

# **The contribution of volunteers to co-producing refugee integration services**

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Since the beginning of the 2015 refugee crisis, non-profit organizations (NPOs) have played a crucial role in supporting refugees fleeing war and oppression in Syria, Afghanistan and most recently Ukraine. Vienna has often been in the limelight in this crisis, due to its geographical proximity to Hungary (which has been notable in its inhumane treatment of refugees) and Germany (where many refugees seek to settle) as well as being less than 600 kilometres from Ukraine. When thousands of refugees began arriving at train stations in Vienna, NPOs and volunteers quickly mobilized to support volunteers in cases where the government was slow to act (Meyer and Simsa, 2018; Boersma et al., 2019).

While previous research has illustrated how non-profit organizations and volunteers were instrumental in providing emergency support to refugees (e.g. housing, food and clothing, signposting to longer term support and services, etc.), we have less evidence about what happens after the initial crisis response, or how NPOs and volunteers support longer term refugee integration. Integration refers to “the strategy that refugee and autochthonous populations undergo in accepting cultural diversity and promoting equitable participation under one political system” (Feinstein et al., 2022, p. 2168). Integration is thus a complex area of both social service provision as well as societal/community change that requires the active participation of multiple stakeholders in order to create public value, or the collective needs and wants of citizens in society (McMullin, 2023).

Thus, in order to better understand the inputs of volunteers and non-profits to refugee integration, I apply frameworks of public value and co-production. In next section, I review the extant literature on public value creation, refugee integration, volunteering and co-production. This is followed by a brief description of the methodology of the current study. Then, I present an analysis of the case studies of co-production of refugee integration services in Vienna, Austria. Finally, I discuss the findings and implications for our understanding of co-production in the context of refugee integration.

## **1.1 Refugee integration and public value creation**

Integration of refugees into their new societies has become a key policy objective in countries where refugees have fled to. However, integration is a complex process with multiple conflicting interpretations. Ager and Strang (2008) usefully suggest that integration relates to four core domains: markers and means (i.e. access to employment, housing, education and healthcare); social connections (both bonding and bridging social capital); facilitators such as language acquisition and cultural knowledge; and a foundation of rights and citizenship.

Many government integration programs are often focused primarily on the markers and means and facilitators of integration, with a primary emphasis on work integration and language programs. However, Ager and Strang argue, meaningful integration is far more complex. Being ‘integrated’ into a society means having friends and social connections both with those from a similar national/ethnic background, as well as with local citizens. Integration is thus a complex policy problem that requires multiple inputs and subjective interpretations of both the problem and solutions. In this way, we can understand refugee integration through the lens of public value creation. According to Moore (1995), public value relates to the response to collective needs, which are jointly defined by the government and citizens. The universe of public values is broad, including notions of accountability, ethical decision-making, equity, justice and the protection of citizens’ rights (Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007). According to Bovaird and Loeffler

(2012), we can also distinguish between value to users, value to groups, social value, environmental value and political value.

In the case of refugee integration, there are potentially multiple conflicting values at stake: on the one hand, governments are driven by values of security and protection, which create conditions for excluding refugees and discouraging displaced people from entering the country. A contrasting narrative emphasizes instead the necessity of the public sector to minimize suffering, advance human rights, and ensure that refugees receive just treatment and the support they need to become successful new citizens (Geuijen et al., 2017). This latter value coalition is what underscores government and non-profit organization efforts towards refugee integration - there is a need for different stakeholder groups (i.e. public organizations, NPOs, refugees, local citizens) to contribute both to defining what types of public value are sought, as well as contributing to the process of value creation (Bovaird and Loeffler, 2012).

Understanding the (co-) creation of public value helps us to understand the contribution that non-profit organizations, and the volunteers who contribute to these organizations, can make towards refugee integration efforts in multiple ways. From a purely pragmatic perspective, government integration programs create only certain types of value, primarily within the realms of facilitating access to housing, employment, etc. (markers and means) and basic language training (facilitators).

However, non-profit organizations recognize the need for other types of value to be created. There are domains of integration which cannot be facilitated by government, most importantly the domain of social connections. As Geuijen and colleagues (2017) argue, the value created to address wicked problems such as forced migration is distributed across the institutions of government, civil society and private companies. At the local grassroots level in particular, government is especially dependent upon non-public organizations to organize social action.

