factor that needs to be borne in mind is the importance of the informal economy within many countries, including two of the countries covered by the study, Spain and Italy. According to the OECD (2004a), the share of informal economic activity in Italy represents 16% of the Italian GDP. In fact, the informal economy has risen in the past few years according to ISTAT figures on the share of irregular workers (from 13.4% in 1992 to 15.1% in 2000). In Spain, equivalent data is lacking for 2004; however Schneider and Klinglmair (2004) estimate that the average size of the shadow economy (expressed as a percentage of GDP) in the years 2002-2003 in Spain was 22.3%. Though the number of illegal immigrants filling these jobs is difficult to assess, comparisons between municipal registers (which cover the entire population; irrespective of their legal status) and the residence permit system gave a figure of roughly 1 million clandestine immigrants in 2004, many of whom are likely to have taken advantage of the recent national regularisation which took place in 2005. Within the highly flexible United States labour market, Holzer (2005) has estimated that 6-7 million immigrant workers are illegal. New legislation is currently being debated in Congress to resolve this issue, at least in part through developing new forms of temporary employment permit.

Immigrants are particularly vulnerable to being exploited by the informal economy. This is a problem in both rural areas (with a high percentage of illegal work in agriculture) and in large cities, where the large numbers of people employed in unregulated jobs at least partly reflects the difficulty of legally operating low added value services at a profitable level given the high costs (land, transport) associated with such urban environments. Participation in the informal economy produces problems of legality and unprotected and unregulated employment, and in the longer term can restrict the ability of immigrants to become integrated into the formal labour market. In countries where the informal labour market is relatively entrenched, such as Spain and Italy, it is a difficult issue to tackle. While regularisation exercises obviously help, they are often relatively temporary, with some immigrants having to undergo multiple regularisations as they go in and out of employment.

Key stakeholders working at the local level

Multi level, multi-stakeholder approaches

The wide variety of different stakeholders involved at the local level in supporting the integration of immigrants into the labour market to some extent reflects the diversity of barriers which immigrants face. Depending on the local area, activities to support integration can be taken forward by local and regional authorities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), trades unions, not-for profit enterprises, and employers. Each of these local organisations complement the support provided to immigrants in accessing the labour market by the public employment service (PES) which is delivered locally but mainly designed and developed at the national and regional levels.

The degree of involvement of different stakeholders depends very much on their traditional roles in each country, their established positions of power and their existing partnerships. Heckmann and Schnapper (2003) have pointed out that, “the way in which a country ‘normally’ tries to secure cohesion, conflict solution and to solve social and economic problems will also be used when integrating migrants”. In the Nordic countries, for example, support is provided to immigrants by mainstream employment and social services under the relatively centralised public welfare system. In contrast, in the countries reviewed within this publication (Canada, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom) the system is much more decentralised, with non-governmental organisations playing a major role in the provision of services to immigrants. In Spain, the United Kingdom and Italy, local municipal authorities take a relatively strong lead in coordinating partnership approaches, whereas they appear to have a weaker role in coordinating activities in Canada. Likewise, the trades unions play an important role in Italy, Spain and Switzerland, whereas they are largely absent from local

initiatives to support integration in Canada, and the United Kingdom. The private sector produces active partners in some local regions in the United States and English speaking Canada, with employers and community foundations taking a leading role in coordinating local action in Toronto, for example, and taking responsibility for developing integration initiatives at the local level. Private sector employment is less common in Europe, although in Italy local chambers of commerce play a notable role, particularly in stimulating local immigrant entrepreneurship.

The following section briefly summarises the types of contribution made by each of these stakeholders at the local level in the countries participating in this study.

The public employment service

The public employment service (PES) is the organisation with the most obvious responsibility for supporting the integration of immigrants into the local labour market. However it is comparatively rare for the PES to specifically target immigrants in their programmes, although projects developed by other stakeholders to support immigrants at the local level are sometimes funded and supported. In Spain, for example, the regional branches of INEM part-finance projects run by regional and local authorities to generate innovation in provision for immigrants. In the United Kingdom, the Jobcentre Plus service runs ethnic minority outreach services in target areas to which refugees are eligible, and sub-contracts these to non governmental organisations. A new Jobcentre Plus refugee operational framework also supports partnership working between district offices and local refugee and community groups.

While programmes implemented by the PES are most often designed at the national level, in decentralised states regional employment services have more direct input into programmes that support immigrant integration. To help employers to recruit immigrants, INEM has developed a new catalogue of unfilled vacancies for which there is no Spanish worker available. The database is updated quarterly and if employers find that their vacancies are listed on the register they can advertise abroad without having to check locally that no other workers are available for the position. The register is run by the regional offices of the PES, and there is discretion at regional level on which jobs are placed on the register, leading to considerable variation in the type and number of jobs that are listed.

Amongst all the participating countries, Canada had the most extensive and diverse set of PES programmes targeted towards immigrants, and the regional offices of Service Canada have developed a number of specific initiatives, perhaps influenced by the fact that Canada, in common with the United States and Australia, has traditionally classified itself as a “country of

immigration". In Ontario, Service Canada supports a series of targeted programmes to support immigrants including a newcomer assessment and referral project, specialised career search and work experience programmes, specialised employment centres and job finding clubs and programmes to support refugees. The Québec employment service (Emploi-Québec), in cooperation with other departments such as the Ministry of Education, Leisure and Sport and the Ministry of Health and Social Services likewise supports work experience programmes for immigrants with foreign degrees, mentoring schemes, skills upgrading projects for nurses, engineers and agriculture professionals trained abroad, and an office training project for immigrants. Government services and non-government organisations take part in recruiting and coaching those in training.

The role of local authorities

Despite the fact that in most cases they have no specific legal competency to help people into employment, local authorities play an important role in the local integration of immigrants into employment in many of the countries covered by this study. The multiple other competencies of local authorities mean that they are well placed to tackle the wide variety of issues which can indirectly prevent immigrants from accessing jobs (see Box 1.1). Whether or not they operate a specific integration policy, mainstream provision in relation to housing, schools, social assistance and spatial planning all have a significant impact on the wellbeing of immigrants and consequently on employability, particularly as these groups are less likely to be economically independent as their native counterparts and therefore more dependent on local assistance.

Ray (2003) has argued that the basic structure of a local area (its transportation, housing) is key to its ability to create social and economic cohesion, and that it is the everyday prosaic realities of a city or locality (accessibility, neighbourhood relations, access to public goods) that create both the positive successes and the barriers and sticking points in relation to integration. Through their historical development, certain localities have evolved land use patterns, housing provision and transport systems that are much better equipped to serve cultural diversity and prevent inequality through, for example, preventing the development of isolated pockets of deprivation with associated low quality housing, poor accessibility and poor quality amenities. He cites the city of Toronto in Canada as having been particularly effective in developing an integrated public transit system and tax pooling policies that did a great deal to sustain social cohesion and interaction as the city grew rapidly following World War II. However, in recent decades, low levels of investment in public transport and an absence of direct tax-sharing relationships between municipalities has contributed to increased

Box 1.1. Relevant actions by local authorities

Housing: Taking forward sensitive housing policy which avoids the concentration of immigrant and minority ethnic groups in certain areas, for example through supporting dispersed/mixed social housing development, clamping down on discriminatory landlords, avoiding the development of “back water areas” through ensuring good accessibility and tackling poor quality housing and urban decay;

Youth education: Ensuring that the children of immigrants have equal opportunity in school, colleges and higher education: this may involve extra help when children are young to ensure that language and other barriers associated with cultural difference do not prevent learning. Ensuring mixed education, and avoiding strong concentrations of immigrants in certain schools may also be a valuable means of promoting future integration;

Adult education and skills: Working with colleges and vocational schools to support ongoing learning of languages and vocational skills;

Entrepreneurship: Supporting immigrants in the development of enterprises, and particularly the expansion of these enterprises beyond “home industries” that frequently involve long hours and poor working conditions;

Building social networks. Ensuring that immigrants participate in broader social networks, which may assist in finding employment, through for example ensuring equal access to sport, cultural events and also promoting intercultural and inter-religious dialogue;

Promoting acceptable working conditions: Working with employers and trade unions/labour to ensure that when immigrants are in employment, this is good quality employment, with acceptable working conditions, proper health and safety and acceptable hours so that immigrants do not become the “working poor”. This may also involve tackling the informal labour market.

Economic development and ensuring all member of the community access the labour market: Ensuring that immigrants and people from minority ethnic groups have equal access to economic opportunity – this may take the form of tackling basic barriers to the labour market, working with employers to prevent discrimination – whilst also ensuring that immigrants contribute as far as possible to the local economy.

Source: OECD LILM project.

segregation and the concentration of immigrants in poorer communities. Ray describes a growing spatial mismatch between the housing locations of less-well-off residents, many of whom are newcomers, and the distribution of employment opportunities which will have an impact on labour market integration.

The importance of in-direct factors in reducing labour market integration has been recognised by a number of local authorities. The local authority in Santa Coloma de Gramenet in Spain, for example has placed a significant emphasis on tackling local neighbourhood issues (noise control, neighbour disputes, licensing of traders) in areas of high immigrant concentration, to prevent issues between residents becoming “ethnicised”, with resulting exclusion of these communities. The local development company has also focused on transport and accessibility plans as a means of helping local immigrants to access jobs in nearby labour markets, given the lack of economic development in the locality itself. Housing was a particular issue where local authorities felt able to intervene to support immigrants in Italy and Spain. Although housing may seem to have a relatively indirect relationship to the labour market, having appropriate housing close to available employment opportunities can be crucial to accessing and maintaining a job. In Italy, for example, housing plays an important role in the integration of immigrants in local labour markets because of the general housing crisis. Social housing accounts for less than 5% of the market, forcing the migrant labour force into an overcrowded rental market, and in many areas of the industrial north, housing costs are seen as the main obstacle to local labour market development. The Casa Amica project in Bergamo is a good example of a local initiative to provide housing for immigrants, involving a consortium of 16 public and private bodies, led by the regional and local authorities and comprising trades unions and associations. Casa Amica conducts research on the local housing situation and develops projects to meet needs, including the management of 132 apartments, construction of temporary housing facilities, the creation of a non-profit housing agency and the purchase and renovation of buildings for rental to single-parent families and mediation with homeowners. In Madrid, where housing costs are also particularly high, local NGOs focus on negotiating rental agreements with local landlords to help ensure that immigrants are not discriminated against or exploited.

Local authorities often become involved in immigrant integration issues through their responsibility for reception and the processing of legal papers for immigrants and through their role in emergency management situations. While decisions on the allocations of work permits to immigrants are usually made on the national level, the local level often has responsibility for administering them. For example, in Italy, foreigners are required to apply to the local police station for their residence permit. In times when large numbers of immigrants arrive this can cause long queues to form in city centres, raising public concern over the management of immigration inflows, and causing employers to lose production time. This has led the autonomous province of Trento in Italy to open a special service, CINFORMI, which has

since become the principle actor in issuing permits and supporting the overall integration of immigrants locally.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

Both local authorities and the PES frequently work with non-governmental organisations in the delivery of services to immigrants at the local level. This is sometimes for legal reasons: in Spain, for example, local authorities are not able to work with immigrants who do not have employment or resident permits, and therefore to some extent rely on NGOs to provide emergency support for these groups. NGOs are also favoured partners in the local integration process because they are felt to provide the supportive environment and individualised “one stop shop” approaches that immigrant with multiple obstacles to employment need.

In English speaking Canada,⁷ public support to help immigrants into employment is almost entirely contracted out to NGOs at the local level, with only a small proportion of direct support being given to clients by the public employment service. NGOs frequently “mix and match” federal, provincial and municipal funding streams, in addition to private and charitable contributions, to deliver a number of different services to immigrants. In Winnipeg, Manitoba, for example, the International Centre provides both a reception service and a wide variety of other services to immigrants according to their needs, including advice on preparing CVs and navigating the local labour market, support in accessing local university training courses including advance payments on student loans, a cultural participation programme, a nutritional and wellness programme, children’s recreational programme, outreach work with a social worker and translation services. Available resources to support immigrants in their job search include computers, projectors, lap tops, and a library. Despite being based in a relatively small scale facility in the community, the centre is able to help a relatively large number of immigrants: in 2004-5, 612 clients received guidance from employment facilitators, 202 participated in employment and job search workshops, and 253 gained employment directly as a result of this support.

In Madrid, the regional administration is working with non-governmental organisations at the local level to deliver a system of support to immigrants focusing on the local emergency management of extreme marginalisation and exclusion. The Social Attention Centres for Immigrants (CASI) programme provides a series of highly professionalised “one stop shop” services at the neighbourhood level, across the whole Madrid region, funded by the government but run by the voluntary sector. A team of professionals provide a range of complementary supports, with clients being offered five different services within the same location, including social work, legal, labour, inter-cultural, and social/educational services.

In Italy, the non-profit third sector has also been at the forefront of providing emergency reception facilities, and local authorities throughout the country have learned to rely heavily on shelters and services provided by associations. The most important associations and facilities have strong links to the Catholic Church. In London, a broader mix of secular and non-secular NGOs are at the forefront of provision for refugees. These NGOs (or RCOs: "Refugee and Community Organisations") provide a wide variety of services, including job search support and training in familiar local settings, funded through a variety of national, regional and European funding streams. Such RCOs are often run by immigrants associations and as such are felt to provide a community based environment for training and supporting refugees, with a strong understanding of different cultural issues affecting these groups.

Colleges and vocational schools

Colleges and vocational schools are particularly well placed to take forward an integration approach at the local level, in that they act as intermediaries between local people, local employers, and local governance structures. The community college system in the United States is seen by many as acting as an "integrative social institution" which actively links post-secondary education to local labour market needs. Over 25% of the more than 6 million students enrolled in community colleges in the United States are immigrants. La Guardia community college in New York, for example, is working with a variety of industry forums as well as immigrant entrepreneurs, concentrating on long term career path building and undertaking up-skilling programmes for immigrants in the health care industry.

Vocational schools in Switzerland have been particularly involved in providing support to immigrants because of the importance of the apprenticeship system within national vocational education. Vocational schools work with young people who have just arrived in the country to support their access to apprenticeships, which are seen as a principal route into the labour market. In particular, a number of vocational schools run pre-apprenticeship courses, which help young immigrants to address skills gaps, particularly around numeracy and literacy, before joining the mainstream programmes. The classes are small and the tutors work hard to build up links with local employers to ensure that their pupils are able to access employment placements in an increasingly competitive market. Vocational schools maintain relatively close links with federal institutions and participate in national conferences which enable them to closely follow the national policy agenda, and develop a common approach in a highly decentralised system. At the same time, their closeness to local communities enables them to carry this agenda forward with sensitivity to local conditions.

