Planning for Refugee Settlement and Integration: 
*A Strategic Social Sustainability Approach*

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A Strategic Social Sustainability Approach  

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Abstract:  
This thesis explores how municipal planning for refugee settlement and integration can move strategically towards sustainability. A conceptual framework was developed by integrating the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development with best practices and recommendations identified in the literature. A case study was conducted in Karlskrona, Sweden, to investigate how a municipality plans to settle and integrate a large and unprecedented influx of refugees, and to assess how the constructed Framework can assist in planning. Semi-structured interviews with stakeholders in the Karlskrona Municipality were conducted. Keywords from the constructed Framework were used as a priori codes, to analyze the data obtained in the interviews. As perceived in our case study there is no full understanding of the importance of reaching Social Sustainability and all the essential aspects needed to achieve it.

Keywords: Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration; Strategic Sustainable Development; Social Sustainability; Framework for Sustainable Planning for Refugee Settlement and Integration; Municipal Planning
Statement of Contribution

This thesis is the result of an intensive, enjoyable group work over the last five months. Looking back at our thesis journey we all feel greatly privileged having the chance to work with one another. We were able to share a great interest and motivation for our subject and research, and beyond. All three of us will always look back on this experience with gratitude, appreciation, and fondness for the friendship we made.

We are proud to say that we created a working atmosphere in which each of us could reach their greatest potential, contributing our strengths, invaluable insights and learnings. In many instances throughout the writing of the thesis, we worked collaboratively on numerous sections, specifically the development of the Framework. We took all decision on a basis of consensus, and by working most of the time in the same physical space, we ensured to always be on the same page. We were all part of crafting interview questions, participating collectively in the interview, and recording, collecting, transcribing and analyzing interview data.

This statement is too short to describe the many contributions made, and yet it should be acknowledged that each of us offered unique strengths:

Alisa, Alisa has contributed to the thesis with her ambition, focus and presence, and her patience and eagerness to understand and translate any ideas of her thesis mates. She is our queen of academic writing and has enormously lifted up the quality our thesis, as the way something is communicated is always at least as important as the actual content. She has great researching skills and obtained an extensive part of the data informing the research. Further, thanks to her previous studies in Anthropology, she contributed with a great amount of background knowledge on migration and refugee to our thesis work. During the interviews Alisa took the most valuable and extensive notes. She dedicated a massive amount of time in writing out the result section, accurately checking everything that had been said. She devoted herself to the outline of the first sections on the sustainability challenge and sustainable development and wrote a great deal of the methodology. During interviews, Alisa was the one taking the most extensive and valuable notes. The final formatting is Alisa’s artwork.

Fakhri has contributed to the thesis process with her wisdom, experience and drive. She has strong organizational, time management and rapport-building skills. During times of pressure and stress, Fakhri always changed the atmosphere, brought laughter and motivation. She has also brought balance to the group dynamic with her honesty, commitment and compassion. Through her personal and professional relationships, Fakhri has connected the team to a wider audience of Swedish people working in a variety of roles for the municipality related to service provision for the asylum seeker and refugee community. Fakhri had dedicated time to fostering relationships with recent refugees in Karlskrona and the surrounding area and has established a level of trust that has provided the team access to data that we may otherwise not have had. She completed the Swedish to English translation of documents from the Kommun, and translated and formatted flow charts regarding the settlement processes for both asylum seekers and refugees in Sweden. She obtained statistics on the number of migrants coming to Sweden, as identified by Migrationsverket (The Swedish Migration Board). Fakhri took initiative in obtaining data on issues with integration in Sweden, specifically with content obtained from Bra (the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention), which she also translated. Furthermore, Fakhri has kept the team
regularly and diligently informed with current events and news stories related to the Refugee Crisis in Sweden throughout 2015-16.

Lynn has contributed to the thesis with her focus, eagerness and curiosity. She has strong research, writing and analytical skills. She has been a positive energy and her excitement is contagious and refreshing. She has been dedicated in researching best practices and recommendations and co-created the excel worksheet for recording and organizing data to inform the Framework. She also conducted the German to English translation of recommendations for settlement within the context of Austrian municipalities. Lynn primarily developed the sections: best practices in planning for refugee settlement and integration; relevance of the topic; the Discussion; and The Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration, of which she wrote a vital piece on how planners are intended to read the Framework, considering each level in order to plan towards sustainable refugee settlement and integration. Crafting reiterations of the purpose, Lynn brought clarity to the aim of the overall research. She took a lead in posing the questions during interviews. Lynn has been motivated and eager to analyze data and designed the data analysis methodology.
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Special thanks to all our interviewees for accepting the invitation to participate in the interviews. They gave us a lot of valuable insights and information and reality check and thereby provided for a main part of this thesis.

