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Nordic Vietnamese

Our Community in Finland



Ministry of Economic Affairs
and Employment of Finland

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Acknowledgements

It is difficult to do justice to the topic of this study, which is far from exhaustive of the rich stock of Vietnamese settlement experience in Finland. For the valuable assistance so generously given, I am indebted to the individuals, families and members of the community who came forward to participate in the study, and who shared the fruits of their settlement experience in Finland.

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<p>Abstract</p> <p>The study Nordic Vietnamese – Our Community in Finland was conducted in 2017–2018 and is a qualitative investigation that examines how the Vietnamese have fared in the 40 year period over which they have settled in Finland and have made it their second home society. The study population numbered approximately 150 persons settled in different areas and regions of Finland. They represented the age spectrum from teenage to elderly in their 70s. The range of educational levels and occupation backgrounds was wide in this cross section of the Finnish Vietnamese community. The data collection focused on main facets of settlement and integration.</p> <p>The key findings of the study and the related proposals have to do with the need to involve people with the same ethnic background as the integrating immigrants in reception and integration services. Furthermore, the mother tongue instruction programme should be resourced more strongly and reinforced alongside the school curricula. The number of elderly in the refugee communities is increasing. Some have come to the stage at which they would need to access serviced accommodation where it would be possible to communicate in their mother tongue, since their Finnish language skill is usually inadequate for managing independently.</p> <p>The above proposals would be likely to bring about considerable economic saving in the settlement and integration services. They would help to avoid long-term settlement problems and more costly interventions. Furthermore, the life quality and integration experience of settling families and individuals would benefit.</p> <p>Contact person at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment: Anne Alitolppa-Niitamo, Tel. +358 29 50 47688</p>			
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<p>Vietnamilaiden yhteisö Suomessa -tutkimus tehtiin vuosina 2017–2018. Tässä laadullisessa tutkimuksessa selvitettiin miten Suomeen saapuneet vietnamilaiset ovat 40 vuoden kuluessa asettautuneet ja kotoutuneet Suomeen ja tehneet Suomesta toisen kotimaansa. Tutkimusta varten haastateltiin noin 150 eri puolella Suomea asuvaa henkilöä. Haastateltavien ikäjakauma oli teini-ikäisistä yli 70-vuotiaisiin. Tutkimuksen kohteena olevien Suomen vietnamilaiden koulutustaso ja ammatillinen tausta oli hyvin vaihteleva. Tiedonkeruussa keskityttiin asettautumisen ja kotoutumisen kannalta keskeisiin tekijöihin.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen keskeiset tulokset ja ehdotukset liittyvät tarpeeseen ottaa kotoutujien kanssa samaa etnistä kulttuuritaustaa edustavia mukaan työskentelemään vastaanotto- ja kotouttamispalveluissa. Lisäksi äidinkielen opetukseen pitäisi ohjata enemmän resursseja ja vahvistaa sen asemaa opetussuunnitelmassa. Ikääntyneiden osuus pakolaisyhteisöissä kasvaa. Osalla olisi jo tarvetta palvelusumiseen, jossa voisi kommunikoida omalla äidinkielellä, koska monilla iäkkäillä suomen kielen taito ei riitä itsenäiseen pärjäämiseen.</p> <p>Edellä mainitut ehdotukset voisivat tuoda merkittäviä säästöjä kotouttamispalveluissa. Niiden avulla voitaisiin ehkäistä pitkän aikavälin ongelmia ja siten välttyä kalliimmilta väliintuloilta. Lisäksi toimet parantaisivat perheiden ja yksilöiden elämänlaatua ja kotoutumiskokemusta.</p> <p>Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriön yhteyshenkilö: Anne Alitolppa-Niitamo, puh. +358 29 50 47688</p>			
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Referat	<p>Undersökningen Vietnameser i Norden – vårt folk i Finland utfördes 2017–2018 som en kvalitativ studie med syftet att utreda hur det har gått för de vietnameser som har bosatt sig i Finland under de senaste 40 åren och för vilka Finland har blivit ett andra hem. Undersökningsspopulationen omfattade ca 150 personer bosatta i Finlands olika områden och regioner. De representerade åldrarna omfattade från tonåren till 70-årsåldern. Olika utbildningsnivåer och yrkesbakgrunder var brett representerade i detta tvärsnitt av den vietnamesiska befolkningen i Finland. Datan som samlades handlade om de viktigaste frågorna kring bosättning och integration.</p> <p>Undersökningens främsta iakttagelser och förslag handlar om behovet av att personer med samma etniska bakgrund som de människogrupper som tas emot tas med som en del av arbetskraften inom mottagnings- och integrationstjänsterna. Vidare behövs det större resurser för modersmålsundervisningen och denna bör få en starkare roll jämsides med skolornas läroplaner. Andelen äldre människor i flyktingsamhällena ökar. Vissa har nått en så hög ålder att de behöver serviceboende men på ett ställe där de skulle få kommunicera på sitt modersmål, eftersom deras kunskaper i finska i allmänhet är otillräckliga för att de ska kunna klara sig på egen hand.</p> <p>Förslagen ovan skulle sannolikt ge avsevärda ekonomiska inbesparingar i mottagnings- och integrationstjänsterna. De skulle bidra till att stävja långsiktiga mottagningsproblem och dyrare interventioner. Även livskvaliteten och integrationen som erfarenhet för de familjer och individer som bosätter sig här skulle bli bättre.</p> <p>Kontaktperson vid arbets- och näringsministeriet: Anne Alitolppa-Niitamo, tfn +358 29 50 47688</p>		
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Contents

Foreword	9
Esipuhe	11
Abstract	13
1 Introduction	15
2 Methodology	20
3 The context of settlement	23
Finland as a ‘new gateway’	23
Expressing gratitude	24
Resettlement goals.....	25
Refugee reception and the sphere of the welfare State	26
The vulnerable.....	27
4 Priorities in settlement	29
Cultural dimensions – the traditional extended family model.....	29
Work and remittances.....	30
The practical quality of living – back to basics.....	31
The fundamentals of managing – initiative, an enterprising disposition, contacts and links with Finnish people, being ‘active’.....	34
Thrift	34
Challenges and problems	35
5 Social interaction	39
The importance of social interaction	39
Interaction with Finns, in the neighbourhood and workplaces	40
Contact with Vietnam and visiting.....	41
Transnational families.....	42
6 Employment	44
The Vietnamese in the labour market.....	45
Working philosophies.....	46
Long, continuous employment	47

Traditional occupations in Vietnam.....	48
Employment in the younger generations: 1 ½, second and third.....	49
The nature of some personal choices.....	50
Educated and qualified in Vietnam.....	51
Those whose labour market links break.....	52
General observations on immigrant employment.....	53
7 The Vietnamese Family and its evolution.....	55
Families' ties of interdependence.....	56
Socialization.....	57
Cultural model of socialization.....	58
Youth.....	61
8 Family dynamics, cultural coping and social services.....	64
Problems facing the family.....	64
Need for Vietnamese workers in settlement social services.....	66
The importance of a family approach.....	68
9 Community, culture and solidarity.....	69
Community organisation.....	69
The elderly in the community.....	71
Religion.....	72
Community diversity.....	73
Vietnamese relatives in the context of labour migration.....	73
Domestic Migration.....	74
10 Closing observations and summary.....	76
11 Proposals for Policy.....	83
Bibliography.....	90
Appendix 1. Statistical Information.....	91
Appendix 2. UNHCR nine internationally accepted goals for integration of resettled refugees.....	92
Appendix 3. Definitions.....	93
Endnotes.....	95

FOREWORD

The first Vietnamese refugees, or ‘boat refugees’ as they were called at the time, arrived in Finland in the late 1970s – early 1980s, in other words 40 years ago. They were Finland’s first quota refugees. They were also among the first minority groups in Finland ethnically distinctive from the general population. Their language, culture, parenting style and prejudices toward them – these presented new challenges for Finland’s social system and services, too.

The Vietnamese refugees were not a homogeneous group; they spoke different languages, and had different religious and socioeconomic backgrounds. Nevertheless, they did have many things in common. The Vietnamese culture is very collective: the concept of family is much wider, and responsibility of care stretches far beyond the core family.

This qualitative study explored the settlement and integration processes of Vietnamese refugees as they made Finland their new home. The study focused on factors that contributed to the integration of the Vietnamese who arrived in Finland as ‘boat refugees’ and their children. Such factors included family and its significance for the socialization process of young people, employment, social relationships and interaction, and cultural adaptation.

The study is primarily based on group interviews with Vietnamese people living in different parts of Finland. In total, 149 people were interviewed. The interviews were conducted in Pietarsaari, Tampere, Helsinki, Sipoo, Turku, Littoinen and Lieto. The study group included mostly people with Vietnamese background who had immigrated in the end of 1980’s or later, or who were born in Finland.

The situation of the Vietnamese people living in Finland provides an interesting opportunity to examine intergenerational integration. Which factors were considered important? Which things facilitated the adjustment to a strange culture? What things were considered challenging? What do they think of their life now? How did the second and third generation integrate in Finland? Addressing these issues is important in order to benefit from previous experiences in the integration of immigrants. Key findings of this study include the importance of family-focused integration and parenting support in the new environment.

I would like to thank Doctor Kathleen Valtonen for conducting the study.

Paula Karjalainen, Ministerial Adviser, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment

ESIPUHE

Ensimmäiset vietnamilaiset, ns. venepakolaiset, saapuivat Suomeen 1970–1980-luvun vaihteessa eli 40 vuotta sitten. Vietnamilaiset olivat Suomen ensimmäisiä kiintiöpakolaisia. He olivat myös ensimmäisiä selvästi etnisesti erottuvia maahanmuuttajavähemmistöjä Suomessa. Kieli, kulttuuri, lastenkasvatus, heihin kohdentuneet ennakkoluulot – monet tekijät tuottivat uudenlaisia haasteita myös Suomen yhteiskuntajärjestelmälle ja palveluille.

Suomeen saapuneet vietnamilaiset eivät olleet kuitenkaan yhtenäinen ryhmä, vaan he poikkesivat toisistaan niin kieleltään, uskonnoltaan kuin sosioekonomiselta taustaltaan. Siitä huolimatta heillä oli myös monia yhdistäviä tekijöitä. Vietnamilaisten kulttuuri on hyvin kollektiivinen, perhekäsitys on laajempi, ja huolenpito- ja hoivavastuu yltää pitkälti yli ydinperheen.

Tässä laadullisessa tutkimuksessa on selvitetty, miten Suomeen saapuneet vietnamilaiset ovat asettautuneet ja kotoutuneet Suomeen, tehneet Suomesta toisen kotimaansa. Tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan erityisesti tekijöitä, jotka vaikuttivat venepakolaisina Suomeen saapuneiden vietnamilaisten ja heidän lastensa kotoutumiseen, kuten perhe-elämää ja sen merkitystä erityisesti nuorten sosiaalistumiseen, työllisyyttä, sosiaalisia suhteita ja vuorovaikutusta sekä kulttuurista sopeutumista.

Tutkimus perustuu pääosin Suomessa eri alueilla asuvien vietnamilaisten ryhmähaastatteluihin. Kaikkiaan haastatteluihin osallistui 149 henkilöä. Haastattelut toteutettiin Pietarsaareissa, Tampereella, Helsingissä, Sipoossa, Turussa, Littoisissa ja Liedossa. Tutkimusryhmä koostui pääasiassa 1980-luvun lopulla tai myöhemmin Suomeen muuttaneista tai Suomessa syntyneistä vietnamilaistaustaisista henkilöistä.

Suomessa asuvien vietnamilaisten tilanne antaa mielenkiintoisen mahdollisuuden ylisukupolvisen kotoutumisen tarkasteluun. Mitkä tekijät koettiin tärkeinä? Mitkä edesauttoivat sopeutumista vieraaseen kulttuuriin? Minkälaiset asiat olivat haastavia? Miten he näkevät tilanteensa nyt? Miten toinen ja kolmas sukupolvi on kotoutunut Suomeen? Tällainen tarkastelu on tärkeää, jotta voimme hyödyntää aiempia kokemuksia kotouttamisen kehittämisessä. Esimerkiksi perhelähtöisen kotoutumisen merkitys ja vanhemmuuden tukeminen uudessa ympäristössä nousevat tämän tutkimuksen keskeisiksi huomioiksi.

Kiitokset VTT Kathleen Valtoselle tutkimuksen toteutuksesta.

Paula Karjalainen, neuvotteleva virkamies, työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö

Abstract

The present study was conducted in 2017–2018 and is a qualitative investigation that examines how the Vietnamese have fared in the 40 year period over which they have settled in Finland and have made it their second home society. It has thus a strong longitudinal focus. The study is conducted under the auspices of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Immigrant Integration.

The study population numbered approximately 150 persons settled in different areas and regions of Finland. They represented the age spectrum from teenage to elderly in their 70s. The range of educational levels and occupation backgrounds was wide in this cross section of the Finnish Vietnamese community. The data collection focused on main facets of settlement and integration. These included employment, social relationships and interaction, family life and roles, the second generation, life quality aspects and individuals' perspectives on their integration experiences.

The chief findings and proposals related to

1. The need to involve people with the same ethnic background as the integrating immigrants in reception and integration services.
2. Furthermore, the mother tongue instruction programme should be resourced more strongly and reinforced alongside the school curricula. Grave problem situations can arise and have arisen when youth gradually lose their mother tongue and communication lines with parents possessing weak Finnish language skills are broken.

3. The number of elderly in the refugee communities is increasing. Some have come to the stage at which they would need to access serviced accommodation where it would be possible to communicate in their mother tongue, since their Finnish language skill is usually inadequate for managing independently. This would entail, for example, revisiting staffing options that include Vietnamese speaking worker/s or adjusting accommodation patterns to enable elders to access service in their mother tongue.

The above proposals would be likely to bring about considerable economic saving in the settlement and integration services. They would help to avoid long-term settlement problems and more costly interventions. Furthermore, the life quality and integration experience of settling families and individuals would benefit. The complete list of proposals can be found at the end of the text.

1 Introduction

The Finnish Vietnamese community has become part of our society. We have grown accustomed to interact with them in their many roles in social and economic life. While the experiences of their flight from war-torn Vietnam have become part of the past, the first generation cannot forget the dangerous and often tragic sea journeys that were undertaken in the quest for survival and safety for themselves and their families. The Finnish Vietnamese who left and risked their lives in small boats in the 1980s were a part of the so-called Third Wave of Vietnamese refugees who fled societal upheaval and repression in the aftermath of long decades of civil war. Their experience had many of the unfortunate elements that characterize the humanitarian crises in the Mediterranean today.

The Vietnamese refugee population can be seen in the global context of forced migration. It is estimated that 68.5 million persons worldwide have been *forcibly displaced* as a direct result of persecution, conflict, or generalized violence. The more recent increase in the numbers of forcibly displaced are related to the Syrian conflict (especially between 2012 and 2015), as well as to conflict in Iraq, Yemen and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Refugees number 25.4 million as part of the forcibly displaced populations. Of these 19.9 million are under the UNHCR's mandate. It is the developing regions of the world which host 85 per cent of the world's refugees under UNHCR's mandate, which amounts to approximately 16.9 million people. The least developed countries provide asylum to one-third of the global total (6.7 million refugees).

The forcibly displaced include 3.1 million asylum seekers, and 40 million Internally Displaced People (IDPs). Internally Displaced Persons are people or groups of people who have been forced to leave their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of, or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of

generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or man-made disasters, and who have not crossed an international border (UNHCR 2017; Ferris 2017).

In Finland it is now 40 years since the first Vietnamese groups arrived here to settle and to re-build their lives and that of their families. They were accepted from the midway camps in Southeast Asia (e.g. Panat Nhimkom in Thailand, Pulao Bidong in Malaysia and camps in Hong Kong). They came through the Orderly Departure Programme of the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees).