Employers

When making employment decisions about immigrants, employers do not have recourse to the usual sources of information (on educational background, previous work performance) which guide them in choosing the right employee. Local activities to ensure that employers can quickly see the potential offered by immigrants are therefore crucial, including, for example, bridging programmes that provide work experience placements for immigrants, actions to support the transferability of qualifications and projects which recognise prior competencies. In this sense employers are perhaps the most important of all the stakeholders to be involved at the local level, both because they themselves can offer opportunities to immigrants, and also because they can be involved in designing projects which are attractive to other employers.

In English-speaking Canada and the United States, this study has identified a number of examples of employers playing a relatively strong role locally, taking a lead on partnerships to develop integration approaches, and in some cases working together to provide employer based training opportunities for immigrants. Employers are leading partners in the Toronto based Region Immigration Employment Council (TRIEC), for example, which was launched in 2003 and has the mandate to improve access to the labour market for skilled immigrants. It is run by a council incorporating major employers, government representatives, trades unions and NGOs, and offers a strong example of an inclusive, but ultimately employer led approach. The employers who support TRIEC claim that local demography is a major driver: although there are no real skills shortages now in Toronto, they predict that the ageing population will produce such shortages over the next five years. They would prefer to learn the particular human resource management skills required to effectively recruit talented immigrants now, and therefore remain ahead of the game. TRIEC is seen as a “solution seeking machine” and runs a number of different programmes including “career bridging”, mentoring, and the promotion of good practice in the hiring of immigrants.

In the United States, employers were also important members of the recent three year Building the New American Community initiative. This initiative was funded principally by the United States Office of Refugee Resettlement and focused on three cities: Portland, Nashville and Lowell. The aim was to develop public-private partnerships that reached across levels of government and the private sector has played a relatively strong role, particularly in Nashville, where the Nashville chamber of commerce helped to raise funding for the coalition and ensured that activities in Nashville had a strong workforce and business development orientation.

In another region of Canada, the province of Manitoba has worked with a group of local employers to provide an effective company based training system. A number of local credit unions (including Cambrian and Assiniboine) have joined forces to develop a customized training programme for immigrants seeking the position of “member service representative”. The local authority has assisted the credit unions in undertaking an assessment of the various competences required by the position and using these to design a five week training course tailored specifically to the post. The training course also addresses the obstacles which immigrants can experience if they have not worked in Canada previously, including training in communication skills. The initial training period is followed by three months of paid work experience in the participating credit unions for those who successfully complete the training. The credit unions are planning to run four courses a year. The first two courses involved approximately ten participants each, selected from a pool of around 80 local immigrants who expressed an interest, with the majority going onto full time posts. The credit union industry is perhaps particularly well suited to this type of initiative, having both a community based approach, and strong pre-existing networks between its institutions. The local credit unions were particularly interested in employing immigrants in their branches in order to improve the adaptability of their services to local communities where a high concentration of immigrants are currently living. However, the local authority in Winnipeg also provided an important role in galvanizing the initiative, supporting the employers through providing a trainer, and the initial investment in the competency profiling. This “pooled training” approach for employers could be usefully copied elsewhere.

In the European countries participating in this study, local stakeholders had greater problems bringing employers into partnerships and ensuring that they participate in the design of initiatives. For example, in London, employers tend to be conspicuous by their absence from local initiatives concerned with labour market integration of refugees, despite the fact that many suffer skills shortages and skills gaps. NGOs reported difficulties in finding workplacements outside the voluntary sector, and those employers who did work with immigrants and refugees were often unwilling to publicise their work in the prevailing political and media climate surrounding immigration, since they felt that the potential adverse publicity that might follow “putting their heads above the parapet” could be damaging to their businesses. In turn, the lack of private sector involvement leads to a lack of “good practice” examples for others to follow. In Switzerland, vocational schools and other local stakeholders have experienced difficulties engaging employers, a problem which is made worse by the lack of anti-discrimination legislation existing in the country. The difficulty of involving employers in local initiatives in European countries is not peculiar to this particular policy area.

Previous LEED research has also highlighted the difficulty of encouraging employers to work towards improving the labour market integration of people who have greater difficulty in accessing the labour market, with Keane and Corman (2001) arguing that these groups are generally of lesser concern to employers. Förschner (2003b) also highlights the low level of cooperation with economic departments and entrepreneurs as being a key weakness of the European Union funded Austrian Territorial Employment pacts (TEPs).

However there are notable exceptions to the rule. For example, the potential for associations of employers to progressively tackle both integration and quality of work issues at the local level was illustrated strongly in the province of Lleida, in Spain. The Farmers Association in Catalonia (*Unió de Pagesos*, member of the Spanish network of agricultural and livestock organisations, COAG) has developed an innovative model for promoting good quality employment for temporary immigrants, bringing small-scale farmers together to co-ordinate and improve working conditions, and providing a variety of different forms of accommodation, training and social support. The advantage of the scheme from the employer's point of view is that the employees are accessible (through accommodation on site) and anti-social behaviour or absenteeism can be more easily managed. Immigrant workers benefit by being guaranteed a minimum standard of employment conditions, having their accommodation paid for, and participating in cultural programmes which support the development of positive relations with the local community. One of the progressive aspects of the programme is a transactional model that supports the creation of development projects and leadership training programmes in the immigrants' country of origin. Developing ongoing links with specific localities in sending countries has both supported a sustainable supply of workers and built a strong degree of trust, whilst supporting local development overseas. The national network provided by COAG has also provided the potential for temporary workers to extend their stay in Spain through transferring to work in different Spanish regions where the timing of the harvest is different.

In Italy, local chambers of commerce play a key role in a wide variety of initiatives, from training to accommodation and support for entrepreneurship. Italian chambers of commerce have been at the forefront of developing sector-based approaches to training and recruiting new immigrants from abroad. In order to meet demand for qualified seasonal workers in the tourism industry, for example, the Association of Commerce and Tourism in Trentino developed a bilateral project with the Romanian professional school for hotel and catering in Bucharest. The project, the first of this type in Italy, was intended to address long-term tourism sector labour needs in Trentino, and approximately fifty tourism enterprises became involved. The advantages to employers are clear. The demand for trained

Italian-language staff in the tourism sector is very high, and training costs are lower in Romania than in Trento. Trainees, on the other hand, are able to benefit from being given priority in the seasonal labour quota and a relationship with the trade association that sponsors their visa application. Eighty one students were taken on initially, and those that successfully completed a period of language training received three months professional tuition in Trento followed by additional professional training in their country of origin. Italian chambers of commerce have also been particularly active in supporting immigrant entrepreneurship at the local level. In addition, private banks have been responsible for financing local initiatives – for example the Casa Amica housing project in Bergamo outlined above.

A key challenge for all local initiatives working with employers to support integration is the issue of discrimination. While discrimination was raised as a issue in all the participating countries, and is the focus of national level policies and legislation,⁸ specific local anti-discrimination initiatives were relatively lacking in the case study areas reviewed. However, in Montréal, in order to help the region's employers recruit and retain immigrants and ethnic minorities, the office of Emploi-Québec has worked with a not-for-profit organisation, "*Le Mouvement québécois de la qualité*" to prepare a guide on good human resources practices for companies that employ a multicultural workforce. In Toronto, TRIEC has also developed a marketing campaign to encourage new employers to tackle develop good practice in taking a positive approach to immigrants. The Hire Immigrants campaign recognises champions in the field, and provides training for future human resources professionals. European funded programmes at the local level such as EQUAL and in some cases the Territorial Employment Pacts (TEPs) have also supported approaches to tackling discrimination in the countries covered by the European Union. In Belgium, for example, a TEP in Brussels has developed an innovative approach to tackling discrimination on a sector basis, bringing employers together for joint training sessions on issues of discrimination in recruitment. Trade unions are also represented at the seminars, ensuring that they are challenging environments where employers are forced to examine their anti-discrimination policies in depth.

While employers are important partners, several experts have stressed the important role of the public sector in mediating between the private sector and local immigrants to ensure that the needs of the immigrant are best met. Employers may have different motivations in helping immigrants, for example, and it may not always be in their interest to support upward mobility or even sustainable employment. There is an important role for "not for profit brokers" between employers and employees.

It is also important to note that it is not only private or third sector employers that need to be brought on board in the local integration of

immigrants. The public sector is also a particularly important employer at the local level, but often does not feature prominently as such in local integration initiatives.⁹ The canton of Neuchâtel in Switzerland has recently been innovative in promoting public sector employment for immigrants in its legislation and planning, establishing in law that it is not necessary to have Swiss nationality to become a civil servant except in some specific services. Increasing public sector employment has also been included as one of the recommendations prepared by the canton's working group on integration for 2006-9. There are a number of good reasons for pursuing the local integration of immigrants through local public sector employment: firstly, public sector employment represents a significant sector in the labour market. Secondly, the public sector can implement equal opportunity and integration in an arena which its own agencies control, including the development of training courses aimed at disadvantaged groups within the labour market. Thirdly, non-nationals are also recipients or clients of state services, and increasing the representation of non-nationals within the public sector may increase the appropriateness of the services on offer.

The not-for-profit private sector

Not-for-profit private sector organisations such as social enterprises, local development companies, and community foundations can also be important players in the integration of immigrants into the labour market at the local level, not least due to the flexibility they gain from being outside of the public sector.

A social enterprise in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, has played an interesting role in developing customised training for immigrants which is geared to the needs of local employers. The Centre neuchâtelois (CNIP) has established itself as an important regional training centre, primarily providing training for adults to give them new skills and to assist in their reinsertion into the labour market. The centre can accommodate roughly 120 trainees at any one time, with approximately 70% being immigrants. The centre initially took out loans from the Swiss federal government in order to invest in renovating the factory, and purchasing machinery. It now relies for its income on payments per unemployed trainee from the public employment service and, to a very small degree, from the marketing of its own products. Its independence from the formal training system allows the centre to take a significant "demand led" approach, responding to employer needs by providing short and intensive training "close to the realities of industry", in day and evening classes. Because the centre does not have to conform to the annual calendar used by the vocational schools, it can offer modular courses all year round. The centre also works with particular hard to reach groups, including a number of older immigrants who have work injuries relating to previous employment. This is

reflected in the centre's annual output figures: while 40% of the trainees who left the centre in 2005 went into employment, 28% had to finish training on medical grounds.

In the municipality of Santa Coloma de Gramenet, in Spain, the local authority has chosen to delegate its integration services to immigrants to a local development company Grameimpuls S.A, which is responsible for managing local economic and employment promotion policies. The company works with approximately 70-80 immigrants a year and has the advantage of being empowered to work in the relatively wide range of activities normally taken forward by local authorities whilst also retaining a relatively focused approach on economic development and integration issues. The director of the centre has been able to build up a strong local profile as a representative dealing with immigrant issues, and has build up relations of trust with local employers, community organisations and government representatives. He feels that this trust is an essential element in supporting change and helping immigrants out of situations of deprivation. The training delivered by the centre focuses on employability skills in particular, although the centre experiences some problems identifying good quality jobs for participants in a local labour market which has high rates of temporary employment: of those who left the programme in 2003, roughly a half found employment, and of those, only half again were still in employment the following year.

Community foundations are another form of semi-private organisation that play a visible role in the integration of immigrants in a number of OECD countries. In the United States, the tradition of philanthropy means that foundations are strongly involved in the development and management of integration projects. The Independence Community Foundation in New York, for example, was set up through an endowment from Independence Community Bank and focuses on community development, education, culture and the arts, poverty, housing, and economic and workforce development issues in the New York metropolitan area. It has recently funded a "Latin American Workers project" in the neighbourhood of Williamsburg, which was developed to provide a drop in centre for day labourers. In Canada, it was a private foundation, the Maytree Foundation, which played a particularly important role in stimulating the development of the TRIEC partnership to support immigrant integration in Toronto. The Foundation was responsible for developing the initial strategic vision and programme of work, and is now coordinating the partnership bodies which implement the programme. The employment council has been able to attract and maintain membership from a large number of partnerships in the region partly because the Foundation is a relatively neutral and independent coordinator.

Trade unions

Access to good quality employment is a crucial aspect of the local integration of immigrants into the labour market. Trade unions have a role to play here, although their presence in helping integration at the local level is far from uniform. The unions are more visible partners at the local level in Southern European countries, for example, such as Spain and Italy, as opposed to Canada and the United Kingdom. One factor limiting union involvement is a reluctance to get involved in supporting immigrants in temporary or undocumented employment, who may be seen to be in potential conflict with their existing members. Unions in some cases also proved negative about employer involvement in local initiatives to support access to employment, for example work experience and mentoring schemes, as this was felt to place too many extra “non-contract based” requirements on their members.

Given the right tools and motivation, however, trade unions can make a significant contribution at the local level to increasing the quality of employment on offer. In Italy, trade unions have been at the forefront of the regularisation process at the local level. In Milan, the CGIL union alone handled 30 000 applications in 2002. Equally important was the ACLI-Colf, the Catholic Worker’s Association for domestic workers, which set up branches around the metropolitan area of Milan to help domestic workers with their legal procedures. This contact reinforced the role of these associations as representatives of immigrant workers, especially in a situation where institutions were unable to develop a coordinated response.

In the United States, unions are generally less involved in integration issues. However, in New York, the 32BJ Service Union has recently had important success in improving the employment conditions for their members employed in service jobs such as night-time security or cleaning commercial buildings, of which 70% are foreign born. In the last five years the union has campaigned to raise wages for 6 000 workers from USD 5 to 10 an hour, with added health care benefits. Employers pay into a training fund, to allow union members to access up to college degree courses, and there is a university scholarship programme for workers children. The union employs a number of lawyers who support union members when going through legal problems. The union also participates in a New York Civic Participation Project which is a collaboration between unions and community groups to promote low-wage immigrant worker rights. This project supports engagement by immigrant communities in civic participation at the neighbourhood and citywide level and provides community grants to support integration.

Immigrants associations

It is increasingly recognised that immigrant associations have an important role to play in integration at the local level, as they encourage the development of services that are culturally sensitive, and that take the demands of immigrants themselves into account. One of the key findings of the Building Americas New Community initiatives, for example, is that “new Americans” should be involved significantly in decision making processes. The evaluators of these initiative felt that it was particularly important that immigrants associations are not only consulted on schemes, but are also offered the possibility of active participation in design and delivery.

In Canada, immigrants associations are strongly represented at the regional level, in roundtables which comment on and feed into employment policy. At the local level, they also help to deliver employment programmes. For example in Montréal, an association which represents Jewish residents, Jewish Employment Montréal (JEM) works as a matching agency for immigrants, drawing upon a database of approximately 2500 employers, mainly from the local Jewish business community. It aims to offer a professional approach with strong awareness of the needs and interests of business, whilst also offering the benefits of a supportive community group to their clients. Immigrants associations are also responsible for running many of the refugee and community organisations operational in London. The London case study, for example, highlights projects that are working specifically with refugees from the Somali, Iranian, Arab, Filipino, African, Asian, Latin American, Cameroonian or Hindu communities. There is also a strong recent history of immigrants associations being involved in local regeneration partnerships, such as the Renewal partnership in West London, enabling them to take an active role in the design and management of partnership projects at the local level.

