

Institution: University of Strathclyde
Unit of Assessment: 25
Title of case study: Enhanced professional status and employment prospects of refugee teachers
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Research by Smyth and colleagues into diversification of the teaching profession resulted in the formation of Refugees Into Teaching in Scotland (RITeS) funded initially by the European Refugee Fund and then the Scottish Government. RITeS has enabled professionals who were teachers in their country of origin and arrived in the UK seeking asylum to maintain their professional identity and revitalise their professional skills in a new education system, leading to employment opportunities through identification as teachers rather than refugees. The project provided information on the specific needs of 387 refugee teachers to the General Teaching Council for Scotland and to employing local authorities. RITeS has been used as a model for similar projects with teachers in England and other refugee professionals in Scotland.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Context</p> <p>A key problem identified in previous research relates to the limited diversity of the teaching profession in most of the Western world. Recruitment of Ethnic Minorities Into Teaching (REMIT), funded by Greater Opportunities for Access to Learning in Scotland (GOALS) attempted to find solutions to this problem with limited success. Anniesland Further Education College, the largest provider of English Language classes for newly arrived asylum seekers in Scotland, brought to REMIT's attention that there were a significant number of teachers among the refugee and asylum seeking population in Glasgow who may be able to increase the number of teachers from Ethnic Minorities in Scotland. In 2003, supported by the General Teaching Council for Scotland, REMIT organised a seminar with refugee teachers which led directly to seeking funding for RITeS. The research question was how to address the re-professionalisation of this group of refugee teachers in a new country while resultantly increasing the ethnic and linguistic diversity of the teaching profession in Scotland. RITeS, based at the University of Strathclyde, was funded by the European Refugee Fund in 2005-6 and by the Scottish Government, West Forum General Teaching Council for Scotland and the Educational Institute of Scotland in 2006-11.</p> <p>Key Findings</p> <p>The research project engaged directly with 387 refugee teachers throughout its existence (2005-2011). The first part of the research used structured interviews to construct an original database of demographic factors (age, gender, ethnicity, languages spoken) in addition to professional details regarding teaching qualifications and teaching experience of all. This database provided an accurate picture of the range of skills, experience and qualifications in the whole group. In the second part of the research, in-depth semi-structured interviews and observations of practice were conducted by the project co-ordinator with a 10% sample of the teachers. This produced a substantial body of data regarding the barriers and enablers for re-professionalisation of this group. The study revealed evidence of cultural, institutional and structural racism operating to exclude these teachers from employment opportunities.</p> <p>Throughout the project the refugee teachers were involved in designing a programme of support for their professional development and this part of the research project resulted in findings concerning the self-perceptions of professional development needs of overseas professionals.</p> <p>Key Researchers</p> <p>Professor G.Smyth was Reader in the School of Education at the time of the research. Dr H.Kum, project co-ordinator, was Research Fellow in the School of Education 2010 -11. Professor I. Menter, then University of Glasgow, was an academic collaborator.</p>
<p>3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>[1] Smyth, G., & Kum, H. (2010). 'When they don't use it they will lose it': Professionals, deprofessionalization and reprofessionalization: the case of refugee teachers in Scotland.</p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

Journal of Refugee Studies, 23(4), 503-522, doi: 10.1093/jrs/feq041

Notes on quality: Double blind peer reviewed Journal article; **submitted in REF2 for UoA25.**

[2] Smyth, Geri (2010) 'Bilingual teachers: what role do they actually play in education?' in Ringen, B-K and Kjørven, O.K. Teacher diversity in a diverse school – challenges and opportunities for teacher education: Opplandske Bokforlag, Norway.

Notes on quality Peer reviewed publication

[3] Kum, Henry, Menter, Ian and Smyth, Geri (2010) 'Changing the face of the Scottish teaching profession?– the experiences of refugee teachers' Irish Educational Studies special issue on Race in Education Volume 29 Issue 3, pp.321- 338. DOI:10.1080/03323315.2010.498570

Notes on quality: Double blind peer reviewed journal article

[4] Kum, Henry, Menter, Ian and Smyth, Geri (2008) Refugees into Teaching in Scotland Research Report online at

http://www.strath.ac.uk/media/departments/childhoodandprimarystudies/rites/ritesresearchprojectreport/Final_Report_Dec_08.pdf

Notes on quality: The RITeS Project was awarded 5* beacon status by the original funders, the European Refugee Fund.