## **1.2 The involvement of volunteers: co-production of refugee integration**

Co-production relates to the collaboration between traditional service providers and citizens, who would normally be passive beneficiaries, in the delivery of public services (Bovaird, 2007; Ostrom 1996). Co-production goes beyond consultation to involve citizens in collaborating directly with professional service providers in both the design and/or governance of public services, as well as in the direct delivery or implementation. For example, parents co-produce childcare services in co-operative nurseries by contributing to decision-making, chaperoning events and cleaning nurseries (Pestoff, 2006). Another example would be the involvement of older people in designing a program of support for lonely people in the community, which was then implemented by citizen volunteers who acted as peer mentors (McMullin, 2022, 2023).

In some areas, there is some conceptual blurriness about what it actually means for citizens to co-deliver public services, for instance, how laypeople might contribute to the delivery of specialized healthcare provision. The notion of public value thus helps us to better understand the range of activities that citizens contribute to in the public service provision process. Thus in the example of healthcare, while citizens cannot contribute to a surgery, they can contribute to service provision, and thus create value for themselves and other patients, through peer mentoring and expert patient programs (where people with a chronic health condition are trained to collaborate with healthcare providers to improve communication and health efficacy).

Co-production can be understood at different levels, based on who participates and who takes part – whether at the individual level (e.g. personalization of services), group level (e.g. peer support groups), or collective level (participation of groups of citizens to improve their wider community or society as a whole, with benefits extending beyond the group) (Nabatchi et al., 2017; McMullin, 2023). Public value can similarly be understood as having degrees of publicness, with arbiters of value at the individual level, collective/ voluntary association level, and government/ public level (Moore, 2014; Geuijen et al., 2017).

In relation to refugee integration, the value being sought – particularly social solidarity – is one that cuts across these levels, with questions of individual welfare, questions of what ‘we’ private individual citizens believe is valuable to us and to the community, and finally questions of how the power of government should be used to ensure the living conditions of people should be protected in a just society. This thus by its very nature necessitates the active involvement of refugees as well as the contribution of local citizens. Hence, volunteers from the local community are critical in creating bridging social capital, providing opportunities for refugees to gain language skills beyond the classroom, and in creating a welcoming society.

Volunteering benefits asylum seekers and refugees by increasing social ties, improving language skills and employability (Handy and Greenspan, 2009; Guo, 2014; Strokosch and Osborne, 2016). Involving refugees directly in creating individualized integration plans and developing new services are also important areas of co-production of integration services, but this also involves challenges of building trust and overcoming language barriers (Røhnebæk & Bjerck, 2021; McMullin, 2021).

## **2. Research Methods**

This research is based on qualitative fieldwork with NPOs in Vienna, Austria. Vienna was selected as the case for analysis because it is characterized by a unique constellation of factors that make it a rich context for the study of the role of NPOs and volunteers in refugee integration. First, Austria is characterized as a corporatist non-profit regime, meaning that a large non-profit sector plays a significant role in delivering social services (Neumayr et al., 2009). This means that, unlike contexts such as the Nordic countries, many responsibilities for social service provision are outsourced to NPOs, rather than being the sole responsibility of the state. Furthermore, previous research illuminated the key role that non-profit organizations played in Vienna in supporting refugees in the early stages of the 2015 refugee crisis (Meyer & Simsa, 2018; Simsa et al., 2019). Some refugees during this period transitioned through

Vienna towards other locations, but many remained, which raises the question of the role of NPOs in longer term integration in this context. Thus, the research design is one of nested case studies, focusing on multiple NPOs within the single context of Vienna, through four fieldwork visits from October 2022 to October 2023.

Data was collected via interviews with 20 individuals (6 volunteers, 8 senior staff, 2 policy officers, 2 frontline workers and 2 public servants) representing 11 organizations (3 social service, 3 social activities, 2 community centres, 1 advocacy, 1 mental health and 1 public). Of the non-profits, most employ paid staff and also engage volunteers in their activities, two are entirely volunteer-run, and one (mental health services) is run by professionals only, with no volunteers. Interviews were conducted in English, and were recorded (with informed consent of interviewees) and transcribed intelligent verbatim by the researcher. As someone not from Austria (and with a limited ability in German), my position as a qualitative researcher in this context is perhaps limited; however, I also benefit from the ‘benefits of strangeness’, and ability to observe and interpret things in a way that those native to a situation might see as taken-for-granted or not noteworthy (Soss, 2014).