The Vietnamese 'boat refugees' were the first group to come to settle here under the so-called Quota system. As a Third Country of resettlement¹, Finland receives quota refugees annually. This arrangement is firmly established as one of its roles in the international regime of protection.

Since the mid 1980s, Finland's Third Country resettlement programme has brought annual refugee quotas from war-torn regions of the world. The Vietnamese preceded other quota refugee groups, such as the Somalis, Iranians, Kurds, Iraqis, Bosnians, to name a few of the early cohorts.

In 2017 in Finland there were 10,817 people of Vietnamese background. Persons of Vietnamese background are those whose both parents or the only known parent have been born in Vietnam. This figure includes those who came as refugees, as well as others who arrived under different migration classes such as workers, spouses, students, for example. 5603 individuals had Vietnamese citizenship in the same year. 9,872 individuals' mother tongue was Vietnamese in 2017 and those born in Vietnam numbered 8,012 (Statistics Finland).

The aim of the present study is to examine how the Vietnamese have fared in the 40 year period over which they have settled in Finland and have made it their second home society. The study is conducted under the auspices of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Immigrant Integration.

In examining the settlement and integration of the Vietnamese community, the study explores their endeavours to participate in the different spheres of life in Finland and to become full members of the society. Focus is directed to the key aspects of integration such as family life and its tasks in acculturation and socialization of youth, labour market participation, social relations and interaction,

and cultural adaptation. The interest here is in the processes and experiences of their adaptation to a second homeland, and in their present situation with respect to participating in the private and the public spheres of societal life. The study is based on qualitative data and seeks to bring to light aspects of integration which do not emerge from statistical data.

Finland's more recent ethnocultural diversity began with groups arriving in a strongly humanitarian context. Its diversity is quite distinct in that labour migration is not a strong feature of immigration policy. Labour migration however is currently being considered and debated as one potential solution to the more recent deficits in labour force. Previous to the inception of annual refugee quota reception in the latter 1980s, in-migration in Finland was very low for nearly half a century. On the other hand, there was high out-migration to Sweden in the 1960s and 1970s² when Finns left to find employment opportunities in neighbouring Sweden (see Korkiasaari and Söderling 2003). Thus the cultural environment met by the early refugee groups was not ethnoculturally diverse. This factor has to be taken into consideration when scrutinizing how ethnic and social relations have evolved over the recent decades. Although the foreign-born form but 6.8 % of the population³, they feature a wide diversity as to ethnocultural roots.

The geographic settlement of resettling refugees has been shaped by the principle that municipalities participate in resettling refugees on a voluntary basis. Those municipalities which receive refugees are responsible for the provision of orientation and reception services, such as for example, housing, social and health services, language instruction, education and labour market services. The State subsidizes the costs of service provision. In one sense, employment has been generated in the social services and in the resettlement service sector. This is more pronounced especially in the centres, including urban centres, where larger numbers have been received.

The pattern of spatial settlement across the country is uneven, guided by the geographic location of the municipalities willing to participate in the resettlement programme. This system materialized into a de facto residential 'dispersal' model of settlement (see Dunn (1998; Lanphier 1983). It should be noted that this model was not aimed at cultural *assimilation*. In the early years, the much smaller numbers in communities settled in outlying areas was a source of distress for some of its members. Yet in time, the social links and welcoming overtures of the locals and the

ready support of workers from the social settlement services became an important and lasting aspect of their early years.

Gradually the larger population centres and cities have drawn a many of those who were initially settled in smaller municipalities. Growing familiarity with the social conditions allowed and continues to allow individuals and families to make independent choices regarding their place of residence. Domestic migration is discussed later in Chapter 8 on Community.

Although this aspect has generally receded into the background, the Vietnamese, like other refugee groups from southern climates, faced a sharp transition in adjusting to the Nordic climate. It is interesting to recall some of the work written around the time of arrival of the early cohorts of Vietnamese. Beach and Ragwald's (1982) writing was entitled 'A New Wave on a Northern Shore: The Indochinese Refugees in Sweden', and Louis-Jacques Dorais, Lise Pilon-Le, Nguyen Huy (1987), writing of a Vietnamese community in Canada, entitled their book, 'Exile in a Cold Land'! The title of this report is selected in the same tradition.

Depending on their original circumstances, learning experiences for some of the individuals and families could also include adjustments requiring a shift from rural Vietnam to urban environments in Finland, or from traditional occupations to a 'modern' labour market structure. For a part of the community, learning Finnish and becoming fluent enough in order to communicate, was an outstanding challenge.

This study initiative was well received in the community. The project was seen as an indication of wider interest in the life of Finnish Vietnamese, their encounters in the 'new' environment, and how they have coped with settlement processes. Indeed the study was driven by community energies and synergies in the field.

The study also takes place at a strategic time. It garners the fruits of reflection as families, individuals and the community revisited the challenges encountered, as well as the experiences and knowledge accumulated within the 40 year period of settlement in Finnish society. Their longitudinal experience of settlement tells of an evolving course of adaptation in many areas in the public and private spheres of life.

The data collection also looked at how settlement services responded to the needs of settling persons and families. From a policy perspective, the information on their engagement with reception and settlement services can provide useful feedback on the settlement service system. This component of the data gives an opportunity to understand how integration-aimed service mechanisms were experienced and utilized. The insights gained from the community should be of use to service development and have relevance for an ethnoculturally evolving society like Finland.

2 Methodology

The study was conducted in 2017-2018, and is a qualitative investigation that is combined with a brief section on relevant statistics. The findings explore and open up aspects and processes which are not usually captured in statistical data. The settlement processes and outcomes under scrutiny have been evolving over three decades, which builds a strong longitudinal dimension into the findings.

Participants willingly contributed their settlement expertise to the study. Indeed a crucial role was played by the community and its representatives during the different phases of the study. The choice of the themes featuring in the data collection protocol benefitted from numerous insights contributed by persons possessing long experience of settlement and integration in Finland. Their input was also taken into consideration as the field work progressed, as is customary in a qualitative study.

The baseline for the study was to engage the Vietnamese as subjects rather than as objects of the research. Additionally, the investigator has studied the integration of Vietnamese population during the period of over 30 years in Finland.

It was sought to reach as wide a cross-section of the community as possible, within the scope of the study. The qualitative data reflects a broad range of settlement circumstances and life conditions, as well as different dimensions of the same phenomenon. Focus groups were chosen as the main form of field work. One advantage of the focus groups was that the total number of participants would be greater, thus widening the coverage of the field work.

The focus groups brought together individuals and families from a sizeable geographic catchment area. For example, the Pietarsaari focus group drew persons from distances of up to 70 kilometres away, in addition to those from the nearby

environs. Similarly, the Sipoo focus group included people from Porvoo and surrounding areas. Additionally the groups comprised individuals and families who had spent early settlement years in outlying municipalities in Finland.

The nature of the focus group was such that it was also a forum for participants to contemplate collectively, as well as to give personal feedback on topics. The opportunity for collective, focused discussion was appreciated as this tends to be rare. Participants in the same group were often not strangers to each other, and sometimes on very good social terms. On these occasions, the sessions were conducted in a 'safe' environment since people knew that they could voice their opinions freely.

The group sessions proved to be a chance to bring out long standing concerns. Some of them served as a setting for disclosing and discussing openly, sensitive or troubling matters which would otherwise remain as their own private troubles. Bringing issues out for common discussion is an essential step toward addressing problematic situations. It can pave the way toward efforts to improve conditions.

The concerns and insights brought out in focus groups indicated clearly that potential exists for the development of collaborative work between official service systems and the Vietnamese community/communities. There would be reason to stimulate the dialogue between the formal service system and all the refugee and immigrant communities of settlement service users.

The field data was also gathered in family and individual interviews. One group discussion was held with community 'elders'. 'Elders' refers to individuals who engage very fully with the wider community and are concerned with its wellbeing. These enjoy respect in their community.

The assistance of two able and experienced individuals was a valuable asset to the study. The field work benefitted from their solid roots in the community, and, not least, from the networks they were able to mobilize. This collaboration was central in bridging outwards into the wider Vietnamese community. The total number of participants was 149 persons. The field work took the form of 8 focus groups, as well as family, youth and individual interviews.

Focus groups were held in Pietarsaari, Tampere, Helsinki (2), Sipoo, Turku (Varissuo), Littoinen, and Lieto.

The logistics for the field work were taken as a grass roots responsibility in the community. Some volunteered their own homes as focus group venues. Two hours was the scheduled time for the sessions but these tended to extend over this scheduled period. Subjects knew that the study was part of a Public Sector effort to explore the experiences and challenges related to settlement.

Statistics

Appendix 1 presents statistics on various aspects of settlement and integration.

A comprehensive statistical profile of the current life conditions of the Finnish Vietnamese was not within the scope of the study. Statistical information on themes of relevance to this study is available out of main institutions such as The Social Insurance Institution of Finland (KELA) and the National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL). However, their registry data base does not include information on foreign background (Koponen and Jokela 2015). The collection and analysis of more extensive statistical data on the Vietnamese population would call for a separate study.

3 The context of settlement

Finland as a ‘new gateway’

The refugee settlement programme introduced new features of multi-ethnicity and multiculturalism into the society. The Vietnamese were a very visible minority in the more homogeneous population. Their settlement processes run close to the majority society’s gradual accommodation to visible ethnic diversity in the population.

Significant in-migration has not been a feature of Finland’s recent history, unlike in the so-called ‘old gateways’, a term coined to refer to traditional immigrant-receiving countries and cities, such as New York, for example (Waters and Jimenez (2005). In older gateways, immigration and immigrant minorities have had time to become a familiar and integral feature of the society. A larger percentage of the population is of immigrant background. ‘New gateway’ countries include, for example, Southern European countries such as Italy and Spain which were formerly countries of emigration, and now are destination countries for asylum seekers and migrants. Finland is among these, having had few non-European immigrants before the 1990s (Alghasi, Eriksen and Ghorashi, 2009).

Humanitarianism is uppermost in refugee reception, and this was very much the case with the Vietnamese in Finland. The plight of the ‘boat people’ aroused the sensitivities and sympathies of the receiving population. At the same time social services and the Public Sector institutions had to make adjustments to cater for resettling groups. In countries of refugee and immigrant reception, there is also a need for confronting questions of integration and inclusion that require adjustments or even structural change in existing practices or policies in order to enable newcomers to participate fully and as fully empowered members in key

areas of social life. Structural change seeks to address the root causes of problems which hinder access to newer groups and citizens.

New gateways ideally initiate in a timely way, structural measures and action to foster parity and openness of institutions to more recently arrived new members of the society. This is the underlying principle of 'multiculturalism'. Multiculturalism is often thought of as a term to describe the characteristic of ethnocultural diversity in a society. However the *multicultural model* of integration, which has been adopted also in Finland, refers to the active measures in the society to bring about the inclusion of refugee and immigrant groups so that they have opportunities to function fully in mainstream society. Laissez-faire models and approaches to migrant incorporation skirt such action.

The economic climate affects immigration and integration. It is well known that in times of economic prosperity, immigration is more acceptable by the main population, while in times of economic change or downturn, immigration becomes the easy mantra of populism. Populist manipulation of immigration and ethnic diversity issues directly affects the quality of integration and social relations, should no measures be taken to contain it. When immigration is politicized, immigrants find themselves in a vulnerable position in their own society. Fortunately, unlike the experiences of some of the later groups, Vietnamese did not meet populism-related domestic tensions at the time they arrived for resettlement in Finland. On the contrary, there was a high point in the national humanitarian response.

Expressing gratitude

Vietnamese individuals and the community do not fail to express their feeling of indebtedness to Finland for the humanitarian protection extended, and by extension, for the humanitarian principles used in selection procedures at the time. The quotas included larger families, some with physical disabilities and 'long stayers' in the camp. The refugees felt welcome to rebuild their lives in the new home society.

Finland's culture might not be centred on family ties to the same degree as in Vietnamese families. As one participant observed:

'Let me comment that Finns might not seem to put such strong weight on family bonds as we Vietnamese do. Yet Finland extends help to others, and to those in developing countries. They have great humanitarianism – taking in refugees, providing them with mother-tongue teaching'

Vietnamese were ready to resettle in Finland, even though the country and society were not at all familiar to them. One individual voiced the sentiments of others, saying that

'We Vietnamese did not bring demands to our country of settlement. We came from Vietnam where basic needs are more modest than in Finland. In Finland there is good social support, fine public services and children can all benefit from schooling. We are grateful to Finland. Other groups who came later met different conditions, for many different reasons.'

Resettlement goals

Although the Vietnamese came from a country reeling from decades of war and societal turmoil, they still had clear personal goals and tasks to fulfil. These were for the most part:

- Finding employment and earning a livelihood
- Looking after the welfare of their distant extended families
- Working to build a good future for their children by fulfilling the responsibility for their socialization and future in the new environment

Individuals among them also wished:

- to pursue studies or train further
- to be able to use competencies and acquired expertise in the new society (referring to those arriving with a strong educational background)

The goals of the refugees reflected their values and life hopes, as well as the responsibilities to be honoured toward their families in Finland as well as in Vietnam. Refugees' and migrants' goals are a motivating force in settlement. Nevertheless, the rate at which settlement and integration proceed depends not entirely on their individual characteristics and strengths, but also on the opportunity structure in the new home society and how they might link into it.

Attitudes in the main population are important, as well as how the official policies of openness work in practice, especially in the key arena of employment. Practices on the ground have far reaching impact on the quality of integration and on the life of refugees and immigrants in the society of resettlement.

Refugee reception and the sphere of the welfare State

The Finnish welfare state plays a primary role in refugee and immigrant integration. The services that target the needs of quota refugee groups work in tandem with the main service provision system. The responsibility for refugee reception and settlement is formally in the province of the State, with non-State organizations contributing in different roles. These include, for example, the Red Cross and the churches.

In the early phase, Vietnamese like other quota groups, encountered the wide service response, components of which have been shaped to meet their initial needs in health, social services, language training, education and labour market services. At the present time, they interface with the social welfare system as 'ordinary' citizens, but their perspectives tell of wider reference frames. The following are some comments from the focus groups:

'Education is good, and free, as are services.'

'The government uses the tax revenues for the benefit of citizens. You can see where your tax money goes.'

'We are proud to be able to work, pay taxes and honour the duties of citizenship'

This manifested strong trust in how Government administers its duties to citizens. The welfare state institutions, guarantees and provisions ensure social security and services universally, a sharp contrast to the conditions of precariousness previously experienced by many. In addition to the prolonged distress of war conditions in Vietnam, many of the individuals and families had had lengthy stays in refugee camps – some up to seven years awaiting resettlement to a third country. While rights might sometimes be taken for granted, for the Vietnamese who come from a very residual system, appreciation of the arrangements in their second homeland is staunch.

The vulnerable

The provisions that a society makes for its more vulnerable members speaks of its standards of public responsibility. Those families with a disabled member can tell of this. The father of a disabled son, who arrived as a child and is now a grown man, said:

'The care for the disabled is so fine. The disabled person is arranged different types of support, schooling, and is treated equally. Compared with in other countries, the disabled live a happy life.'

Another type vulnerability is described:

'My wife did not succeed in learning Finnish. She has had medical problems also, but has received support and participates in employment programmes [Government subsidized employment programmes].'

A single mother of 3 children has been on disability benefits for many years. She relates how her children can go to school, and are growing up well. The health care services have made a big difference in her life. Persons in vulnerable situations interface with the safety net, and the human face of social welfare. Their experience has been positive and earns their warm praise. The welfare provisions have improved the lives and life quality of the disabled individuals, and indirectly the lives of their families.

In one family, the wife has had little schooling. She has attended several language courses but still does not know Finnish well. She fell sick some years ago, but received medical treatment, sickness benefit, and other support. In another family, the wife was diagnosed with cancer. The family will always remember how she was able to be treated in time.

