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Britain has entered a new era of super-diversity and many regions of the UK are experiencing the arrival of new communities. Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs) have developed following the arrival of new asylum seeking and refugee communities, and have been charged with the role of supporting the integration of these newcomers. However, there is much evidence to suggest that they are functioning only with individuals rather than working with institutions to transform systems and ensure welfare provision is adapted to account for diverse needs. This paper looks at the role of RCOs in attempting transformation and, using data collected through survey, interviews, and participatory action research, examines the extent to which RCOs are able to engage with the public and wider voluntary sector, to ensure that refugees' welfare needs can be met. It finds that in addition to the much-researched functional barriers to transformation, there are major institutional barriers to engagement. Institutions have failed to adapt their systems to enable representation of new communities instead expecting RCOs to build their own capacity to communicate. The paper ends by offering some ideas around resourcing RCOs to be represented and developing the capacity of institutions to adapt to new diversity.

Introduction

Between 1992 and 2002, nearly 255,000 people were granted refugee status or exceptional leave to remain in the UK (Home Office, 2005). Data indicates that refugees from over 100 different countries have been dispersed to regions across the UK under the UK Border Agency dispersal programme (Phillimore *et al.*, 2004; Phillimore and Goodson, 2008). The influx of newcomers into the UK has become a highly politicised and contentious issue (Robinson *et al.*, 2003; Zetter *et al.*, 2006). Over time, a two-pronged policy approach to asylum has emerged. The primary focus is upon deterrence, which involves restricting asylum seekers access to the UK through reducing their access to welfare and housing, the use of increased travel restrictions and securing of borders. The secondary focus is upon the integration of refugees. This move is borne out in Home Office strategy documents on refugee integration, *Full and Equal Citizens* (2000), *Secure Borders, Safe Haven* (2002) and *Integration Matters* (2005). In the most recent strategy, the Government describes integration as 'the process that takes place when refugees are empowered to achieve their full potential as members of British society, to contribute to the community, and to become fully able to exercise the rights and responsibilities that they share with other residents' (Home Office, 2005). Whilst the strategy's key targets

focus on functional aspects such as housing, education, employment and health, there is a clear emphasis on the involvement of refugees in local communities and the creation of social networks and social capital through the creation and support of RCOs (Home Office, 2005).

The critical role of RCOs is established as enormously valuable 'in helping refugees to acclimatise to life in the UK' (Home Office, 2005: 36) through provision of support services, building links with the wider community and providing expertise to all levels of Government. Yet despite the acknowledged importance of this role in all aspects of refugee integration, little support has been offered to RCOs by Government, with many RCOs relying heavily upon competitive funds, seedcorn funding via the Refugee Community Development Fund and support from charities and trusts. Fears about the capacity of the sector, particularly in the regions, to deliver integration to the expectations of the Home Office have been expressed both by those working in the sector (Gameledin-Adhami *et al.*, 2002) and academics studying RCO activity (Griffiths *et al.*, 2006).

The arrival of significant numbers of asylum seekers and refugees is acknowledged to be one of the key components of super-diversity (Vertovec, 2008). The influx of ever-more fragmented groups of people has led the statutory sector to rely heavily upon community organisations such as RCOs for intelligence about changing populations and welfare needs (Vertovec, 2008). It has also challenged the public sectors' ability to ensure effective representation of communities that are represented by these small, often poorly organised, organisations. With the combination of super-diversity and the move to involve the voluntary sector in service provision to ensure that the wide-ranging needs around ethnicity, religion, culture and even tribal affiliations are met, it could be argued that the role of RCOs in facilitating integration is more important now than ever. Whilst some RCOs are equipped to deliver a range of services, it has been recognised that clear guidance is required for commissioners, RCOs and other bodies that support them in order to draw on the expertise they offer and to make services more responsive to the needs of new communities (see Perry and El-Hassan, 2008).

Many authors have written about the importance of RCOs being able to operate on a transformational basis, influencing the shape of welfare provision, as well as offering services to asylum seekers and refugees (see Gameledin-Adhami *et al.*, 2002; Griffiths *et al.*, 2006). Certainly one of the strands in the academic debate around integration concerns the importance of mutual adaptation of institutions and communities. It has been argued that integration in the fullest sense of the concept can only freely occur if mutual accommodation from the host society is possible (Berry, 1997; Banton, 2001; Korac, 2003). Whilst this approach requires migrants to adopt the basic values of the wider society, it also requires national institutions to adapt to better meet the needs of all groups living together in a multicultural society. This paper will focus on the role of RCOs in their attempts to carry out transformational work and their ability to engage with the public and wider voluntary sector.