Interviewees were asked about their organization’s services and activities offered to support the integration in refugees, the approaches of involving volunteers in these, the enablers and challenges to doing so, and about changes over time (particularly changes between the first wave of refugees in 2015 and war in Ukraine in 2022). In addition, interview data was triangulated with document analysis (newsletters, annual reports, website text) and 3 targeted ethnographic observations (at community centres and activities for refugees) totalling 3 hours and 30 minutes.

The research applied an abductive, iterative approach to data collection and analysis. Fieldwork was initiated in October 2022 with a general research aim regarding the role of refugees in co-

producing integration services. As fieldwork progressed and key themes began arising in interviews, the research focus was refined to concentrate on the role of both local and refugee volunteers in the provision of services to support the integration of refugees.

Data were analysed in NVivo in a three-step process of coding and analysis. The first round of open coding to identify key themes across the data, including services offered, the involvement of volunteers (in different types of activities, and the challenges and opportunities in doing so), and differences between the involvement of different groups (Middle Eastern and Ukrainian refugees, and the involvement of local volunteers). Through this round of coding, it became clear that volunteers contribute to the create of public value in multiple ways. Thus for the second round of theoretical coding, data were coded according to Ager and Strang's (2008) domains of refugee integration, or markers and means, social connections, facilitators, and foundation. This allowed us to identify how the contribution of volunteers working with NGOs support the creation of public value in the realm of refugee integration.

### **3. Analysis**

#### **3.1 Markers and means**

The markers and means of integration are comprised of employment, housing, education and health (Ager and Strang, 2008). Refugee and local citizen volunteers co-produce services in this domain in several ways. In relation to health, access to healthcare services is often a significant challenge for refugees (and other migrants) because of a lack of German language competence as well as cultural differences between Austrian society and refugees' home countries.

One way that non-profits engage volunteers in co-production in this area is a program of health literacy and information sharing, run by one of the social service non-profits, which is funded by the federal government under the integration portfolio. The program trains migrant

volunteers to deliver peer-to-peer information sessions about particular health topics (such as diabetes, women's health, nutrition or dementia). Information sessions are delivered in German or a range of migrants' native languages.

*“They [migrant volunteers] organise themselves completely. We are here just to get money for this project, to support them if they need something. If they have problems, they can ask. Basically, they get the knowledge from us and then they get a lot of material. They come here and choose, okay, I'll do something about food, and they can take this stuff.” (R4)*

The project thus fundamentally relies on the skills, connections and language abilities of migrant volunteers who serve to train, educate and signpost people from their community to relevant health information. Refugees' access to healthcare is also facilitated by the involvement of volunteers with a migration background in the provision of counselling services, and/or as interpreters for counselling services, which is a service offer provided by four of the NPOs studied. In these cases, refugee involvement is crucial in providing a cultural and language bridge between service users and service providers, enabling refugees to access mental healthcare to deal with trauma, domestic abuse and other mental health challenges.

In relation to employment, non-profits provide a range of formal and informal support for refugees to enter the job market, once they have received their formal asylum status (asylum seekers waiting on the approval of their application are not allowed to work, and are thus limited to the limited amount of 'basic support' provided to them by the state). Some NPOs have taken this one step further and have deliberately hired refugees as paid staff within their organization, such as one organization who hired a Syrian refugee trained as a psychologist to offer counselling services, despite the fact that she could speak no German:

*“We said we would like to give one job to a woman who is not so well integrated already here and if it's just that we give her the job and she does nothing actually, it will still be fine, because we gave a woman a job. [...] It will be great for her to have that in her CV, that she worked one year in a mental health project. So the social impact is really fine, even if she doesn't see one client. [...] Now it's crazy what she's doing. We have*

*so many women in the organisation who are coming to all those kind of services she's offering.” (R2)*

### **3.2 Social connections**

While public organizations can offer services that support some domains of integration – particularly in the markers and means of housing, education, and employment – there are certain areas of value that can only be collectively created between refugees themselves and other local people. These social connections are instrumental in helping people to feel at home, to combat loneliness and to build community.

#### ***Bridging social capital***

As Ager and Strang argue, integration is a ‘two-way’ process, which “points to the importance for integration to be seen as a process of mutual accommodation, and thus the need to consider means of social connection between refugees and those other members of the communities within which they settle.” (Ager and Strang, 2008, p. 177).