The welfare state features universal coverage extending to all citizens, entitling them, as its members, to the full range of social welfare, social security and services. In addition to providing social security, the welfare state is a mechanism that is *inclusive* of all members in the society. This aspect is well demonstrated in the cases described above.

4 Priorities in settlement

Cultural dimensions – the traditional extended family model

'We came from a land of war and privation. Most of us went to work straight away in order to earn money for putting our lives together again, and for looking after our family and extended family.'

'Finland is a good country with a very fine education system, everyone can get to study. We did not pursue this because we had other overriding concerns at the time.'

'We couldn't afford dreams at the time, only to get settled and to take any kind of work to help our families [in Vietnam].'

As can be seen from the above quotations, the Vietnamese settlement process has been influenced by the importance attached to responsibility for extended family welfare. Individuals' duties embrace the multigenerational extended family unit in addition to their own immediate nuclear family. Members honour their responsibility for the welfare of elderly parents especially, and for that of siblings and other relatives.

Due to the dire conditions in the homeland during the war and in the long aftermath, the assistance from adult children or relatives abroad has been critical to the welfare and survival of those in the homeland. Refugees who resettled in other countries managed, and often still manage their household economies with the welfare of the wider family in mind. The intervening geographic distance throws up

practical challenges but does not weaken family bonds and roles of responsibility. Thus the struggle of relatives in precarious conditions has been alleviated over distance in the extended families.

In Vietnam, where the formal public system of welfare is residual⁴, the critical role in family welfare and wellbeing resided with the extended family. At present Finnish Vietnamese carry their responsibilities for the care of elderly parents in cooperation with the family in Vietnam. In the meantime, the circumstances of the households of many of the refugees' families in Vietnam have become more settled, meaning that there might be less or no need of assistance from overseas relatives. However, the symbolic gestures of assistance are valued and honoured.

Collective responsibility for welfare is also manifest when important and long term help and support are rendered over 'family' lines. Close circles and friends who are not necessarily of the same family relation, render support well over family lines. The collective contribution of individuals amounts to concerted working toward wellbeing, and has been honed to make caring possible over distance and separation. The extended family and close friendship circles both in Vietnam and in Finland all contribute in tangible and intangible ways to promote caring, welfare and wellbeing. The extended family's central role in caring comprehensively for its members remains extant even after decades of settlement in Finland.

Work and remittances

'In the beginning all of us refugees had to assist our families in Vietnam. That is why employment was more important than studying.'

For the Vietnamese gainful employment had put them in a position to send remittances back to those in the homeland. Other refugee groups hold similar human priorities as those demonstrated among the Vietnamese. This is common among groups coming in the context of refugeedom from homelands where conditions have deteriorated.

Maimbo and Ratha (2005) point out that remittances are recognised on a global scale as a pivotal mechanism for reducing the inequality between countries. The

authors emphasize the importance of remittances to relatives and families in poor and low income countries which generally have weak public services. It provides basic welfare and security to those in the homeland⁵. Remittances to family in the homeland have been used to meet costs of sickness, basic needs, schooling and shelter.

The data here showed that notwithstanding their taxing circumstances, individuals in unemployment generally do not relinquish their traditional roles which are intertwined with collective family values. Thrift and income-stretching are standard strategies for managing in scarcity.

The practical quality of living – back to basics

The subjects assessed their overall impressions at this stage. For the majority, the many pluses outweigh the minuses. Yet in looking back, the difficult patches of integration surface. These experiences are looked at from a closer perspective in later sections of the study. They comprise another aspect of the settling process.

The subject described how settling in a new society has been a very intensive learning undertaking. It required coming to grips with a new language, culture, and a shift of living environment which called for different livelihood skills. Settling in and becoming integrated is also the fruit of endurance. It entailed finding new friends, working simultaneously toward more immediate social and family goals, as well as long term priorities relating to basic needs across the extended family. Individuals were finding their place in Finnish society. They had come to stay. Not least, the making of new friendships shaped the experiences that build settlement.

Given the wide cross section of families' socioeconomic and education backgrounds, the majority of re-settled Vietnamese reported feeling satisfied with how their lives have taken shape, and with their current conditions, even though every family would have encountered its own problems and difficult challenges in the course of settlement. Subjects readily mentioned positive facets such as the economic stability attained in many households, the safety and security in the society, as well as services that work well. The following section features

an abundance of quotations. These have been included in order to retain the spontaneous quality of the responses.

'We manage all right economically and the security we have is important. The services are fine. Most of us are happy here although in every family there must be some problems and challenges.'

Their confidence is inspired by the fact that the peace and safety in their new home society is grounded on citizens' honouring and abiding by the law. In the focus groups, some of the participants felt that their families were doing very well. They stated that:

'The quality of life is good when society offers opportunities to progress and build a good life.'

'We are contented when thinking about life in other countries. Finland is a safe country and life is safe.'

'Finland is a peaceful and safe country. Services are good. People can enjoy their life and do not need to live under great stress.'

'Services are good and there is work [jobs].'

On comparing with the previous situation in Vietnam, one subject wanted to point out that regardless of their socioeconomic situation, all children are entitled to education and can grow up to be independent.

'Even children of poor families can complete higher education and gain qualifications. The education system is excellent. Were we in Vietnam our children might not have been able to complete schooling. They most likely would have earned just the minimum.'

'The school system is marvellous. Children are arranged transportation by taxi, even through high school!'

One of the participants brought us right 'back to basics':

'Schooling is good, and free. Services work, as well as the welfare net. People do not die of hunger.'

In the focus groups, in general, when participants got together they developed lively discussions around the topics, and some of the quotations reflect the processes of revisiting, rethinking and clarifying perspectives on their integration experience. Positive statements from persons in fortunate circumstances referred to, e.g., the laws, social services, schooling, health care and housing.

Socioeconomic categories set out below are indicative of the diverse circumstances among the households:

- those in difficult circumstances. The course of integration is derailed for various reasons. These are also looked at in Chapter 6 under the discussion of those on the labour market margins
- those of modest means, encountering problems, otherwise not in easy circumstances, and managing one way or another – thrift as an imperative
- Those clustered in the middle of the continuum - managing and 'in control' of their life circumstances. They live 'comfortably', the exercise of thrift being important.
- those who have done well and have achieved a solid standard of living, and feel quite positive. In such cases the employment situation is good (including some successful entrepreneurs), family relations are in order, and if their children's schooling is progressing well, there is a feeling of achievement.

The fundamentals of managing – initiative, an enterprising disposition, contacts and links with Finnish people, being ‘active’

Some participants wished to make a reminder that initiative and readiness to take up opportunities have always had a strong effect on how well newcomers would get along and how efforts to become established would eventually bear fruit. These emphasized that even though living conditions are all right, those making their life in Finland would have to be willing and ready to take up such opportunities that arise. They would need to reach out and form social relations with others, especially with the main population/Finns.

‘The society values ‘equality’ and the socio-economic differences are not large. However getting ahead still calls for our effort and activity. And we need to work on language skill if we mean to make a go of things.’

‘Basic pay is good, and allows people to live a relatively happy life, but we cannot take things for granted.’

‘Still, although there are opportunities in the society, we ourselves are the ones who have to take initiative and go after them. We need to make contacts with other people, especially in the main population. Our effort and activity is the key, for sure. We still need to work on language skills, no matter what our circumstances are like. We need an active and positive attitude.’

Thrift

One pivotal principle for managing in settlement has been to practice thrift in a consistent way. Thrift has been, and is a common habit among the refugees. In this respect, their ways might differ from the contemporary life styles around them. Participants explained that the fact that their households manage economically, is due in large measure, to their thrift, or in other words, to how they spend their money! For example, food need not cost a lot if ready-made food items in the groceries are avoided, and if they do not frequent restaurants. Participants

described that their custom is to spend carefully, save, and keep on working hard and up to 12 hours a day when necessary.

Thrift takes a philosophical turn when subjects explain that, 'it depends on our own attitude whether we feel needy or whether we feel content with what we have'. Another family of modest income said, 'We always assist our relatives. This all depends on how we ourselves can tighten our budget in order to do this'. A family in comfortable circumstances explained that, 'Our economic situation is good, because we both have steady work and manage on the combined income. We have not got large loans and are careful not get into any serious debt'.

An example of modest means is the family which is usually able to manage on their income, but not always. Their income is very modest. One spouse earns but the other is on sickness benefits. These funds can usually cover their day-to-day expenses, but there is nothing extra for travel, for instance, or to have entertainment otherwise. The working spouse would like to have extra work, but it is not available. They have assisted their family members (grandmother, mother) in Vietnam, and for this they simply cut down on spending.

Challenges and problems

Language

Language has been a major hurdle for many of the Vietnamese. Learning Finnish has been difficult for them due to weak schooling and educational background. The backdrop of their predicament can be linked to civil war conditions, infrastructural break-down in the society and general disruption of 'normal' life over decades. However, the availability of blue collar employment at the time of their resettlement in the late 1980s mitigated this to a large extent as they were able to find gainful employment at that time.

'Learning Finnish presents a big problem, because our schooling background is weak. However, anyway, after the introduction courses we got to work immediately. Even though our language skill was low, we managed, since manual work did not require such strong language skills.'

The language instruction during the initial years of orientation was a beneficial preparation for the labour market, even though many continued to have difficulties in communicating due to their weak starting line. Participants recalled that even after the orientation period, they needed to be persistent in trying to learn and to work at strengthening their Finnish in order to be able to communicate. This would have been possible, especially in those cases where Finnish language instruction came to be offered by employers. Other organizations by this time were also offering language instruction.

Individuals would have been able to avail themselves of these opportunities, provided that the time and energies could be found. For many, family responsibilities and working life tended to shift language concerns further along. In addition to rebuilding their lives and making a home, the problems they shouldered were economic – how to alleviate the situation of relatives in straits in the homeland.

The problems with weak language skill

Non-proficiency in language is seen as having been, for some, the main factor behind communication problems breeding misunderstanding and awkward sessions with authorities. In spite of the availability of interpreters, parents' communication with teachers, for example, could be inadequate and lead to misunderstanding. Some parents had difficult and unpleasant experiences of not managing to control or deal effectively with their children's issues. Individuals remembered incidents of misunderstandings that remained unresolved and thus are still troubling because of the confusing situations that they were unable to unravel at the time.

The second generation acquires language skill in school, and can move onto a different footing from their parents. The risk existed that they would go their own ways prematurely in the new environment, were there not accord and harmony between youth's perspectives and parents' understandings and wishes. When there are problems with socialization of youth it is difficult to pass on the traditional values and culture-based mores which have functioned as the bedrock of youth development and socialization in the homeland culture.

Difference between the Finnish language skill of parents and their children can put parents at a disadvantage and their children in difficult positions and roles. Family relations are discussed further in Chapter 7.

Prejudice and discriminatory behaviour

The subjects chose not to dwell in much detail on unpleasant experiences, especially in the group situation. Negative experience is often dealt with by the Vietnamese in the more private spheres of family and social life. It is not customary to discuss problems in public. However encounters with racism, prejudice and discrimination were experienced as part of settlement and these evoke bleak memories. Settlement has not been an easy path. Prejudice in social life is discussed in Social Interaction Chapter 5.

Different experiences of racist behaviour in the public sphere include the following:

- work place behaviour toward them could be insulting or deliberately offensive. These took the form of remarks and insinuations – sometimes sustained for a long time (in early phase of settlement). Problems of this nature were also straightened out in the work place itself
- perceived differential treatment in workplaces or in interface with services and officials. At times some sensed that their requests to officials or at the workplace were not taken seriously, not given proper attention, or simply disregarded
- overt racism/disparaging comments on the streets in early times. See Kosonen (2008) on the significance of perceived discrimination, especially during childhood and adolescence on psychological wellbeing and even in the long term, on sociocultural adaptation as adults.

It appears that, on balance, the interface with open-minded and welcoming Finns over time has counteracted the negative aspects. In speaking of racism, the subjects do it against the context of other rewarding social interaction that they have experienced.

Although this is not a study of majority attitudes, it is probably safe to say that gradual accommodation and interaction with the Vietnamese has led to greater mutual understanding, which has enhanced intercultural and interethnic relations with this new minority. It might be said that in this way they have become part of the still evolving multicultural society, which is no mean achievement for both sides!

5 Social interaction

The importance of social interaction

'Our relationship with relatives is always close, but we also have many friends with whom we keep in touch regularly. Relatives and friends are the foundation in our life. They put new heart into our family life'

Many of the participants kept in touch and met with friends. They enjoy the company of Vietnamese as well as of Finnish circles. Within the wider entity, individuals and families congregate together with those with whom they feel a kindred spirit. The community as a whole features internal diversity as to social and socioeconomic background. Because of the collective cultural ways of Vietnamese, many tend to spend a fair amount of time in company. A few have more Finnish friends than Vietnamese. In some of the families, Finnish friendships began from the start with the Friend Family Programme organized by the Finnish Red Cross. At this time, in many cases, Finnish friends have come to be looked upon as 'family'.

At any rate, for the majority, the pleasure of being with others is an important factor in the settlement process. Another individual expressed it by saying that:

'For us, the nearness and camaraderie of relatives and friends is very important. For us it means a feeling safety and belonging.'

One subject's own observation was that those who have good Finnish friends adapt better to the society, and that individuals without Finnish friends would adapt less easily. This is no superficial impression. One of the Finnish informants of the study was firmly of the opinion that closer interaction and interface of immigrants with a cross section of Finns would open up new understandings on both sides, not to

mention solid connections which could take integration forward. Some settling persons come in little contact with majority society members, for various reasons such as language skill level, or unfamiliarity with civil society centres of activity. The importance of fostering interaction with majority society is weighty as it relates also to building mutual respect and trust – pathways to inclusion in society.

Social networks can be understood as mutual helping mechanisms upon which members can rely when, and whenever, they are in need of some type of assistance. Helping in close circles can be tangible or, equally valuable, intangible. When relations are close, they are akin to family bonds, and helping responses can be unconditional, unlike in the case of more formally sought help. This is a mechanism commonly observed in the community. Support in circles can bring security.

The Vietnamese community comes from a society in which the 'informal safety net' plays a critical role in welfare and wellbeing. As mentioned earlier, the State safety net is at 'residual' level, meaning that the basic level of welfare response is nominal. Individuals are accustomed to generating their own informal 'safety net' to meet not only contingencies, but also routine basic needs. The family and social networks function also in the capacity of a safety net for fending off everyday risks and difficulties. In this way also, vibrant networks facilitate settlement and integration processes for new groups.

The social networks of the Vietnamese, who have been settling longer, have come with time to extend over the ethnocultural boundaries. In the case of newer groups, the close association with their own fellow countrymen and women can be misread as a conscious desire to 'keep apart'. Unfortunately, this would be to underestimate the complexity of ethnocultural adaptation processes in the society. *Adaptation processes can be taking place quietly and powerfully in less obvious fashion.*

Interaction with Finns, in the neighbourhood and workplaces

'We do not want to disturb the Finns' was a way of explaining that there was respect for social 'space'. It also told that the new group was not familiar at the time with the local 'codes' for social behaviour. Possibly the experience of the Vietnamese with other cultural backgrounds in their homeland (France, China, USA) had sensitized them to intercultural situations.

The relations in neighbourhoods naturally vary widely, from friendships and unflinching cordiality, to 'minding one's own business'. Some have flourishing camaraderie with their neighbours which makes for very rewarding relations on both sides. Some accept it when the neighbours do not seem to wish contact or to be in neighbourly relations. The overtures made by Finns count considerably.

At times attitudes have been upsetting. The newcomers felt that resentment or envy might have arisen when some people could not understand why and how they came to afford to buy a car or their own apartment or to be managing well financially. Hence the emphasis placed by the Vietnamese on their habits of thrift. At workplaces friction could be caused when other workers become unsettled should the newcomer show much industry and diligence on the job. Newcomers face this reaction commonly. The local work force feels threatened when new groups or migrant groups come in to work alongside them.

