How we build inclusive communities

Good Things Foundation’s Playbook for Community Integration
Introduction

Why is a playbook like this needed?

There is currently no guide to help community leaders, practitioners and policy makers understand what the characteristics of community integration are, what the benefits for migrant individuals and existing community members can be, and how these can be achieved at a local level through community support and interventions. There are tools and indicators to measure hard outcomes like progression to employment and volunteering but nothing for softer outcomes.

In their Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper launched on 14 March 2018, The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government set out their vision for community integration as ‘where people, whatever their background, live, work, learn and socialise together based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities.’

A playbook is a simple practical document. It isn’t a rigid framework for measuring success – it’s here to help organisations think and talk about soft outcomes. It can also help organisations to evidence and promote the work they do that doesn’t need formal evaluation, and so often goes unnoticed.

In an age of increasing loneliness and social isolation, understanding what is meant by, and needed to create, community cohesion and integration is critical.

It is through this lens that we can (repeatedly) build stronger relationships between people, and create a sense of belonging as a valued part of a supportive community.
What does community integration mean?

We recognise that community integration means different things to different people. Everyone has their own personal goals. For some people it will be employment, for others it will be just to feel a sense of self worth.

Community integration is a goal and a process simultaneously, but if we can’t evidence the outcomes of this it is unlikely to receive the political traction (at either a local and national level) for continued support and prioritisation.

We understand community integration to be full and meaningful participation across these areas:

- Social participation
- Political and civil participation in democratic action at a local and national level
- Economic and community participation
- Cultural participation

This playbook is a practical response and tool, helping individuals and communities address the following barriers to community integration:

- Negotiating local customs
- Lack of English language skills
- Discrimination, racism and prejudice
- Community segregation
- Social class inequalities

(Barriers taken from [Immigrant integration in British Society](https://www.man.ac.uk/unity-out-diversity) - part of The University of Manchester’s ‘Unity out of Diversity’ research)
Co-design

We worked with our Online Centres to co-design this playbook.

Research for this playbook is taken from the evaluation of four years of English My Way and other community projects delivered by Good Things Foundation, through the 5,000 strong Online Centres Network.

This playbook has been developed with Online Centres to ensure it is as useful as possible for organisations delivering community integration activity. About the purpose of the playbook, centres said:

“It’s all about ensuring people’s safety and happiness”

“It gives us a gauge and way to understand whether we have serviced people’s needs”
Thematic Overview

With Online Centres, we’ve identified four themes which are present in inclusive societies. For each theme, we will set out the community activities that help deliver this area of community integration, and what the impact is on individuals and communities. These themes are:

Theme 1 **Relationships**
Being able to connect with others on a personal and community level, with equal interactions

Theme 2 **Participation**
Having the confidence to communicate views, share ideas and be an active participant in decisions that affect your life

Theme 3 **Independence**
Being understood, in control of your life, able to go about everyday life confidently and fulfill your own potential to progress.

Theme 4 **Shared Sense of Place and Culture**
Re-negotiating your cultural identity whilst feeling a sense of belonging
**Theme 1: Relationships**

Being able to connect with others on a personal and community level, with equal interactions.

**Community Activities:**
- Social and community get-togethers such as learner award ceremonies and celebration events with food to share
- Working with social housing providers to create the conditions for individuals to put on celebration events
- General confidence building activities like facilitated informal classes and group work
- Social activities like group photos, cooking and art workshops
- Working in partnership with children’s centres, women’s centres and primary schools
- Supporting peer to peer learning
- Promoting national success locally
- Free English language provision

**Individual Outcomes:**
- Confidence to use English adequately with and be understood by neighbours and acquaintances and family
- Adequate quality, quantity and continuity of social relations with family, friends and acquaintances
- Interconnectedness with a range of networks and groups, own community and the larger social environment including transnational social networks
- Feeling less lonely
- Having trust in others to share concerns around personal issues e.g. bereavement and mental health

**Community Benefits:** Happy, mixed and connected community where there is understanding and tolerance between people, and reduced prejudice and anxiety
Theme 2: Participation

Having the confidence to communicate views, share ideas and be an active participant in decisions that affect your life

Community Activities:
- Democracy education - history of voting and the right to vote, the UK political system, inviting politicians to speak and visits to see government in action
- Encourage freedom of speech - hold sessions and give people safe space and privacy/confidentiality that allows people to have their say on issues that affect them
- Work with local schools to hold parent days to meet other parents, discuss their child’s progress and how they can get more involved in making a difference
- Conversation cafes, running small elections, role play simulating the voting process, taking action together such as creating a petition or writing to an MP
- Recognising learner achievements through celebration events
- Free English language provision

Individual Outcomes:
- Understanding the democratic processes and your own role in civic life - participating in a way that feels right for you
- Confidence to use English adequately with and be understood by teachers, doctors and other professionals
- Feeling self worth and self esteem to acknowledge what is important to you e.g. keeping your neighbourhood clean, your child’s education, opposing opinions or having healthy debate
- Confidence and means to exercise personal rights to resources
- Awareness of child’s education, and ability to support children and engage with children’s school