[5] Hartshorn, Bryce, Hextall, Ian, Howell, Irene, Menter, Ian and Smyth, Geri (2005) Systematic Literature Review For The General Teaching Council for Scotland: Widening Access To The Profession, General Teaching Council for Scotland, Edinburgh (Research report).

Notes on quality: Result of competitively awarded external grant funding from General Teaching Council for Scotland

Other evidence for quality of research

The research referred to in this section resulted from the RITeS (Refugees Into Teaching in Scotland) project for which Professor Geri Smyth was Principal Investigator and grant holder. The project received an initial grant of £75k from the European Refugee Fund for year 2004-05 and was subsequently awarded 5* Beacon status by the external evaluators. The RITeS project was subsequently awarded grants of £143k (2006-2008) by the Scottish Executive Education Department and £165k (2008-2010) and £93k (2010-2011) by the Scottish Government to continue its work with Smyth as PI. In August 2006, an additional £50k was awarded from the West Access Forum to conduct ethnographic research with the refugee teachers.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Process from research to impact

Research at the University of Strathclyde that identified the barriers and enablers to re-professionalisation of refugee teachers was disseminated widely through a number of processes: via the Scottish Insight Institute international programme on Refugee Integration (2009); dissemination in Canada and Australia (2010); a DVD circulated to all schools in Scotland; ESRC seminar series Diverse Teachers for Diverse Learners (2011-12); Nordforsk research network Diverse Teachers for Diverse Learners (from 2011, with Geri Smyth as UK leader). The research was also disseminated to policy-makers and stakeholders through a published report that was made widely available online, through peer-reviewed journal papers, and through articles in the media and in professional journals.

On receipt of funding from the European Refugee Fund, the first task was to design and develop a database of refugee teachers in Scotland. This database now holds details of nearly 400 refugee teachers in Scotland, with data related to demographic and professional details. The database design was then adopted by the Refugees Into Teaching group (RIT) funded by the Teacher Development Agency in England. The database was seen as such an important way of capturing this detail that RIT sought training from Strathclyde staff to develop a similar database. The project also shared data with the Scottish Refugee Council and the Bridges Projects in order to maximise available support services for refugee professionals in Scotland. The Scottish Government funded

Impact case study (REF3b)

scoping study on *Support Mechanisms for the Recognition of the Skills, Learning and Qualifications of Migrant Workers and Refugees* led by the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Partnership [Source A] concluded by providing three options for the Scottish Government to develop a service to support the recognition of skills and qualifications of refugees and migrants in Scotland. The study found that: *“specific [...] expertise exists within the HEI sector, as a result of past-projects and activity, including the RITeS project”* and the evidential experience of RITeS was considered in the development of the final options.

Types of Impact**Improved support and training for refugee teaching staff:**

An integral part of the RITeS project was the provision of tailored support for the refugee teachers no matter their immigration status or teaching background. The need to clearly identify these needs in a detailed fashion was quickly spotted as a research opportunity and funding was received from the West Access Forum to pursue this. The resulting interviews and observational field notes resulted in a rich body of data which were disseminated via RITeS Management forum meetings and public events. This data shaped subsequent programme provision and was disseminated to local authorities to assist in their planning of Continuing Professional Development for teachers. A statement from Glasgow City Council (GCC) indicates: *“As a result of the research undertaken identifying refugee teachers, a large number of RITES teachers had work shadowing placements in GCC schools. This had a number of benefits: For RITES teachers - an opportunity to use their skills in Glasgow schools, to observe classroom practice and learning experiences, to understand differences between education in Glasgow and their own experiences. For host schools - many of these placements were very successful. Schools gained an enhanced understanding of the needs of refugee teachers and of refugee issues in general. The teachers were often able to use their language skills to support children with English as an Additional language and to help with promoting first languages in the school. For children - for many refugee children, it was an opportunity to see someone from their background in a position of importance in the school”* [Source B].

Accreditation and Union membership for refugee teachers:

The data was also able to guide the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) as they considered the accreditation needs of internationally educated teachers and future employers regarding the employment support needs of such teachers. The GTCS subsequently gave priority status to the challenges and opportunities facing refugee teachers in Scottish schools as a focus for teacher research to be supported by the Council. This enabled refugee teachers to participate in GTCS funded research.