The role and function of RCOs

There has been a considerable amount of interest in the role and activities of RCOs in recent times. In Griffiths *et al.*'s exploration of the term RCO, they found that a 'plurality of organisational terms were the norm, with the provision of services on the basis of ethnicity to refugees and asylum seekers as the defining feature of an RCO' (2006:

891). Central to the definition of RCOs is that they are established *by* asylum seeking or refugee communities, or their pre-established communities, *for* asylum seeking or refugee communities (Zetter and Pearl, 2000). Moya (2005) maintains that RCOs often emerge because of shortcomings in the migration process itself and as such they serve to satisfy unmet needs, such as welfare, leisure and social interaction. Similarly, Carey-Wood (1997) suggests that the development of RCOs was a response to the difficulties refugees experienced trying to access mainstream services, while Hunt (2008) indicated that some RCOs may be established to create a good impression and help influence leaders' asylum decision. Other research has indicated that RCOs have a better understanding of refugees' needs than statutory agencies (Salinas *et al.*, 1987), and act as mediators between refugees and the state, to try to enable access to services at least on an individual basis. Zetter *et al.* argue for a re-conceptualisation of the role of RCOs post-dispersal, stating that under conditions of exclusion and marginality, the main function of RCOs in dispersal regions is to overcome 'the fracturing of communities and their support mechanisms' (2005: 178). They reason RCOs are compelled to 'respond to the immediate needs of asylum seekers, rather than the long-term settlement needs of refugees' is largely because deterrence has led to asylum seekers being excluded from mainstream services.

Whatever the reasons for RCO development, their role in contributing to refugee settlement is well established. According to Zetter *et al. (*2005), the conventional paradigm concerning RCOs was to consider them an agency for the integration of refugees through the development of bonding and eventually bridging social capital (Putnam, 2002). RCOs provide a multi-faceted function, with the key activities of RCOs identified as ranging from the provision of intelligence pre-arrival (Phillimore *et al.*, 2009); assistance with initial reception in the form of translation, interpretation, personal and emotional support; assistance with self-sufficiency, including skills building, provision of cultural knowledge and signposting (Challenor *et al.*, 2005; Phillimore *et al.*, 2009; Gameledin-Adhami *et al.*, 2002); help with long-term adjustment through facilitating access to volunteering opportunities (Hunt, 2008); social space and social contact; an opportunity to reciprocate help received on arrival (Hunt, 2008); mutual understanding and a common identity (Griffiths *et al., 2*006; Salinas *et al.*, 1987; Duke, 1996); and, finally, the provision of expert knowledge to inform policy development (Gameledin-Adhami *et al.*, 2002)

Until recently, there has been little attention paid to the limitations of RCOs (Griffiths *et al.*, 2006). Whilst providing a wide range of services and support, there is 'an overwhelming sense of fragility about RCOs', with those based in the regions being more vulnerable than those in London (Gameledin-Adhami *et al.*, 2002). The lack of significant new public funding to help RCOs establish in the regions have left them 'doubly disadvantaged' as they try to become established with no track record and whilst dependent on small-scale and short-term funding (Zetter *et al.*, 2005). RCOs often have to compete for funding with more established NGOs and many lack the ability to attract sustainable funding in order to achieve longevity, and adequate social space. They also demonstrate limited knowledge of the British system and are dependent on small numbers of dedicated individuals (Gameledin-Adhami *et al.*, 2002).

Concerns have been identified around representation and governance, including problems around inclusivity, which span the exclusion of women and the fragmentation of refugee 'communities'. There is little evidence in the literature to suggest that RCOs have undertaken any effective networking or information sharing (Zetter and Pearl, 2000). Issues around representation and accountability have also been raised, but only superficially

explored. Any capacity to become mediators in the process of refugee integration is taken up by the range of defensive tasks that emerge from trying to support asylum seekers and refuges with their immediate basic needs, alongside tackling issues around destitution.