Perhaps the most important area where non-profits provide public value in the realm of refugee integration is facilitating the creation of social connections between refugees and other refugees, and between refugees and local Austrians. This occurs in many contexts. Several of the non-profits studied have as their primary aim to create new friendships or enjoyable social experiences for refugees. This is done through multiple forms of co-production, from both individual and group approaches. One form of co-production for social connections is ‘buddy’ projects, where a refugee is paired with a local Austrian person who provides some degree of support, but primarily aims to act as a friend or mentor. Four of the organisations provided such buddy pairing activities, with varying levels of formality and expectations on volunteers. These projects have been especially targeted at refugees from the Middle East who started arriving in 2015-2016, many of whom were young men on their own, or unaccompanied minors.

Refugees and local Austrians also volunteer in a range of group activities, which provides opportunities for the two sometimes detached groups to meet one another. As one non-profit staff member explained, one of her organization's activities was a cooking afternoon where refugee boys from Afghanistan prepared lunch, which people from the neighbourhood could buy. The project gave people the opportunity to bond over food and conversation, as well as increase the refugee boys' confidence and earn them a bit of money.

*"They had the feeling like they were offering something for the community. They got lovely feedback, excitement from people. "Wow, how cool is that!" Because otherwise it's like, "Oh, one of those refugees." That was the starting point. The more they kind of got more language skills, the more options we could give them in supporting." (R6)*

This motivation to create value through shared experiences and build connections is one that resonated with the approach of several of the organizations interviewed, including one organization run entirely by volunteer efforts, which pairs local citizens with refugees as ' tandems ' - not as volunteers but rather to build friendships between refugees and locals. [...]

### ***Bonding social capital***

Non-profits also support the creation of bonding social capital between refugees, by creating spaces where refugees can meet others from their home country and opportunities to develop their own shared activities (often in their native language). Several interviewees spoke about activities for Ukrainian refugees. One NPO has opened an entire community centre for Ukrainian refugees, which offers meals, clothes and most importantly, spaces for socializing and for Ukrainian volunteers to run their own services and activities for their community, such as sewing, yoga and dance classes. An interviewee described on such Ukrainian volunteer who is teaching English classes from the community centre.

*"She says that also gives her the feeling that she is useful and that she can do something, that she can support other Ukrainians and that she doesn't feel like she's, firstly, waiting for the war to stop, and secondly learning German and then there's a lot of spare time*

*left where she's not doing anything because she can't, because she didn't manage to find a job.” (R15)*

Many integration services involve volunteers with lived experience of forced displacement themselves, and sometimes paid staff members as well.

### **3.3 Facilitators**

As Agar and Strang explain, one of the key domains of integration is in the factors that act as facilitators in the process, which mainly consists of an ability to communicate with people in the host society, as well as a feeling of safety and security. These values are achieved through the delivery of services and activities in two areas: language classes for refugees, and support through translation and interpretation by speakers of refugees’ native languages.

#### ***Language acquisition***

One of the key areas of integration is facilitators, and acquiring a working knowledge of the language of the host society is instrumental to this. In Vienna, [asylum seekers are offered German classes funded by the Integration Fund .....]. Many non-profit organizations also offer a range of less formal German classes as well as conversation practice activities (language partners, German language ‘cafes’). Several interviewees explained that non-profits offer these types of settings for informal language practice because it is crucial to actually use the language in everyday life.

*“Our focus in German training always being more on the informal learning, because there was and is a lot of choices where you can go to German courses. But our impression was, what is really needed and what we saw was really needed is this kind of connecting with the locals, and having a place to train what you get from the course, because at home you can read from the book but there's nobody listening. So giving people a chance to practice and at the same time connect to locals, because there is so much you don't understand about a country if you first come there and that is only accessible really by talking to people or interacting with locals.” (R6)*

#### ***Translation and interpretation***

As we conceive the public value of refugee integration as being one that can only be achieved through ‘movement from both sides’ (refugees and local society), language as a facilitator of

integration is not purely the responsibility of refugees to acquire, but there must also be opportunities to facilitate refugees' access to knowledge in their mother tongue. Non-profit organizations are instrumental in this domain, and many organizations engage refugee volunteers who have a good command of German, to act as translators and interpreters to support the NPO's work with refugees whose language skills are less developed.

