

Resettlement & Employment

What does academic research tell us?

DR SARA KINDON, MS TESSA BARDSLEY & MS HAYLEY VAUGHAN
SCHOOL OF GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT & EARTH SCIENCES
VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
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Session Overview

- ❑ **Why is employment important within resettlement and integration?**
 - ❑ Discussion and ideas from delegates
 - ❑ What does the research tell us?
- ❑ **What are the ongoing challenges?**
- ❑ **What is meaningful and sustainable employment?**
 - ❑ Discussion and ideas from delegates
 - ❑ What does the research tell us?
- ❑ **What are future opportunities?**
- ❑ **Conclusion**

Why is employment important
within resettlement & integration?

What does the research tell us?



Social Inclusion

Financial Security

Wellbeing

Identity

(Nunn et al., 2014)

Employment is important to enable people to:

- Experience self-worth and hope
- Become financially independent
- Practise and master English
- Use and learn skills
- Meet and make friends
- Develop a sense of belonging
- Put down roots
- Be a contributing member of society

Build
&
mobilise
social capital

(Colic-Peisker & Tilbury 2007, Elliott & Yusuf 2014, ENAR 2016, Jackson & Bauder 2014)

Social Capital

- ❑ People's relationships with their networks and how these networks impact shared norms, trust, reciprocity and social agency.
- ❑ People with strong social capital are well connected to information, resources, and other people. Their economic, physical, and emotional wellbeing increases, and they are more able to contribute to society.
- ❑ Employment represents a two-way flow of social capital between individuals and society.

(Mohan & Mohan 2002)

What are the ongoing challenges?

What does the Research tell us?

- **Individual**
 - Expectations of self and work
 - Cycles of optimism and despair
 - Family and cultural obligations
 - Mobilising skills and social capital

- **Host Society**
 - Communication of job opportunities
 - Language support
 - Recognition of overseas qualifications or relevant experience
 - Unconscious bias of employers
 - Potential mismatch of skills with local shortages
 - Media mis-representation, societal discrimination

(Cheung & Phillimore 2013, Fozdar 2011, Lundberg 2013, Povrzanovic & Frykman 2012, Searle 2011, Tilbury & Colic Peisker 2006)

"I worked for a woman's clothing store. It was so funny because [back at home] I was dealing with land disputes and had six death attempts. One of them I got thrown out of a police SUV and two of my bodyguards and one of my lawyers were killed. And a year later I was selling women's dresses. It was pretty crazy" (Gill, participant in study by Jackson and Bauder 2014)

- Occupational downward mobility via deskilling and/or segregation
- Underemployment and lack of fulfilment

- **In NZ:**

Technicians/Trades	23%
Labourers	18%
Community and Personal Service Workers	13%
Managers/Professional	11%

(Searle et al., 2012: viii)

'How can these people [resettling refugees] increase ... their level in Canada and learn about Canadian culture and their education if they are working as dogs all the time? It's crazy.'

(Omer, participant in study by Jackson & Bauder 2014)

- 'Refugee jobs' may be 3D: dirty, disempowering, or demeaning
- Precarious, short-term, low status, low paid, shift work, long or unpredictable hours ('secondary labour market')
- May be compounded by lack of security/stability and/or lack of belonging or comfort with workplace culture

(Colic-Peisker & Tilbury 2006)

What is meaningful and sustainable employment?

Meaningful & sustainable employment means:

Employees experience:

- Dignity
- Social connection, friendships
- Stability and trust
- Self-sufficiency
- Sense of place
- Reciprocity
- Upward mobility
- Future orientation

Employers experience:

- Content and motivated workers
- Higher productivity and creativity
- Diverse and harmonious workplaces
- Loyalty

- “Empowered refugees are more likely to create positive change in their own lives and the lives of others by organising their own initiatives, or lobbying for programme improvements” (Deloitte, 2016:16)

(Fleay et al., 2013, Nunn et al., 2014)

Workplace relationships more than neighbourhood relationships influence a [former] refugee's sense of belonging as they bridge the gap between individual and wider society more effectively.

(Ager & Strang 2008, CRF 2012, Lunnon 2016, Searle 2011)

What are future opportunities?

What's being recommended internationally?

