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The Utrecht Refugee Launchpad

Key Themes: Working Paper

August 2018

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This project is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund through the Urban Innovative Actions Initiative.

Introduction

This document is an ongoing review of academic research, considering the existing evidence base regarding asylum seeker reception. It is used as an internal aide to support the development and refinement of theory and assist with the interpretation of evidence for the Utrecht Refugee Launchpad (see Oliver, Dekker & Geuijen 2018). The review has sought to collect evidence on key themes that the project addresses as well as consider some of the existing practices and similar types of innovation in the field. It is not exhaustive, but explains some of what is known (and what is not known) about how an initiative such as the URLP might work. The following questions are addressed:

What is the evidence on the problem that URLP addresses?

a) Why is innovation around asylum seeker reception needed? Evidence on impacts of existing approaches on asylum seekers' mental wellbeing, labour market and social integration

There is a strong need for innovation in asylum seeker reception, since existing research draws attention to the negative implications of current trends in European asylum seeker reception. In particular, these are explored in terms of the effects of the limbo period on social and structural 'integration' and wellbeing and neighbourhood relations.

i. The limbo of reception

A key characteristic of the existing approach to asylum seeker reception across Europe, as well as in the Netherlands is that following application, applicants typically experience a long period of limbo while awaiting a decision, where there are strict rules about engaging in work or integration activities. This is followed by the expectation that, once status is granted, integration moves swiftly. In addition to this temporal dimension, there is some convergence in the spatial aspects of reception arrangements. Kreichauf (2018) identifies a 'campization' in reception arrangements, where facilities in localities across Europe bear similar hallmarks of separating asylum seekers during this limbo period in 'closed' facilities, in the margins, or away from receiving societies.

The picture depicted above is also familiar within the Netherlands, where existing reception facilities are designed to be 'austere (basic) but humane'. A network of asylum seeker centres are operated under the administration of COA (*Centraal Orgaan opvang Azielzoekers*) where large numbers of asylum seekers are housed in institutional facilities. The centres are governed by the principle that reception facilities should not in themselves be attractive to asylum seekers, as this might encourage people to come to the Netherlands. Inhabitants must adhere to certain rules, such as that asylum seekers should be available at all times for the asylum procedure, as well as for deportation. In the Netherlands, asylum seekers are also prohibited to work or study during the first six months of their legal procedure. Some rules and regulations also hamper asylum seekers' possibility for work or study even after this phase e.g. they are not allowed to work for more than 24 weeks a year (Gastelaars, Geuijen, van der Horst and Leeuwen 2002).

The effects of these types of reception systems have been extensively researched, demonstrating that many residents of reception facilities experience their lives as 'on hold' because of the forced inactivity. Studies show that asylum seekers' mental health problems are aggravated as a result of the reception phase (Fazel et al. 2005; Gerritsen et al. 2006; Geuijen 1998; Li et al. 2016; Miller en Rasmussen 2017). Research also documents that there are often incidents of aggression in asylum seeker centres; one such study of reception centres in the Netherlands showed that for COA employees incidents of violence and aggression have become part of the job of working at an asylum seeker centre (Ufkes, Zebel and den Besten 2017). Acts of aggression most often occurs by those

who have received a negative decision, or are still waiting on their decision, rather than for those who have received a positive decision.

A prolonged inactive stay in a reception facility has also been shown to lead to problems once asylum seekers move on. This includes delays in labour market integration for those granted status (Dourleijn & Dagevos 2011) as well as difficulties in considering future options about return migration (Leerkens et al 2010). In particular, the fact that refugees have no control over the processing time for their application is a large stressor, and the longer the wait the lower the employment outcomes down the line, particularly because of psychological effects, including depression and compounding of previous trauma. As Fransen, Ruiz and Vargas-Silva (2017) show, legal restrictions on economic activities in the waiting phase also leads to high levels of inactivity and potential loss and deterioration of skills experienced by refugees in placement. This has significant effects for both those receiving a positive decision on status, or indeed following refugee return.

Once out of the asylum system, refugees continue to face challenges in employment, as they demonstrate low rates of labour market participation, high unemployment, low wages and downward mobility into low skilled, low status and insecure jobs. This emerges out of the combination of problems of human capital, including language difficulties, lower returns on education undertaken in foreign countries, problems in recognition of qualifications and lesser experience of the labour market (Vroome & Van Tubergen 2010). It also emerges from refugees' limited social capital, where they possess a lack of 'resourceful social ties' with people who have information on the labour market and is compounded by health difficulties arising from previous experience of war, poverty and political suppression (ibid.). Finally, refugees suffer losses incurred by admission policies, which include long periods staying in asylum centres and being forbidden to work, underlining the negative effects of reception arrangements themselves, as above (ibid.)