The high profile given to immigrants associations in work to support integration and social cohesion in the United Kingdom is not without its critics however. Kenan Malik has recently argued¹⁰ that funding targeted at particular immigrants associations has been divisive, encouraging competition between different communities for resources and power. He feels that focusing on ethnicity sidelines issues of poverty and equality, and creates a politics of difference. A reluctance to single out particular communities for attention may also at least partly explain the relatively low involvement of immigrant associations in Spain and Switzerland at the local level. In Switzerland, immigrants associations played a strong role in supporting integration up until relatively recently, in the absence of public sector support. However, now that both the federal level and the cantons are taking a more active role, policy makers are reluctant to work with immigrants associations

locally as they do not want to be seen to favour particular groups in society. This standpoint is also reflected in France, where the republican national model means that ethnic communities are not directly taken into consideration in policy making and implementation. Despite this, Moore (2004) has recently demonstrated that this is sometimes subverted at the local level, where crisis situations in areas of high immigrant concentration in Marseille and Toulouse have led to the unofficial appointment of North African mediators to serve as links between policy makers and immigrants. Immigrants associations have also played a relatively limited role in supporting integration issues in Spain, which has been blamed on a historic lack of “associationalism”; however the national government is now trying to build capacity in these groups to ensure that they play a role in the new integration agenda which has been taken forward by the new government in Spain since 2004.

The instruments used

Many of the tools and instruments used to support the integration of immigrants in the local areas studied are similar to those used within mainstream active labour market policies. For example, the majority of local activities focused on job search support, education and training, mentoring and the provision of work experience placements, although they adapted this support so that it responded to the specific needs and lifestyles of the local immigrant population. In addition, local initiatives also provided specialised support to immigrants including language tuition, the recognition of qualifications and skills gained overseas, and help with wider social acculturation, participation and networking. Table 1.3 summarises the types of adaptation developed by initiatives to meet the specific needs and barriers experienced by immigrants.

Job search and self-presentation

Many of the local initiatives reviewed as part of this study focused at least in part on improving the ability of immigrants to “navigate” the local labour market. On arriving in a new country it can be difficult to understand the methods which local people use to find jobs, particularly where the majority of jobs are not formally advertised (such as is the case in Canada and Italy). For example, in London, the Refugee Education and Training Advisory Service (RETAS) offers a series of two week job search and orientation courses which were run throughout the year, including an overview of the United Kingdom job market, and individual careers assessments. Many local initiatives provided access to the internet and newspapers and advice on making prospective calls to employers. In addition, support is given on self-presentation techniques – how to write CVs and covering letters, and how to

Table 1.3. **Types of adaptation of local initiatives to the specific needs and barriers experienced by immigrants**

Issue	Barrier	Adaptation
Skills and competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language skills, socio-cultural knowledge and understanding, lack of funding and/or subsidies to access education and training locally, qualifications gained overseas, lack of local referees and lack of local work experience to prove competencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language courses • High staff to participant ratios on other training courses to give additional language assistance and help with interpreting and navigating local cultural norms • Support with acculturation to the local community • Provision of information on local institutions and governance frameworks, including the local education system • Recognition of qualifications • Education and training courses • Organisation of work experience placements with local employers
Accessibility issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of knowledge of local labour markets, concentration of some immigrants in poorer communities and in ethnic enclaves • Lack of local social networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses in navigating the local labour market • Support with accessing neighbouring labour markets • Support with social networking
Availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of relatives in the country may make it difficult to delegate caring responsibilities • Problems with overcoming socio-psychological issues trauma, disaffection and low motivation (particularly second or third generations) • Migration status (rules around whether asylum seekers are able to work for example) • Availability of work permits for particular jobs • Immigrants often become concentrated in the informal economy where they have entered the country illegally or their work permit has expired. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of evening classes • Provision of childcare along side training courses • Social and psychological support, confidence building and re-motivation courses • Work with children to ensure that they succeed in the education system • Support with navigating the legal permit system • Local projects to encourage the better regulation of employment
Employer attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of normal recourse to information on immigrants experience and qualifications • Lack of knowledge about the value and relevance of qualifications and experience gained in other countries. • Racism, particularly as regards visible minorities. Concentration of immigrants in poorer areas which may become stigmatised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiatives to bring employers into contact with immigrants and build trust, including mentoring and work experience • Initiatives to reduce prejudice and discrimination amongst employers

Source: OECD LIILM Project.

succeed in an interview. In some cases, advice was given at least initially on navigating the wider social environment – the role and functions of local institutions, where to seek support and advice, as this was felt to be a necessary first step before improving access to employment opportunities.

A number of local initiatives studied had also developed targeted approaches to helping different types of immigrant navigate the labour

market. While some initiatives chose to target a particular labour market sector, others focused on particular groups within the immigrant community. In London, for example, Education Action International have published an “Employment resource handbook for refugee engineers” which aims to provide essential information on the job hunting culture in the United Kingdom in addition to an overview of the engineering profession (Rogic and Feldman, 2004). The Rexdale Employment Resource Centre (ERC), operated by Humber College in North Etobicoke, Toronto runs a job-search course which targets a number of different sectors, but focuses on a particular type of immigrant – the highly skilled. The centre provides four week courses for “Foreign Trained Professionals and Tradespeople” which are explicitly designed to help professional migrants gain professional-level employment. The courses are relatively resource intensive, each course involving roughly 20 participants and costing around CAD 2 000 (EUR 1 400)¹¹ per participant but outcomes appeared to be positive, with the majority of participants finding professional-level work after finishing the course.

Education and training

Many local initiatives provide education and training courses for immigrants in basic skills such as IT and numeracy in order to build up their employability. Such courses are frequently adapted to the specific needs of migrants, for example through the provision of additional language support and help with understanding cultural norms specific to the host country. A number of local initiatives also ensure that courses are accessible to immigrants who have constraints on their availability (due to having taken “survival employment” or due to responsibilities to dependents), providing evening classes, and associated childcare, although such support is less common. Training is often delivered within a broader set of activities and support. For example, the RAAD Large Scale Employment and Training project for refugees and asylum seekers in London includes a raft of different forms of support including training, advice in job search and job creation initiatives – since 2002, in addition to awarding 329 qualifications (many in short courses such as forklift truck driving and IT) the initiative has created 111 jobs in medicine, industry, the voluntary sector, customer services and the retail sector.

While many local initiatives offer training in basic and generic skills, some choose to focus on specific skills required for certain professions. Again in London, a project run by the Arab Group focuses on the provision of dressmaking skills in order to increase the opportunities available to local Arab women and Arab refugees. Between 2002 and 2005, 42 candidates were trained by the project, of whom 18 have gained a formal vocational qualification in fashion and dressmaking, eight have directly accessed jobs in

linen and upholstery factories and two have opened their own tailoring businesses. In some cases, education and training is used to help re-direct immigrants who are already employed in low quality and low paid jobs into occupations with more chance of career progression. For example the Alma Mater project in Italy has developed a number of small scale intensive re-training programmes for women in low skilled-low paid jobs. One such project re-trained women in the domestic services sector in skills required to develop a career in banking. Following the course, twelve women left domestic employment and began long-term contracts in Italian banks as bank-clerks.

Languages

Language was viewed by many local stakeholders as crucial to the local integration of immigrants, and language tuition was a common element in almost all of the local initiatives visited in the participating countries. Language and communication skills are becoming increasingly important as a requirement for employment in the service based and knowledge based economy, and increasingly it is these jobs which immigrants are hoping to access. Whereas traditionally, activities of the secondary sector accounted for a large portion of foreign employment in most OECD countries, recent years have seen a gradual spread of foreign employment into the tertiary sector. In 2002-03, that sector accounted for more than three-quarters of foreign jobs in the United Kingdom (83.3%), in Sweden (76.1%) and in Finland (75.6%). More than 70% of foreigners also work in services in Australia, Canada, the United States, Ireland, Luxembourg, Norway and the Netherlands (OECD, 2005a).

Languages are often taught as part of wider training courses – for example language is a key element in the pre-apprenticeship courses provided in Swiss vocational schools. In other initiatives languages were taught as part of a package of job search support, sometimes in conjunction with basic numeracy training. Despite the emphasis on language teaching, many local stakeholders complained that freely available language courses were oversubscribed. In London, for example, expenditure on English as a Second Language (ESOL) has risen significantly in the United Kingdom over the last few years, but the Strategy Unit (2004) suggested that the volume of demand for ESOL still far outstripped supply. A further issue for London, and for the other countries covered by the study is how and whether provision matches the needs of learners and the demands of the economy – in terms of level (introductory/intermediate/specialist), and content (specifically in relation to fulfilling workplace needs).

The *level* of language provision was a particular issue raised in countries recruiting relatively high skilled immigrants. In most countries language tuition was offered at a relatively basic level, however it was evident that many employers were seeking relatively high levels of language competency.

Canada, for example, employs a language competency benchmarking system, with a scale ranging from 1 to 12; with most employers requiring a language level of 8 or above. Only the province of Manitoba currently provides widely available language training up to that level. In most cases generally available language training stops at the level of 5 or 6.

It was also found that generalised language courses are not always enough to meet the specific occupational requirements of different labour market sectors. In both London and the Canadian provinces local stakeholders have placed growing emphasis on occupational language courses which are targeted to particular professions. Occupational language tuition is an important element of the training schemes being operated in Canada to provide top up training for immigrants wishing to enter a profession. The Enhanced Language Training (ELT) initiative funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada also provides job-specific language training to enable immigrants to gain the language skills they need to flourish in the workplace across a number of different sectors including teaching, nursing, engineering and medicine, while separate communication skills courses have also been developed for accountants and call centre staff. In London, the Renewal partnership has also developed occupational language courses, in combination with adaptation programmes and workplacements as part of specialist packages aimed at particular employment sectors. Likewise, bilingual vocational courses with an emphasis on English in specific workplace contexts have recently been established in the London Borough of Croydon.

In the light of the demands of the knowledge and service based economy it is likely that language tuition will be given increased importance at the local level in the future. A number of national governments are giving new priority to language training in their integration and immigration strategies. In the United Kingdom, language tuition is an important element in a recent joint statement by the Home Office, the TUC and the Confederation of British Industry to support managed migration in the interests of the United Kingdom economy. The Home Office have also introduced a language standard as one of their requirements for United Kingdom citizenship. In Canada, a key element of a new agreement on immigration which has recently been negotiated between Canada and Ontario is a commitment to improve the availability of language services, through for example expanding language training, assessment and referral services and ensuring that they are delivered through appropriate partnerships, including those with employers, regulatory bodies, and professional and trade associations.¹² Language tuition was also identified as a key issue for future investment by the evaluation of the three Building New American Communities pilots in the United States.

Recognition of skills and qualifications

Another instrument which has been given particular support in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom, is the recognition of qualifications gained overseas. Credential and educational attainment recognition was seen as one of the main issues for investment emerging from the evaluation of the Building New American Communities initiative as it is a key component in the process of ensuring that employers can take maximum advantage of the previous knowledge, training, skills and experience brought by immigrants.

Recognition of qualifications is particularly challenging in Canada because its ten provinces and three territories have jurisdictional responsibility for the regulation of skilled trades and some professions, which in many cases has been delegated to regulatory bodies through legislation. There are over 400 such bodies responsible for regulating approximately 20% of the Canadian workforce. In Québec, the Québec Ministry for Immigration and Cultural Communities (MICC) runs a Centre for the Recognition of Skills and Competences for immigrants with prior qualifications. The centre carried out approximately 14 104 comparative assessments of diplomas in 2005-6, mainly for people outside the professions. In addition, the Regulated Profession Information Office (SIPR) informs immigrants established in Québec of how to gain access to occupations regulated by professional corporations as well as certain other trades and occupations whose entry or eligibility conditions are subject to regulatory requirements.

The recognition of qualifications is also taken seriously in the United Kingdom. According to a conservative Refugee Council estimate there were nearly 1 000 refugee medical doctors in Britain in 2003¹³ unable to work because of qualification difficulties, despite substantial experience in their native countries. The National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) provides a benchmarking service for international qualifications, operating as a private organisation funded partly by the Department for Employment and Skills and partly by corporate membership. Part of a wider European network of national centres of recognition, the NARIC services form an essential component of a number of local projects delivered in London to assist refugees, such as the pan-London Migrants and Refugees Qualifications project.

Supporting the recognition of qualifications is often just one stage of a skilled person's route into employment. The assessment of qualifications and competences can act as a baseline for a further investment in skills and work experience and in many cases migrants only need a short amount of extra training, or indeed the recognition of their existing competencies which do not fall within formal qualifications. Emploi-Québec, for example, provides modular "bridging" courses for up-skilling immigrants so that their skills will

be recognised by local employers, running a number of different skills upgrading programmes for nurses, agronomists and different categories of engineers. The training in nursing and engineering, in particular, facilitates admission to the corresponding professional corporations. The Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Qualifications Recognition Programme in Winnipeg is another example of the work being done in Canada to better assess prior levels of competence, as a way of enabling immigrants to avoid long period of re-training. Up until recently, it was necessary to do a 2 year community college training course to qualify for early childhood education in the province. A representative of the Manitoba Child Care Programme has sought to adapt this to the specific needs of migrants, and recently launched a new 14 week pilot training project involving work based assessment and training, based on a “competency assessment framework” which was designed with a local college. In addition to recognising previous competencies, the course also focuses on skills that immigrants may currently lack such as awareness of cultural and occupational norms in Canada. This type of training is particularly effective in that it allows immigrants to quickly enter the labour market whilst still building relevant skills.

It has been argued that outside the professions, having a qualification is a proxy used by employers for general competency, and as such is a mechanism for establishing whether a person has the professionalism and commitment to learn to carry out a job. Often, what employers are particularly interested in, for example, are the generic attributes of a person (their time management, commitment and professional manner) which are proved indirectly by their ability to complete a degree or training course. The Neuchâtel social enterprise CNIP in Switzerland has placed considerable emphasis on providing certification of relatively basic skills through their training modules as an important mechanism for building trust amongst employers. After each module trainees are given an evaluation dossier containing a very precise description of the modules taken, and the quality of work carried out. CNIP places strong emphasis in the certification of the professional competences exhibited by trainees during their training modules. The evaluation of a trainee covers the learning of practical skills *e.g.* manual skills, as well as intellectual qualities such as the ability to concentrate, memorise materials and use abstractions. Behaviour, personal style, team work and motivation are also validated. The certification of these elements provides an important point of reference for potential employers.