*“We have I think between 10 and 15 volunteers who come here every week. Most of them are helping with translation. They are trying to translate during the counselling sessions, most of them in Arabic, Ukrainian, and Dari Farsi. Sometimes we are desperately looking for volunteers for these languages, and sometimes it's like everybody wants to help. So yeah, we have volunteers and we try to give them a good structure as well. Well, sometimes it's working better; sometimes it's working worse.”*  
(R5)

With refugees coming from multiple countries in the Middle East and now from Ukraine, NPOs acted fast to ensure that refugees were able to access vital information. Over the longer term integration needs, translation and interpretation remains an important service offer from NPOs. For instance, several interviewees noted that migrants and refugees often come to their organization for helping in reading mail that they receive.

### **3.4 Foundation: Rights and citizenship**

The domain of integration upon which the other four categories are built upon is a foundation of rights and citizenship for refugees, encompassing justice, freedom, equality and the right to participate in the political community. This is perhaps the most contentious of the domains of integration, raising nationally distinct questions over who can be called a citizen, and national senses of identity and belonging. Co-production in this realm is thus limited by the decisions of government regarding the rights and status of asylum seekers and refugees. Many interviewees discussed the frustration that asylum seekers feel due to the fact that while they are waiting to receive their asylum status, they are prohibited from entering paid employment and fully participating in Austrian society. In this way, many of the other domains of integration

are contingent upon this foundation being acquired. However, there are two important domains where volunteers engage in co-production that support refugees' rights.

### ***Refugee volunteers: Volunteering to support asylum application***

Several interviewees stated that the reason that many refugees get involved in volunteering for their organization was the impression that community involvement would support their case in their asylum application.

*“For some of them it is very important to do volunteer work, because they are waiting for their asylum. So they can also show that they have done volunteer work, because we give them also a kind of certificate that they have done some hours for the community.” (R14)*

*“If I can write them a review of how awesome they are and how many hours they've invested in Vienna already, it seems to make a difference. Obviously we don't know. [...] I feel it makes a difference without really having any numbers on that.” (R6)*

Though this motivation to volunteer was described by several other interviewees, as the second quote suggests, it is unclear whether volunteering experience actually is taken into consideration in asylum applications. [...]

### ***Local volunteers: Advocacy and information***

Though not co-producing integration services per se, another contribution that volunteers make towards supporting the rights and citizenship of asylum seekers and refugees is through advocacy work. Paid staff members at two of the non-profits studied work in close collaboration with a network of volunteers to support asylum seekers in their legal cases and to lobby government to change refugee reception policies which are deemed unjust and unfair. One organization has created a volunteer-run information platform for asylum seekers and refugees about topics such as how to acquire a driving license, what German classes are available and where, and sources of legal advice and support. This platform compiles information from an array of dispersed (and sometimes incorrect or out of date) sources, which can be confusing and hard to access for refugees.

Citizen volunteers also advocate for policy change to improve the asylum application process. One volunteer discussed setting up a sort of watchdog group that engages legal advisors and law students to sit in on asylum court cases to report on bias and hold judges to account. In this instance, volunteers are not working to co-create value with government, but are rather acting on behalf of asylum seekers to ensure the creation of value for them.

### **3.5 Ripple effects and intersections between domains of integration**

#### ***Ripple effects of integration interventions***

As illustrated in the previous sections, we can see that the co-production of refugee integration services (by non-profit professionals, local volunteers and refugees) results in the creation of value in multiple domains of integration for refugees. Though this framework is instructive in helping to delineate the primary value sought by different activities, many of the benefits described by interviewees were in fact not a direct result of the intervention of activity, intervention or service but rather further down the line, or ‘ripple effects’ (Jagosh et al. 2015; Chazdon et al., 2017; Nobles et al., 2022). Ripple effects relate to the broader impacts and implications of an intervention, or how one type of value or domain of integration builds upon others. Integration services can have ripple effects for refugees themselves, as well as for local citizen volunteers who are inspired by the opportunity and extend their involvement or use their experience as a stepping-stone into other realms of volunteering, engagement or advocacy.

For example, local volunteers engage in co-production of language classes to support refugees to acquire proficiency in German, but all of the interviewees who spoke about German classes indicated that the value created by these was often in the social connections made between participants rather than purely about improving their German. Participants and volunteers in German classes and language cafes become friends and this creates further opportunity for social development and gaining a sense of belonging. Furthermore, many activities act as

springboards: initially creating value directly for participants, but then opening the door for further opportunities.