However, the discussion of social interaction would not be balanced if the workplace arena of interaction were not to be mentioned in a positive light. For most persons settling in a new country, employment makes singular impact on integration. It is a pathway into the spheres of valuable activity and a way of joining in, and interacting directly with the mainstream population in tangible roles. The workplace is also one of the most fertile environments for picking up language and learning to understand the social environment.

Contact with Vietnam and visiting

The Vietnamese live in many countries abroad, but they remain part of the larger family and the bonds with those in the homeland remain firm. The deterioration of relations is not an ideal situation. It can take place, for instance, if the family member abroad is in unfortunate circumstances and does not wish to keep contact or to disclose her/his situation. This is a source of much sadness for the family in Vietnam, particularly for the elders.

The Vietnamese in Finland travel to visit their family, and if they can afford it, they also visit in the 'diaspora', keeping in touch with those abroad in other countries. As mentioned earlier, thrift and income are essential to being able to travel. Some cannot afford it. There are also individuals who do not wish to visit Vietnam. They might bear the weight of previous experiences in the homeland. For others, the society they left is no more. It is worse when even their friends might no longer be the same because of the hardships they have gone through.

At this time, the Vietnamese need not suffer from isolation, since the community linkages have developed. Moreover the families who came in the late 1980s have evolved to become extended families themselves. Social as well as family networking is characterized and reinforced by interdependence in their circles. There is nevertheless, regret that the younger generations who grow up in Finland might not learn to appreciate the values of the traditional family system that has been the bedrock of their culture.

Transnational families

Migration and settlement in places far away from the homeland has its emotional and social costs of separation. In the three decades since the first groups arrived, this problem has been significantly assuaged by the development in electronic communication systems. Affordable and rapid communication puts a different complexion on how individuals manage and cope with their affairs over distance. In one sense, they occupy a common space of communication between two fields of activity – that in Finland and that of the homeland.

The extended family can be understood as an example of transnationalism extending between Finland and Vietnam. It might also straddle the homeland and the countries of settlement (Finland, USA or Australia, for example). From a theoretical perspective, 3 types of transnational activity are usually identified:

- economic (e.g., business, trade, entrepreneurs utilizing their contacts across borders)
- political (e.g., building political base of power in migrant sending or receiving countries)
- socio-cultural activities (e.g. strengthening and using interpersonal ties, close circles in both countries). See Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt (1999).

The Vietnamese extended family can be seen as a transnational system of the third socio-cultural type. It is a vehicle for keeping interpersonal ties vibrant. The family linkages in this transnational system of contact facilitate ongoing activity to ensure wellbeing of wider family in Vietnam. The kin at the different family nodes in different countries all participate in this purposeful transnational activity.

6 Employment

The reception and resettlement of the Vietnamese refugees took place at a relatively fortunate time for employment. The economy was growing in the 1980s. The electronics industry had started to its expansion. The arrival of the Vietnamese groups took place mainly before the Finnish economy went into a depression in the early 1990s when the unemployment rate rose to a peak of 18 percent.

Finding employment is of utmost importance to persons settling into a new country – whether they arrive as refugees or immigrants. Employment has far-reaching implications for integration. Moreover for the individual, being employed is one of the hallmarks of having a valued role and being able to contribute to the society of settlement (Valtonen 2015). Throughout history, in different countries, employment and membership in the society often overlapped.

Employment and labour market insertion are receiving greater emphasis in the reception and orientation services for refugees and other immigrants (Sarvimäki 2017). This is partly in response to work force deficits in prominent areas of the labour market. The concerns of the Vietnamese over obtaining employment is one that is reflected across all immigrant groups.

Joblessness or chronic joblessness of an immigrant has serious ramifications, because of the formidable challenge of becoming integrated and part of the society from a peripheral and status-less position. *Social support and state security alleviate want, but are not mechanisms of insertion.*

The Vietnamese in the labour market

The education profile of the early Vietnamese cohorts ranged over the whole scale, from basic schooling up to university level. Those with a background of basic or secondary education level are a clear majority. In the community are also those who had completed high school, but because of the conditions at the time, were not able to pursue further education toward professional or vocational goals. In different circumstances, they would have been able to utilize to advantage their best years for study and training. There were also years spent in the refugee camps. Thus the community comprises also persons who had completed up to high school, but lacked opportunities to develop further livelihood paths. A small minority in the community had professional qualifications and experience which were in teaching, nursing and book-keeping, for example.

It should be noted that Finland's selection processes at the time gave weight to humanitarian aspects as opposed to education or employability. In a sense, we might say that our Finnish Vietnamese community represents a cross-section of the society during the period when they had to leave their homeland.

As mentioned earlier, due to employment availability at the time, a large part of first generation was able to move directly into working life after the period of orientation and language instruction. This was a characteristic of the greater part of those Vietnamese refugee cohorts arriving the late 1980s, and it is quite distinct. The Somali and Iraqi groups who subsequently were resettled, have not had this positive pattern of settlement since their labour market entry was very difficult.

The Vietnamese were able to join the labour market primarily at blue collar level. Their employment was found, for example, in the electronics industry, metal work, assembly at factory floor level, in cleaning and laundry work, food processing, warehouse work, and painting. They were employed in the service sector, for example, in cooking and as kitchen assistants. Some found their way into entrepreneurship, in the restaurant business, to which several turned at some point in their working life in Finland. Enterprises include the following types: bicycle shop, construction firm, automobile company, cleaning enterprise, industrial laundry.

Vietnamese women's employment was a high point in early resettlement. It was very empowering for many of the women to have 'earning' power, and in particular, for those with a lower level of education who otherwise would not have had this type of chance in Vietnam. Women's ready participation in the labour market sprang in large part from the responsibilities they had held in prolonged wartime conditions, as well as from household mores. They were already accustomed to make use of opportunities to earn in order to supplement family and household income in the informal and formal sectors.

Working philosophies

The subjects have pointed out that their approach at work is one of industry, being hard working and always ready to learn and to try. The nature of the work might be 'simple' since their education is not strong. Working, however, is also vital for being able to assist their relatives, and this is reward in itself. It was estimated informally that two thirds of the original cohorts still assist their kin.

'We try to learn, to be industrious and positive. We needed to demonstrate that Vietnamese are good workers. It takes perseverance.'

When asked if they were able to use their previous work experience from Vietnam, some of the practical skills were mentioned, such as repairing machines. It is clear nonetheless, that the activities of earning a livelihood in the homeland must have required the same qualities and dispositions of perseverance which they bring to the Finnish labour market. This type of asset they were able to transport into the local labour market.

Even though Finnish language skill was limited when they started working, most were able to improve through practice in work places. Very few sought to take additional classes formally, but the workplace interface and interaction environment took the form of 'immersion' and on-site learning. Subjects told that they had continued to learn Finnish in the workplace through regular practice.

Long, continuous employment

A fair number of individuals have enjoyed long, continuous employment despite ups and down in the labour market sectors in which they are employed. Such stable, long term employment relations have allowed families to build a satisfactory household economy, especially if both spouses were fortunately placed. Their work records start from the time they moved from the orientation phase into the labour market, and span up to 40 years. Looking back on this achievement, their reflections on the rough times have mellowed. At times the workplace atmosphere was not easy if they were among those selected to continue after downscaling of the work force. Through weathering the fluctuations and reverses, their tenacity paid off. The security which they earned in employment is a 'thick' dimension of full membership in the society.

Individuals have also had very positive experiences of workplaces where they have been, and are, well treated. Some workplaces have a good atmosphere and spirit, with workmates friendly and helpful. In such places, the employees continue to develop and keep on learning. This favourable/ideal situation is reflected clearly in family wellbeing and positive attitudes.

There are larger and smaller enterprises where 'difference' has not been a handicap in principle or in practice. Workplaces were described positively and warmly. The knowledge and experience gained from the workplace experience, and not least, contacts and advice, have been valuable even when individuals branch out into their own enterprise.

The experiences at work have also been trying. Negative experiences were, for example, perceived prejudice, resentment, differential treatment, disparaging remarks, being passed over, and envy toward them if they were doing well. Depending on the circumstances, some have changed or been able to change their workplaces. It appears that, for the most part, these troubling phases have had to be handled and coped with by newcomers themselves, through an attitude of 'taking things in their stride'. As was remarked during interviews:

'Finns have had their prejudice about us, but because of our hard working habits and with the passage of time, all this is behind. We try to speak and learn the language more, because by speaking one makes contacts and has interaction.'

It is noticeable that 'voice' is not much used by Vietnamese to protest in problem situations. Individuals usually do not lodge formal complaints and probably do not feel themselves to be a position to do so.

Traditional occupations in Vietnam

Some of the refugee adults had to manage the transition to a modern economy from traditional livelihoods in agriculture and farming, and fishing. The participants in the study reported also other occupations in Vietnam: dressmaking and sewing; embroidery; makeup and hairdressing, gardening, waitressing, student, construction, sales (sales persons), small and micro enterprise.

The overriding priority in settlement was on working, and there was willingness to take available employment. One subject reported that, because her father's Finnish was not good at the time, and even though he had a background of education, he took any type of available work. This was not unusual. Individuals wished to have work, which would give a foothold in the labour market. This necessity of having to take any available work opportunities has led to the development of 'all rounders' – individuals who have taken on varied work opportunities out of necessity and/or because of an enterprising approach to settlement.

Among the Vietnamese, as in immigrant groups in general, individuals have had to build work histories that span different areas of employment, primary and secondary labour market sectors, different labour market cultures and sometimes even the formal/informal economic sectors.

Employment in the younger generations: 1½, second and third

The so-called 1½ generation are those who were born in Vietnam but came at an early age to Finland. They were able to benefit from the school and education system in Finland. At times the new language posed a stiff challenge but if they overcame this, they could proceed with schooling and further education in the local system – a considerably stronger advantage in the employment market. One example is provided by the subject who reported as follows:

'I completed basic and high school here, graduating in 1996. Since my teenage years I have been working and have never been without work for any lengthy period. This includes summer work, and short term jobs in many different firms. Now I am in practical nursing and have a steady job. I work in the public sector, because I feel that the public sector handles things in a straightforward way, and is under State supervision. The municipalities have to follow the laws and policies.'

The 1½, second and also representatives of the third generation exhibit a wider cross section of occupations than that of their parents. This is to be expected in immigrant groups in general. The 1½ and second generations are often better equipped for the labour market and possibly more easily employable, having had time to acquire language and qualifications in the local education system. On the time scale, moreover, since they arrived at a younger age, the 1½ generation has the opportunity, similar to native youth, to choose to pursue career change by returning to studies.

'When we came to Finland, my parents always encouraged us to get a good education. Each of us needed to have a qualification which would let us seek a job in Finland. Finland offers the opportunity to study towards a basic qualification or to seek vocational education, or to study for a profession if one is able to, or if it is possible. Our family's goal was to get into working life.'

Individuals who came as children to Finland could pursue vocational education into specialized areas. For these, the language problem might still linger into further education, should they have had fewer years of basic schooling in Finland. Requests for occupation-related language training have been made over the years from immigrants in specialized areas.

The younger generations have joined the service sector at different skill levels. Blue collar occupations are in, for example, automotive technology, car sales and painting, machinist work, textile care, welding, bakery work.

Others can be found in service sectors, including employment services. Many have gone into the profession of practical nursing – a helping profession in the social and health field⁶. Some of the professional areas of the younger generation of Vietnamese are in data consultancy, medicine, pharmacy, nursing, engineering, economics, and dentistry.

The universal education system has been one of the most important factors facilitating social mobility. A crucial factor is also parental encouragement and support for their childrens' schooling and educational attainment. Young people are at a disadvantage when their parents are unemployed chronically or for long periods. Parents would lack insider knowledge of the dynamics of the labour market and, in practice, be in a much weaker position to guide and support their children's education efforts.

Entrepreneurial activity is developed in various areas. Restaurants (small and larger), cleaning companies and commercial gardening are a few examples. A successful family business means self-employment, but it can also be a source of employment for spouses, first generation parents, siblings as well as Finnish workers. A participant said that life for their family was now happy. The fact that they worked twice as hard was all right, as long as they bore in mind who they were and from where they have come.

The nature of some personal choices

A few individuals were nostalgic about their former fishing occupation. One person said that he had dreamt of continuing as a fisherman in the new society, but this was not possible since the fishing industry was not going strong. Moreover fishing trips lasted months, in cold and lonely conditions. Another subject reflected on his former fishing occupation and the turns his livelihood had taken. His stay in the refugee camp had been a long one. On completion of the orientation courses he went into metal work and has remained in in factory work ever since. With low

schooling level, he was not able to pursue study or training. Moreover in the early phase of settlement, he was missing his family and needed to work to support his child.

Some women had considerable expertise and experience in dressmaking and sewing in Vietnam, and did not have equivalent openings or opportunities in Finland. They turned to other types of work. Other individuals found they could not manage to learn the language and ended up having very tenuous links with working life. Various employment programmes offered occasional work periods.

Depending on their circumstances, households on minimal income could feature low or intermittent income, sickness/disability benefits, various spells of labour market training and Government subsidized employment programmes. The father of one family whose income consisted of labour market support, Old age pension, and children's student allowance, stated that it was primarily a matter of how they managed their spending.

Educated and qualified in Vietnam

Individuals who came with professional qualifications and experience from Vietnam were few. In the local labour market these are difficult to locate, as they are not in their original occupations. One area in which it was possible to use professional training from Vietnam has been in accountancy/book keeping. The studies and training attained by some of the individuals with solid school grounding in Vietnam led to their attaining qualifications in Finland in carpentry, cabinetmaking, and the goldsmith trade, for example.

Due to the pressure of having to earn, individuals with high school and even professional training went into various sectors. Some worked and continue to work for the reception and orientation services, as hourly paid interpreters and hourly paid mother tongue teachers in schools⁷. The electronics industry, cleaning, and eventually practical nursing are some of the areas where this group found work. They would have been available for and willing to work in refugee and immigrant reception and orientation jobs in the municipalities. Their language skills, and valuable cultural and settlement experience would have been an asset to the field.

However this main arena has never been opened up to bring in and utilize the expertise of the refugees and immigrants themselves.

On looking back on their working life in Finland, some feel an element of regret that they could not, at the time of newly settling, pursue equivalency studies or training that would have meant continuation along a career path, or advancement in an occupational field. Individuals were able to 'make the best' of their future, manoeuvring in the labour market and being flexible as to the type of work they did. This is another example of 'all rounding' which describes the path of many such immigrants in the area of employment.

Those whose labour market links break

The community includes some individuals who were not able to gain a foothold in the labour market during settlement. The reasons vary with individuals. Some were not able to focus and concentrate on vocational studies, and could not follow through regardless of their previous educational background. At times, refugees remain affected by events prior to resettlement. On the other hand, employment 'all rounding' (or turning one's hand to any work available) requires flexibility, much drive and, not least, a sense of self efficacy – confidence built on previous achievements, which leads individuals to have a conviction that they are capable, and will do well. Involuntary unemployment puts individuals' identity and feelings of self-worth at risk.

The linkages to the employment market are of prime importance for settling persons. As mentioned earlier, the workplace is where individuals acquire and strengthen language skills in the first instance. The workplace is also an arena of social interaction. It is a place where workers keep pace with the insider labour market dynamics and are closer to the developments in the economic sector of society. For immigrants much social information is exchanged, and potentially the work personnel constitutes a network of 'weak ties' which extend further into the society, and are a useful source of contacts (Granovetter 1973). Moreover, through inter-personal processes, it can be a forum where prejudice is overcome as individuals interact in mutual interest. Of great importance is the employment record which entitles individual workers to earnings-based social security,

strengthening their pension levels and other social security payments in the event of sickness or unemployment.