Community Benefits: An engaged, democratic community who actively participates in decision making, and includes the views of the many not the few
Theme 3: Independence

Being understood, in control, able to go about everyday life confidently and fulfill your own potential to progress

Community Activities:
- Provide initial skills assessment
- Offer informal and community learning, in ESOL, literacy and numeracy, and peer support to build confidence and skills
- Support with digital skills and access
- Provide volunteering opportunities to expand people's awareness of the local area
- Show people how to access local services like dentists and hospitals, use Google maps to find locations, and find out how to make enquiries over the phone
- Free English language provision and language support for other learning sessions
- Employability skills and rights support e.g. Work Clubs, interacting with Jobcentre Plus and applying and receiving benefits

Individual Outcomes:
- Confidence to use English adequately and be understood when using local services such as shops and public transport
- Being focussed on own learning and learning opportunities to gain skills, competencies and information
- Feeling useful and optimistic about the future
- Being able to support self and family and having a sense of stability e.g. to be in secure housing
- Being more self reliant and less dependent on others e.g. to manage health, buy food and read letters
- Being more employable and 'economically independent'
- Being more able to easily access local services and support

Community benefits: A supportive community where people can grow and flourish as individuals, who then feel a shared sense of worth and work together to achieve collective goals
Theme 4: A shared sense of place and culture

Re-negotiating your cultural identity whilst feeling a sense of belonging

**Community Activities:**
- Organise visits to places like the library, train station, markets and restaurants. Real world supported learning opportunities e.g. practice ordering in a shop
- Celebrating with others through parties and street festivals, and linking to other events like Bonfire Night
- Support people to have a say in issues and the conditions of their community
- Enable expressions of unity and difference within a group
- Discuss British values e.g. politeness and time management
- Have sensitivity and awareness of cultural barriers
- Free English language provision

**Individual Outcomes:**
- Understanding and respecting other people’s customs, religions, cultures, with the opportunity to engage with them
- Feeling safe and equal within a community, and being willing to travel and go outside immediate neighbourhood
- Confidence to use English adequately with people from a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds
- Strong sense of mutual commitments and obligations, promoting personal and social responsibility
- Having a sense of identity which is a mix of country of origin and Britishness
- Personal satisfaction with neighbourhood

**Community Benefits:** Community with a shared sense of belonging built on a common set of values, attitudes and experiences.
How to use the Playbook

Whether you are directly supporting people; designing projects or are creating policy, we hope you get something out of this playbook.

1. **This playbook is for everyone:** For community organisations, local authorities supporting people in their communities to feel integrated; for national organisations and policy makers developing programmes to create integrated communities.

2. **Use it to help you ask people what their own personal goals are:** Have a conversation, find out about them. Some people find it difficult to know what their objectives are. This playbook could help.

3. **Pick the bits that feel right:** The playbook isn’t a rigid framework and can be used flexibly. We know people don’t fit into predefined categories, so use the relevant parts and ignore those that aren’t.

4. **Use it to form an evidence base to funders:** The content of the playbook are real life examples of what community organisations are already doing. Use it to evidence and promote the hard work you do.

5. **Practical tool:** Print it out and put it on your wall, share it with colleagues and partners, use it to develop your programmes.
Resources

The following literature and resources have been used to develop the handbook. They are there to help you do even more to support community integration.

- **Community ESOL Handbook**: This handbook outlines common challenges, and provides tips and resources for delivering pre-entry ESOL in the community.

- **ESOL in Libraries Handbook**: This handbook is for both libraries delivering ESOL learning who would like to develop their English language provision, and for those libraries wishing to introduce a pre-entry ESOL offer.

- **ESOL in Libraries Pilot: Summary of Centre Participation**: To test the feasibility of using English My Way in a library setting, Good Things Foundation led a research pilot between January and March 2017, with five libraries in areas of highest ESOL need.

- **ESOL in Sikh Temple case study**: By running classes in a Sikh Community Centre and Temple, a Leicester centre has taken English language to the heart of the Sikh community, and helped improve the English of people who might never have stepped outside the community to learn.

- **Immigrant integration in British Society**: The University of Manchester’s ‘Unity out of Diversity’ research project explores how immigrant integration is perceived and understood in different sectors of society, including public policy, the academic sector and amongst the general public. It aims to gather research evidence and stimulate the public and policy debate as well as identify effective indicators of integration.

- **Migration and integration: A local and experiential perspective**: This paper seeks to reflect the experience of migrants themselves in four key domains acknowledged to be critical – health provision, education, housing and the labour market. The paper is part of the University of Birmingham’s Institute for Research into Superdiversity (IRiS) Working Paper Series.

- **Migrants and Community Cohesion Briefing**: A briefing note written by MigrationWork, to encourage migrant communities to play an active role in contributing to the area.
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Sketches taken from Online Centre work at GOAL-Woman! Alliance CIC, Zest Centre and Premier Learning.

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