In addition to difficulties in mental wellbeing and labour market integration created through the conventional approach to asylum reception, another major challenge is the problem of social integration. Asylum seekers separation from resident populations is compounded by linguistic barriers, which can lead to only limited development of 'resourceful social ties' as noted above (ibid.) In addition to the logistical and linguistic barriers, many asylum seekers can also become subject to hostility and racial harassment in receiving countries (e.g. Phillips 2006). Those placed in asylum centres are vulnerable, since the opening of a new asylum seeker centre in a neighbourhood may well stir public debate and sometimes protest (Bock 2018 – and in this AZC, see here:).

ii. Neighbourhood relations:

Research on the theme of neighbourhood relations confirms that asylum seeker reception centres are generally not welcomed. One study of the Dutch populations' attitudes towards asylum centres (AZCs in Dutch) before the refugee 'crisis' shows that that approximately nine out of ten people would object to the constitution of large AZC with 500 asylum seekers in their neighbourhood (Lubbers, Coenders and Scheepers 2006). Kanne, Klein Kranenburg & Rosmea (2015) note in particular that the size of an asylum seeker centre is a decisive factor in its acceptance. A representative survey among the Dutch population during the refugee crisis shows that while 32% would object to a small AZC with 50 inhabitants, a much larger group of 73% would object a large AZC with 500 inhabitants in their neighbourhood (SCP burgerperspectieven 2016).

Opposition to an AZC by neighbourhood residents is fuelled by a number of factors. First people may feel that economic interests are threatened (Blalock 1967; Lubbers et al 2006; Zorlu 2017). Neighbourhood residents perceive competition for scarce resources such as housing, social services, and economic benefit. Opposition is more prominent in neighbourhoods with more inhabitants with a lower social-economic status, who are more dependent on government resources. Second, the hypothesis of *cultural threat* focuses on the (perceived) threat that an AZC poses to the local identity of the neighbourhood community, where unfamiliar out-group members housed in an AZK are perceived as holding different norms and beliefs (e.g. in religion, language and dress, see Ceobanu & Escandell 2010, Hubbard 2005). Realistic and symbolic cultural threats enhance anxiety and hence negative attitudes toward immigrants (Zorlu 2017).

Finally, opposition to opening an AZC in a specific neighbourhood can also be explained by *threat to the specific local context*, where there is a perceived social burden placed on a specific neighbourhood and expected strain placed on local resources and facilities such as housing, public transport, healthcare facilities and schools (Blalock 1967; Dekker & Scholten 2017; Finney & Robinson 2008; Lubbers et al. 2006; Zorlu 2017). Asylum seekers are often interpreted as receiving preferable treatment and support – for example in finding housing, work and access to services. This can fuel residents' fears of declining access to and potential deterioration of local services, as well as loss of residential property value.

This last type of opposition is more prominent in neighbourhoods that are already coping with problems such as poverty, nuisance and crime. Additionally, this hypothesis argues that this social burden is shared unevenly between different neighbourhoods or cities, explaining its reference to the concept of NIMBYism (an acronym for 'Not In My BackYard' see Zorlu 2017). However, this concept denies legitimate concerns for the local context and unequal sharing of the social burden by ascribing opposition towards the siting of the AZC as selfish or illegitimate, because citizens raise no such concerns to similar developments elsewhere. On the other hand, research suggests that it is not uncommon for public attitudes towards an AZC to change for the better after a shelter opens, especially if expected negative effects for the neighbourhood such as enhanced crime rates are not actualised (Achbari & Leerkens 2018).

b) What are the possibilities in local contexts for innovations in asylum seeker reception?