Heartfelt thanks to our families and friends, who supported and encouraged us limitlessly. A specific thanks goes to Alisa’s and Fakhri’s husbands who accepted long waiting nights dedicated to our thesis instead of family. Additionally, a very special thanks to Fakhri’s husband who applied his magic engineering hands to craft some of our figures. Also, we would like to dedicate a big thanks to our fourth, unofficial teammate: Alisa’s daughter who not only borrowed us her mummy, but also joined us going to some multicultural events, enriching each one with her beautiful curious energy.

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Executive Summary

Introduction

In light of the sustainability challenge, the ways in which society is structured requires changes for the survival of modern human civilization. Sociopolitical, cultural and religious, demographic, economic, scientific and technological drivers profoundly impact the health of the environment and the social system - in direct and indirect fashion (Nelson et al. 2006). In order to achieve a sustainable society, society must transition away from its current unsustainable effects on the global socio-ecological system. Within Strategic Sustainable Development (SSD), planners plan with an understanding of human societies as complex systems that are interdependent.

Previous research suggests that climate change, as one part of the sustainability challenge, is becoming a serious cause for migration. When faced with immense and relative sudden increases in population, new social and ecological sustainability challenges can be caused in receiving countries. In a literature review on refugee planning and best practices no framework was identified that supports a strategic planning process for sustainable refugee settlement and integration.

In light of the predicted increase in people that will be forced to leave their country, the potential impact migration has on the global socio-ecological system, and the lack of comprehensive, yet widely applicable sustainability planning frameworks available, the importance for sustainable approaches in addressing rising refugee challenges becomes clear. The purpose of this study was to respond to the identified needs mentioned above, and construct a framework for refugee settlement and integration applying an SSD approach that will guide planning strategically towards social sustainability.

The research question proposed by this paper is: How can municipal planning for refugee settlement and integration be supported to move strategically towards sustainability?

In order to investigate how a municipality establishes and implements municipal plans to settle and integrate a large and unprecedented influx of refugees, and to assess how the constructed Framework can assist municipalities in planning for sustainable refugee settlement and integration, a case study in Karlskrona, Sweden, was conducted.

Methodology

A Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration was developed by reviewing existing literature and combining international best practices and recommendations for refugee settlement and integration with the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD). The FSSD is a scientifically-based, rigorous, and unifying framework for strategic planning towards sustainability. It suggests planners to (1) better understand the System they are planning for; (2) create a vision of success framed by success principles for sustainability; (3) develop strategic guidelines leading to success; (4) come up with actions in line with the sustainable vision and the strategic guidelines; (5) create and apply tools that ensure application. The FSSD was employed as it provides a systems perspective in order to analyze planning for sustainable refugee settlement and integration. Best practices and recommendations, as well as studies and guidelines, were sourced primarily from the UNHCR, International Organization for Migration (IOM), the European Parliament (EP), and
the European Commission (EC), as well as the Journal for Refugee Studies. Furthermore, recommendations stemming from national governments and NGOs were consulted and integrated into the Framework.

After constructing the Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration, the current reality of planning in the Municipality of Karlskrona was assessed against it. To obtain data, a variety of qualitative methods were employed including document gathering and semi-structured and informal interviews. In order to analyze the data, keywords of the first four levels of the Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration were used as a priori codes (Savin-Baden and Major 2013). Those keywords represent the main categories of best practices identified in the literature and by SSD thinking.

Results

The Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration is intended to provide a strategic planning process for refugees’ settlement and integration.

The Systems Level: When employing the Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration, planners are advised to first gain understanding and awareness of:

- how the system they are planning in is nested in the global socio-ecological system
- societies as complex adaptive systems and the five essential elements required for their adaptive capacity
- international, national and local legislation and guidelines for refugee settlement and integration that impact the system in which planning occurs
- stakeholders involved in planning and their ways of working and cooperating
- the economic, educational, cultural, infrastructural, and social context in both the host country and country of origin
- the host and refugee population

The Success Level: Success includes (a) municipality’s vision for sustainable refugee settlement and integration crafted by using the (b) success criteria specific to the context of refugee settlement and integration as boundary conditions.

The Strategic Level: Key strategies identified to reach success are: to gather all relevant stakeholders to craft a shared vision specified to the place in which planning takes place; backcast from the crafted vision of success to the current reality; brainstorm creative actions that will move from the current reality to the vision in a sustainable future; and to apply, at a minimum, three suggested prioritization questions. Visioning and planning for actions is recommended to take place well ahead of time - if possible, before the arrival of refugees (EFA 2015). In the whole process of planning for sustainable refugee settlement and integration, as well as when carrying out relevant services, co-operation and communication between key stakeholders are also applied as strategies (ECRE 1999).

The Actions Level: The Framework suggests some actions, but does not provide a detailed and comprehensive list, as actions always need to be adjusted to the particular background in which planning takes place.
Case Study - Understanding the Current Reality in Karlskrona

In the thesis, the analyzed results are presented according to each level of the Framework.