Unemployment erodes at the integration process. The question that arises again is over whether it is possible for immigrants who are located on the margins of the labour market, to find alternative opportunities to become well-integrated and fully participating members of society.

General observations on immigrant employment

In the case of the Vietnamese, their joining the labour force took place at a fortunate time when they could access employment. The majority were able to fill places in the blue collar sector, which matched in large measure, their experience and competencies. When labour market conditions subsequently tightened in the 1990s, the subsequent resettling groups met an entirely different scenario. Sarvimäki's (2017) study included the study of the labour market performance of immigrants from Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia who arrived after the Vietnamese in the 1990s. The study found that ten years after arrival in Finland, the average earnings of immigrant men from Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia were 22-38% of the average earnings of native men of the same age.

A positive sign is the 2016 action plan of the Government that sets out to improve recognition of education obtained abroad. This will be one of the key factors in labour market integration of new immigrant groups in the future. In the light of the experience of later groups arriving in the 1990s, another critical issue is whether the hiring of immigrant applicants will meet with resistance. Intensive and supported linkages have been proposed as being one important mechanism to help immigrants to obtain employment (Forsander 2002). Yet this is not likely to be a feasible or sustainable option in a modern labour market situation where the foreign-born applicants' numbers are sizeable.

The real issue is about whether opportunities should be tied to networks, which is in practice a system that 'works' and is systemic in smaller scale, or more traditional labour market systems. Networking is important, but it is not likely to be a solution to labour market integration of immigrants in contemporary and future conditions.

It would be more straightforward and in line with the practice of equal opportunity and labour market equity, to put appropriate measures in place to ensure that the pool of *actual* candidates is open and not tied to networks. This would apply to both private and public sectors. Paakkinen (2016) observes that it is a challenge to make use of the skills of the immigrants. To keep highly skilled people employed below their level in the Public Sector hardly makes sense.

7 The Vietnamese Family and its evolution

In order to present the data on the family in settlement, the model of its roles is adopted here. The family is generally understood as having 3 main roles:

Long term care

Ongoing care for its members. Care-giving is understood in its widest sense to cover the range of caring needs which family members may have. Care may take different forms and emphases depending on many factors such as, for example, the characteristics of the particular family, the social context and environment, the cultural context, the particular needs and contingencies which arise during the individuals' life cycle, and the caring capacity of its members.

Socialization

Socialization involves bringing up youth, providing the security, guidance, support through their childhood into adulthood.

Economic support

The family household is usually economically supported by adult members who work to provide for the physiological needs of its members – food, clothing, shelter, for example.

Families' ties of interdependence

From the data on family life, two qualities could be identified as vital for keeping attachments vibrant and resilient between members, in spite of spatial separation. The family members engage in collective generation of welfare for its members. Individuals are used to assisting, contributing and cooperating with each other in order to ensure care for elderly parents, and for the youth and others across the family. It is a strongly collaborative system of caring and being cared for. This can be seen as *interdependence* that automatically, as it were, strengthens and gives meaning to the bonds between family members.

Following on from this collaborative interdependence in families, we find that individuals interact in 'high context' roles (Hall 1976a; 1976b), i.e., they can fulfil a number of crucial tasks and roles towards each other. An adult aunt might be the provider of funds to enable a sibling's children to have schooling, or might act as a surrogate parent when necessary. Thus individuals can relate to each other in multiple roles, depending on the circumstances and contingencies. One subject's comments help to explain this:

'The family ties and responsibilities are very different from in Finland, since support and social security does not come from the State. Helping must come from relatives. Relatives and family are the ones who must fill that gap. Maybe these responsibilities will end with the younger generations. We cannot bring them up in the same fashion in which we were raised.'

'Our parents have grown old, and they have no income. Thus the family who lives abroad must support them.'

The family members need to pull together to look after each other. It is regarded not as a burden but as part of the system to which they belong. It is their familial frame of reference. The chronology of the extended family continues in Finland.

In earlier phase, the extended family filled in for its members abroad and extended help, including giving personal caring for parents and relatives in need of such. Over distance, there was some type of assurance usually that the family was looking after those in need. At this time, the needs of family are now those of very elderly parents who value the presence of their children and close kin because of

aging problems and end of life approaching. Refugee life is about coping with the practical challenges of separation and maintaining ties over distances.

Socialization

The second area of family functioning has been perhaps the most challenging. The precedent for bringing up children of Vietnamese background in the Finnish environment is just being established by the Vietnamese themselves. The general feeling after the data collection was that roughly half of the participants were satisfied over how they had managed the socialization of their children. This is an evolving process and it is hoped that there will be a growing number of parents who are reassured that the way they brought up their children proved eventually to be a good one. There is one proposal in the next chapter that could make a significant difference in this critical area.

Some of the main concerns voiced by parents related to the changing norms of child-rearing which were facing them in the Finnish environment. The concerns included the following:

Youth were courting and having serious relationships at an early age, whereas some grandparents and parents felt that young people should first complete their studies, find employment and after that, find their spouse and establish their own family. This concern was especially marked in earlier years. Finnish courting modes differ sharply from the norms in Vietnam.

Parents are unsettled if they feel that their youth has lost respect for their elders. The respect for one's elders has been the foundation of relationships between generations. Moreover some felt that respect elders was at the core of being Vietnamese, and should this be lost, the cultural roots of their descendants would shrivel away.

When children intermarried, the new sons or daughters-in-law might not be familiar with the family's culture and ways. The elders feared that contact and closeness with their children's families would weaken. At base, this could be anxiety and insecurity over the risk of becoming eventually estranged from their children and grandchildren.

Cultural model of socialization

From the data, we can deduce that it has been common for parents to try to retain valuable aspects of the socialization model in Vietnamese culture. In the new social environment they are required/forced to devise new approaches more in tandem with those of the society of settlement. This is a time of vulnerability for some, since they themselves are not rooted into the settlement culture. Some might not have arrived at an understanding of it, and it is difficult to grasp how it could be adapted to their immediate socialization challenges.

In the extended family model, there were many actors in socialization because of the 'high context' roles of family members. These adult relatives and supports are missing in settlement. Thus the onus of socialization is on the parents, who themselves face childrearing customs very unfamiliar to them. The school, peers, church and perhaps friends also feature among those who might be able to participate in some way in socialization processes.

Some of the parents had had deep concerns when their children started to go with peers who smoked and used alcohol at a young age. Not finding a way to deal with this peer pressure 'threat', the eventual choice could be for the family to leave and find another location held to be a more suitable and 'safer' environment in which to raise their children. Much depended also on the type of areas where initial housing was allocated.

The obedience that traditionally would be expected of children was getting more elusive. Some faced a dilemma over how they could succeed in socialization when the parameters were so radically changed. Some of the statements made by concerned parents capture various aspects of parenting in a very different environment:

'Bringing up children is no longer the same. The parent must be the one to request. We need to approach matters with diplomacy and caution. We cannot use the old ways. A parent has to learn new things.'

'In Vietnam, parents are parents, but here parents are expected to be more like friends.'

'There is too much freedom when parents cannot even get their children to continue and complete their education.'

Echoing the sentiments of other participants, individuals also described what their families had found to be good approaches:

'We need to be flexible, but stick to the rules and be clear about our roles. We can find good teaching in religion.'

'It is not an overwhelming situation. I wouldn't take it as such, even though there is a chance that children might end up badly in trouble if they keep going with peers. Nowadays, children can choose to hold on to their basic Vietnamese principles and standards. Of course, there will be disagreements and quarrelling, but we discuss and try to work things out, and finally we can live in harmony at home. Family love is at the core and we must look out for each other.'

Parents stressed the need for flexibility, openness and understanding. Emphasis was put on setting an example. Some told about how their children socialized happily with friends, going to the movies and shopping. The focus groups were suitable occasions for parents to reflect on this central area of family life, and to share their opinions and observations:

'If the family is not happy, the children become unhappy.'

'It is important to take time when we are raising children. Parents cannot be always rushing around.'

Parents' satisfaction with the manner in which their children were growing up seemed to be linked in many cases with a good flow of information from school on the children's progress. There were also parents who spoke about misunderstandings that arose with school officials over their children's matters. The discussions with teachers were recalled with disappointment over the experience of being hampered by their own language problems. For subjects with inadequate language skill, this was one of the problem areas in socialization.

Good communication flow with the school officials was lacking at times when it would have been critical. Outward communication with officials on important

matters and issues can be compromised by weak language skill. Individuals in this situation rely on help from others. Interpreting assistance is available but individuals do not call upon this service in what should be routine matters. This especially so after several years of residence in Finland have passed.

The more rapid adaptation of children can develop into relations of disturbing and ongoing friction with the younger generations. One participant made the remark that the weakly educated parent counted for very little. Most likely reference was being made to fact that better educated parent might be more confident of functioning in the new culture.

Subjects mentioned the 'cultural barrier' that might develop between the generations. This was sometimes brought about by parents' not listening to or understanding the thoughts of their youth, but holding on to rigid old-fashioned ways. It was thought that it is imperative for parents in settling families to learn new ways in order to modify their socialization methods in the new conditions.

It was also the observation of participants that in cases where parents were themselves weakly integrated into Finnish society, the likelihood would be greater that they would run into difficulties with teenage or even adult children. The language problem moreover could prevent communication and block out information exchange that would equip individuals to understand the 'new' culture and to come to terms with cultural adaptation processes.

Given the need of many in the community for stronger language skills that are needed for understanding official rules, practices and documents, a request was made for the development of a comprehensive information source in the Vietnamese language. Many individuals have a critical need for important current information that affects their lives. Such a resource would clarify for them many issues related to their roles as citizens, parents and full members of the society. This initiative would reach out to those who are in especial need of it. At the same time, such a resource would have a reinforcing effect across all integration measures.

Youth

Focus was directed to the processes of settlement as experienced by the younger generations (1½ and second). Their responses brought new perspectives on several themes, since they have been observing adaptation and settlement from the perspective the young. Their cultural transition was from Vietnamese culture to Finnish, but this took place largely (1½ generation, born in Vietnam but coming to Finland at an early age) or completely in Finland (2nd generation, born in Finland). Their responses yielded some leads on measures that could be put in place to facilitate integration in their case, but also in general.

The initial help extended to newly arrived families is part of the memories of the time. A subject described how the reception services and workers of the Finnish Red Cross were an important family source of support and guidance in the cultural ways of the new environment. People in the neighbourhood were often very welcoming and helped the adults in everyday matters, for example, grocery shopping and banking. Referring to the reception programmes, youth appreciate the significance of the language and orientation courses that enabled their parents to be equipped for training or finding employment.

The Vietnamese community itself would often gather to spend time together and be of support to each other in the new country. The meetings brought a respite from culture shock and loneliness, and not least, a sense of security. The friend families who were introduced at the beginning to newly arriving families softened the transition period and these friendships have sometimes lasted throughout the years. It should be noted that extended families can be very inclusive of others. The ties that bind family members are strong, but the family is not bounded to exclude others. Youth remember that their families could turn to their Finnish friends for guidance in everyday matters.

The quality of wellbeing in the family, and indeed the lack of it, registers with its youth who are sensitive to family ups and downs. As one subject noted, the state of family wellbeing filters through the whole family, whether or not this is articulated. Moreover the successful and 'happy' integration' of parents was mentioned as one concern of youth, even though this solicitude might seldom be expressed.

Cultural bridging

Cultural bridging has led to bi-cultural attitudes. As one subject put it, 'I try to learn from the best sides of both cultures', and another said,

'I have been fortunate to grow up in two cultures. As I get older I can make for myself a life built on the fine sides of both cultures'

The youth spoke of their values, such as broadmindedness, justice and equality, honesty, and independence (standing on one's own feet), for example. They observed that these were not so different from the values of their Finnish peers.

Growing up in two cultures was thought to deepen individuals' capacity to understand other cultures. One cultural custom which seems to have been unconditionally taught and sustained is that of having respect and consideration for parents and elders, and valuing them as worthy of being honoured. This was a principle held important and worthy of being cherished especially in the light of disrespectful treatment of older people that otherwise can occur in daily life.

The challenges that came to mind included the early dilemmas of identity formation, which needed to be worked through. Problems relating to identity can arise as part of the acculturation process in immigrant groups. The pressure to conform can be experienced as oppressive for young persons of immigrant background.

It was observed that a peer group from the majority society can facilitate the path to integration as it brings the new culture much nearer and opens it up for understanding. We are reminded of the potentially positive effects of peer groups in the process of socialization. The other side of the coin is when peer groups become a risk factor in child socialization, as was earlier discussed.

Social mobility has worked for many in the younger generations. They have benefitted from the education system and among them many have trained to post-high school professions and vocations. The career choice might be difficult and challenging for youth when refugee/immigrant parents have not accumulated adequate knowledge of the careers and employment arena in order to be able to assist in their youth's decisionmaking at the end of schooling years. Due to this, the youth of refugee and immigrant background would benefit from a strengthened

component of vocational guidance and information provided by the school system itself. They would need information on the wide ranging options in the society, in order to be able to make informed decisions on the career path as well as training and development opportunities. *Their immigrant background should not limit the potential choices on their horizon. The opportunities for upward social mobility should also be made familiar to them.*

So far the younger generation of Vietnamese is still rarely found in more traditional professions such as teaching (school and institutions of higher education), administration, medicine, dentistry. Moreover while individuals might be laterally integrated into different sectors, their vertical representation is very weak in workplace. Thus their sights should be set ambitiously, and with their future development in mind. The ambition and potential of the 1 ½ and second generations of refugee or immigrant background should be recognised, encouraged and supported as a specific dimension of vocational guidance in schools.

8 Family dynamics, cultural coping and social services

Problems facing the family

It is customary for others in the community to respect the privacy of persons undergoing sensitive personal or family problem situations even when the latter might sorely be in need of support from others. In settlement contexts, the families are far away from their own original close circles. The persons to whom families would otherwise naturally turn for help, are not nearby. Thus an important source of support and guidance is not available. The family probably would not seek help from persons with whom they are not very close.

An area of settlement that has cast a permanent shadow over some families' settlement, as well as deep concern in the community, is family break-up. The particular problem focused upon here is when intergenerational situations deteriorate and eventually end in child custody. This is particularly distressing in the light of the fact that the refugee/immigrant family is the very cornerstone of settlement, and performs unique roles. It is the entity that is committed to providing *unconditional* caring and support for its members. Newcomers (adult and youth) encounter demands, setbacks and intercultural stress in their quest to find meaningful roles in life. The family nevertheless remains for its members, the refuge and crucible in which cultural adaptation is forged. Because of its singular roles in the settlement and integration process, the integrity and functioning of the family is of overriding importance.

Varying circumstances can lead up to the risk of family break-up. The socialization patterns of Vietnamese culture differ from those in Finland. The dilemma facing parents is how to find and learn new ways to guide children who are growing up and quickly adopting the different attitudes and ways of their new social environment. Youth are heavily exposed to the influence of their peers. Physical disciplining is not tolerated and is against the law in Finland, differing radically from traditional socialization patterns accepted in Vietnam. Settling parents are trying to protect their children from moving into unknown risky behaviour areas that could lead them into troubles and harm. The welfare and future of the second generation constitutes an almost sacred goal of parents in settlement.

It was mentioned that some of the parents did not understand or *could not imagine the severity* of the consequences of corporal punishment. This would depend on the background of the parents. Some would be at a loss on how to control their children and instil discipline and understanding in 'new' cultural modes. Others would already be familiar with socialization customs different from the traditional.

Language problems could well lie at the root of some processes of estrangement between parents and children. Children usually learn Finnish as a matter of course, and often quite rapidly, while their Vietnamese language skill might also lapse, leading to real communication difficulties between the generations. These are referred to as 'cultural walls' between parents and children. In unfortunate cases, according to subjects' remarks, some children were suspected of simply using the non-tolerance of physical disciplining to advantage by reporting incorrect information on parents and actually setting official procedures in motion.