The Utrecht Refugee Launchpad emerged as a solution to the challenge facing localities across Europe who were tasked suddenly in 2015-2016 with practically managing an unprecedented arrival of high numbers of asylum seekers within national borders. In 2015-16, the EU and its Member States was compelled to develop urgent policy-responses to the sudden escalation in humanitarian migration. Much effort was focused on developing the 'blunt instruments' of managing arrivals at the border e.g. through fences, walls, deportation and detention (McMahon and Sigona 2018) but equally there was attention to how reception was managed at the local level, within the neighbourhoods, towns and cities in which asylum seekers arrived. Often facing opposition and hostility from local residents, especially when these facilities were placed sometimes virtually overnight in already marginalized zones (see above and e.g. Bock 2018) local authorities faced a

difficult task in creating a solution that would meet the needs of multiple groups of asylum seekers and local, potentially hostile populations. Nevertheless, within some cities, including Utrecht, the moment gave rise to a 'window of opportunity' in reimagining the response to asylum seeker reception (Geuijen, Dekker and Oliver 2018).

This opportunity reflects a broader shift where there is considerable evidence from Europe that it is at the local level – in cities or regions rather than at the national level - that civil and political actors are taking a lead on migration reception and integration (Ambrosini 2013, Scholten 2008, 2013 and Scholten and Penninx, 2015). Research confirms that local policymakers are not always mere followers in implementing national solutions, but rather can act rather as 'policy entrepreneurs' responding to their own cities' practical issues and political contexts (see Guiraudon 2000 on 'vertical venue shopping'). Local variance in reception and integration is influenced by the civic or political traditions of particular cities, by the opportunities and constraints in local labour and housing markets and for civic participation, as well as the relationship between local, regional and national governance on integration (Oliver 2016). There may be considerable divergence between local and national models of integration, but there is equally strong potential for local governments to innovate in ways that might eventually find traction in national level policies, as charted in a significant academic literature (e.g. Caponio and Borkert 2010). It is from this context that the URLP and *Plan Einstein* emerges.

What is the evidence on URLP's potential solutions?

a) What is the evidence on developing good relations and neighbourhood acceptance of asylum seeker centres through social contact?

In the face of the problems with the existing model of reception, the Utrecht Refugee Launchpad sought to create a new type of reception centre, of which one of its distinctive elements was to bring people from the neighbourhood together with asylum seekers in co-living and co-learning activities. The solution sought to offer 'something back' to the neighbourhood, addressing negative reactions the centre as outlined in the previous section, whilst simultaneously supporting asylum seekers to build social connections and skills for better labour market and social integration. What is the evidence, from academic research, that might give credence to the approaches chosen to improve neighbourhood relations through social contact, and ultimately lead to better wellbeing and integration for asylum seekers?

This aspect of the project loosely draws on the prominent literature on intergroup contact theory, which emerged in the 1950s through social psychologist Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis. Allport's original proposition was that contact generally fosters more favorable attitudes toward out-group members, as contact is the most influential factor in explaining attitudes towards them (Pettigrew 1998). Positive intergroup contacts are expected to reduce ethnic prejudice, through countering negative preconceptions regarding the values, beliefs, and lifestyle of the 'other' (Pettigrew and Tropp 2000). Since its origins in the 1950s, the social psychological theory of intergroup contact has been refined, receiving renewed interest especially from policy circles. In particular, it has been assumed an important means of generating 'community cohesion' in an era where multiculturalism is under question and concerns about separation and hostility between new immigrants and existing populations have grown (Askins and Pain 2011). Research among multiple groups, such as Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, or between young Asian British and white British secondary school pupils in Northern town provide high support for Allport's thesis (Hewstone et al 2018).

Yet the theory has also attracted critique. Scholars have posed that instead of reducing prejudice, interethnic contact can also reveal differences and potentially diminish social cohesion in neighbourhoods. Most prominent is Robert Putnam's (2007) study '*E pluribus unum'* describing that ethnic diversity in neighbourhoods tends to reduce social solidarity. In highly diverse neighbourhoods residents of all races tend to 'hunker down', have less trust in others and withdraw within their private social networks. This thesis is supported by other empirical studies, e.g. a recent study by the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (Jenissen, Engbersen, Bokhorst and Bovens 2018) confirms that residents of highly diverse neighbourhoods are less in contact with others, evaluate contact less positively and have more negative opinions about their living environment. While this evidence might indicate that policy interventions aimed at stimulation contact can potentially even risk enhancing interethnic conflict over resources and identity or withdrawal within the in-group rather than increased acceptance, there is also evidence that

undermines this argument (Gesthuizen, Van der Meer and Scheepers 2008). Indeed, Schmid, Al Ramiah and Hewstone et al (2014: 672) point out that the evidence is mixed. They critique existing studies for only considering the direct effects of diversity, without considering how intergroup contact itself and how diversity is subjectively encountered, might explain how diversity *indirectly* affects trust. They argue:

> …diversity does not inevitably lead people to "hunker down" (Putnam, 2007, p. 149), but also enables them to open up and can provide them with opportunities for engaging with others of different ethnic backgrounds than their own. Diversity thus offers possibilities for having positive, face-to-face contact, and not merely living side-by-side, with one another, which can cancel out, or even override, potential negative effects of diversity on trust toward others, regardless of their ethnic background.