Skills audits are another useful tool for recognising the wider skills and competencies which immigrants may have that fall outside of recognised qualifications. In the city of Leicester in the United Kingdom, NIACE (the National Organisation for Adult Learning) has worked with Leicester City Council and the East Midlands Consortium for Asylum Seekers Support to

develop a skills audit initiative to explore the skills and qualifications of asylum seekers, to find ways of presenting these skills in a positive way to employers, and to consider how they might be used for the benefit of the local and regional economy. The project sent a survey to the 440 registered asylum seekers in Leicester in 2001 and then conducted follow up interviews with 70 respondents to identify their skills and experience (Aldridge and Waddington, 2001). The project also focused on encouraging people working in the field of accommodation for refugees and asylum seekers to record the qualifications, skills and previous work experience of individuals as essential information for forward planning. In London, similarly, the Mayor has launched a skills audit of refugee women in London from the teaching, nursing and medical professions entitled, "Missed Opportunities" (Dumper, 2002).

In the Southern European countries of Italy and Spain there is less emphasis on the recognition of skills and qualifications at the local level. This partly reflects the fact that these countries do not have a national policy to attract skilled immigrants, and are in many cases trying to attract immigrants to fill their lowest skilled positions. There is a tendency for local initiatives in Spain, for example, to concentrate on supporting immigrants into low skilled positions rather than actively recognizing skills and supporting career progression. Though this may be an appropriate recognition of the jobs available in the local labour market, this has several consequences: on the one hand many low-skilled positions are relatively temporary meaning that immigrants come in and out of employment support programmes. Further, in many cases immigrants are over-qualified for the positions they take, which could store up problems of frustration for the future.

Work placements

The interest of employers in generic skills is also apparent in the emphasis that many employers place on the need for applicants with local work experience. The absence of Canadian work experience is a key obstacle cited by Canadian companies to employing immigrants, for example. While some local stakeholders see this as an example of unnecessary discrimination by employers, others have reacted more pragmatically by ensuring that such experience is quickly accessible to immigrants at the local level. Work experience placements were one of the key instruments used by TRIEC. Local immigrants are selected to join the TRIEC Career Bridge Scheme on the basis of their qualifications, employability and language level. To access this pool of pre-selected graduates, employers pay an upfront fee of CAD 10 000 (approx EUR 7 180) and are able to hire a immigrant for a paid work experience with the company for up to twelve months. The scheme is managed through a website, and is so popular that the site can only be opened for applications

three hours every month. A network of NGOs also sources potential participants. By April 2006, three hundred internships had already taken place with 85% receiving offers of full employment, although not always in the same company.

In the Career Bridge scheme, the emphasis was on finding work experience placements with relatively large employers, and TRIEC had experienced some difficulties engaging SMEs in the programme. In Montréal, Emploi-Quebec has supported a programme (developed by the Industrial Adjustment Service Committee for Immigrants, IASCI) known as “Professional immersion activities for immigrants with foreign degrees” which has been successful at involving small to medium enterprises in addition to other sizes of company, and local community organisations. This programme is administered by Emploi-Québec with the help of local NGOs, who both process applications and identify placements within the local community. The scheme has a particularly impressive success rate, a longitudinal study revealed a 72% job placement rate immediately after the immersion activity. The level of satisfaction with the programme is also high, with participants being particularly positive about the strong interrelationship between the professional immersion activity and the respondents’ main field of expertise: placements are only organised when there is an explicit relationship between a job and a candidate’s previous training.

In Switzerland, identifying workplacements is a crucial part of the apprenticeship system, and one of the difficulties experienced by pre-apprenticeship courses in Geneva and Neuchâtel was finding an appropriate placement for immigrants. In Geneva, a private organisation, known as Interface Enterprises, has developed a useful linking role between vocational schools and local employers, setting up a large scale database of potential placements which staff can then use to place trainees. They have also launched a project to encourage local ethnic entrepreneurs to offer placements to new immigrants seeking work experience and apprenticeships.

Soft inputs: social capital, network building and acculturation

Field work in both Spain and London points to the important amount of work that is done by NGOs to help immigrants that are at some distance from the labour market due to social and psychological difficulties. Many of the CASI clients in Madrid have multiple social and psychological problems and they require an important amount of support before employability can even be considered. In London, refugee and community organisations often make a considerable investment in building the personal confidence and social skills of refugees as a prerequisite to then developing specific employability skills and finding an appropriate job.

Other types of “soft input” notable within the case studies include support with social network building and acculturation. In Southern European countries such as Italy and Spain, much of the work carried out to support the integration of immigrants is focused on wider social integration rather than specifically on labour market integration. Building solidarity and understanding between local residents is seen as an essential element in ensuring the wider participation of immigrants in society and as such their ability to access work. In countries where much employment is advertised informally this may be an effective strategy. For example, in Italy, the PES can only provide a limited role in matching immigrants to employment demand in contexts where most jobs are advertised informally. In fact, studies involving employers in Italy have found that the majority of employers seek employees not through temporary work agencies or public employment centres but through informal channels. In the province of Turin, a 2003 study found that 57% of businesses hired new employees through contacts with friends and family; 14% were acquaintances of current employees (Ricerche e Progetti, 2003). In Canada, a similar situation exists, with approximately 80% of vacancies being advertised informally. This places newcomers to the labour market, and especially immigrants, who are less likely to have an extended social network, at a disadvantage when seeking employment opportunities.

Many of the local initiatives reviewed within the case study countries helped immigrants to establish social networks which might help them to acquire a job. Interface Enterprises in Geneva explicitly set out to encourage young immigrants to exploit their local social networks in the search of job opportunities, approaching key figures in their community, such as their “conciierge”, about local jobs. Informal job search mechanisms are also favoured by JEM in Montréal, word of mouth being their main basis for drawing up their 2500 strong database of local employers. JEM engages with employers in its work both to canvass the availability of job placements and to persuade employers to accept some responsibility for taking on new members of their community. One strategy is to hold meetings with “employer clusters” – that is employers in particular fields and sectors – in order to review the curriculum vita of prospective employees. JEM receives some 400 to 500 applications per year for its placement services. Around 25 % succeed in getting jobs; while another 50 % are referred to various education options.

Networking as a route to employment is one of the principal aims of mentoring projects, although confidence building and advice on “route planning” towards a particular job or career are also important components of this type of support. Mentoring was highlighted as a particularly popular means of helping immigrants to access the labour market in London, and in Switzerland and Canada. TRIEC in Toronto, for example, has developed a large scale mentoring programme. Since February 2005 over 1 000 matches have

been made with mentors working in both the public and private sector in Toronto. Responsibility for organising the mentoring scheme is franchised out to eight different NGOs, while TRIEC itself recruits workplaces and mentors. The scheme is partly sponsored by private companies, and large companies such as Deloitte Touche and TD are active members – for example 10% of Deloitte’s senior managers currently act as mentors – and this helps considerably in encouraging other companies to join.

Mentoring has also proved successful in London, with mentee health professionals reporting that mentors had facilitated their access to, and initial progress within the National Health Service. The goals of mentoring sessions in the Mentoring Programme for Refugee Doctors, for example, are to provide refugee doctors with advice on the United Kingdom health system, medical career paths, professional registration, recruitment processes, specialist training, and employment opportunities; to facilitate access of refugee doctors to clinical attachments, employment opportunities and further training; and to support refugee doctors in search for appropriate employment.

The Italian experience also shows that networking is useful not only in terms of accessing a first job, but also in supporting ongoing career progression. The Alma Mater permanent centre in Turin, in addition to providing vocational training and qualifications, also has the unintentional effect of establishing close relationships between immigrant and native women leading to better employment outcomes. Alma Mater serves as a meeting place for foreign and Italian women, providing social activities and common cultural and social projects. Women working together in this context establish friendship bonds which have often led to upward movement in the labour market.

One problem with “soft approaches” to integration is that they are inherently difficult to evaluate. For example, Alma Mater do not consider the longer term opportunities they indirectly create for women as a noteworthy outcome of their activities, since it is not within the framework of a single project and is neither extendable nor fundable. RCOs in London also reported difficulty in evaluating the “softer” elements of their work such as confidence building. Despite this difficulty, such approaches can be crucial to supporting longer term labour market integration and cannot be neglected.

Support to entrepreneurship

Finally, not all local initiatives in the participating countries focused on supporting immigrants into existing employment. A number of localities also focused on stimulating immigrant entrepreneurship. In Italy, entrepreneurship amongst migrants has been identified as an important economic driver, with recent national growth in the number of entrepreneurs being entirely due to

an increase in immigrant entrepreneurs. Chambers of commerce have therefore been keen to support the expansion of this area.

In Milan the local chamber of commerce has been active in supporting immigrant entrepreneurs through its agency Formaper. Partly funded by the European Social Fund, it has worked to address the special requirements of self-employed immigrants, promoting mentoring by immigrants of the same community and attempting to mediate with banks to facilitate access to credit, one of the most serious obstacles to growth. In addition, in Turin, the chamber of commerce has published a guide in the nine principal foreign languages spoken in the region, providing information on the local legal context for entrepreneurs and services that would be useful for immigrants wishing to start a business. Sector based employers confederations have also taken an active role in promoting entrepreneurship. The National Artisan Confederation (CAN) has actively recruited immigrant entrepreneurs for a number of years and in Bologna, has opened a special office providing a wide range of consulting, orientation and mediation services for more than 500 local immigrant entrepreneurs. The service supports the development of business plans and runs training courses.

In London, ethnic entrepreneurship is seen as a major growth area, and is the target of a number of London Development Agency initiatives. The refugee support agency, RETAS, also runs specific Business Start-Up courses for refugees in London, focusing on issues and information related to the small business environment in the United Kingdom.

Governance issues

The number of stakeholders active in the field of supporting the local integration of immigrants, and the number of instruments used, leads to a significant governance challenge at the local level. A number of the issues are familiar ones. The factors which prevent effective support being given to immigrants also undermine wider policies to produce economic development and social cohesion: poor communication and coordination between stakeholders, a lack of integration between supply and demand, a poor prioritisation of resources, an emphasis on short-term impacts rather than long term change and a grants based culture of provision which does not encourage either mainstreaming or sustainability. The following section discusses each of these issues in turn, highlighting the specific policy issues and policy dilemmas affecting activities to support the integration of immigrants.

Policy fragmentation

Given the number of actors involved in supporting integration, regular communication between local organisations is vital to ensuring that immigrants are guided or “signposted” to appropriate forms of support at the local level. Unfortunately communication is often hampered by the relative fragmentation of this policy area, heavy work-loads and lack of resources held by the organisations involved.

At the national level, responsibility for the integration of immigrants often falls across a number of different government departments, each of which may produce relevant funding programmes. In the United Kingdom, for example, the Home Office, Department for Work and Pensions, Department for Education and Skills and Department of Communities and Local Government all implement programmes targeted towards immigrants and ethnic minorities. In English speaking Canada, likewise, immigration is the focus of both Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada among others.¹⁴ In effect, local service providers such as NGOs often provide a point of “integration” for different national government programmes of support to help immigrants at the local level, combining a number of different approaches in a one-stop shop environment. This may be of benefit to end users, and to some extent NGOs value the spread of financial risk between a number of different funding organisations. However they also bear the burden of an important degree of resulting bureaucracy. The International Centre in Winnipeg, Canada, for example is an established NGO which has been providing one stop shop settlement services to immigrants for 57 years and currently has a 2 million dollar budget. However this budget is made up of seven different grants, six of which are renewable on an annual basis.

Fragmentation between the different institutions dealing with integration also exists at the local level. Although service providers such as NGOs may effectively coordinate national or regional funding streams, their communication and coordination with other local actors is often less developed – indeed the way that national and regional funding streams are structured often means that they are in competition. In Winnipeg for example, it was apparent that many of the local stakeholders were not aware of the other services for immigrants operating in their area, despite the fact that many of these organisations had existed for many years.¹⁵ Likewise, local initiatives in London have grown up organically in a piecemeal manner, and over time, this has led to a particularly complex system.

Fragmentation has a number of repercussions at the local level. In Italy, the sheer number of organisations involved in supporting the integration of immigrants into the labour market may have reduced the ability of local actors

to develop a strategic local approach. Local authorities have difficulty assuming control and determining local strategies to support integration in view of the myriad of stakeholders and subcontracted service providers involved in integration issues, and the dominance of the social partners in determining the direction of local economic policy.

Fragmentation of delivery can also lead to service providers being particularly isolated, which does not help in their mission to help immigrants become better integrated into wider society. A key strength of NGOs is that they are able to engage immigrants, at least in the first instance, in a localised environment where they feel comfortable. However, in order to combat any possibility of ghettoisation, there is ultimately a need to encourage immigrants to extend their horizons and move beyond the “comfort zone” of their immediate local area and community to mix more widely and encounter new challenges. The London case study has identified this as being analogous to the need to supplement “bonding” social capital with “bridging” social capital, so as to link unemployed immigrants onto both future support and employment opportunities. Considine (2003) has pointed to the issue of “network closure”, describing how “what makes a group strong in social capital terms may be the same thing that makes it exclusive and restrictive”. He also points out that while some organisations may maintain good links this does not necessarily lead to general information sharing, as “some classes of insiders are restricted to limited roles and information flows are confined to one or two well-worn pathways”. This was also reported as an issue in some of the local areas studied, with certain prominent NGOs in local areas maintaining good linkages, while others “fell between the gaps”.

A further problem caused by the potential for isolation is that service providers fall outside of “communities of learning” and the sharing of good practice which is essential to the development of more effective services. Taking advantage of their independence from the mainstream employment system, many NGOs innovate and develop their own methodologies for working with clients, which can in some cases be a major advantage: NGOs offer a personalised service flexible enough to be adapted to the needs of the people they are working with. However their lack of connection to mainstream services can also have its dangers. Not all NGOs are aware of good practice methodologies, for example, which results in them either appearing to “reinvent the wheel” or repeating problems which have been identified elsewhere. Where they do not form part of a wider delivery structure, NGOs can also be dominated by certain individuals who develop a strong leadership style. Such individuals can develop a strong local profile, and indeed Eberts (2003) has highlighted the important role that such dynamic leaders are able to play within local development through motivating staff, inspiring the recipients of services and building informal partnerships based on a shared

vision. However, such leaders can also make projects vulnerable in the long-term, and lead to service provision becoming potentially paternalistic in character.