There have been several cases of children taken into custody on the grounds of physical disciplining of children. Child custody is a highly sensitive matter, and not easily discussed openly. However some of the focus groups featured a 'safe' atmosphere for bringing up sensitive issues. These were the opinions of some of subjects:

'Child custody is a good thing in principle, but sometimes we feel that officials have intervened into the issues in Vietnamese families too severely without understanding of the culture, customs or the ways that children are brought up. This has caused untold anguish in some families.'

'Officials in school and social services respond to problems in two ways: children receive such fine teaching and guidance in school. They learn to manage and to look out for themselves, and to be independent. But some child might have a strong temperament [be stubborn], and know how to take advantage of the system. When children go into the children's home, the family and family love breaks beyond repair, and it is difficult to rebuild from this. It would be better if officials intervened in time and before the situation has become critical, and children are taken away from parents.'

These comments speak for themselves. One subject explains that she established close contact with the teachers in school, described their family circumstances, and what happens in the family, in order to avoid misunderstanding and mistaken assumptions. Communication is critical.

Need for Vietnamese workers in settlement social services

There is a compelling case for the inclusion of Vietnamese workers (and workers from other settling communities) into the reception and settlement services alongside native personnel. The hiring of persons of cultural and migrant background into the core settlement services should take priority in building municipality-level integration services. The cultural knowledge and competencies of such workers would be critical for making balanced and culturally sensitive assessments of problem situations and fashioning feasible and beneficial responses.

In difficult and sensitive personal and family crises, a deeper level of cultural understanding is needed, which cannot be found in the conventional social service and professional social work responses. It is available in the stocks of cultural knowledge and settlement experience which can be drawn upon from experienced and capable individuals in the community. Such non-native workers should be included in roles in the service response loop at levels corresponding to their expertise and valuable settlement experience.

The workers of ethnocultural background would bring critical language skills as well as sharp awareness of what is happening in the settling communities. They would become aware of problem issues early, and enable proactive responses to

be put in place. Such individuals would be invaluable for mediating culture-related issues between e.g., officials and individuals concerned, as well as working in mediating capacity on the ground in the community. Workers from the community itself would have a clear idea of how the parents (in this case) are trying to employ the cultural modes for bringing up children and would be able to negotiate and intervene to avert the escalation of the problem situation. The proactive approach could be implemented with workers close to the community and able to use communication skills to the best advantage for the client and for the social service provision system as a whole.

Tuori (2013: 37) sums up this point as follows:

'My starting point is that migrant NGOs and experts of migrant background hold the kind of competences and experiences that are needed in service provision (also Valtonen 2001). Recruitment of people of migrant background is also a question of equality and social justice. The effect of lack of cooperation, joint projects and decisionmaking is that most of the experts of migrant background are seldom consulted in work for integration ... there are few employees of migrant background in the public sector provision of social services ... the role of community organizations is unclear and little initiative has been made to include them into the service provision arena. In the law on the domiciling of migrants these are however mentioned. Thus, the result is that experts of migrant background are marginalised from service provision and design of integration services (Tuori 2013: 37)

Competencies of workers

In addition to the need for such workers, the discussion also touched on the qualities and competencies required for such a task. Appropriate training and education of ethnocultural personnel would be necessary, as has been the practice in other immigrant-receiving countries such as Canada. Workers should be hired into the personnel of reception and integration social work and social services at a level and status as part of settlement and integration personnel.

As a priority measure to build cultural competency in the reception services, non-native Finns should be admitted to social work higher education programmes as students and as teachers.

The importance of a family approach

Family a settlement resource

The family is a pillar of its members' settlement and integration. The family functioning and wellbeing depends on the wellbeing of each member. Should there be internal problems, these are inevitably reflected in the integration of the family members. This is an argument for accommodating family approaches to Vietnamese families' problems situations. It holds true also for working with people coming from more collective cultures where family relations are dense. The family is the source of long term (and often unconditional) caring and support. It is critical in the social services and social work to engage with the family as a system that has latent and potential strengths to overcome its issues collectively.

Family policy is already a strong feature in formal existing welfare provision. However for new groups with strong family centred culture, there would be need for family supporting measures that take into account the problem situation in the context of the family as a unit. Service approaches would also need to engage family strengths in shaping responses. This underlines the importance of hiring persons of the same cultural background to have a role in formal service provision.

9 Community, culture and solidarity

Community organisation

At this time, the community wonders why the former enthusiasm and drive for association activity has dwindled. In the early years there was ample support and willingness for working together. The participants looked at the possible reasons which might have been different then. Perhaps they were pulled together by loneliness, also referred to as 'feeling like orphans'. Homesickness and culture shock were much easier to bear with others, and in company was to be found security and mutual support.

People still get together and help each other, as we have seen. Many vibrant sub-groups feature close ties of friendship and strong mutual help mechanisms. The intervening years have been ones of preoccupation with making a livelihood, childrearing, caring also for wider family, as well as other settlement undertakings. Now that this 'rush' is over, they turn to collective goals but cannot capture the initial enthusiasm and feeling of purposeful unity. This is not an unfamiliar phenomenon in communities at this advanced stage of settlement. On the other hand, some migrant minorities see a resurgence of collective activity around reawakening interest in the culture, for example. The Turku groups remarked on the spontaneous collaboration and communal energies that are still mobilized around the organisation of festivities to celebrate high points in the community's life. The recent example was the event to mark the 30th year anniversary of Vietnamese resettlement in Finland, which attracted national level interest.

Many subjects identified the main difficulty in building more comprehensive and stable organizational activity as the lack of a leader figure or leadership that would be able to draw a wide base of commitment. This possibility seemed to be elusive

because of the diversity in the community. However, the idea of having a widely based community association to promote their interests is interesting.

There are several associations at present. These are listed below:

- Hue-People ry (persons from the Hue region in Middle Vietnam)
- TNC ry -Yhteinen Ääni (United Voice, an association formed by around 20 persons whose goal is to offer support and assistance to Vietnamese, such as with translation of form and papers of the Social Insurance Institute of Finland (KELA), and generally official notices and documents)
- Since 1990 the Vietnamese Cultural Association operated for over 20 years in Turku, but its activity has in recent years declined
- The Vietnamese Catholic Mutual Support Association of Turku was founded in 2006 to render assistance to its community

Associations are wont to go through their own life cycle. Much depends on having the core people who will sustain and keep the activity and agenda vital enough to draw in the commitment of others. At present the Vietnamese community is thinking about the role and potential of Third Sector activity. The Third Sector overlaps with civil society, and in practice also has the potential for rendering crucial services which lie outside the provisioning of the formal State system. In particular, in the area of refugee and immigrant settlement, community organizations could fill a service gap that could make an invaluable contribution to the resettlement and integration arena. This would call for official and financial support and effective links of collaboration with the State service system.

Areas in which the mature community could contribute include the following:

- Facilitation of acculturation processes of individuals and families, including support and guidance in family matters and problem situations (intergenerational relations, socialization guidance). The community and its members have the cultural knowledge, experience and resources for helping proactively as well as in advisory and support capacity. Not least, they have the necessary language skills and settlement experience.

- Provision of many types of practical assistance and socializing opportunities for the communities' elderly, and for the youth
- Helping newcomers
- Language groups (Finnish as a Second Language FSL) – conversation, booster courses and instruction for those who have not previously been able to acquire adequate Finnish language skill
- Community outreach to prevent marginalization – the community can operate 'on the ground', and has, as it were, its finger on the pulse of community life.
- Provision of 'low threshold' assistance on the basis of individual help or group sessions
- Bridging functions such as facilitating participation in public discourse and debate on policies and events in the society

Ethnic community capital can be mobilized as a resource for integration.

The elderly in the community

The situation of the elderly Vietnamese is disquieting to the community. At this time, the younger generations are at work or school for most of the day. Elderly relatives remain at home and many are not mobile enough to go out independently for activities or to seek out the company of others.

They are also at a stage where they would need to live in specially serviced accommodation such as homes for the aged. However, they are lacking the level of Finnish language skill that would be adequate for managing life in ordinary conditions in serviced accommodation for the elderly.

A worker/workers with Vietnamese language skill, would enable them to move into suitable accommodation. Clustering the Vietnamese elderly into caregiving nodes featuring ethnic-based services could be a way to facilitate hiring of a suitable carer/s with language skill in Vietnamese. Responding to this need in the community would call for attention from policymakers and the service sectors concerned. Even though the number of elderly Vietnamese is not large compared

to that in the main population (see Age Pyramid Appendix 1), the situation is of a scale to warrant some official level measures. Moreover the welfare of the elderly in other minority groups will be a matter arising in the future.

Religion

Religion plays a central part in the lives of many of the Vietnamese. A major congregation is the Buddhist. Vietnamese also belong to the Roman Catholic as well as other congregations. The Buddhist temple in Turku has drawn followers from all over Finland. The project is the fruit of dedication and work. Some visit the temple for prayer, while others are active in its maintenance/upkeep and ongoing functioning. The members of the congregation visit the temple monthly or more frequently. The subjects told of what their religion meant to them:

'Religion is vital to life. A strong spiritual life guides and strengthens self control and our life quality.'

'Religion is like a safe harbour.'

'Through religion, people find a fine way to live, and peace for the spirit. Through religion, the youth can find better understanding of their own culture, their parents – understand things which are not taught in schools.'

The group in Pietarsaari expressed it this way:

'We lack our network of relatives, but instead religion provides a model for us, and a strength underpinning our lives. Although we have no temple or denomination here, we try to hold to and practise our religion.'

From the subjects' statements, we can see that some families turn to religion to provide the family with signposts and guidance in the upbringing of their youth. The lack of supporting extended circles accounts partly for their seeking out religion to provide the foundation they need in steering their youth into good life paths. This feature can be observed across other immigrant groups who lack their original support systems in settlement.

Community diversity

The profile of the Vietnamese community has evolved over the 40 year period since the first cohorts arrived as refugees. The Vietnamese population now includes more individuals coming in the context of other classes of migration, for example, as workers and students. The community has always featured internal diversity. Individuals represent differences by regional background, dialects, religion, ethnic roots (for example, Vietnamese of Chinese origin) and minority groups.

Through the Family Reunification programme individuals were able to reunite their immediate family units (spouses and children under 18 years). Currently individuals arrive through marriage as well as in the context of work and studying. Finland does not otherwise have family class migration or sponsorship of relatives. The wider family concept does not feature in policy.

In the local community around Pietarsaari, subjects described how internal differences of religion, age, municipality of residence, education background and so on, did not create divisions. They said that on the contrary:

'We are simply friends. We help, encourage and support each other'

Vietnamese relatives in the context of labour migration

In the course of focus groups and interviews, it was mentioned that individuals' relatives of working age would wish to come to Finland to work. However the procedures for applying for permits are complicated and lengthy. Travelling connected with the application process was very costly and did not ensure success. The request was for easing the application processes and, if possible, for more favourable policy toward applicants who would like to come to work in Finland. This would be a very valuable opportunity if relatives could be allowed to enter Finland to work.

The support and assistance of the Finnish Vietnamese families would serve as a natural reception and settlement support mechanism. This would be a significant factor if utilized in the labour migration context. In countries of immigration

with labour migration policies, chain migration and family class immigration are established mechanisms that link immigration with labour market interests of the receiving countries. The admission of relatives of the current Vietnamese population in Finland to suitable sectors of the Finnish labour market could prove to be a timely labour market strategy to meet labour force demand.

The data from Pietarsaari focus group session brought to light the local resettled Vietnamese community's spontaneous support mechanisms to help the groups of Vietnamese workers in the market gardening/greenhouse sector. It is estimated that approximately 1000 Vietnamese individuals are workers in this sector in that area. The long-time Vietnamese residents there come to the assistance of the 'newcomer' workers, sometimes travelling long distances to where the workers live and work. The forms of help provided include providing essential practical information which otherwise would not be easily available to this Vietnamese-speaking population. Such assistance can complement in an important way, the official mechanisms of the municipalities. Assistance includes essential information on duties and expectations, paper work, their legal status and other matters relating to working and managing in Finland.

The experience from the Pietarsaari-Kokkola area is praiseworthy and not quite unique. The now established Vietnamese in other locations in Finland have become accustomed to extend assistance to newcomer countrymen (students, workers) who otherwise lack their own networks.

Domestic Migration

Domestic or so-called 'secondary migration' has taken place to urban concentrations and especially to the larger cities in southern Finland. The reasons for this internal migration are many. In discussions, the participants explained that the larger towns were attractive because of:

- Employment opportunities including summer/seasonal work
- Training and education opportunities

- Larger Vietnamese population, in which culture and language retention for children becomes easier because of the community and social activities
- The proximity of fellow countrymen and women
- Religious congregations and places of worship
- More moderate climate

An interesting ethnic concentration is the Varissuo area of Turku, where the proportion of persons with foreign language background is approximately 40%. It has become a hub of many types of activity for the different groups who live there. Even though it is a large suburb by Turku standards, it is small and compact enough for frequent human and social contact, which is not restricted to people of the same ethnic origin. Finns and the cross section of the immigrant resident population interact and keep lively social circles.

The social services, transport services and a bustling shopping centre give Varissuo an accessible focal point. Varissuo was known for its teething problems in the beginning. These have subsided over the last decades and given rise to a suburban centre that is 'alive', possibly enlivened to a large extent by its immigrant groups!

10 Closing observations and summary

The study data generates an in-depth view into the lives of the Finnish Vietnamese community. The community has fashioned its distinct model of acculturation and integration during the 40 years they have been living among the citizenry in Finland. New groups and communities develop their own patterns of coping and building their lives in the environment of settlement.

Integration is a generic term for rich variants of encounter and adaptation between peoples in a society. In Finland, which is a relatively 'new gateway' country, we are part of this process and have a strategic vantage point not only for following the processes of integration but also for participating personally and fostering their progress.

Emphasis is generally put on integration being a two-way process requiring cooperation of both the main population and its institutions and the settling groups. The progress of integration in a society should not be underestimated. People come gradually to understand the nature and significance of diversity before achieving their own blueprint for managing in a new environment. Individuals cannot take great distance from their original cultural frameworks until the frameworks for coping become clear. Refugee and immigrant adaptation is taking place at many levels. Fashioning research tools to detect the more unobtrusive patterns would be an interesting project for collaboration with ethnic communities.

The Vietnamese community made it a point to express how much they appreciate having been received for resettlement in Finland. The humanitarianism underlying the Finnish reception and settlement programmes have made an indelible impression on those received for settlement. The community do not take for granted the conditions of safety, security and peace in their new home society.

These have been the foundation for rebuilding lives that were torn apart by decades of civil war in the homeland.

The Finnish welfare state has played a primary role in refugee settlement. In the early years of settlement, the Vietnamese like other quota groups, encountered immediately the extensive service response, which addressed matters of health, social services, language training, education and labour market services. At this time, after decades of experience with the system, many study participants made specific reference to the State's comprehensive response to needs. Special mention was made of the provisions for individuals with disabilities, long-term illnesses and other difficult problems which would otherwise overwhelm the resources and energies of carers and families.

The welfare of the extended family

The settlement thrust of the Vietnamese has been heavily influenced by their concern over the wellbeing of their wider extended families in the homeland. The assistance from adult children or relatives abroad has been critical to the welfare and survival of those in the homeland. Refugees who resettled in other countries managed, and often still manage their household economies with the welfare of the wider family in mind. The intervening geographic distance does not weaken family bonds and caring responsibility. These transnational fields of helping that connect members of the extended family in different countries of settlement are increasingly recognised as having global impact. Remittances and other flows of assistance address and alleviate need in countries of origin. They constitute a human, grassroots response in the face of global inequalities and inequities.