Current research therefore shows that contact will not necessarily eliminate mutual prejudice and enhance intercultural understanding if deployed 'unproblematically'. It has been demonstrated that spatial proximity alone is not sufficient to lead to social interactions (Kleinhans 2004) and while bringing people together in mundane encounters might lead to an increase in courteous behaviours in public space, it rarely leads to any major transformation in dominant social values and respect for difference (Valentine 2008). In one UK based study of encounters between young people of African and British heritage, Askins and Pain (2011:818) maintain this same point: that 'we cannot simplistically assume that activity will enable meaningful encounter'. Indeed, as Allport explains in the original theory, contact in and of itself does not automatically reduce mutual prejudice. Allport describes four conditions that are required for this to happen, requiring instead that there are: (1) equal status between groups; (2) common goals; (3) cooperation between groups; and (4) support of institutional authorities, law, or custom. He also noted that if broader inequalities between groups were not resolved, individual prejudice was unlikely to be reduced simply through everyday contact. Amin (2002) likewise cautions against a 'onesize fits all' approach, recognizing that habitual engagement in urban residential areas *can* potentially foster understanding, but that each intervention needs to work within its own social dynamic.

Given this work, recent attention by social psychologists and social geographers have sought instead to identify the particular conditions that both enable and inhibit contact (Askins and Pain 2011). This recognizes that the social interaction generated in 'encounters' has the *potential* to be transformative and a catalyst for intercultural acceptance, but only when key conditions to generate 'meaningful encounters' occur (see Askins 2008, Askins and Pain 2011, Amin 2002,Wilson, 2016). Such research demonstrates that in addition to Allport's conditions, participatory practices are most effective when *owned* by the people rather than delivered to them, for example by working within community groups (Askins and Pain 2011). Another important condition is enabling them to actually *do* things on a repeated basis, where engagement with materials, tools and 'stuff' is important and where tactile engagement with real objects 'suggest interactions, demand communications and enable conversations' (ibid.:818) and are better than encounters which focus on talk or activity alone.

Learning too from Mayblin, Valentine and Andersson's (2016) study suggests that essential elements are the provision of space to explore differences, a focus on shared interests and funding for

professionals to facilitate encounter and manage conflict. It is also important to provide space for 'banal sociality', or time spent 'hanging out' alongside the activities rather than only during them. Wilson (2016:465) further argues for movement away from face to face contact only, but consider rather the ways in which encounters are sensed, recognizing that 'encounters are mediated, affective, emotive and sensuous, they are about animation, joy and fear, and both the opening up and closing down of affective capacity'. Key within this body of work is a call for recognition of when encounters *do not* work, requiring attunement to failure and ambiguity rather than the apparent 'certainties' of encounter in bringing people together.

b) How might the URLP's focus on developing skills impact on wellbeing and integration?

The second distinctive element of the URLP is a focus on education and skills training through offering English language and entrepreneurship classes and coaching. This model falls broadly in line with recent recommendations that have been formulated to change the existing operation of reception centres. ACVZ (2013: 83) suggested for instance that reception should:

> *expand the interpretation of the right to education and development… [and…o]ffer at all locations a supply-driven programme consisting of a number of short skills courses adapted to the relevant stage of the residence procedure… As soon as aliens arrive at the facility, establish their level of education, skills and interests and discuss with them what activities they are able and willing to participate in or contribute to… Ensure that aliens in reception facilities have free and unlimited access to internet and create dedicated study areas.*

The URLP hypothesises that education and skills development would better refugee's prospects for labour market participation, whether in the Netherlands or in the case of return. Evidence on entrepreneurship is developing, with an examination of its merits as a potential solution to problems facing refugees, both in refugee camps (Betts, Omata and Bloom 2017, De la Chaux and Haugh 2015) and in receiving countries. In the first case, investing in entrepreneurship in refugee camps can be seen as a means of filling an 'institutional void' leading to despair, crime and boredom (ibid.). In the latter case, it is claimed that entrepreneurship can help to build integration on the basis of shared values of innovation and product development (Koltai 2016).

