Intergenerational relations and the settlement experiences of African migrants in northern England

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Aims

The report looks at how the migration and integration experiences of African migrants living in Yorkshire vary across family generations. The study was funded by the British Academy under its Research Development Scheme.

Methodology

Data was obtained over an 18 month period during 2008-09 through 40 biographical interviews with 20 families of African origin [Sudanese, Somali, Kenyan and Zimbabwean] living in Yorkshire. Interviews were also conducted with other key

individuals including community leaders, and local and national policy makers. Data was also gathered from focus group discussions conducted within the four African communities. All those involved in the study had lived in the UK for between five and 40 years and came to the UK by a range of migration paths [migrant workers, students, family joiners, refugees, EU citizens] – although many of the ‘child’ generation were British born.

Key issues

The report focuses on the intergenerational aspects of migration and its consequences. It looks at how the different generations from each of the four African countries involved in the study feel that their migration to the UK has affected relationships within the family, their cultural identity and the development of social networks. It also examines their views on welfare provision, education and employment, and their experiences of discrimination and prejudice. The report includes numerous [anonymised] quotes from those involved in the study.

Conclusions

Noteworthy conclusions include:

- Islamaphobia is an additional burden carried by many Muslim women because of their heightened visibility compared to men.

- Parenting across two cultures is challenging and can lead to the development of serious tensions between parents and their children.
- The most successful transitions post migration were found in those families where both parents and children developed strategies for embracing their new culture whilst maintaining key traditions from their country of origin.

Recommendations

The report states that integration policies should not mistake difficulties migrants have in being accepted in the UK for a lack of attachment to the country. It also offers a number of recommendations for policy makers around housing provision for, and the settlement and integration of, asylum seekers and emphasises the need for greater equality in education and employment for migrants.

Web Link
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Migrant Group
Asylum seekers
EU migrants
Non-EU migrants
Refugees
Students
Topic
Migration
Children

Education
Family migrants
Older people
Somali
Unemployment
Welfare entitlements
Young people
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