The gap between labour market supply and demand

A further problem arising from the relative fragmentation of provision at the local level is the lack of communication between organisations involved in supply and demand. Rath has stressed that it is vital that the labour market context, and in particular the local “opportunity structure” is taken into account when developing local initiatives – otherwise immigrants risk being prepared for jobs which do not exist.¹⁶ Given the speed of local labour market change it is crucial that organisations are aware of the latest labour market demands so they can accurately guide immigrants towards employment routes that are most in demand. While this may seem self-evident, it is apparent that supply side organisations (training institutions, NGOs) often operate without up to date information about labour market needs, providing relatively generic labour market advice, without adequate information or understanding of the longer term needs of the local labour market. This can lead to an un-necessary focus on the perceived “deficits” of the immigrant (their personal confidence and generic job search skills for example) rather than on ensuring that immigrants understand and can respond to local demand. NGOs in Spain often focus on “employability” and ensuring that immigrants are work ready, rather than directly accessing jobs and workplacements. While this may be because immigrants are not yet ready for work, it may also be due to organisational deficiencies which prevent NGOs from effectively linking with local employers. Likewise Italian training organisations often seem to be driven more by institutional priorities than by local needs.

Remaining in close contact with the local labour market is not only important to providing specific training to meet skills gaps, but also to monitoring the ongoing relevance of tools and instruments in times of labour market change. Some question whether apprenticeships, which are at the heart of post-compulsory vocational training for immigrants in Switzerland, are less suited to the work environment than they were once were. It is suggested, for example, that apprenticeships are perhaps more appropriate to employment in manufacturing and trades, and less suited to an economy based on information technology and both high and low-skill services. This may be adding an additional barrier to the labour market for immigrants whose education is concentrated in the dual apprenticeship based system.

It is clear that bringing on board employers (both private and public) at the local level is crucial to improving labour market knowledge in the longer term. The advantages of such a demand led approach are clearly

demonstrated in a number of the local areas reviewed by the study. However, in many countries, this may take some time. It is therefore important that local stakeholders also find alternative ways to fill their knowledge gap through communicating with local organisations that are most aware of economic and labour market trends. The case studies reveal that intermediary organisations such as colleges can play an important role in linking employers with other stakeholders. In both London, and in Canada, local colleges are central players in the provision of bridging courses that support access by immigrants to sectors where skills shortages exist. In the United States, efforts in this area have gone one step further, taking into account forecasting of future economic growth areas. As part of the federal level High Growth Strategy, one stop shops have been developed at the local level which guide immigrants into a set of high growth occupational areas.

Regional authorities have also in some cases started to look at immigration as a way of contributing to wider regional economic development objectives. In addition to the bilateral arrangements established between Trentino and Bucharest outlined above, the Region of Lombardia also promotes training programmes in countries of origin, aimed at providing specific skills to meet regional needs. Various small scale courses have been organised by the region in Tunisia, Slovakia and Moldavia, with eighteen Tunisians and fourteen Slovaks being trained in construction skills in 2005, for example. The CVs of the participants have been catalogued on special on-line databases allowing employers in Lombardia to examine and call candidates as needed.

Working towards better coordination

In the face of the complexity and relative fragmentation of delivery for support to immigrants in many local areas, some experts have begun to question whether mainstreaming is a more effective means of service delivery. Mainstreaming can allow local areas to avoid a grants based culture (with its associated short-termism and bureaucracy) and unnecessary proliferation of actors in the same field, by encouraging core local institutions to take into consideration the needs of newcomers in their wider programmes. The relative benefits of mainstreaming language training are evident in the Italian context. In 1997 a major reform of the adult education system resulted in the development of “permanent local centres for adult education” with the assignment of elementary and middle school teachers to adult education. The local authorities covered by the study (excluding Trento which operates its own system) rapidly responded to the new national programme, ceasing to sponsor third sector language classes for immigrants and starting to work with the new centres to coordinate language, literacy and middle school certification for all. The courses offered by the third sector were slowly

eliminated through better coordination and competition from the official educational structures. Reliance on a national public system has solved the problems of a lack of consistent certification and the uncoordinated supply of language courses which often resulted in duplication.

In London, the education and training system is relatively flexible, so rather than local initiatives developing new training courses they often refer immigrants to mainstream services. Access to education and training, is facilitated by a relatively open system offering a wide range of opportunities for lifelong learning. However it is recognised that refugees may face difficulties in comprehending and navigating the complex system and RETAS provides a range of guides aimed at refugees, including a “Handbook on Education for Refugees in the United Kingdom” (2004), providing an overview and introduction to the system, and including sources for further information. Similarly, in Trento in Italy, CINFORMI sees its role as facilitating access to existing services rather than supplying a specially targeted version of the same service to an exclusively immigrant population. It is in this spirit that the centre does not offer, for example, support for immigrant entrepreneurs, but rather orients immigrants towards existing services.

In some cases local areas have gone further in the direction of mainstreaming to target all local residents in their strategy to promote integration. The municipality of Mataro in the province of Barcelona in Spain, for example, has developed a broad “citizenship plan” based on a shared notion of citizenship for the whole community: the plan has been developed under the auspices of a special council made up of 35 representatives of municipal groups, citizen groups, and immigrant associations, and explicitly states that all mainstream programmes must welcome new arrivals. To achieve the objectives of the new plan, the town council has proposed fourteen action programmes including the provision of information to vocational guidance (facilitation access to information and services); and a programme for aiding job integration (with professional training and integration of those with particular difficulties). The benefit of such a strategy is that it involves the whole community in creating a positive and welcoming local environment for immigrants and a shared notion of citizenship.

Whereas mainstreaming services can improve coordination, however, it can also reduce flexibility and innovation. Immigrant integration is a particularly diverse area of policy, and it is an area where policy makers are still learning about the most appropriate mechanisms. Because of this the local level can be particularly effective when it encourages diverse approaches and innovation. One particularly effective solution to support innovation at the local level is the development of a seed-funding system or local “innovation grant”. In Winnipeg, Canada, the Manitoba Immigrant Integration Programme has been used to fund a variety of different pilot programmes,

including the Winnipeg-based Credit Union scheme and the Early Childhood Educator Qualifications Recognition Programme identified above.

The *Diputació de Barcelona* (provincial government of Barcelona) in Spain has also been particularly successful at accessing national and European funding to encourage innovation. Approximately two hundred of its municipalities are currently carrying out some work with immigrant groups, although the most activities are occurring in municipalities where there is a high concentration of immigrants. The *Diputació* supports the sharing of the results of innovative projects, and encourages other municipalities to adapt successful programmes to their own localities, using tools such as methodological guides.

Mainstreaming also threatens to remove the sheltered individualised “one-stop-shop” support which can be provided by smaller organisations such as NGOs. The CASI model in Madrid has overcome this by developing a strong mainstreamed approach which also benefits from both the innovative nature of NGOs and their ability to provide individualised support. The entire region of Madrid is covered by CASI initiatives and all the local NGOs work to similar goals and methodologies, leading to a consistency in provision. There is a degree of inbuilt flexibility in the programme, however, with block grants being allocated to each CASI. Within certain constraints, this grant can be used as the CASI sees fit, and the two CASIs in Fuenlabrada and Ciudad Lineal had developed a number of innovative projects, including a guidance project for immigrant parents on the education system, and a project to tackle gang culture through developing alternative activities for young immigrants, including dance programmes.

Outreach projects are another way of combining the professionalism of mainstream services, with the more innovative and individualised approaches provided by local service providers such as NGOs. In London, for example, the Somali Women’s Group ICT Training Project in Hillingdon works in partnership with Uxbridge College, to provide training at a local community centre. Staff from the college provide tutorage at the community centre which is in close proximity to an estate where many refugees live and many project participants are refugees. In this way the women can learn in an environment which is comfortable to them whilst also obtaining more specialised help. It is felt that refugee and community organisations in London could perhaps do more to ensure that qualifications gained in the community setting are followed up by courses in more mainstream environments, however, to support the bridging of refugees into the wider community.

Partnerships

Local “place based” or territorial partnerships have been developed in many local areas as a mechanism for reducing the isolation of individual stakeholders, supporting innovation and encouraging mainstream organisations to adopt integration-based approaches. In Canada, the Toronto Regional Immigrant Employment Council is an obvious example of the benefits of bringing a number of different stakeholders to tackle the common issue of integration, bringing NGOs, employers, unions, policy makers around the same table to produce both innovative programmes, and to stimulate the emergence of more permanent mainstream institutional change. As the cities in Canada differ significantly, both in terms of the local labour market and the local immigrant population, a “place-based” integration programme was considered to be especially important. The partnership grew initially out of the Toronto Summit which involved high level stakeholders in developing a city based vision and predicting key issues that would affect the city in the years to come. In Québec, likewise, each sub-region has a council of labour market partners, unions, employers and community groups who work together on local integration issues.

In London, a number of the community organisations supporting refugees are coordinated by wider partnerships bringing together a mix of social and economic partners. The Renewal partnership in West London was set up under the United Kingdom’s Single Regeneration Budget using a grant of GBP 6 million (approx. EUR 8.9 million), and leveraging in a further GBP 10 million (approx EUR 14.8 million). It covers six different boroughs in West London, involves a number of partners including refugee groups, local authorities, local career guidance services (Connexions), the West London Learning and Skills Council and the Association of London Government. It also has a major public sector employer (the Ealing National Health Service Primary Care Trust) as its accountable body. The aim is to support refugees in West London through funding projects, linking labour demand and supply, building the capacity of refugee community organisations, and conducting research and mapping exercises. The Renewal partnership stresses that an integrated, partnership approach is crucial for tackling refugee integration, as it involves tackling a series of long-term problems that are interlinked and cannot be dealt with in isolation. The partnership considers that, in particular, it is vital that social integration factors are viewed alongside economic integration and are addressed in genuine partnership with refugees. Renewal provides a degree of continuity for RCOs within a field dominated by short-term funding programmes, and a degree of capacity building support, which can be time intensive and require assistance over a number of years. The ultimate aim of the partnership, however, is to create a step change in the way all public services respond to the needs of refugees.

Partnerships at higher governance levels are also important. The region of Madrid has used a partnership approach to draw up multi-annual strategies for integration across the Madrid community, involving a wide variety of local partners such as experts in immigration from Madrid's universities (who form a technical support team), representatives from all programmes oriented toward immigrants, and representatives from different ministries. The aim is to use the partnership approach to bring together theory and practice. A strong element of reflexivity is built into the approach through feedback from the various partners, and the creation of awareness in the different departments of the regional administration is an important part of the planning process.

In London, in order to facilitate the development of a strategic co-ordinated approach to refugees, the London Development Agency and the Regional Skills Partnership has established LORECA (London Refugee Economic Action) as the lead body on employment, enterprise and training for refugee and asylum seekers. The agency, funded by the London Development Agency, the Learning and Skills Council and the European Social Fund, has already developed a complex guide to services in London, aimed to support the development of "route maps" for refugees to guide them through the relatively fragmented local services. The partnership is also able to speak authoritatively with government, employer bodies, funding organisations, training providers and professional bodies about the needs of this target group. The guiding principle of LORECA is "strategy not delivery".

Partnerships can be particularly useful in supporting greater coordination *between* governance levels. In Canada, there are a number of provincial and territorial agreements in place, and the provinces and territories are consulted on federal programmes. Despite this, it is still felt that there is room for increased communication between the federal, provincial and local levels of government to improve coordination and joint planning and all the provinces are currently working on this. In addition, TRIEC has established an "Intergovernmental Relations Committee" in Toronto to bring policy makers together to discuss integration issues. It is the first time the departments have sat down together to develop a common research tool on integration, analysing gaps in services, and looking at over supported, and under supported areas in the locality. The meetings allow people from different jurisdictions to have regular frank exchanges in a "safe environment". In Quebec, the establishment of regional action plans and the development of regional conferences involving mayors and municipalities as part of the provincial integration strategy "Shared values, common interests" is also a clear step towards developing a multi-level governance approach to this issue.

Inter-service agreements are a further way of ensuring cooperation on the issue of integration. Also in Québec, the Ministry of Immigration and

Cultural Communities and the Ministry of Employment and Social Solidarity signed a three-year agreement in 2004 to promote the job market integration of immigrants and visible minorities. Through this agreement, the departments seek to combine their efforts to optimise their respective activities in order to promote the social and economic integration of newcomers and to harmonise their activities to ensure a continuum of services, measures and programmes between the two departments. In the Montréal area, two service harmonisation agreements have also been signed between local employment centres and Immigration-Québec services for the north and south parts of the Island of Montréal to improve immigrant services. The main purpose of these harmonisation measures is to enhance the quality and speed of services to immigrants in order to accelerate the job integration and retention process.

Developing complementary services between different regional and local governance institutions is particularly important in view of the different competences often held by these institutions. While the municipality of Milan is tackling complex integration issues through its responsibility for governing the heart of an industrialised province, for example, it does not have responsibility for labour policy, which is held by the province. This issue has been addressed via the evolution of a comprehensive Pact for Employment involving eighteen different stakeholders. The municipality, which is normally excluded from an active role in employment services, thus became the coordinator for a wide range of initiatives including attracting and managing European Social Fund resources. In Barcelona, territorial employment pacts have also proved effective in enabling local authorities to work together over administrative boundaries to tackle labour market issues affecting immigrants. The relatively independent status granted to the territorial employment pacts as also allowed these partnerships to work on helping undocumented immigrants who are otherwise excluded from public sector support.

Coalitions or partnerships were the main vehicles used as part of the three year pilot Building the New American Community initiative. Each area developed a public-private partnership that reached across levels of government and included a broad array of non-governmental organisations, as well as institutions and individuals from many different segments of society including refugee- and immigrant-serving organisations, business associations, faith-based organisations, and neighbourhood and social service providers. In each case the coalition was assisted by a national team of policy analysts, advocates and researchers from the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National Immigration Forum, the Southeast Asia Resource Action Centre, The Urban Institute, and the Migration Policy Institute.

A Migration Policy Unit review of the lessons of the BNAC initiative (2005) found that it was crucial that partnerships extend beyond the “usual suspects” to engage mainstream policy makers and institutions, acting as “coalitions of change”. They found that engaging such institutions allowed them to “slowly effect changes in laws, rules, practices and norms of organisations and official institutions, which may have been formulated decades before a new wave of immigrants arrives in a city”. Part of this process involved a need to “deepen the expertise of the public servants who administer the myriad programmes that will drive the pace of integration” (Fix, Papademetriou and Cooper 2005).

Thematic partnerships, which look at the issue of immigration but are not necessarily territorially based, are also useful tools, particularly in view of the fact that they can stimulate activities at the local level. The role of partnerships in “catalysing” action at lower governance levels was apparent in a number of the local initiatives reviewed in Winnipeg, for example. Both the Winnipeg-based credit union scheme and Early Childhood Educator Qualifications Recognition Programme developed because their lead actor had participated in partnerships focused on issues facing immigrants, which galvanised them into action.