Entrepreneurship for refugees is particularly attractive because it promises some financial security and independence, and the possibility of continuance with previous experiences of self-employment in the home country[1]. Some argue that refugees in particular possess qualities that are stereotypically associated with entrepreneurship, such as propensity for risk-taking and an ability to identify and exploit opportunities (Hugo 2013). Such a characterisation casts entrepreneurship as positive and adventurous, with the promise of rewards. The promotion of entrepreneurship is attractive too since it assuages public concern, with research on public attitudes to asylum seekers

[1] Indeed much research shows that entrepreneurship has a dynamic relationship with migration, as spending time overseas allows the accumulation of human and physical capital that can be used in the event of return. In this way, amongst international migrants more generally, overseas returnees are more likely to be entrepreneurs than non-migrants, notwithstanding the losses in social capital during periods away (Wahba and Zenou 2012).

suggesting the Europeans are willing to accept those with higher employability[2] who have the potential to make strong economic contributions (Bansak, Hainmueller and Hangartner 2016). Its emphasis on job *creation* in particular is beneficial for assuaging public concern around competition for jobs (van Kooy 2016). We find entrepreneurship is therefore increasingly promoted as a cure for challenges associated with refugee movements.

However, some scholars point out that for refugees, entrepreneurship has significant risks and it should be understood as a practice that is motivated by necessity more than opportunity and ambition (ibid.). There are some criticisms that some types of skills and language training that focuses on entry to the job market can in practice merely just serve the neoliberal agenda, by preparing workers for employment in minimum-wage, entry-level jobs in less desirable sectors of the economy. Warriner (2017:495) in a critical assessment of English language programme for new arrivals (in an English speaking context) argues for instance:

> *It is widely believed and argued that the user of English can, through effort and hard work, be transformed into a better form of human capital through increasing his/her formal or measureable competence in English. This view dominates not only the English language teaching universe, but it also circulates in public portrayals of what kinds of skills, competencies, and trajectories immigrants need, want, and should develop for themselves'*

Although English is viewed as a powerful form of linguistic capital by all actors involved, Warriner's analysis of what occurs outside the classroom shows that the ideology is not fulfilled in reality, as there are still important limits to the kinds of access and opportunities open to students following the courses. This echoes with findings of other research around refugee entrepreneurship, where refugee entrepreneurs find significant barriers in scaling businesses because of limited access to finance and capital, especially because of restrictions on refugees' access to access formal banking facilities (Betts, Omata and Bloom 2017).

c) **How do other initiatives tackle the same problems?**

In terms of existing practice, the Utrecht Refugee Launchpad is similar to some other comparable initiatives which focus on generating **social connections** for refugees through **co-housing** models. Initiatives like CURANT (*Cohousing and case management for Unaccompanied young adult Refugees in Antwerp),* another UIA funded initiative in Antwerp, places unaccompanied young adult refugees in an organised befriending and cohousing scheme, matched with buddies (sharing similar elements with other befriending schemes, see Askins 2016). The evaluation is ongoing, but the latest research report notes that upon entering the scheme, refugees have relatively homogeneous social networks with others of the same sex, mother tongue, religion etc. It is expected that buddying will diversify those networks, although the provisional report also does point out that 'the project does emphasize the distinct categories of "the refugees" and "the Belgian buddies" and that refugees have more expectations on them than buddies (Ravn, Van Caudenberg, Corradi, Mahieu, Clycq and Timmerman 2018: 78).

[2] Bansak, Hainmueller and Hangartner's (2016) research is based on surveys of 18,000 individuals. As well as employability, other traits most preferred for asylum seekers were consistent testimonies, severe vulnerabilities and favouring Christian over Muslim asylum seekers.

Similar elements of generating social proximity are also found in the *Grandhotel Cosmopolis*, an asylum seekers' centre which functions too as a café and hotel in the city of Augsburg, Germany. Research by Zill (2018) suggests that contact and everyday interaction between neighbourhood residents and asylum seekers increased, although it rarely resulted in detailed personal knowledge or intercultural friendships away from the Grandhotel and its immediate vicinity. In some ways, these themes are also evident in broader city level trends such as the *Cities of Sanctuary* movement, which seek to lead to the development and adoption of more inclusive practices at local level to overcome obstacles to migrants' personal safety generated by national controls on immigration (Darling 2009, Hintjens and Pouri 2014). Ideas of careful management of communication and countering misconceptions is also a key aspect of the Anti-Rumours Campaign in Barcelona, which has since been rolled out to many other European cities as part of the European-wide strategy C4i (communication for integration)[3].