- Reconceptualise employment pathways as non-linear, diverse and long-term (Nunn et al., 2014; Willriott & Stevenson 2013)
- Consider skill-shortages in decisions about where to resettle people
- Enhance pathways between volunteer and paid work; and between education and work
- Streamline overseas qualification recognition processes
- Better resource diverse communities' specialised job networks, language providers, mental health support as well as research and advocacy organisations (Bakker et al., 2014)
- Challenge employer misconceptions of cost (OECD & UNHCR 2016)

Positioning
Employers as
Well-
Integrated
Agents of
Change who
can:

- Increase their knowledge of refugee rights – and work closely with resettlement agencies and refugee-led organisations
- Provide varied employment opportunities for different kinds of people that are meaningful and secure
- Foster employees' social capital
- Develop general workplace competency in inter-cultural communication
- Provide on-the-job language learning

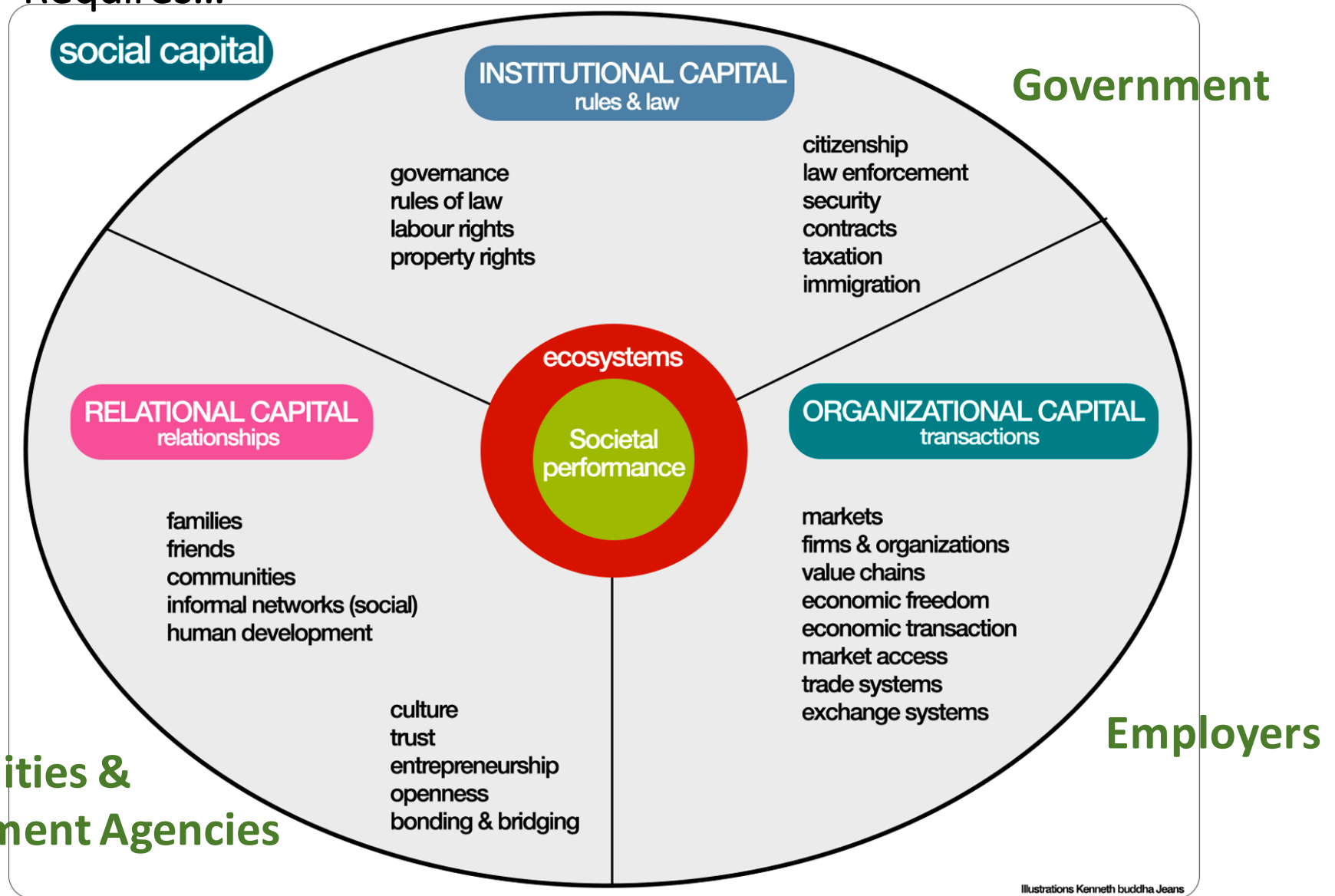
(ENAR 2016, Jackson & Bauder 2014, Vaughan & Hogg 2018)

Wider Strategies

- Support employers with adequate resources, information, training and incentives (ENAR 2017)
- Research, analyse and learn from success stories (employees & employers)
- Work with media to build knowledge and understanding about refugees, challenge stereotypes, promote diversity and reduce discrimination (Dorffer-Hvalkoff 2016)

Conclusion

Enabling Employment within Refugee Resettlement Requires...



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