Although the rhetoric prescribes a role for RCOs in integration and equal opportunity terms (Home Office, 2002, 2005), the reality for RCOs is somewhat different with RCOs main contribution relating to meeting the survival needs of their community members rather than having any policy influence (see Gameledin-Adhami *et al.*, 2002). The Refugee Council (2006) argues that the defensive work undertaken by RCOs threatens their role of helping refugees to integrate, deterring them from engaging on any strategic matters, such as those outlined by the Home Office in *Integration Matters* (Home Office, 2005). The UK Government has generally viewed the organisational activities of refugees as helpful in the process of integration (Schrover and Vermeulen, 2005) and provided small amounts of funding to support their activities and development. Griffiths *et al.* (2006) argue that by providing front-line services and helping their clients access the welfare system, RCOs are helping in a small way to integrate refugees into society. However, there is little evidence of RCOs being involved in the development of resources aimed at the longer-term integration of refugees. Here it is argued that for RCOs to have a role in integration in its fuller sense, they need to have what Narayan *et al.* describe as a transformational, rather than a survival function, and to develop the power and ability to 'negotiate with local elites and participate in local, national, or global governance and decisions' (2000: 276).

Gameledin-Adhami *et al*'s. (2002) survey of RCOs highlighted that virtually no RCOs had any means of systematically prioritising the needs of their communities or the skills to act strategically. Whilst many had an integrative role, when it came to dealing with the individual, they felt marginal to the process of integration 'they observed gaps in their relationships with other agencies, yet they knew that their work with mainstream agencies was vital if they were to make a difference' (Gameledin-Adhami *et al.*, 2002: 11). It is clear that RCOs face a range of barriers and constraints that prevent their involvement in transformation work. Griffiths *et al.* (2005) identify two main issues that contribute to the disempowerment of RCOs at a transformational level. The first focuses upon the Government's restrictionalist approach to migration, which presents migration as a problem for the UK and thus RCOs as part of the problem rather than the solution. The second concerns the infancy of the RCO sector compared to the BME sector as a whole, and the orientation of funding for community organisations as mature organisations that understand the system. Zetter *et al.* (2005) contend that RCOs elect to depart from conventional forms of organisation, adopting fluid institutional forms and weak associations with institutions in a bid to resist the predominantly asylum seeker hostile, policy environment. Little empirical research has explored RCOs attempts to transform, or investigated institutions' interactions with RCOs. Looking outside the integration and RCO literature to theory around group representation, Young (1990) argues that groups whose experiences, cultures and socialised capacities differ from the supposedly universal ideal will be oppressed if they are expected to assimilate into existing systems. She contends that social justice can only occur where society contains and supports the institutional conditions necessary for the realisation of a good life. Thus, it could be argued if RCOs are to have a role in transforming welfare systems so that asylum seekers' and refugees' needs can be met, and new groups included in society, it is necessary for institutions to

develop new mechanisms for engagement. We now move to explore the extent to which this is occurring.

Methodology

In this paper, data are drawn from four studies of the role of RCOs in refugee integration. The first two comprise of follow-ups to postal surveys of NGO activities, the first of which was undertaken in the West Midlands of England in 2002, and the second across the UK in 2004. The UK survey specifically targeted organisations working solely with asylum seekers or refugees, whilst the West Midlands survey was aimed at all NGOs in the region. The surveys, while not identical, shared some common questions around the types of integration activity respondents undertook, the numbers of refugees served, geographical areas covered and length of operation. Some 262 forms were dispatched in the West Midlands and 102 returned of which 21 were from RCOs. Across the UK, some 227 forms were dispatched of which 68 were returned.[1] In each of the above projects, survey completions were followed up a number of face-to-face interviews with RCO leaders. RCOs were selected for interview across the UK, where they provided more than three types of services to over 50 refugees per annum. The interviews allowed researchers to explore in more depth the types of services offered, the organisations' aims and objectives and the main barriers to achieving their goals. Some 22 interviews were undertaken across the UK with an additional 12 interviews from RCOs based in the West Midlands.

Two further projects have contributed data to this paper. The first involved a year's close working with 16 RCOs in the West Midlands with the specific aim of building their capacity to undertake transformational work. Data were collected through participant observation with RCO leaders and policymakers as the authors engaged with both parties in formal and non-formal settings. The final project consisted of a series of interviews and one focus group with RCO leaders and policymakers undertaken as part of an evaluation of a refugee-housing project. This project involved a total of 11 RCO leaders and six policymakers over a two-year period.