Empowerment through employment

Across the community, success in obtaining employment has had high significance for family wellbeing in Finland. This earned income also made it possible to contribute to the welfare of kin who remained in Vietnam. The labour market entry of the Vietnamese was facilitated by the fact that the economy at the time had an opening for the skills which the Vietnamese newcomers could offer. These were primarily in the blue collar sectors. Finding employment was indeed a critical turning point in the settlement and integration process. It was also very empowering in the case of many women who were able to be in earning capacity.

They had indeed held breadwinning roles previously, but had now made the crossing into another labour market culture.

The refugees who arrived with higher levels of education were a minority among the Vietnamese groups received in the late 1980s and early 1990s. With very few exceptions, these never found employment opportunity corresponding to their skills and experience. Factors inhibiting their progress were the lack of effective equivalency measures for qualifications, and also of linking mechanisms that would have been critical in accessing potential areas for employment. Labour market resistance to immigrant employment was not experienced by the Vietnamese in the same measure as by subsequent groups of refugees, who arrived later when the economy was in recession – a factor that puts refugee and immigrant jobseekers at a disadvantage when pursuing employment alongside locals.

The utilization of the human capital of the refugees and immigrants is becoming part of recent labour market discourse. In contemporary society employment has an irreplaceable function in refugee/immigrant integration. Unemployment erodes at the integration process.

When individuals and groups remain indefinitely on the periphery of the labour market and without any stake in the economic life and activity of the society, the path to 'belonging' and becoming a full member of the society is tortuous. Moreover, through inter-personal processes, the workplace often acts as a forum where prejudice is overcome as individuals interact in mutual interest in tangible roles. Additionally the employment record of an individual determines the level of future social security and social insurance benefits related to old age, sickness and unemployment.

The move to urban centres

'Secondary' or domestic migration has gradually taken place to urban concentrations and in particular to the larger cities in southern Finland. More opportunity for employment as well as wider training and education opportunities attract people to the larger population centres. The established Vietnamese communities there offer social and community activity for all ages.

Religious congregations are usually formally organized where there are greater community concentrations. The congregations have a guiding and socialization function for youth that is taken into account and highly valued by parents.

Adaptation processes and social interaction

When appraising integration processes, the focus tends to be directed to acculturation or cultural adaptation. Yet refugee and immigrant adaptation embraces a wide span of adjustments. Settling individuals and families can be shifting from a rural environment to an urban one, and vice versa. As in the case of the Vietnamese, many settling groups have met Nordic organization of society and institutions for the first time. Individuals seek to learn about different codes for behaviour and social relations in order to avoid pitfalls. In this capacity, social interaction with locals can be invaluable. Some of the study participants have even remarked that when individuals have Finnish friends they tend to integrate better.

Ethnic supportive and mutual help networks have played a role in the social adjustment processes. Ethnic networks are not meant to reinforce isolation, but are a mechanism for coping. Networks are the context and foundation of personal identity in early settlement and they function as important fields of communication facilitated by use of the mother tongue. Networks are also a much appreciated source of assistance for those more recently arrived. The Finnish policy of building communities numerically has facilitated the developing of a critical mass as a basis for network building in the communities. Among the Vietnamese, networks of fellow countrymen and women have flourished from the start. These co-exist with or have become well interwoven with Finnish networking. For the younger generations, of course, networking is naturally inclusive of their Finnish peers.

Families

In the traditional extended family model, there were many actors in socialization because of the 'high context' roles of surrounding family members. Since these adult relatives and supports are missing in settlement, the onus of child socialization rested with the parents who themselves were facing childrearing customs very unfamiliar to them. The precedent for bringing up children of Vietnamese background in the Finnish environment is becoming established by the Vietnamese themselves.

The data showed satisfaction by most parents over how their youth had grown up and matured in Finland. Youth socialization had been most challenging however for some parents when they faced having to learn quite different ways to guide children who were rapidly adopting the different attitudes and ways of their peers. Even though the welfare and future of the younger generation constitutes an almost sacred goal for parents, varying circumstances led to children being taken into custody and eventual break-up of families.

In order to promote the wellbeing of settling families in refugee groups, the integration services would need cultural competency resources to enable culturally specific measures to be effected to address the situations and contingencies that arise in the course of settlement and adaptation.

Integration expertise in the communities

The settlement experience and expertise base of individuals in the community constitutes an asset should be utilized in reception and integration social services. Such individuals should be recruited into active and formally mandated roles in the integration services. Their expertise and direct integration experience would constitute a needed cultural competence dimension into service provision. Many educated and suitable individuals can be found in communities.

The younger generations

The 1½ and second generations have grown up in Finnish society, language and culture. Ideally they are at home in both cultures. Among the youth, growing up in two cultures was thought to deepen individuals' capacity to understand other cultures. Youth mentioned learning from both cultures and synthesizing the fine aspects in each. There were positive advantages from having a bicultural background and perspective.

For youth, the early dilemmas of identity formation were challenging at times, and needed to be worked through. Having a peer group from the majority society made integration and adaptation easier since this brought the new culture much nearer and opened it up for understanding. With respect to life plans, the younger generation can aspire to perform or achieve more or less on a par with their peers

across the society, whether of native or immigrant background. They have the same starting points.

Youth however can be handicapped when formulating career paths if they lack familiarity with the range of educational and career opportunities open to them. This can often happen, for example, when parents are unfamiliar with occupational and labour market systems, and opportunities for social mobility in the society of settlement. The formal vocational guidance programmes should cater to the specific need of young people of refugee or immigrant background for comprehensive understanding of the spectrum of career choices, the different levels of further education alternatives and the opportunity for lateral and upward social and occupational mobility.

The youth in the study reversed the direction of family concerns, and pondered on their own parents' adaptation and coping styles in the new home society. Youth care about parental wellbeing, and have an awareness of how the first generation integrates.

Factors which facilitate integration

The study data generated insights into how Vietnamese integration processes have taken place in Finland. Some of the areas which were identified as facilitating integration are described below.

Regular feedback on integration services development with the inclusion of the input of service-users themselves would serve to ensure that the already comprehensive range of settlement services is pitched accurately to evolving settlement needs.

Interaction, dialogue, public discourse and different forms of cooperation with the majority population increases and deepens mutual understanding between groups. Support and adequate resources should be channelled to organized initiatives and activities in civil society and the Third Sector. Much anti-marginalization action could take place in the civil society arena, and would moreover harness the synergies located there.

Cultural competence as part of the social work and social service personnel resource would need to be given heavy emphasis. This would strengthen culturally appropriate approaches to difficult and sensitive problem situations in the social professions. Such a measure would contribute to the fashioning of culturally appropriate as well as effective interventions. The hiring of persons of the same ethnic background as the settling communities into roles of responsibility would be the most direct way to increase cultural competence.

Employment is the key to becoming integrated in a new society. Employment also has important empowering repercussions in social life. Conversely unemployment can have disempowering effects and give rise to weakened linkages to the society of settlement. Newer citizens who can be seen as contributing in many roles to the social and economic life of the society, are not an easy target for populism.

Culture can be seen as a central integration resource. It is closely related to the strategies honed over time by people seeking to survive in specific environments and to find systems of meanings. The 'newer' cultures with which we mingle in multicultural societies can be understood as holding important blueprints relating to coping in the original homeland environments. In the society of settlement, refugees and immigrants from different cultural backgrounds need to learn, adopt and/or accommodate to the culture and mores in their new home society. This cannot be a rapid process and in the interim they generally must take recourse in their original coping methods to address challenges and problem situations. In the course of the focus groups, it was suggested that settlement and integration went better for those who had Finnish friends. We can assume here that the interaction and communication with Finns would bring many valuable insights into Finnish culture and mores, which in turn would be useful for settling persons to deepen their understandings and thereby come to terms more competently with the surrounding culture and society.

We learn much from Vietnamese settlement and the initial processes of coexistence, interaction and becoming multicultural. The social and familial bonds – in all their variety – are a cornerstone of life quality, even in a welfare state. Furthermore, the formal as well as informal links of interdependence among people of different ethnicities, cultures and backgrounds, lay the basis for interpersonal ties of solidarity. Cross-cutting ties can strengthen the social fabric.

11 Proposals for Policy

Although the first generation of Vietnamese arrived some 40 years ago, the integration challenges evolve and affect the wellbeing of succeeding generations and that of other immigrant and refugee groups. The whole society benefits from the effective integration of its new groups into the fabric of the society.

This section sets out some policy recommendations which are formulated here on the basis of the data findings of the study. The recommendations are concrete and in line with the UNHCR nine internationally accepted goals for integration of resettled refugees (2002). See Appendix 2.

Highest priority should be put on the hiring of persons of the same ethnocultural backgrounds as the resettling communities to work alongside personnel in the main arena of reception and integration services

The refugee reception and integration system should be ethnoculturally integrated at this time. Individuals of immigrant and refugee background would need to be hired in and employed into the mainstream of reception and integration services. The multicultural competencies and language expertise of persons with refugee/immigrant background are needed in the settlement services which are currently provided out of the social work and the social service sector.

Workers of immigrant background should be hired at levels in the system which would allow them to work effectively as part of the full-time municipal staff of reception and integration services. The communities have been part of the society for decades and many suitable individuals can be found to serve in this capacity.

In order to promote the cultural competency in reception and integration services, the social work and social services further education institutions and programmes should admit non-native Finn as students and teachers.

The language skills of workers from newer ethnocultural groups would, in the first instance, be invaluable for first language communication, in particular, in sensitive and fragile problem situations. Newly settling individuals are often not fluent in Finnish or Swedish. Confusing misunderstandings can be avoided if they are able to use the first language. Additionally settlement and acculturation problem situations would need to be understood, assessed and addressed with the input of culture-based expertise. This would work beneficially for both the multicultural clients and the social service system.

Cultural expertise is also critical from a proactive perspective. Workers from the communities would be in tune with community life and have on-the-ground knowledge of when difficulties/problems are developing. Early detection of problems and appropriate timely responses would be possible. Should problems worsen and reach critical proportions, these could lead to grave consequences such as in the case of child custody interventions and ensuing family break-up.

In a 2016 study out of KEVA, Paakkinen (2016) writes that it would be in the interest of the Public Sector to hire educated immigrants as soon as possible into positions corresponding to their education and competencies. It would be fitting for the Public Sector to have the people who use their services functioning in different capacities in their personnel. See Chapter 6 on General observations on immigrant employment.

The ‘community capital’ of settling groups should be utilized as a settlement resource

At this time, Vietnamese community activity could be of service in carrying out several Third Sector roles which would complement the Public Sector services. This would apply also to other settling and settled communities with immigrant or refugee background.

A feature which is common across the Vietnamese communities is a high level of informal mutual assistance in social and friendship circles. It would be

advantageous to develop and strengthen spontaneous helping mechanisms into formally functioning entities/community organizations which would respond to needs in the community which are not in the arena of formal services. These areas of activity would include, for example:

- practical assistance and socializing opportunities for the elderly, who often do not have adequate language skill for seeking out such opportunities in the general population
- assistance to newcomers to become settled in the local area, and helping 'on the ground'
- guidance and counselling in the demanding integration areas, such as intergenerational family relations and child socialization modes of the new cultural environment
- arranging and providing special FSL (Finnish as a Second Language) courses and groups tailored for those persons who have not previously been able to acquire adequate Finnish language skill. There are individuals whose language skill has remained at an unsatisfactory level which reduces their ability to manage without help in official matters. Theirs is not a question of being among the 'marginalized', but rather one of inadequate language skill.

There is a low threshold to participation in community organization activity as well as to help-seeking from them. The community organization/s would serve as mechanisms of social inclusion and integration.

Communities would require infrastructure and funding for the implementation of activity and programmes.

Strengthening the programme of mother tongue instruction

Mother-tongue instruction has been held to be an important tool for promoting the retention of culture among the youth. Language is related closely to identity.

The study data pointed to the risks incurred when the younger generations lose the mother tongue as they rapidly learn Finnish. Family communication faces difficulties, depending on the language skills of the parents. At best, families manage communication well in Finnish or Vietnamese. In worse case scenarios,

a language barrier rises when parents do not have command of Finnish and their children's Vietnamese deteriorates to the point where communication with parents is blocked. This predicament has given risen to troubling internal family problems when parents have less and less control over how they bring up their children. Mother tongue teaching should be featured alongside school curricula and be recognised for its role in overall integration.

The vocational guidance youth of refugee or immigrant background should be inclusive of information on the wide spectrum of occupational, vocational and professional options, including also perspectives on lateral and vertical social mobility opportunities in the labour market

Immigrant parents often do not have sound knowledge regarding career and employment opportunities in the labour market. They would not be in a position to assist in their youth's decision-making at the end of schooling years. In order to strengthen their working life chances and choices, the youth of refugee and immigrant background would need a comprehensive component of vocational guidance and information specifically targeted at developing their awareness of the wide ranging occupational, vocational and professional options. Moreover they would need to be able to envision their future paths of social mobility laterally as well as vertically in the labour market. The Finnish education system seeks to promote occupational choices and mobility in line with individuals' potential. Youth's immigrant background should not limit the potential choices on their horizon.

Family supporting approaches could be developed to strengthen family coping in settlement and integration

Family policy is strong in the Welfare State system. However there would be need for family supporting measures which would assist settling families in the difficult phases of the settlement process. In the settlement services it would be important to adopt, as necessary, family approaches to problem-solving. The problems of members affect the whole family unit. At the same time, it is the family members who often will be the ones able to work together to bring about needed changes and solutions to problem situations.

Unemployment and in particular chronic unemployment of settling individuals or groups should be approached and addressed as a serious integration obstacle

Should settling persons remain outside the labour market for long periods or chronically, this erodes at the entire experience of integration. Multi-pronged/cross-sectoral measures are called for to in order to prevent social marginalization.

In order to utilize more effectively the human capital of more strongly educated settling individuals, profession equivalency programmes and anti-discriminatory measures would need to be reinforced to address barriers in the labour market

Networking is often discussed in relation to immigrant unemployment. However networking is not likely to be a sustainable solution to labour market integration of newer citizens and immigrants in the contemporary labour market arena.

It would be more straightforward and in line with the practice of equal opportunity and employment equity, to establish measures to ensure that the pool of *actual* candidates is open and not tied to networks, i.e., to de-couple the linkages between networks and jobs. This would apply to both private and public sectors. Paakkinen (2016) observes that it is a challenge to make use of the skills of the immigrants. To keep highly skilled people employed below their level in the Public Sector hardly makes sense.

There is a need for an information source in Vietnamese on all critical aspects of life in the society

There was a well supported request from across the participant groups for a source of comprehensive information in Vietnamese. Individuals would like to be familiar with all aspects of the society with which they interface – laws, regulations, taxes, schooling, official procedures and matters relating to immigrants. Some hoped that different forms, applications, official statements and documents (for example, relating to labour market services) could also be available in Vietnamese. The subjects' requests extended to practical information relating to churches, temples, and institutions which are part of their lives.

Individuals would like to keep abreast of current developments that affect their own lives and that of others, as well as not having to fall back on others or to remain uninformed and unaware. Such information would help to de-mystify many

areas with which newer citizens are not familiar. Clearly many had felt the lack of information in different situations.

Currently there is no web-site in Vietnamese. Subjects requested that the coverage of the proposed site/station/ channel should be nation-wide. It should also be taken into account that new workers, for example, in the green house market gardening sector would need information to have an understanding of their legal status and position. Some might be illiterate.

It was felt that the information source would need to be unbiased, to the point, neutral and trustworthy. Moreover there would be need for more than voluntary effort for this undertaking. It would involve salaried worker/s with strong language skill.

Formal consideration should be given to admitting workers from Vietnam to join the labour force. Relatives in Vietnam could be admitted in the context of labour migration

Individuals' relatives of working age would wish to come to Finland to work. At present the procedures for applying for permits are complicated and lengthy. Local travel related to submitting applications, is costly and the outcome uncertain. This was a request regarding the possibility of easing the procedures of application. It also touched on whether the consideration of Vietnamese candidates for work in Finland could be looked upon favourably.