Prioritising limited resources

Another important issue effecting actors at the local level is the resources available to support integration. There is significant variation in the resources available to local areas to integrate immigrants, both between and within the countries participating in the study. Canada, for example, allocates a relatively high amount of resources to integration through its provincial programmes, however this varies between the provinces and their specific agreements with the federal government. In 2005-06 the per capita allocations for Ontario and Manitoba were approximately CAD 850 (EUR 590) and CAD 1 200 (EUR 835) respectively, whereas in 2004-5 Québec received CAD 3 800 (EUR 2 646) per immigrant. These differences mainly result from independent negotiation procedures between each province and the federal level and are subject to change.¹⁷ Spain similarly allocates different resources to integration depending on the locality and region, with regions such as Madrid, Catalonia and Andalusia allocating greater resources because of the higher concentration of immigrants in these areas.

The general resources available to a local authority can also have a significant effect on the initiatives taken forward, with localities which have strong economic development and more significant local budgets evidently possessing the means to develop more ambitious projects than poorer localities. The types of initiative being taken forward by the two municipalities of Mataro and Santa Coloma de Gramenet in Barcelona, Spain, for example, reflected differences in their resource base, with Mataro benefiting from a

higher degree of economic development and therefore higher business rates. Indeed, Zapata-Barrero (2003) reports that in fact many local institutions in Spain lack the necessary financing and infrastructure to enable effective policy implementation. The central administration has recently taken action to address this situation by developing a new cooperation framework for the management of a “Support fund for refugees and the integration of immigrants, as well as for their educational reinforcement”. The fund was created in 2005 as a tool to establish a cooperation model between the general administration of the state, the autonomous communities and local councils, with the purpose of promoting and strengthening public policies in these fields and, consequently, reinforcing social cohesion. As part of the framework, 50% of the overall funding allocation to the autonomous communities was required to go to projects that had been devised and delivered locally in 2005, falling to 40% in 2006. In Italy, some local authorities are also hampered in their attempts to promote integration through a general scarcity of resources, with the municipality of Milan, for example, being forced to compete with neighbouring local authorities for a limited amount of resources to provide services for employers. Projects such as the Milan territorial employment pact are important in drawing down funding in this respect.

Given that NGOs often provide the “front-line” of services to immigrants it is within these organisations that financing issues become most apparent. The sustainability of funding for NGOs was a concern across all the participating countries, with local actors reporting not only continual efforts to access and renew funding, but also low wages and long hours, which threatened to create “burn-out” in staff. In Spain, much of the work done by NGOs at the local level is reliant on volunteerism, private donations and European Union grants in addition to funding from the central administration. European funding in particular is less likely to be available in the future given the new financial priorities of the EU following enlargement. In London, many RCOs are competing for similar sources (*e.g.* from the European Social Fund, from a fragmented public sector, from lottery sources) for limited and unstable funding. In view of the important role of philanthropy in the United States and Canada, there is perhaps scope for greater effort by large employers and employers’ organisations to fund training and work-experience initiatives in Europe, especially since they stand to benefit from the outcome. However, the very instability associated with current activities is often felt to undermine the clarity and consistency that the private sector needs to see before committing resources.

Deciding on the timing and intensity of interventions

Given the limited resources available at the local level, a key question facing local actors is where should resources best be placed? Should funding

be distributed widely so that support is available for every immigrant? Or should funding be channelled into relative intensive schemes that produce greater long term integration for certain groups?

Evidence from the case studies shows that in order to create longer term labour market integration a relatively focused and intensive approach is needed – cheaper interventions which are not specifically targeted at an immigrant’s skills level and aspirations have lower long-term success. In Canada, for example, TRIEC have analysed the use of resources in the Ontario region and found that the majority of funding goes into low intensity support (see Table 1.4) which is relatively unsuccessful in terms of supporting immigrants into appropriate employment. The most effective programmes (such as “career bridge” and subsidised employment placements) produce more effective results, with over 80% effectiveness in placing people into jobs, however they are relatively resource intensive and so not widely accessible. Within the Career Bridge scheme, for example, only 10% of the over 1 200 candidates who have registered their interest in the database have so far been allocated an internship.

Table 1.4. Differentiating high resource and low resource activities

Low resource activities	High resource activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job search • Confidence building, help with social networking • CV preparation • Short-term training • Basic language training • Mentoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work experience programmes • Medium to longer term “bridging” training in medium-high skills areas • Recognition of qualifications gained abroad • Projects to tackle discrimination in recruitment procedures • Training in home countries to meet local skills gaps • Higher levels of language training, including occupationally specific language use

Source: OECD LIILM Project.

In the main, the emphasis on short-term support found in Ontario is reflected across the other case study countries. Both the performance management systems of funding programmes (with their emphasis on quick outputs), and in some cases employment service regulations themselves encourage local initiatives to support rapid access to employment for immigrants, which may ultimately produce short term labour market participation as opposed to longer term integration. While local initiatives in Italy have some success in placing immigrants into work, for example, success stories in integrating immigrants into quality employment with the same conditions for immigrant workers as for Italians, are rare. Similarly, London experiences problems of a grants based culture where local projects respond to the requests of funders to produce short term outputs, as opposed to

working towards longer term gains. Where more intensive interventions do exist they tend to be relatively small scale, leading to a relatively negligible impact on the overall integration of immigrants into the labour market.

An additional factor which encourages local organisations to provide relatively short term programmes is their wish to prevent immigrants from being outside of the labour market for too long. Local stakeholders in Canada warn against investing in support which will take immigrants out of the labour market for lengthy periods. In the Canadian context timing is particularly important as the likely period of re-training necessary to meet professional skills requirements can be significant. The employers represented on the TRIEC partnership in Toronto emphasized that the sooner that an immigrant comes into professional employment after arrival, the better, and similarly stakeholders in Winnipeg pointed out that if an immigrant has not found employment in their own field within two years, then it becomes more difficult to re-enter their sector. Awareness of such attitudes has led some local providers to respond pragmatically when developing programmes of immigrant support. In Montréal, for example, JEM advises immigrants to retrain for lower skilled but available positions in the short term, rather than sticking to their profession and undergoing several more years of studies outside of the labour force. A different approach is taken in the regional programming developed by Emploi-Québec where one of the stipulations for financial assistance is that training courses are related to the individual's previous field of studies.

Local stakeholders in other countries also argue that it is best to get immigrants into employment quickly and then "back-fill", avoiding time-intensive periods in education and training. In London, for example, despite the recent policy emphasis on language acquisition, there is a commonly held view that the stress should be on ensuring individuals have sufficient language ability to function in a specific workplace environment as soon as possible, rather than ensuring maximum language competence if this delays entry to the labour market. In this context, initiatives which blend employment placements and training are particularly valuable, as are training schemes devised by employers as part of workforce skills upgrading strategies (see for example OECD, 2006b). In Montréal, for example, the regional labour market training programme has recently included a commitment to work with Emploi-Québec on the delivery of language training to employed persons. Where external training is necessary, modular training courses which allow immigrants to quickly build on their existing skills are also particularly important.

Targeting

One mechanism for influencing the intensity and effectiveness of interventions without necessarily increasing the length of the intervention is to ensure that actions are accurately targeted to a migrants needs. It is evident that in many local areas integration policy is becoming increasingly sophisticated in recognising differences within groups of immigrants and actively responding to such differences. For example, despite the overall reluctance of Spanish policy makers to single out particular groups in the population to receive support, the *Diputació de Barcelona* has developed an interesting project to identify particular “incidence groups” within the population, reflecting the different barriers which are faced by specific types of individual to the labour market. Participants in the programme underwent an occupational analysis of strengths, weaknesses, potentials and barriers before identifying appropriate actions to support their labour market integration. At the CASI project in Fuenlabrada, Madrid staff have also identified a model for identifying people at different stages of work readiness, developing a three-fold approach that has proved useful in directing resources toward those most in need. For immigrants with the highest employability (people with work permits and professional skills) the emphasis was on immediately finding a job or appropriate occupational training. For those with lower employability – generally women with children who have no Spanish and who are socially isolated – the focus is on social and personal development training, instruction in how to read maps and manage public space, and language and literacy classes.

All the CASI projects in Madrid worked with a high percentage of women as a group particularly vulnerable to exclusion. This focus on women was also common elsewhere in the case study countries in reflection of their lower employment and higher unemployment rates. The particular issues women face include relative isolation from support due to arrival through family reunification programmes (where immigrants often do not receive the same sort of support to enter the labour market), lack of qualifications and experience due to discrimination in the country of origin, and concentration in certain sectors vulnerable to the informal economy and high temporary employment, such as the domestic economy.

Other initiatives targeted the immigrants who had the highest skills levels and employability. The initiatives reviewed in Canada, for example, in many cases focused on the highly skilled due to the specific recruitment of this group to Canada through the national selection system. Targeting immigrants with particularly high employability can have the advantage of allowing local initiatives to present a particularly positive face to employers, promoting immigrants as a potential “resource to be exploited” rather than a

problem to be solved. However there is also the danger that imposing too many selection criteria before admission can lead to “creaming” or “screening” effects, with projects helping those most easy to help, neglecting those that perhaps have more need of support. In Switzerland, one question facing the vocational schools working with young immigrants is how much they can invest in the education of students whose lack of previous education means that they need intensive help. The dilemma is that if vocational schools carry out direct intensive integration with the most intractable cases it is on the one hand costly and on the other hand uncertain of success. Output based performance management systems can in particular encourage screening effects, by encouraging service providers to work with the people for whom they are most likely to achieve a positive output.¹⁸ This situation is at least partly mitigated in Canada by the fact that NGOs are able to access more general funding (for example from charitable organisations such as the United Way) which is not tied to outputs, and can therefore be used flexibly to support immigrants needing longer term support. However NGOs in other countries do not always have recourse to such a flexible funding base.

Some initiatives target immigrants differently depending on whether they were newcomers or are already second or third generation immigrants, reflecting the different barriers experienced by these groups. Definitions are important here – in the United Kingdom the fact that the majority of children of immigrants born in the United Kingdom are British citizens¹⁹ means that they are automatically targeted differently in local programmes. In Switzerland, even the third and fourth generations of immigrants are still classified as foreigners if they do not have access to Swiss passport (which is not uncommon) and this has resulted in a certain blurring of target groups at the local level. While the vocational school in Neuchâtel focused on recent young immigrants and identified that they were often highly motivated to succeed (reflected in their naming the pre-apprenticeship course “JET”), another project helping both first and second generation immigrants categorised both generations as having motivational problems. Such differences in approach may be subtle but are reflected in both the way that immigrants are treated, and the messages given out to others. Indeed, the recognition of the high motivation of the young immigrants participating in the JET programme meant that they have now developed a reputation as a particularly dynamic and successful group, increasing their positive reception in the vocational school itself and within local companies.

When supporting second or third generation immigrants, local initiatives often focus on providing support at a young age, to prevent exclusion later in life. In Spain, the local development company in Santa Coloma de Gramenet saw the relative isolation of immigrants as a key factor leading to the underperformance of their children in the education system: there is a 40%

school failure rate in the municipality. They have therefore supported the promotion of inter-culturalism in schools, encouraging children to learn about the different languages, cultural and ethnic practices in the community. They also foster exchanges between sports clubs and families to increase mutual understanding. Similarly, despite the fact that the children of immigrants tend to perform relatively well educationally compared with their native counterparts in the United States and Canada (see Reitz, 2003), Norwalk Community College is particularly concerned about the performance of the children of first generation immigrants and has developed the “ACTS for children programme” which gives priority to tackling early childhood education and youth gang membership. The project uses a partnership approach involving the mayor, school superintendent, teachers union, head of city housing authority, and local chamber of commerce among others, to address concern about an achievement gap amongst local students in the Norwalk Public Schools and to cultivate successful learners from birth.

Table 1.5 below provides a summary of different types of support given based on the length of time which immigrants have been in the country (from newcomers to second or third generation offspring).

Finally, a number of local initiatives target their activities by focusing on particular ethnic groups. As noted above, it is felt by some that working with individual communities can allow an understanding of the specific types of issue likely to affect these communities in accessing employment (*e.g.* the nature and structure of the labour market in the country of origin, particular cultural and religious practices, and particular issues of racism and discrimination). There are some concerns, however, that such policies can ultimately create competition between different communities and therefore be divisive.

In France, Spain and Switzerland, local policy makers have attempted to get around such problems by targeting particular local neighbourhoods (where immigrant communities may be concentrated) rather than specific ethnic groups, and indeed some localities avoid directly targeting immigrants at all in their policies. A key feature of Zurich’s cantonal policy on integration, for example, was to treat the problems experienced by immigrants as “problems of exclusion” rather than necessarily “problems particularly experienced by immigrants”. Indeed some experts warn against “racialising” or “culturalising” exclusion as a social phenomenon, arguing that when people associate poverty with people from particular backgrounds and cultures, they forget that they are actually looking at poverty as an issue. In Europe, for example, migration has to be seen in the context of the high rate of unemployment in some European countries, and the existence of “urban poverty sinks” in which both native born people and immigrants become concentrated. A key issue in relation to such “urban sinks” is visibility, and one of the factors identified as

Table 1.5. **Targeting by length of time in the country**

Length of time in country	
<i>Newcomers</i>	<i>2nd/3rd generation</i>
Language training	Outreach training projects in local communities
Job search support and general orientation guidance	Projects which seek to reintegrate demoralised and disenfranchised groups
CV preparation	Projects to improve employment rights and conditions, and tackle the informal economy
Providing advice and information on good practice to employers on employing newcomers	Projects to tackle racism
Occupational language training	Initiatives to reduce isolation in certain communities
Skills audits and prior learning assessments	Projects aimed at the children of immigrants to support educational attainment.
Recognition and validation of qualifications gained abroad.	Positive action projects
Mentoring projects	Mentoring projects and support/guidance with career progression
Supported workplacements and career bridging programmes	

Source: OECD LIILM Project.

leading to the recent disturbances in the suburbs in France has been the housing of poorer groups on the outskirts of cities, out of sight of wider society. This lack of exposure and the “racialisation” of the issue combine to prevent the wider population from looking for effective solutions.

The role of national actors: creating a supportive policy environment

It was apparent in all the countries under study that the national policy context had a significant impact on the ability for regional and local actors to support the integration of immigrants. Not all local stakeholders felt that they had the required support from the national level to take forward the integration agenda locally. Indeed, local actors often appear to develop effective integration approaches despite, rather than because of, national policies and programmes.

