



What works in integration?

Prepared for the COMPAS Breakfast Briefing, 19 October 2012

About the project: Integration: What works?

Aims:

- Explore the challenges of evaluating and achieving ‘success’ in integration
- Gather best practices and learning points to inform government and trust/foundation approaches to design and evaluation of integration
- Set out a series of evaluation methods tailored to the challenge of integration

Methodology:

- Commissioned background paper
- Workshop of experts working at policy and delivery levels
- Case study visits in 4 countries (UK, Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands)
- 25 interviews with governments, NGOs, trusts and foundations

Key Challenges to Evaluation of Integration at the Policy Level

Lack of policy coherence

- No single ministry responsible and lack of infrastructure for reliable monitoring of integration outcomes
- Variety of definitions employed within countries, or lack of definitions
- Disagreement about who should be the focus (target groups)

Key Challenges to Evaluation of Integration at the Policy Level

A heavily politicised issue

- Based on ‘knee-jerk responses’ to perceived problems
- Shift towards an assimilationist rhetoric in the political domain
- Lack of comprehensive data, particularly the socio-cultural elements, and available statistics often used in ways that polarise or misjudge public opinion

Key Learnings:

The limits of policy to achieve and evaluate integration

1. Policy tends to be inflexible, short-term and can shift with new leadership or changes in circumstances

- Need to invest in longer-term initiatives, and recognise where civil society is better placed to effect long-term change.

2. Governments lack the relationships and community confidence required to achieve integration aims

- Need to invest in activities that foster trusted relationships and confidence within and between communities, and the government.

3. Recognition that many elements of integration will not be quantifiable, especially the socio-cultural elements

- Enhance the role of service delivery organisations as repositories of intelligence, and adopt a learning-based approach to evaluation

Key Learnings: Up-scaling the impact of policy

1. More coherent national policy frameworks

- Clear definitions and stated objectives, to provide a focus for tracing progress towards a wider societal aim

2. More flexible and nuanced target groups

- Recognition that the ‘needs’ of communities change over time and between places. Target groups should be consistent with a two-way approach to integration.

3. ‘Integration-proof’ mainstream policies

- Awareness of the impacts of mainstream policies on integration, and the ways in which structural policies impact upon the cultural or behavioural elements of integration.



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