

– AFTERWORD –

AFTERWORD:

WHAT NEXT FOR INTEGRATION IN AOTEAROA
NEW ZEALAND?

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It is easy for research publications to present strong contributions which are of importance for policy makers and support services and for communities themselves but which are short of practical action. The new ‘impact’ agendas in higher education have within them a desire for research to respond to and to enable better policy-making for the public good. As a critic and conscience, the work of scholars in Aotearoa New Zealand has long had this element in-built. So what might we draw out as actions and next steps from this volume? As a reader of the volume, and as someone who witnesses the work of integrating and as an integration policy-worker myself, I offer the following ten points as a guide for things people of good will and conscience might wish to do, including avenues for future research.

1. Abandon the understanding of integration as the equivalent to assimilation; ensure integration is understood as a multilateral process, changing everyone involved and changing society.
2. Accept that there are often stages to integrating, and that confidence, agency and connections are not automatic. Let those who have made their homes, or been alongside those making their homes for many years post resettlement, meet and share their confidence and advice, and, (most of all) their stories with others.
3. Let it be slow. Integration is not ‘going badly’ if people are struggling with English language learning in their first two years of language learning. They are having a completely normal experience of language learning!
4. Do not try to tackle prejudice and discrimination with ‘awareness raising’. There is some evidence that this actually makes it worse (Berry, Garcia-

Blanco, and Moore 2015). Instead, use the laws against racial hatred and discrimination.

5. Find the things which can be changed at a structural level, for example access to higher education, family reunion, and housing for all, then campaign and work for those structures to change. With resettled refugees employment is key, and barriers are in Health and Safety regulations. Not every job needs fluency in English, so try to enable employers and regulations to adapt sensibly.
6. Understand that being unable to be visited by family or to visit family is very difficult indeed and this is the reason why community proxy-family celebrations and therapeutic landscapes are vital. It may well not be that the trauma of war or oppression is what is troubling, but homesickness and missing family; again, normal experiences for human beings.
7. Celebrate, document, and where appropriate, critique *Mangere*. This centre is an extraordinary antidote to the detention facilities around the world. Its history is very significant to the history of Aotearoa New Zealand. It features strongly in the narrative accounts present across this volume. It forms part of the public imaginary in the country, associated with resettlement, and a more systematic and public presence and understanding can aid integrating attempts, if the history and function of the centre is better understood.
8. Make sure the structures of the hosts are changing too. Consider, for example, what it means to organise a meeting, how seating and timings are communicated, and the assumptions made of languages or interpretation or rhythms of the day. No policy made without those with direct experience is really in their interests, and certainly cannot claim to be. Have Council meetings outside the normal offices and in the places people go to and feel at home in. Find mutual safe spaces. Make sure rooms where decisions are made are diversified, so the decision making is not just from within the narrow perspectives of functionaries.
9. Avoid the tired tropes of 'poor English, racism and trauma.' The deficit-based models are tired and do not serve to break the vicious circles. The positive inquiry models allow for the worlds which co-exist with the difficulties to be brought into critical view. Avoid tropes about 'contribution' or 'deserving refugees' or 'grateful refugees' remembering that to seek asylum is a human right. Nothing more is needed.

10. Enjoy people and the diverse epistemologies which enrich the intellectual landscape and enable new thinking while relating this also to the work under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, where much of the struggle, difficulty and justice of integration and settlement has been worked out before this particular wave of work with refugees.

NOTES

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REFERENCES

- Berry, Mike, Inaki Garcia-Blanco, and Kerry Moore. 2015. 'Press Coverage of the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in the EU: A Content Analysis of Five European Countries.' Report prepared for the UNHCR. Accessed 9 December 2020 from <https://www.unhcr.org/protection/operations/56bb369c9/press-coverage-refugee-migrant-crisis-eu-content-analysis-five-european.html>