There are of course, a number of other initiatives for refugees focusing on the themes of skills and language training, and some especially on entrepreneurship. For example, UNHCR has engaged with a multi-sector collaboration in Ecuador to create new businesses in the region through the establishment of a 'business incubator' and to 'help make refugees economic actors in their communities and agents of their own integration' through entrepreneurship (http://www.unhcr.org/innovation/how-we-can-use-business-incubators-for-refugee-integration/). The innovation's impact was analysed as much for social impacts as business impacts, where the initiative has supported 26 enterprises, with over half seeing increases in earning in their first year and a couple of clear successes.

Another smaller–scale example is the *Stepping Stones to Small Business*, a programme which provided business training, networking opportunities and mentoring for refugee women in Melbourne, Australia. It is similar to the URLP in supplying intensive training to help individuals who have articulated small business ideas, through connecting them with a business mentor drawn from a pool of volunteers in the local business community. An evaluation of the programme in 2015 suggested that participants were overwhelmingly positive about the knowledge they had gained, the networks they had developed and the feelings of empowerment gained. Some evidence also showed that they had transferred the information to other women in their home country or Australia. On the other hand, the evaluation showed that participants had not largely converted these newly acquired resources into small business income. While many refugee women demonstrated the traits often associated with entrepreneurship, such as a desire for independence and autonomy, for example, they still faced barriers to small business development. These barriers included a lack of personal savings, the need to delay their progress for family reasons, attitudinal barriers, expectations for childcare and home management, and fewer support systems and networks than men in the marketplace (van Kooy 2016: 71).

[3] See https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/anti-rumours

Summary

This working paper details the existing evidence base around some of the key assumptions of the Utrecht Refugee Launchpad. The review aims to explain how the URLP is situated in reference to the norm of asylum seeker reception in the Netherlands and elsewhere and how this might affect asylum seeker wellbeing and integration. It considers evidence on social contact and generating connections in neighbourhoods as well as research about the potential impact of entrepreneurship, skills and language training, pointing out some of the evidence known on other initiatives.

In reviewing this evidence, we can conclude that the assumptions of the URLP seem to be largely supported by evidence. The existing norm of asylum reception within the Netherlands and Europe is clearly in fundamental need of repair, promoting poor wellbeing, mental health issues and difficulties for longer-term labour market integration. The period of limbo results in a deterioration in skills and limited opportunities to build a relevant social and professional network. By attending to the neighbourhood reaction, the URLP engages with the research that suggests that large centres are likely to provoke negative reactions, with concern founded on the basis of economic threat, cultural threat and social threat. By attempting to offer 'something back' to the neighbourhood and create opportunities for shared social spaces, the project tries to address these issues, exercising social contact as a means of reducing prejudice. Second, in providing opportunities for education and self-development from arrival onwards, the project is in line with professional recommendations. Entrepreneurship and language training can offer some refugees opportunities for self-development and job creation, whilst possessing an additional benefit in addressing public opinion of refugees as a 'burden'.

However, there are some notes of caution to be drawn from existing research and previous initiatives. First, research suggests that facilitating 'contact' in and of itself may not be enough to change fundamental impressions and prejudice between different people. Therefore, in line with current research, the project must expect to invest efforts in learning how and why encounters work, or do not, and avoid reinforcing categorisations. Second, where entrepreneurship can provide a positive focus, studies show how material barriers are often experienced which can mean that effects of the programmes may be short-lived. There are also gaps in evidence, where it is unclear therefore the potential impact that might be achieved. Existing research on English language training for refugees explores how it operates in contexts where English is the mother tongue. Some critical research points out how it can facilitate integration into poor quality employment, but there is a lack of evidence on its effectiveness in the Dutch context, where arguably the reverse could even be the case, or alternatively it could hinder development for other reasons, such as interfering with the ability of asylum seekers to learn Dutch. Therefore, while there is reasonable evidence to support the URLP, there are also some gaps in knowledge, and notes of caution to be considered in the implementation of the project theory.

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