The research findings demonstrated the significance of financial hardship as a barrier to re-entry to the profession. The Head of Registration at the GTCS wrote: *“One area the research discovered that was problematic for RiTES applicants was the financial implication of applying for and being awarded registration. The GTCS decided that we would waive the initial registration fee of £60 which eased the burden”* [Source C]. The Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS: the main trade union representing teachers in Scotland) waived membership fees for all those on the database whether teaching in Scotland or not. This gave teachers access to professional fora essential for their continuing relationship with the profession. A letter from the National Officer, Education and Equality, EIS, states *“it is the view of the EIS that the research undertaken through the RITeS project has directly and indirectly benefited refugee and asylum seeking teachers. --- It was decided to alter our constitution and create a new category of membership of our trade union for refugee and asylum seeking teachers – an associate membership, free for refugee and asylum seeking teachers until they gained employment”* [Source D].

Additionally the Scottish Government recognised the need to work alongside the RITeS project to assist in the Race Equality Scheme Action Plan [Source E]. The data helped to inform local authorities and the General Teaching Council for Scotland of the specific needs of refugee and ethnic minority teachers. The importance of enabling the development of professional capital in the new country was recognised in planning support for such teachers. In addition to the EIS waiving membership fees, local authorities provided staff free of charge to deliver CPD to the

group and the GTCS paid initial registration fees for the refugee teachers.

Increased official debate and public awareness of problems faced by asylum seekers:

The recognition of the personal and institutional racism faced by many of the refugee teachers led to local authority provision of training for their staff to help them consider better the future needs of the group. A statement from the Head of Policy, Scottish Refugee Council indicated “*Findings from the RiTeS research concerning the skills atrophy of professionals in the asylum process in Scotland continues to play an important element in our campaigning and lobbying discourse around the right to work for people seeking asylum. We are pleased that there is strong cross-party support for this measure in Scotland and for the benefits that people seeking asylum could bring to the workforce, society and economy, evidenced recently in a debate in the Scottish Parliament*” [Source F].

Improved language training opportunities: The research findings indicated the barrier represented by limited knowledge of classroom English and this influenced the development of specific English Language for teaching classes at Anniesland College. The Principal of the college [Source G] wrote “*Policy at the highest level of government was affected by the RiTeS project: education was enhanced and learning for refugees was goal orientated. Longer term it also had an impact on the qualifications that were developed at a national level.*”

Exact numbers of refugee teachers subsequently employed cannot be given as refugee status is not collected and nor does it need to be declared by employers. However, the number of ethnic minority teachers registered with the GTCS increased significantly through the support offered by the project partners which resulted from the dissemination of the research findings.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- A. The Scottish Government funded scoping study on *Support Mechanisms for the Recognition of the Skills, Learning and Qualifications of Migrant Workers and Refugees* led by the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Partnership July 2010.
<http://www.scqf.org.uk/content/files/SCQF%20migrant%20scoping%20study%20low%20res%20for%20website.pdf>
- B. Statement from Executive Director of Education, Glasgow City Council (GCC) and East Renfrewshire Council supports the claim that findings from research undertaken within the RiTeS project were used in order to identify employment needs of refugee teachers.
- C. Statement from Head of Registration Services General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) supports the claim that GTCS used findings from research undertaken within the RiTeS project in order to identify accreditation needs of refugee teachers and decided to pay initial registration fees for QTS of refugee teachers.
- D. Statement from National Officer Education and Equality, Educational Institute of Scotland supports the claim that based on findings from research undertaken within the RiTeS project which highlighted financial difficulties of refugee teachers, EIS decided to waive membership fees for all refugee teachers on the RiTeS database.
- E. Scottish Government Race Equality Scheme Action Plan
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/11/28092741/11> will support the claim that The Scottish Government decided to include RiTeS as partners in order to advance race equality in teachers’ employment for the Race Equality Scheme 2008-2011.
- F. Statement from Head of Policy, Scottish Refugee Council supports the claim that access to the RiTeS database maximised support services for refugee professionals.
- G. Statement from the Principal, Anniesland College, Glasgow supports the claim that Based on findings from research undertaken within the RiTeS project, Anniesland College devised specific English Language courses for refugee teachers.