A strong national policy environment is important in a number of different areas. Horizontal communication at the local level is not the only tool to ensure greater matching between supply and demand: vertical communication is also important. It is difficult, for example, for local actors to have a significant impact in supporting integration if the overall intake of immigrants coming to the country does not have the appropriate profile and skills to meet labour market demand. In Canada for example, a number of local stakeholders expressed concern regarding the national “human capital” model which recruits highly skilled graduates, when their local labour markets feature lower skilled and vocational job vacancies. They point to high levels of frustration amongst highly qualified immigrants who had been recruited to Canada on the basis of their professional skills, but have ultimately been forced to accept a lower skilled job. While not necessarily

recommending that the model itself should be changed, it is evident that the emphasis on “adaptability” which is at the heart of the human capital model needs to be better communicated to future immigrants.

Strong communication between local/regional and national policy makers is particularly important because of the variation which exists in labour demand. Harris (2003), for example, has argued that cities have particular skills needs which are not always reflected in national immigration policy, and he finds it hypocritical that governments restrict the integration of low skilled workers needed to perform basic services, which leads to a large proportion of this immigration occurring on a clandestine basis. In order to reduce such mismatches and optimise the contribution of immigrants to the labour market, it is important that the legal framework and selection programmes for immigration take account of local variation in demand.

Canada has attempted to better match immigrants to their host regions by introducing accords and “provincial nominee agreements” which allow the provinces to have some control over the selection of immigrants coming to their region. The Québec Accord provides the province with a strong determining role in immigration selection, and the ability to search for certain skills amongst new migrants, particularly the ability to speak the French language. Québec is responsible for determining the number of immigrants it wishes to receive, selecting most immigrants (excluding refugee claimants and family class immigrants), and designing and implementing its own immigrant welcome and integration programs. Québec’s selection process is currently being updated to take better account of the needs of the Québec labour market, particularly for technical workers. Manitoba has more recently developed its own very active provincial nominee programme; however the province has downplayed their emphasis on skill requirements, partly because the labour market is changing too fast to allow effective forecasting, and partly because their highest priority is now generating loyalty to the region, in the context of a loss of immigrants to neighbouring provinces. Skills requirements have been superseded by ties to friends and family already living in the province.

The new register for unfilled jobs in Spain represents a way of ensuring that all regions have their say in identifying skills in demand and directly recruiting immigrants to these positions, due to the strong role given to the regional authorities in updating the register. However, the register only records current unfilled vacancies, rather than forecasting those which will have high future demand, and the competitive job market means that they are largely at the low skilled end of the spectrum. In Italy there is some freedom for regions to influence the number of immigrants they receive through the national quota system and it is clear that some local areas are better at having a voice on this issue than others: Trento, for example, has been particularly

effective at arguing for increased numbers of immigrants, helped by the fact that the province has been able to prove that it can effectively manage immigration at the local level, effectively matching supply and demand and ensuring that temporary workers did not stay in the region at the end of their contracts.

A further particularly important area for national policy support is anti-discrimination legislation. Local actors need recourse to strong and easily understandable anti-discrimination legislation when tackling negative attitudes amongst employers. In the United Kingdom for example equal opportunities legislation has been important in preventing discrimination against visible minorities amongst immigrants and their offspring. Spain is currently following in the United Kingdom's footsteps, having recently set up a "Council for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities and the Non-Discrimination of Persons due to their Racial or Ethnic Origin", along the lines of the United Kingdom's Commission for Racial Equality. In contrast, Switzerland's legislation against racial discrimination is relatively weak and this has undermined the ability of local actors to encourage employers to take recent immigrants into employment. A number of the local vocational schools reported discriminatory attitudes towards their students for example but given the lack of a federal anti-discrimination law, the only tool open to them was persuasion, often on an individual basis.

National policy makers can also support local and regional actors through developing an overarching strategy and consistent policy message on the value of immigrants to society. Such policy messages are crucial for building positive attitudes towards immigrants, in the context of the increasing scale and importance of migration and, in some cases, negative media coverage. In Canada, for example, particular care has been taken to ensure that positive messages are sent regarding new migrants, deliberating separating the services provided to immigrants from generalised welfare provision in order to dissociate immigration from issues of welfare dependency. The widespread use of the term "newcomer" rather than immigrant can be seen to be synonymous with this approach, given that the term immigrant can in some cases be seen to have negative connotations. The new integration strategies in Spain and Switzerland, whilst still being fully introduced, also bode well in terms of creating a common positive commitment towards integration.

It is particularly important that the national level avoids contradictions in their policy messages, in order to avoid confusion amongst both the relevant actors and local employers. While both the United Kingdom government and the Mayor of London promote a pro-diversity message, in which immigration and diversity is hailed as an opportunity, national policy makers have recently restricted access to employment and training for asylum seekers in order to prevent asylum from being seen as an effective economic route into the

country. While this may be laudable, it has sent a negative message to both NGOs (who are frustrated because asylum seekers lose skills and credibility with employers during the asylum process) and employers who are left confused about the legality of employing different types of immigrant. Transparency is of key importance for employers as the legislation involved in employing immigrants can seem like a potential minefield, with complications regarding permit regulations being seen to increase the perceived “risk” involved with taking on recent immigrants.

Decentralisation can produce a particular confusing picture about the value given to immigrants in the economy and wider society. In Switzerland, differences between cantonal policies on integration have led to a patchwork of policies, and seemingly arbitrary differences in the reception conditions for migrants. The federal level is currently attempting to rectify this through the development of a strong decentralised framework for its integration policy that ensures that each canton has an “integration delegate”, that is a cantonal official whose job it is to maintain links with federal policies and agencies and to act as a focal point for the development of integration policies. In Neuchâtel, for example, the integration delegate has taken on a wide range of responsibilities, supporting training programmes for young immigrants and working with local housing authorities to attempt to avoid concentrations of specific groups in certain buildings and housing areas. The policy of introducing integration delegates is relatively new and it is therefore difficult to evaluate how it is working in all cantons; however the value of sharing approaches at cantonal level can already be seen to be working to some extent in the education sector, with vocational school heads participating regularly in inter-cantonal discussions on integration.

In the context of decentralisation, it is also important that the national level supports the transfer of innovation and good practice from one region to another, particularly in the case of the emergence of new regions which have not dealt with immigration issues before. In the United States, demonstration grants have a useful role in “seeding” the development of experimentation and good practice and encouraging other areas to learn from the results of such pilots. The Building the New American Community initiative, for example, was implemented in three cities which have not experienced immigration until recently. This has allowed both the piloting of new approaches in areas which has a relatively “blank slate” in terms of policy development, and at the same time the import of good practice from elsewhere.

Conclusions and policy recommendations

Drawing on the analysis of the practices reviewed and of the gaps identified in current provision, a number of policy recommendations emerge for local, regional and national policy makers working in the field.

At the local and regional levels

Ensure strong coordination and signposting between institutions

It is vital that strong linkages are maintained between organisations working at the local level to support the labour market integration of immigrants, so as to ensure that immigrants are adequately signposted towards new sources of help in their transition from immigration to employment.

Such coordination may require the establishment of partnerships and networks where stakeholders can regularly meet and share experiences. Such governance mechanisms should be managed in a way which allows local actors to share good practice and information about potentially complimentary services, and to develop common involvement in policies and programmes, while also discussing ways of better adapting mainstream programmes to the needs of immigrants.²⁰ Partnerships need to be set up with relatively long term goals in mind, as integration is often only a gradual process. The Renewal partnership in London is one example of a partnership which has enabled local actors to overcome the short-termism inherent in grant funded programmes, through taking a longer term strategic view.

Given the number of stakeholders active in this area it is obviously important that partnerships are inclusive. However, perhaps the most important partners to bring on board are employers. Allowing employers to have an active role in designing policies and programmes will ensure that these policies and programmes meet demand needs, and are attractive to other local employers, as demonstrated by the TRIEC partnership in Toronto. Employers can therefore play a crucial role in reducing the gap between labour market supply and labour market demand at the local level. Acquiring the involvement of such stakeholders, and maintaining this involvement, can be hard work, and partnerships need to be well managed, and in many cases be directed by a specific partnership coordinator with responsibility for attracting and maintaining a broad membership. The BNAC coalition in Nashville, for example, started off with a strong representation of private sector actors due to the leading role played by the local chamber of commerce. However when the chamber representative left the coalition the partnership had problems maintaining the involvement of demand side stakeholders, which undermined its overall success (Migration Policy Institute, 2004). Where it is not possible for employers to be involved, it is essential that local stakeholders

at least make reference to local labour market information in planning and reviewing their activities, including current and forecasted skills needs and gaps.

It is likely that the priority given to the linking of local labour market supply and demand within immigration/integration policy may increase as regions experience greater skills gaps and local labour markets become less self sufficient in the context of demographic change. Regional and local bodies are already beginning to consider immigration as a potential opportunity within their economic development strategies in Canada, Italy, and some United States cities. In Canada, the desire to attract new immigrants is an essential part of Winnipeg's development strategy, and the basis for their provincial nominee programme. Québec has also been actively trying to attract immigrants over a long period, and other Canadian provinces are following suit: in 2005, mayors from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador participated in a conference to find new ways of making their region more attractive to immigrants, who are becoming essential to local economies undergoing ageing and negative demographic change.²¹ Cleveland Ohio is one example of a city in the United States where there is an explicit strategic goal to attract skilled, foreign-born nationals.²² In Italy, local stakeholders have gone further by developing particular bilateral relationships with local areas in sending countries to ensure that future migrants are trained in skills that will be helpful to the local Italian economy, such as in tourism. Such bilateral arrangements could usefully be adopted elsewhere, particularly as they can assist regional planning in both sending and receiving countries (see also OECD, 2004c).

Support innovation, in addition to the mainstreaming of good practice

The promotion of innovation and flexibility is crucial in a policy area which is relatively new to many localities. The case studies highlight a number of tools for supporting innovative approaches, including territorial and thematic partnerships, and the provision of flexible budgets (as in the case of the Madrid CASI programme) and local grants for innovation (such as the Manitoba Immigrant Integration Programme Fund). However it is also crucial that innovations are mainstreamed so that, ultimately, all local services are better adapted to the needs of immigrants. A key finding of the Building the New American Community initiative was that integration is a process that involves an entire community, not just its most recent members. While immigrants need to change and adapt to their new society, it is also important for society to respond and to bring about systemic change to adapt to the needs of immigrants. Ultimately real improvement in the integration of immigrants may come not from specific local initiatives but from mainstream developments such as improvement in employment conditions and the

regularisation of the informal labour market, reduction in obstacles to entering professions, the availability of modular courses which are available throughout the year and which assess and take account of prior competences and skills, better childcare, affordable housing and the elimination of pockets of deprivation, and job centres which seriously take into account peoples skills and qualifications (whether gained locally or abroad). Giguère (2004), for example, has found that although partnerships and projects fill policy gaps and bring benefits to the local community, new services may be more effectively delivered by public institutions. Discussing the role of new services developed by partnerships in particular, he argues that “delivery of services in parallel with the public sector reduces the scope for the latter to learn new techniques of working and improving its methods. The impact on governance is greatest when the partnership helps the partners, including the public services, to do a better job”. As such, partnerships in the field of immigrant integration may be most effective when they focus not on the delivery of new services, but on becoming “agents of change”. In order to support such mainstream developments it is imperative that local stakeholders establish processes for mutual learning, and for the transfer of good practice from other local areas and regions, and that lessons are transferred to the national offices of more centralised services and institutions.

Target resources effectively

It is important that local actors consider the appropriate balance between providing support for all new immigrants, and developing more targeted and intensive approaches that enable more sustainable labour market integration for certain groups. Targeting immigrants according to skills levels, employability and other factors would seem to be a valuable approach to maximising the effectiveness of limited funds for at least some elements of the immigrant population. Indeed, Siemon (2003) has described the benefits of “turning away from the watering can principle” in order to focus on key areas of local opportunity. However targeting can also generate problems of “screening” (i.e. helping those who are more likely to find employment) and, at the other extreme, stigmatisation.

The timing of interventions is particularly important. It is crucial that local actors provide support which does not keep immigrants outside of the labour market for too long a period. Modular training courses, which allow immigrants to quickly build on their skills to meet local labour market needs, are vital, and should be available at all times of the year, so that immigrant are not penalised by their date of arrival. Stakeholders in the Canadian provinces and in London have developed strong modular “bridging” schemes to retrain immigrants who had qualified overseas, although these are necessarily small scale due to the cost of implementation. The Neuchâtel social enterprise in

Switzerland also offers a strong model for providing short modular courses for low skilled immigrants in competences that are in demand in the local economy.

Initiatives which involve training in combination with employer placements would also seem to be particularly successful, at least in reference to the paid work experience or “immersion” schemes that have been developed in Canada. The Swiss apprenticeship model is another, and in this case long established, mechanism for supporting the training of young people whilst they are in employment which immigrants can take advantage of. However in developing such schemes it is crucial that immigrants are guided towards employment placements that reflect their previous skills and career aspirations. To achieve real success, such interventions also require the strong cooperation of local employers. Ensuring such involvement may require that local actors build up trust and good communication over a period of time, as can be seen with the Toronto based Career bridge scheme and the Québec “Immersion” programme in Canada. The development of initiatives to highlight good practice amongst employers is also a useful mechanism for speeding up employer participation. Finally, evening classes are also helpful in that they allow immigrants to undertake training while working or engaged in job search.

Support the recognition and development of skills

It is important that local areas support the recognition and development of skills, even if they are relatively low level, through skills audits, and the recognition of competencies and qualifications gained overseas. This may involve subsidising access to national or regional mechanisms for the recognition of qualifications. Local initiatives in Canada and in London have built on the work of national and provincial recognition bodies to develop innovative schemes to help those trained abroad to re-qualify. The Swiss social enterprise in Neuchâtel also provides a strong example of the development of certificated courses for more discrete technical skills that are relevant to local employers, whilst also recording information about generic skills and competences which help to build up employer trust.

In knowledge based and service based economies language is particularly important, and local areas should ensure that high level language courses are available that meet the needs of employers. In many cases such language needs will be generic, and may include training in the overall communication skills essential to knowledge or service based economies. However, language courses that are occupationally specific should also be readily available to allow immigrants to develop a vocabulary that prepares them for specific workplaces. Such occupational language courses have been successfully piloted in London and also in the Canadian provinces.

Tackle the informal labour market

In Spain and Italy, the involvement of immigrants in the informal labour market is a major barrier to supporting effective labour market integration. While the local branches of centralised institutions often have difficulty working in this area, it is apparent that local NGOs can make some in-roads into helping illegal immigrants into regularity, even if they cannot tackle the wider informal economy per se. In addition, it is clear that employers associations and unions can prove effective in improving conditions for immigrants within employment sectors which fall victim to informal practices and poor employment conditions, as demonstrated by the local farmers association in Lleida, Spain and the 32BJ Services Union in New York. Local actors should attempt to engage such organisations in this process where possible, while recognising that in many cases unions will be a reluctant partner in activities which appear to disadvantage their existing members.