*“From these groups [German cafes], we got people who wanted to get involved and do volunteer work, because after a while, it felt for them like this was their space as well. We tried to make them aware that this is not... We are not a service centre where you go and you kind of just buy in, but you are part of the neighbourhood centre if you come here.” (R6)*

In some instances, people who started as volunteers became paid staff members of the non-profit organization, or went into further training to work in a similar area. In other examples, participants in one activity sometimes build relationships with other participants and volunteers and leverage this into proposing new activities to the NPO. We can therefore gather that the creation of value in one domain of integration creates both the opportunity space as well as conditions necessary to create value in another.

### ***Intersections and barriers***

Perhaps the opposite of ripple effects would be the way in which a lack of attention to value in one domain of integration can stymie or prevent the development of another. One of the barriers to the involvement of volunteers and creation of value for refugees has been how the public sector insufficiently considers the importance of the intersections between the domains of integration. In particular, non-profit staff and volunteers explained how necessary the foundation (of rights and citizenship) and facilitators (primarily language knowledge) are before refugees can meaningfully create social connections and achieve the markers and means of integration. As one interviewee noted, these markers are insufficient indicators of integration when considered independently:

*“I think having a job is fundamental, but it doesn't integrate you, because in many cases, you're working with other people who are in the same social situation as you that they don't speak German well, that they are with their ethnic communities and you don't get over the borders.” (R13)*

Public programs often push refugees to achieve one marker, particularly employment, before they have the necessary conditions to do so successfully.

*“Austria always demands quite a lot from refugees. You have to learn German and you have to take part in this labour market process, without looking at the situation that the people are living in. If you have to sleep on the floor, and if you don't know how to heat your apartment because the energy prices are so high and the money you receive is so little, and if you fail to provide a hot meal to your children... how should you be able to concentrate on learning the language or learning some new skills that might be useful for the labour market?” (R15)*

Relatedly, in some instances the expectations of integration programs contradict the needs and expectations of participants. For example, the health information program funded by the federal government allows for information sessions to be run in many different languages, but participants are asked to complete an evaluation form that is only available in German.

*“This [document in German] comes and they say, “Okay, it's about integration. This must be in Deutsch.” But a lot of people don't understand this at all. And what is also the problem, here they ask us for the status of the people. So this is something, like we feel it's something personal, it's something problematic somehow because some are not into... They have different kind of status, but still they need information about the health system.” (R4)*

This second limitation of certain services only being available to people with a particular status (either those currently undertaking the asylum application process, or others who have already received their refugee status) illuminates the important intersection between the foundation of rights as a condition for refugees to access support to develop within the other domains of integration. Several other interviewees described frustration at being unable to support asylum seekers with certain project funds, making it difficult to support early and more holistic approaches to integration.

#### **4. Discussion and conclusions**

With the growing number of people impacted by forced migration, the issue of refugee integration has become an increasingly urgent matter in many European countries. From a public value perspective, we can conceive of refugee integration as a question of ensuring

community cohesion and solidarity, as well as protecting the human rights and general wellbeing of refugees (Geuijen et al., 2017). Understanding integration in this way – a ‘two-way’ process (Ager and Strang, 2008; Jalali, 2020) – highlights that integration cannot be achieved purely through the efforts of government programs, nor through the individual efforts of refugees themselves. Instead, the efforts of non-profit organizations in mobilizing the skills, resources and care of volunteers, both from refugee and local citizens, is vital.

While this contribution of volunteers to public value was significant across the four domains of integration (markers and means, social connections, facilitators and foundation), refugee and volunteer co-production of integration services is most significant in the areas where government cannot meaningfully provide public services, namely in the direct areas of social connection, but also in the domains of integration where social connections provide complementary benefits or added value. Local citizens and refugees may be motivated to volunteer for a variety of intrinsic (feelings of altruism, personal values, sense of purpose/meaning) or extrinsic reasons (to develop skills, receive skills and recognition, or receive other benefits) (Clary & Snyder, 1999), but the perception of both volunteers and NPO paid staff is that there are clear and direct benefits gained in both of these areas.

While the study aims to support the development of more theory regarding refugee integration, public value creation, and the contribution of volunteers, it has some notable limitations. Because the research focused primarily on the perspective of paid staff members and volunteers, we are thus limited in our ability to draw conclusions about the actual outcomes, benefits and impacts for refugee service users themselves. Second, as with all qualitative research, we are limited in our abilities to generalize to the wider population or to other contexts. However, the development of this framework for studying volunteer co-production of refugee integration is one that can usefully be applied in other contexts in order to deepen and broaden our understanding of this phenomenon.

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