Findings

Barriers to transformation

The allocation and administration of funds. The problems that RCOs have when seeking to access funds is well documented and the experience of RCOs in this study re-enforces the findings of previous studies. All the RCOs involved in our research lacked funding to pay for essentials, such as staff or premises. It was not unusual to find RCOs being operated out of a backroom by two or three volunteers. To many community leaders it seemed that '*the system*' was not set up to support developing organisations. Whilst leaders recognised they lacked expertise to identify and bid for new sources of funding, they also found that they were given little support to help develop expertise. Many RCOs found funding guidelines unclear, especially those with relatively poor language skills, who could find their applications refused on a technicality. Few funders provided feedback on applications. In addition, it appeared that funders favoured more established organisations. RCOs without charitable status were excluded from most programmes,

while those with appropriate status were '*knocked back*' because they lacked a track record or data to support their applications. One RCO leader described her exasperation:

> For years, many years, we have tried. We fill the form. They say no. We fill another one. Nobody tell us why they say no. One day we decide we are better to spend our time helping people than filling forms.

Those RCOs that had developed into funded organisations had often done so in an organic way, starting with one or two knowledgeable volunteers who had gradually attracted more supporters. These organisations were sometimes successful in attracting funding, often associated with delivery of services, such as housing support or ESOL. Even those RCOs with premises and paid employees continued to rely heavily upon volunteers to help them cope with the sheer levels of demand for support. Funding sources, where they existed, did little to provide conditions in which RCOs could develop into fully functioning organisations. Funds were short term, and much time was spent trying to apply for further funding to enable them to continue their work. A significant problem for some RCOs who had attracted funding was their lack of understanding of the recording, monitoring and delivery procedures and mechanisms, associated with receiving public money. They often struggled with administration and monitoring of funds, because they were completely unfamiliar with running organisations in the UK. Whilst our research was underway, two of the largest refugee-run organisations in the West Midlands ceased trading after funds were withdrawn following accusations of financial mismanagement. In one extreme circumstance, an individual who established a RCO to support young people in his community was prosecuted for misuse of funds because he had not understood the need to allocate resources strictly.

The reliance of RCOs upon volunteer labour and their lack of funds were not readily understood by policymakers. There was an expectation that RCO leaders should attend meetings during working hours with no remuneration for the travel costs of those who were unemployed. Individuals who were working were expected to use their annual leave to attend meetings. Failure to attend meetings was viewed as being unreliable. In the words of a senior council officer:

> We have made an effort. We invite them to every meeting but they almost never turn up. They are not committed to working with us or taking an active role in the partnership.

Volunteers who did attend meetings would sometimes gain employment and be replaced by new personnel who would attend meetings, but, because they had not attended previously, not understand the background to the discussions and consequently found making a contribution difficult. There was little appreciation by policymakers that changes in personnel meant the learning process had to start again. Policymakers showed little understanding of the situation: 'it seems to be a different person each time. They have very little to contribute.' In some cases, impatience directed at RCO volunteers compounded the problem for those who lacked the confidence to speak. Often discussions assumed a level of knowledge about systems and policy that would not have been possessed by anyone working outside of the sector. Use of acronyms and references to people or organisations not sitting around the table could be intimidating to RCO representatives:

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'I did not know what they are saying so I waited until they spoke to me.' Few attempts were made to explain procedures to new arrivals.

Understanding of UK systems and institutional culture

A major issue for many of the RCOs we worked with on the empowerment project was their lack of understanding of UK systems and institutional culture. This coupled with a suspicion of authority, an issue also raised by Robinson (2002) and Hynes (2003: 14) who argues that 'there are layer upon layer of mistrust that is part of the refugee experience'. Mistrust can be related to both negative experiences in their countries of origin and in the UK. Lack of trust in the state led to a situation where some RCO leaders questioned the motives or sincerity of institutions or the larger NGOs. Few RCOs were conscious of the length of time needed to achieve changes in policy or approaches to service delivery. They did not appreciate that agreement on a course of action would not result in immediate action, but rather many more meetings, which might gradually lead to change. Often RCOs would drop out of discussions because they felt: 'I was wasting my time. All they want to do is talk.' An excellent example of this was where a consortium of housing providers came together to develop a refugee-housing project. RCOs involved in this project at the early stages stopped attending meetings after a few months because the project had made no difference to refugee housing. They had not been informed that the application for funds related to the project would take months and that even once funded the new partnership would require several meetings before any actions occurred. Eventually, after two years, a Refugee Housing Centre was developed, but none of the original RCOs benefited from this development because they had given up on the process over a year before. Institutions that had made verbal commitments to take actions, but had not followed through quickly, were viewed as not caring about refugees. In the words of one leader: 'He said yes, yes, we will look at this, we know there is problem. But he never ring us back. I see him at other meetings and he never speak to me again. He does not care about us.'

