

How this Literature Review Was Prepared

Literature Review: Refugee Urban Integration

A FEINSTEIN INTERNATIONAL CENTER BRIEF 

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This is a section of a broad literature review on refugee urban integration that was conducted by the Refugees in Towns Project (RIT) at Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University beginning in December 2017 and being continually updated with new publications. It was conducted to inform the public, academics, and policymakers about the state of refugee urban integration, and to prepare the RIT project for analysis of original data on refugee integration collected from towns around the world.

All references that are available online have a URL link provided in text. Full citations are in the Works Cited document.

For this review, we searched journals related to the topic of forced migration, urban studies, and the various domains of integration ranging from economic to social integration. Keyword searches were conducted through Tufts University's online libraries, Harvard's Hollis catalogue, the Refworld database, and Google Scholar. Given the policy and practice relevance of the subject, grey literature from policy and practitioner reports was included.

Within the literature there is a blurring of practice, policy, theory, and largely anecdotal case studies at the local, national, and international levels, and sources only occasionally present methods or acknowledge limitations. For example, academic writers frequently reference data from practitioners in building academic theory without assessing the methodology—or lack thereof—of practitioners' data. Similarly, policymakers and practitioners often rely on one-off case studies of a single country or city conducted by an academic researcher to design programming or strategic plans, without considering the limitations or generalizability of the case.

The literature is further muddled by the proliferation of unreviewed, non-evidence-based humanitarian online journals, blogs, podcasts, professionally dressed-up field reports, and flashy visual multimedia. Online searches like Google Scholar compound this problem: rigorous academic work tends to be at the end of search results or buried behind paywalls. Meanwhile, flashy online blogs that lack rigorous methodology in their work are free, and readily appear in query results and email listservs. To address these issues, this literature review examined the citations and methodologies of each item using six criteria: “accuracy; representativeness; relevance; generalisability; attribution; and clarity around context and methods” ([Knox-Clarke and Darcy 2014](#): 17). Grey literature and other nonacademic sources were included so long as methods and limitations were gleanable, even if these aspects were not described using academic terminology.

“Integration,” “urban,” and “refugees” are all contested terms: therefore, references that did not explicitly use these terms were included as long as the underlying meaning was within the scope of this review. For example, a report on social cohesion of internally displaced persons (IDPs) would be included, even if the term “social cohesion” is not an exact synonym for “social integration,” and IDPs are the population of focus, not explicitly refugees. The review includes a detailed description of terminology and explanation of how these terms overlap and differ. For ease of reading, all references are listed as abbreviated footnotes with hyperlinks whenever available. For full references, see the Works Cited document.