Support wider networking

In countries where much employment is advertised informally, such as Italy and Canada, projects to support wider social networking are crucial to enabling immigrants to access work. A number of the case studies, especially in Spain and Italy, showed the value of “softer” support activities which allowed immigrants to build contacts as a means of establishing routes into employment. Mentoring in particular received support across many of the participating countries. Again this requires strong involvement for private sector employers and the identification of mentors in a immigrant’s chosen field and specialism. Local actors should be prepared to support such “soft” initiatives, even if the outcomes of such work can be relatively long term, and therefore difficult to monitor.

Promote employment within the public sector

The local level should pursue opportunities for the integration of immigrants through public sector employment, taking advantage of the fact that the public sector frequently represents a significant sector in the local labour market. The public sector can implement equal opportunity and integration within areas which its own agencies control, acting at the same time as a demonstration to others. At the same time, given that non-nationals are also recipients or clients of state services, increasing the representation of non-nationals within the public sector may increase the appropriateness of the services on offer.

Think in the longer term

It is important that local integration policy is developed with a long term view. Particularly in countries that are newly experiencing immigration, it is important that local policy makers think beyond helping newcomers and also take into account the needs of their offspring. Ensuring that all local children have equal access to good quality education, and that extra assistance is provided to the children of immigrants where needed (in the form of extra language teaching, for example) will prove crucial to preventing their future exclusion from the labour market. Local projects to promote inter-culturalism amongst the young, as developed in Santa Coloma de Gramenet for example, will also be an important means of producing future social cohesion.

At the national level

While the local level provides significant added value in supporting the integration of immigrants, it is apparent that there are a number of areas where local activity will result in inconsistency and duplication. In view of this, national policy makers need to:

Ensure that the national immigration system meets local labour market needs

It is likely that improving forecasting of local skills requirements and the clear communication of these needs to national policy makers will be crucial to better planning the integration of immigrants in the future. In order to develop effective immigration selection policies, national policy makers need to be aware of current and likely future skills demands, and how these vary between different localities, according to both sector and types of position. To be effective, this process will require consultation and planning with local and regional stakeholders involved in economic development, training and labour market policy.

It is also essential that local actors are able to communicate a clear picture of the extent of the informal economy in their locality and the types of sector and position that this involves. Supporting managed migration into these sectors at the national level may be the most important mechanism for reducing the informal employment of immigrants in the longer term, an issue which local actors felt was crucial, but over which they had little control. The recent regularisation in Spain and the introduction of the INEM employment register to communicate regional skills needs are examples of a proactive approach to dealing with this issue.

Develop a consistent overarching policy framework which includes robust anti-discrimination legislation

It is important that national policy makers establish a positive framework for integrating immigrants, and that employers are sent clear and coherent messages about the value of employing immigrants. This includes highlighting the economic value of immigration and developing strong anti-discrimination legislation to support work with employers at the local level. In order to be effective anti-discrimination strategies will need to be built through collaboration and consultation with employer organisations, with a role identified for such organisations in coordinating and disseminating information at an early stage. National policy makers should also be particularly careful to ensure that immigration legislation is transparent and not confusing to employers.

Develop open and flexible mainstream programmes

It is important that the national level takes responsibility for developing mainstream employment and training systems that are flexible and open to immigrants. The particular mechanisms adopted by local service providers such as NGOs in order to adapt to immigrant needs (flexible opening hours and evening appointments, job search support targeted towards particular groups according to gender or skills levels) could usefully be adopted by the mainstream public employment service. The studies also show the value of adult education systems which are flexible enough to respond to training needs on a modular basis throughout the year and which provide the opportunity for immigrants to quickly take stock of their skills and build on them to meet local labour market needs. The need to provide more flexibility in the management of key policies (labour market, training, education) so that they are better adapted to local conditions and better coordinated to respond to multifaceted problems has already been documented in previous work (Giguère, 2005).

National policy makers and employers are increasingly recognising the need for consistent and broadly accessible systems of language provision which meet the higher levels demanded by employers, and offer training in the specific language requirements of occupations and sectors. Establishing such provision may involve discussing language requirements with employers on a sector by sector basis, and establishing a minimum threshold below which language training should be publicly available. The language benchmark system in Canada, for example, has been a useful instrument in raising the game in the provinces, with Manitoba, Québec and Ontario working towards widely available language training at a standard which is in line with the needs of employers.

Ensure that the local level is adequately resourced to support integration

In view of the importance of relatively intensive and targeted approaches at the local level it is important that adequate resources are available to local actors taking forward this increasingly important policy area. Funding needs to be long term, to avoid the current situation where many local stakeholders are competing for, and managing short term funding programmes. Local stakeholders are also hampered by the frequent fragmentation of responsibility for integration policies and programmes between different national government institutions, which results in their having to manage a number of different funding streams on the ground. Greater coordination between national ministries to produce joint funding programmes would help alleviate unnecessary bureaucracy at the local level.

Aside from resourcing issues, it is also vital that local organisations have the skills and capacities to deliver programmes to support immigrants given that they are the “front-line” in supporting immigrant integration. Training and capacity building should be provided to local stakeholders where possible in effective tools and instruments, particularly in areas where immigration is relatively new, or which are experiencing particularly high rates of immigration. Again mechanisms for sharing good practice between local stakeholders, and between regions and countries are crucial.

Support the recognition of prior competences and qualifications

While important work is being carried out in a number of countries at the provincial and local levels on the recognition of qualifications and prior competences, it is clear that in order to avoid duplication and provide consistency, national or federal systems of skills recognition will be crucial in the longer term. In the Canada and the United States, World Education Services, a private sector organisation, are already providing certification services to a variety of different states and provinces, and the NARIQ network performs a similar role in Europe. However these organisations are limited to the valorisation of qualifications gained overseas, rather than attempting to assess broader skills and competences. National systems for the valorisation of non-formal learning and prior competency testing (of which an inventory is currently being gathered at the European Commission²³) are likely to play a key role in supporting integration by allowing immigrants to demonstrate their skills in a systematic way to employers without recourse to extra training or work experience. In developing such national systems, it is important that provinces and regions, territories, professional organisations and unions are given a strong role at an early stage to ensure that they result in qualifications that are as widely recognised as possible.

Ensure a strong culture of evaluation

A further area where national stimulus is needed is in creating a strong culture of evaluation. A key problem arising out of all the case studies was the lack of strong evaluation data available for the initiatives visited. In order to understand the effectiveness of local initiatives and their longer term impact on immigrants it is vital that policy makers create and maintain a strong culture of accountability and evaluation. This is particularly important in what is a relatively new policy area in many countries, where innovative approaches are being tried and tested. Canada stands out as being the most successful of the participating countries in ensuring the collection of evaluation data, making it possible for organisations such as TRIEC to assess the relative value and cost of different integration approaches in supporting labour market success. At the same time it needs to be recognised that evaluation and monitoring can be more difficult when local initiatives are delivering “soft” interventions. Outputs should be broad and long-term enough to avoid encouraging local policy makers to deliver short-term responses to integration issues without investing in longer career progression for immigrants or encouraging more systemic change. Mechanisms for negotiating the dilemma faced by local policy makers in ensuring accountability whilst also ensuring flexibility are discussed in more detail in the OECD publication, *Managing Decentralisation; A New Role for Labour Market Policy* (OECD, 2003b).

Evaluation should be complimented by the greater monitoring and collection of data on the performance of immigrants in the labour market as a whole, preferably using a longitudinal approach, and providing data by country of birth, country of birth of parent, ethnicity, gender and postcode. In Canada, the Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB) has been crucial to supporting the recent recognition in Canada that immigrants are no longer closing the gap with the native population in terms of labour market performance as rapidly as was previously the case.²⁴ Such information can be extremely important in stimulating research into changing barriers and needs that will ultimately lead to revised approaches to supporting immigrants at the local level.

In conclusion

A key finding across the country studies carried out within the framework of this study is that the integration of immigrants at the local level is principally a question of the *management of change*. Effective labour market integration depends on helping immigrants to manage the rapid changes which are happening in their own lives, whilst at the same ensuring that the local community itself evolves and responds to changes in its population and

in its urban fabric. This has a number of implications for an effective governance response. Immigrants need clear road maps to guide them between the various services which will support their transition into a new life. This means that there is a need for well coordinated and accessible local services which will meet their various needs, either through the mainstreaming of migrant-friendly approaches across all local services, or else the provision of one-stop shop approaches specifically aimed at immigrants. In either case, some immigrants need a wide variety of support mechanisms to establish themselves in local society, requiring a multi-stakeholder approach. Strong ongoing communication is needed between the different partners involved to ensure the development of complementary and connected services, and to ensure the sharing of good practice.

While the mainstreaming of services to immigrants can support a clear and consistent approach to the problems experienced by immigrants, the changing nature of both the migrant population and local labour markets also means that local governance systems have to support innovation and be flexible enough to accommodate change. In the case of immigration this means changes in the migrant population, in national and regional migration policies, and in the labour market itself. The speed of this change in many countries has meant that local authorities are still learning about the most appropriate mechanisms to assist immigrants. Because of this the local level can be particularly effective when it is given a flexible budget that supports diverse approaches and encourages innovation. Effective mechanisms then need to be put into place to harness and circulate good practice so that it can be incorporated into mainstream practices. It is evident that the best examples of local practice combine both mainstreaming and innovative approaches which are responsive to dynamic local conditions.

Another factor which calls for the management of change is the changing experience of immigrants across generations. Immigrant integration is a multi-generational process, with “upward mobility” for the first generation often largely being the move to a different country itself, where this results in an associated increase in quality of life. Normally, there is a tendency for the second generation to progress further in the labour market and become fully integrated at a degree commensurate with their competences and skills. However different countries, and within them, different local areas, perform very differently in relation to this progression. Education systems and school to work transitions are particularly important in this process, as the children of immigrants can become concentrated in the lowest educational strands and within the worst schools, where their parents suffer from relative poverty and exclusion. The second generation also confronts a series of other obstacles, including discrimination (particularly in the case of visible minorities) and in some cases de-motivation and disaffection. The fact that

different barriers are faced by different generations means that different approaches need to be adapted for different target groups, and it is crucial that policy makers develop strong approaches which go across the generations.

Immigrants do not have the opportunity to become professionals at immigration; they are in every sense “amateurs”, particularly as people often only migrate once in their lifetimes. However local actors do have the opportunity to build their professionalism in receiving and integrating immigrants, developing what Gächter (2005) calls “reception competence”. It is clear from this study that we are only beginning to understand the issue of integration can best managed and governed at the local level, particularly as it relates to ensuring access to the labour market. The participating countries have developed a variety of promising initiatives, but barriers and challenges remain which prevent the effective linking of immigrants to sustainable opportunities that match their skills and aspirations in the labour market, and which offer appropriate career progression. Programmes of exchange and mutual learning between local areas on mechanisms for overcoming such challenges can only be beneficial in the future to help improve overall integration outcomes, and maximise the benefits of immigration for local economies.

Notes

1. See for example the work by the OECD’s Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee and its Working Party on Migration on labour market integration in Germany and Sweden (OECD 2006c and 2006d forthcoming).
2. See Reitz (1998) who argued that interurban differences in the performance of immigrants on the labour market are relatively significant in the United States, although less so in Canada and Australia.
3. Federal Reserve Bank of New York estimate based on the United States Census 2000.
4. Skilled immigrants have employment rates which are systematically higher than immigrants whose studies have been of shorter duration, implying that education facilitates entry into the labour market. However the difference in their participation rate with the native population remains negative in almost all countries where graduates of higher education are concerned. See OECD (2006a).
5. The Conference Board of Canada makes the assumption of equivalence between the education and work experience of foreign-born individuals with that of native-born residents.
6. Domestic services account for 12% of immigrant employment in Spain and 13% in Greece (OECD, 2006a).
7. In Quebec government services deal directly with immigrants while delegating certain more specialised services to NGOs through partnership agreements.
8. Canada and the United Kingdom in particular have a strong history of anti-discrimination policies and legislation, with Spain and Italy, as countries which

are newly experiencing significant immigration, also beginning to increase their focus on this area. Spain, for example, has recently developed a new “Council for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities and the Non Discrimination of Persons due to their Racial or Ethnic origin”, based at least partly on the model of the Commission for Racial Equality in the United Kingdom.

9. Indeed immigrants have been found to be under-represented in the public sector more generally in OECD countries, although immigrant women have relatively high participation levels in the sectors of education and health in some countries (OECD, 2006a)
10. See for example Kenan Malik’s ongoing debate with Sir Bernard Crick, JCWI Quarterly Bulletin, Winter 2004-5.
11. Funded by the public employment service, Service Canada.
12. The Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (21st November, 2005). See www.cic.gc.ca/english/policy/fed-prov/ont-2005-agree.html.
13. *British Medical Journal Career Focus* (2003), 327:28.
14. In Quebec the provincial government has responsibility for integration and labour market policy.
15. Manitoba has in fact recently received federal funding from HRSDC (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada) to address this issue.
16. See for example Kloosterman and Rath (2001) and Rath (2002).
17. Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). CIC points out that comparisons of per capita allocations between Canadian provinces can be potentially misleading as figures may not accurately reflect the needs of the immigrant population (based on factors such as mix) and the capacity of immigrant serving organisations in different provinces.
18. See OECD (2003b) which describes how performance management systems can have the effect of privileging short-term unemployed individuals over individuals with less skills and work experience.
19. Children born in the United Kingdom are automatically British citizens as long as their parents are legally settled in the country. If only the father is legally settled then the parents need to be married prior to the birth.
20. For further information about good practice in relation to local forms of governance and partnership see OECD publications, *Local Partnerships for Better Governance* (2001) and *New Forms of Governance for Economic Development* (2004b) and *Local Governance and Drivers of Growth* (2005b).
21. The Atlantic Immigration Conference (May 15th-17th 2005) hosted by The Atlantic Mayors’ Congress, Halifax.
22. See, for example, www.city.cleveland.oh.us/government/departments/econdev/CIC_Task_force.html.
23. See the website of the European Inventory for the Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning: www.ecotec.com/europeaninventory/.
24. Immigrants used to catch up with their native counterparts in terms of labour market position (salary and level of post) in their life time, while this is no longer the case. Reitz (2003) also makes the point that in 1980, a male immigrant who had been in Canada for 10 years earned an average CAD 1.04 for every dollar earned by

his Canadian-born counterpart. By 1990 the parallel figure had dropped to CAD 0.90 and by 2000 to CAD 0.80.

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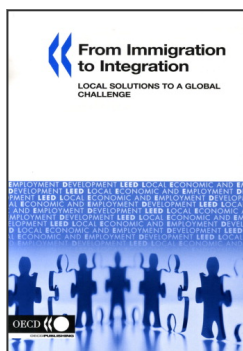
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From Immigration to Integration
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