The concept of partnership was extremely difficult for some small RCOs to understand. They felt that their organisations' committee members belonged to their organisation alone. Moves to join another organisation to operate in partnership were seen as competition. One RCO leader argued: 'he is meant to represent [our organisation], if he goes on the committee for [another organisation] then it is a conflict of interest. How can he represent both of us?' They were also sometimes reluctant to work with other RCOs because they felt they were all competing for the same funds. Rather than pooling resources and ideas, information and contacts were guarded closely. These suspicions were exacerbated by questions of representation. Institutions were very keen to invite a single RCO member to represent refugees in general, rather than liasing with different communities. Whilst there may be some pragmatism in this approach resulting from lack of time and resources, it also resulted from a desire to cultivate a relationship with a trusted individual. One senior politician described how he sought to build relationships: 'I want someone I can trust, someone who I know I can speak to about sensitive matters, someone who is looking out for his community and not just for himself.' Female RCO leaders asked how a male from one African state could be said to represent women or refugees from other countries. They did not support this approach and questioned the motives of the representatives favoured by institutions. The few RCOs who did gain

resources or funds were eyed with great suspicion by others. For example one RCO leader complained: 'My group have not received a proper service from XXXX. I know there are computers and photocopiers for some groups but not for us. It should be for every group'. On this occasion, however, the equipment he was discussing was not the responsibility of organisation XXXX and had not been distributed to any groups.

The approaches and attitudes of institutions

Some respondents felt that institutions acted in patronising or divisive ways to prevent RCOs from gaining any power. An example of this occurred in the West Midlands where a number of RCOs came together to form a network and develop an organisation to help enhance refugee employability. Shortly after, a London based employability concern made an application for funds and then teamed up with institutions in the West Midlands to develop a refugee employability organisation along similar lines to the organisation developed by the RCOs. Once the funding application was successful, the original RCOs felt sidelined. They were not involved in any of the discussions about what the new organisation would do, or how it would be run. In the words of one of the RCO leaders: 'it was our organisation and they just took it from us. They didn't ask us if they could come here to run it. They got their million pounds and kept it to themselves. They should have given it to us so we could develop what refugees needed. Now we won't use XXX. We don't trust them.'

Mistrust and suspicions are perhaps not surprising when the attitudes of some of the institutions interviewed are considered. Many senior officers viewed new communities and RCOs as 'irrelevant'. The fact that communities were so fragmented, that monitoring was not sophisticated enough to identify any particular targets around refugees, and the knowledge that all asylum seekers and most refugees lacked political power and influence, meant that RCOs were below the radar of most individuals. Some policy makers held the view that paying attention to the needs of refugees was politically dangerous and likely to inflame inter-ethnic tensions. Even those who were conscious of the presence of RCOs and tried to connect with them had not considered the need to change their own approaches to engagement or the importance of word of mouth communication. The over-reliance on e-mails with attachments to notify RCO leaders of any meetings or funding opportunities was also considered unhelpful. On the whole, there was little evidence of RCOs being involved in consultations. Attempts to enhance community cohesion and improve communications through the development of ethnically based networks was often said to focus upon long-established BME communities. The Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) paid little attention to new communities and tended to consult with well-established community groups prior to the development of the Local Area Agreement. Whilst floor targets were prepared for existing BME groups in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas, no mention was made of refugee populations or the RCOs representing them. The groups we researched had limited knowledge of, and no contact with, the LSP.

Discussion

While RCOs in the West Midlands have emerged or been rejuvenated initially to deal with the needs of asylum seekers, many have evolved since dispersed. The interviews and participant observation work we undertook in the West Midlands clearly indicated

that RCOs want to engage in transformational work. They were keen to participate at a policy level to try and ensure that the interests of both asylum seekers and refugees were considered in the development of policy and the delivery of key services. Whilst many organisations emerged post dispersal, they have sought, in addition to their defensive work, to engage with policymakers to make a case for change. It is clear that RCOs face a wide range of barriers when seeking to undertake transformational work and that many of the issues relating to the disfunctionality of RCOs outlined earlier in this paper hold true. Certainly, dispersal has led to the development of small, fragmented communities and a wide range of RCOs seeking to support those communities. This operation, as Zetter *et al.* (2005) describe, in conditions of exclusion make most RCOs too small to have any real power, particularly when the communities they represent are generally invisible in ethnic monitoring data. Given their size and lack of experience, RCOs in the West Midlands do have to compete harder with one another and with other CVSOs, particularly where there is already a powerful and vociferous BME sector (Gameledin–Adhami *et al.*, 2002).