The support and assistance of the Finnish Vietnamese families would serve as a ready reception and settlement support mechanism. In countries of immigration with labour migration policies, chain migration and family class immigration are established mechanisms that link immigration with labour market interests of the receiving countries. The admission of relatives of the current Vietnamese population in Finland to suitable sectors of the Finnish labour market could prove to be a timely labour market strategy to meet labour force demand.

Youth line for young immigrants needing advice or counselling

It was proposed that a Youth Line be started for young persons of immigrant background who might be facing difficult situations and would need an opportunity to discuss issues and/or seek advice and counselling.

The Friend Families Programme could be continued as a solid link to the new home society

Friend Families (a programme organized by the Finnish Red Cross since the early arrivals of Vietnamese) have been remembered for their welcoming and warm assistance during the early period of settlement. This programme or a similar programme for 'mentor' or 'friend families', would mean for newcomers a ready source of support and linking into the new society. Additionally it would be possible for settled individuals and families of immigrant background to undertake this role.

The Vietnamese elderly in the community would need access to caring and accommodation services where they can communicate in the mother tongue

The community have for some time been concerned about the current situation of the elderly, who are at the stage at which they would need to live in specially serviced accommodation such as homes for the aged. However, the elderly often lack the level of Finnish language skill that would be adequate for managing life in ordinary conditions in serviced accommodation for the elderly.

During the week, their relatives are at work or at school, leaving the elderly to manage on their own. It would be timely to scrutinize the possibility of developing serviced accommodation options where communication in the mother tongue would be possible for the elderly. This would entail, for example, revisiting staffing options that include Vietnamese speaking worker/s or adjusting accommodation patterns to enable elders to access service in their mother tongue.

It is recommended that feedback and input from refugee and immigrant service users be incorporated in the planning and development of settlement and integration services

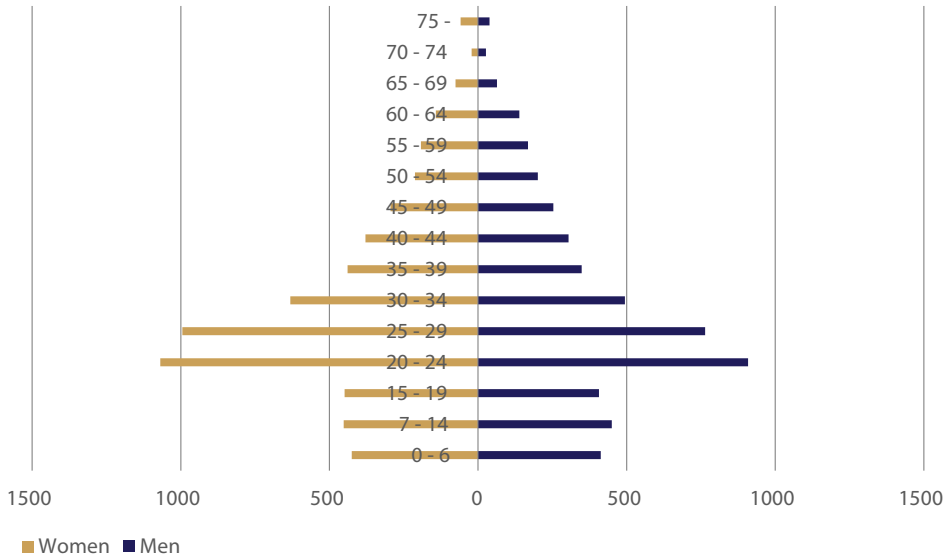
Much effort has gone into shaping the existing service system to meet the reception and integration needs of newcomers. Appreciation of this was very evident from the data. Nonetheless, procedures to elicit feedback from immigrant service users themselves would contribute experience-based information and insights which would be useful in developing the service system.

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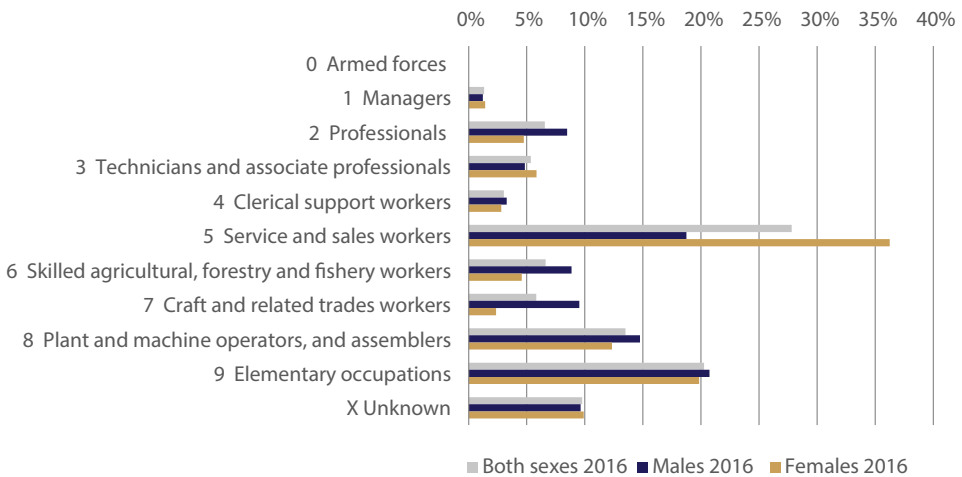
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Appendix 1. Statistical Information

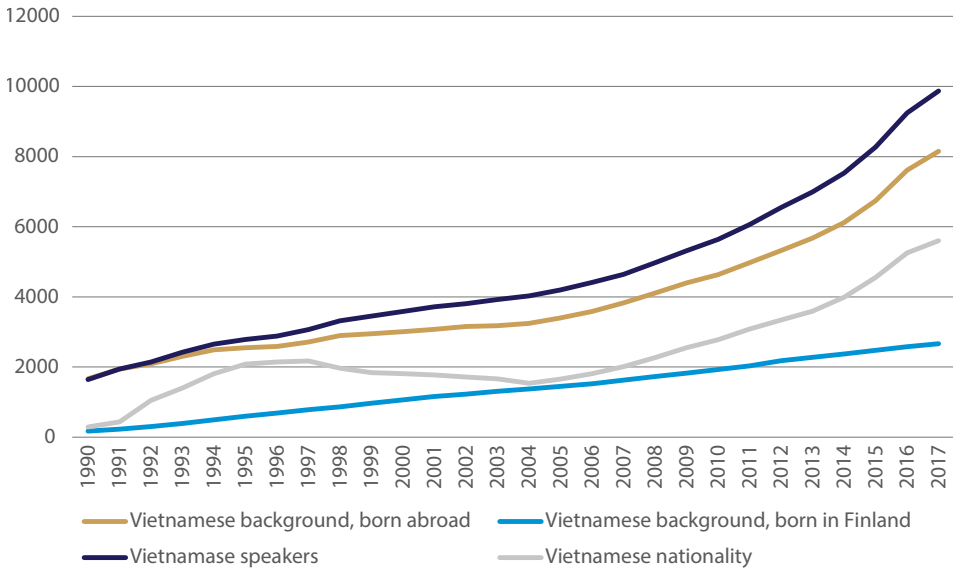
Population with vietnamese background 2017



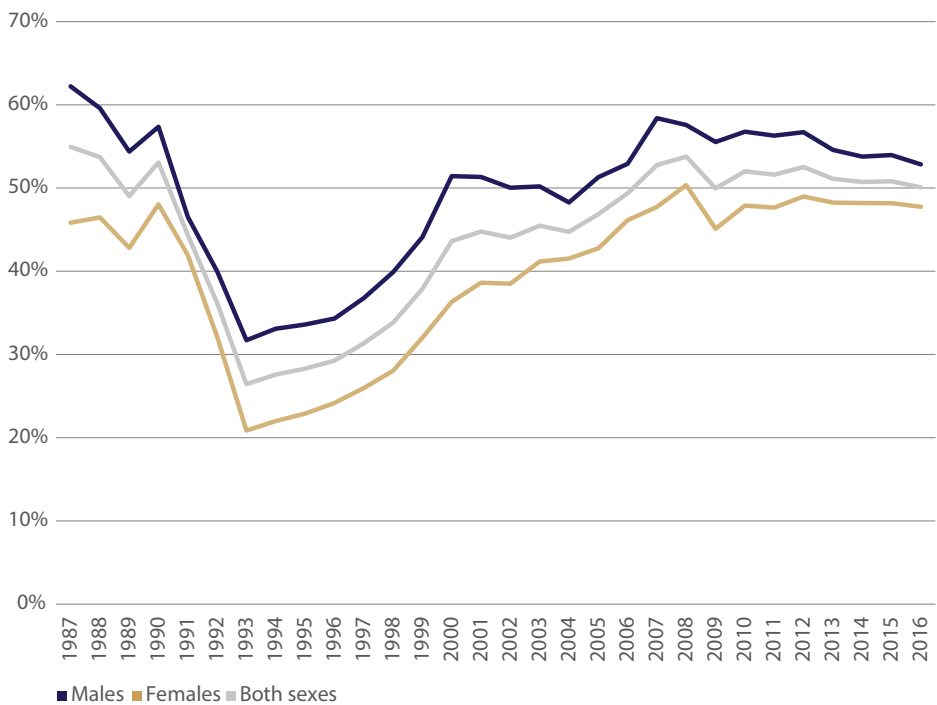
Employed persons by occupation, vietnamese background 2016



Vietnamese population in Finland 1990–2017



Employment rate, vietnamese background, 18–64 year old population



Appendix 2. UNHCR nine internationally accepted goals for integration of resettled refugees

The *UNHCR Integration Handbook: Refugee Resettlement* (2002) also provides a definition of settlement that is based on the concept of integration. According to UNHCR, the nine internationally accepted goals for integration of resettled refugees are:

- To restore refugees' security, control, and social and economic independence;
- To promote the capacity for refugees to rebuild a positive future in a receiving society;
- To promote family reunification;
- To promote connections with volunteers and professionals able to provide support;
- To restore confidence in political systems and institutions, human rights, and the rule of law;
- To promote cultural and religious integrity and restore attachments to community and culture;
- To counter racism, discrimination, and xenophobia and build welcoming communities;
- To support the development of strong, cohesive refugee communities;
- To foster conditions which support refugees of different ages, family statuses, gender, and past experience.

(UNHCR 2002) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2002) 'Part 3.3 Investing in the Future: Refugee Children and Young People' in *UNHCR Refugee Resettlement Handbook*.

Appendix 3. Definitions

Refugees include individuals recognized under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, its 1967 Protocol, the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, those recognized in accordance with the UNHCR Statute, individuals granted complementary forms of protection, and those enjoying temporary protection. In Latin America 15 countries have included the refugee criteria recommended by the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees. While they also recognize refugees under this regional refugee definition, no distinction is made for statistical purposes. The refugee population also includes people in refugee-like situations that includes groups of people who are outside their country or territory of origin and who face protection risks similar to those of refugees but for whom refugee status has, for practical or other reasons, not been ascertained.

Asylum-seekers (with 'pending cases') are individuals who have sought international protection and whose claims for refugee status have not yet been determined. Those covered in this report refer to claimants whose individual applications were pending at the end of 2017, irrespective of when those claims may have been lodged.

Internally displaced persons are people or groups of people who have been forced to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or man-made disasters, and who have not crossed an international border. For the purposes of UNHCR's statistics, this population includes only IDPs displaced by conflict or violence and of concern to UNHCR to whom the Office extends protection or assistance. The IDP population also includes people in an IDP-like situation including groups who are inside their country of nationality or habitual residence and who face protection risks similar to those of IDPs but who, for practical or other reasons, could not be reported as such.

Returned refugees (returnees) are former refugees who have returned to their countries of origin, either spontaneously or in an organized fashion, but are yet to be fully integrated. Such returns normally would take place only under conditions of safety and dignity. For the purposes of this report, only refugees who returned

between January and December 2017 are included, although in practice operations may assist returnees for longer periods.

Returned IDPs refers to those IDPs who were beneficiaries of UNHCR’s protection and assistance activities, and who returned to their areas of origin or habitual residence between January and December 2017. in practice, however, operations may assist IDP returnees for longer periods.

Individuals under UNHCR’s statelessness mandate are defined under international law as those not considered as nationals by any State under the operation of its law. in other words, they do not possess the nationality of any State. UNHCR statistics refer to people who fall under the agency’s statelessness mandate as those who are stateless according to this international definition, but data from some countries may also include people with undetermined nationality.

UNHCR has been given a global mandate by the United nations General Assembly to contribute to the prevention and reduction of statelessness and to the identification and protection of stateless persons. UNHCR also works with populations at risk of statelessness in line with its mandate to prevent statelessness, but these population groups are not reflected in this statistical report.

Other groups or persons of concern refers to individuals who do not necessarily fall directly into any of these groups but to whom UNHCR has extended its protection or assistance services, based on humanitarian or other special grounds. (UNHCR: Global Trends in Forced Displacement 2017)

ENDNOTES

¹ The UNHCR three durable solutions that enable refugees to live their lives in dignity and peace are voluntary repatriation (should conditions improve sufficiently in the country of origin), settlement in a neighbouring country or proximate location where condition resemble those of the homeland, and Third Country Resettlement (resettlement in another country of reception).

² “In the 1950s the Finnish economy started to industrialize, prompting people to move from more rural areas to urban centers in the southern part of the country. Despite the increase in factory jobs in larger towns, however, there was not enough work or housing for all of the newly arriving internal migrants. Sweden and its own industrial sector thus lured hundreds of thousands of Finns to emigrate with the promise of higher salaries, better living standards, and more available housing. The freedom of movement between Nordic countries, the devaluation of the Finnish currency, and Sweden’s already-established Finnish community also contributed to this flow of emigration.

By the 1980s, emigration to Sweden slowed as living standards and wages in Finland approached Swedish levels; many Finns who had previously migrated to Sweden began to return” (Tanner 2011).

³ Statistics Finland 2017.

⁴ The benefits of a residual model of welfare are marginal (meagre) and usually temporary. See Sainsbury (1991).

⁵ See Helsingin Sanomat 13.8.2018, A24. ‘Rahalähetyksistä on kasvanut suuri tulovirta’. Article by Hiilamo, E-A. And Näre, L.

⁶ In 2013, workers of foreign background were only 3.4 percent of the Public Sector work force (Paakkinen 2017).

⁷ These are resettlement-related work in the so-called ‘ethnospecific’ sector where workers’ cultural knowledge and language skills are central (Forsander 2013)

Nordic Vietnamese – Our Community in Finland

The study Nordic Vietnamese – Our Community in Finland was conducted in 2017–2018 and is a qualitative investigation that examines how the Vietnamese have fared in the 40 year period over which they have settled in Finland and have made it their second home society. The study population numbered approximately 150 persons settled in different areas and regions of Finland. They represented the age spectrum from teenage to elderly in their 70s. The range of educational levels and occupation backgrounds was wide in this cross section of the Finnish Vietnamese community. The data collection focused on main facets of settlement and integration.

The chief findings and proposals related to the need for reception and integration services to be integrated by the admission of non-native Finns (workers of the same ethno cultural backgrounds as the settling groups) to the work force in the social work and social services provision to settling refugees and immigrants. Furthermore, the mother tongue instruction programme should be resourced more strongly and reinforced alongside the school curricula. The number of elderly in the refugee communities is increasing. Some have come to the stage at which they would need to access serviced accommodation where it would be possible to communicate in their mother tongue, since their Finnish language skill is usually inadequate for managing independently.

The above proposals would be likely to bring about considerable economic saving in the settlement and integration services. They would help to avoid long-term settlement problems and more costly interventions. Furthermore, the life quality and integration experience of settling families and individuals would benefit.

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