However, while many RCO problems relate to their small size and lack of funds, the main barriers to transformation appear not to relate to a desire to maintain a fluid structure, as Zetter *et al.* (2005) have argued. Indeed, in the West Midlands as in other dispersal areas across the UK, the focus upon asylum seekers, as numbers have dropped, has gradually shifted to include the need to support refugees, family reunion and settlement more generally. Instead, barriers appear to be structural and relate to the failure of institutions to adapt to the needs of emerging communities. Findings from our research indicate three main institutional approaches to RCOs. The first is from institutions that recognise the need to adapt their services to meet the needs of refugees. They acknowledge the role that RCOs should play in policy formation, but fail to adapt their systems or explain their culture in order for them to participate in discussions in a meaningful way. The second is those institutions who also acknowledge the importance of meeting the needs of refugees, but want to do so on their own terms without consultation. The third position includes those that consider the refugee population irrelevant or to be catered for by service provision for the established BME communities. This latter position has seen a strengthening in recent times with the emphasis on community cohesion and guidance for authorities to fund inter-ethnic opportunities wherever possible (CLG, 2008).

The net result of these institutional positionings is the marginalisation of RCOs so that whatever their desire to transform policy, the structures are not in place for them to mobilise themselves in any meaningful way. Indeed, some of the approaches taken serve to weaken the RCO sector, to exacerbate in-fighting and maintain hegemonic structures. In particular, the lack of transparency around applications for, and allocation of, funds, the tendency to look for a single representative of multiple communities and the lack of pro-activity on the part of policymakers can serve to systematically disempower RCOs at a political and policy level.

Conclusion

While this paper focused on RCOs mainly in the West Midlands, with some exploration of experiences across the UK, we believe our findings would be replicated in other areas of the UK, perhaps even the EU. It is arguable how much impact RCOs can have on refugee integration in the current institutional and political environment. Certainly, the RCOs in our study were presented with many barriers preventing them from working with

institutions to transform their services to meet the needs of new communities. As we have noted above it is well acknowledged that integration is a two-way process that crucially depends upon the adaptation of individuals and institutions (Berry, 1991; Mestheneos and Ioannidi, 2002; Schibel *et al.*, 2002). There was no evidence of institutions supporting a change in their governance mechanisms in the way that Young (1990) and others have argued is necessary if new groups are to represent themselves and engage in dialogue that can influence welfare provision and enable them to avoid oppression and exclusion. New institutional mechanisms and public resources are needed to analyse how existing social policy affects new groups and to support the self-organisation of group members. Clearly, there are practical and resource issues of seeking to engage with over 100 new communities that prevent adoption of multi-cultural models of representation that encourage representation of distinct ethnic groups. Gameledin-Adhami *et al.* (2002) argue that more investment is needed in RCOs in organisational development and more generally into civic infrastructure, so that when policy decisions are made the needs of new refugee communities are taken into account. At the very least we would argue that institutions have a responsibility to make transparent their systems and cultures for all to understand and engage with. In super-diverse communities, with ever-changing populations, institutions need to adapt to ensure that there is equality of access to services. This means training institutions to recognise the assumptions they make when seeking to engage new communities. It means institutions recognising their obligations under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to provide equal access to services rather than avoiding those who are under the radar. It means recognising that community cohesion is not just about the majority communities accessing resources equally, but also about all communities accessing those services. It also means recognising that institutions have a responsibility to build, rather than undermine, those organisations that seek to represent their communities and play a vital role in bridging the unmet needs of the statutory sector. Clearly, it is not possible for institutions to consult with all RCOs individually. In order to maximise inclusion, resources need to be invested in building the capacity of RCOs to work together around key issues. RCOs might be supported in the first instance to engage paid representatives with appropriate expertise to consult wide-ranging groups, identify their needs and communicate them to institutions. Such representatives would need experience of working with refugees, and, ideally, be refugees, and crucially have an understanding of institutional culture that they would share with the RCOs they represented.

Note

1 Initial mailings were followed by telephone to enhance response rates. Eighty-five RCOs in the UK survey were unable to be contacted because they were no longer known at the database address and telephone numbers rang unobtainable.

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