The Systems Level: Data obtained and coded from the interviews did not indicate that the interviewees had a theoretical understanding or explicit knowledge about the dynamics at the Systems Level of the FSSD. However, the analysis of the interviews revealed that the interviewees worked practically with aspects of the Systems Level as presented. The majority of interviewee statements connected to the Systems Level referred to stakeholders, as well as legislation and guidelines, and to a lesser extent to interactions between the local and refugee populations.

The Success Level: The largest quantity of data obtained from the interviews related to goals for refugee settlement and integration revolved around developing refugees’ competence to learn Swedish, which would enhance people’s ability to integrate, as well as increase adults’ employment eligibility. In fact, the established vision of the responsible department, applicable also to refugees reads “One Karlskrona with work and education for all”. Little reference was made to the provision of health and meaning-making, and none to impartial treatment. Furthermore, it was identified that there are no structures through which refugees and locals can directly influence the planning process for settlement or integration.

The Strategic Level: When interviewing stakeholders two intertwined issues came up a great deal: a lack in communication and cooperation among stakeholders, and gaps between the various services for refugees. To come up with ideas and craft a proposal plan for improving the process of refugee settlement and integration in Karlskrona, interviewee D held two workshops with 30 stakeholders working within the Municipality. Out of the workshops, one aspect that interviewee D organized was to investigate how stakeholders within the Municipality should work together and with external stakeholders.

The Actions Level: The research team found some actions related to the removal of structural obstacles to health and none for influence. The majority of interviewee statements referring to actions revolved around competence - specifically about language training and access to the job market. Regarding actions that remove structural obstacles to impartiality, a few statements were obtained. Actions surrounding meaning-making were significant, yet such statements actually revealed violations to the removal of structural obstacles to refugees’ meaning-making.

Discussion

The following section states discusses the main findings from the result section, including the main recommendations to the Municipality of Karlskrona.

The Systems Level: It was identified in the analysis that stakeholders in planning and providing services for refugees are working more independently and have little knowledge about other stakeholders. It is recommended for municipal planners in Karlskrona to gain a whole systems perspective and understanding of the five essential elements of adaptive capacity prior to commencing planning.

The Success Level: It is recommended that the Municipality crafts an overarching shared vision, considering all the success criteria of the Framework.
The Strategic Level: The Municipality of Karlskrona has made some significant efforts to assess gaps in the current reality of planning and to backcast from the established vision. It is recommended to hold further sessions on backcasting from a vision, including all the success criteria outlined in the Framework to brainstorm actions. Then the gathered actions should be organized by applying at a minimum the three prioritization questions.

The Actions Level: Language acquisition and employment eligibility are important areas and the research team encourages taking further actions in this regard. Additionally, employing actions that lead to the removal of structural obstacles in the areas of health, influence, impartiality and meaning-making are also critical.

The created Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration can support planning bodies by strategically structuring planning to move municipalities towards social sustainability. To address limitations, among other solutions, additional literature from various parts of the world could have been sourced to build up the Framework more robustly. Furthermore, the Framework should be tested in different countries and contexts and experiences should be integrated.

As perceived in our case study there is no full understanding of the importance of reaching Social Sustainability and all the essential aspects needed to achieve it. Certain aspects under the SSPs, such as influence and impartiality are not, or at least not sufficiently, considered. From interviews with practitioners outside of Karlskrona, the research team perceived that understanding of Social Sustainability and how to reach it is also lacking in other places.

Conclusion

Forced migration is likely to increase in the next years causing diverse social sustainability challenges in the receiving countries. To reach wellbeing of the global social system, those challenges need to be addressed. To respond to them, this thesis has crafted a first prototype of a Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration. The Framework supports planning bodies, such as municipalities, to approach sustainable planning strategically by considering the whole system governing their planning, crafting a vision within the boundaries of the suggested success criteria, shared with all the stakeholders, backcasting from the crafted vision to generate actions that need to be prioritized. Having a shared vision and taking a whole systems perspective, all planning and service-providing stakeholders could work towards the shared goal and would understand how they can cooperate their actions to avoid gaps in the settlement and integration process.

Further research needs to be done and it is suggested to test the Framework in different contexts and incorporate learnings from both, to make the Framework more robust and comprehensive.
**Glossary**

**Asylum seeker**
- “an asylum-seeker is someone who says he or she is a refugee, but whose claim has not yet been definitively evaluated” (UNHCR (a) 2016).

**Blekinge City Council (Landstinget)**
- is primarily responsible for health and dental care, as well as cultural activities and public transport throughout the region. It is the highest decision-making body in the region.

**Educational Association of the sobriety movement/Adult Education Association (NBV)**
- NBV has taken a stand, NBV want to be a force of change in the society. They offer dynamic perspectives. Their activity is broad, with study circles about everything from the internet to lifestyle issues. The NBV is a part of the sobriety movement in Sweden and therefore works for a world free from alcohol and other drugs.

**LMA Card**
- LMA is short for “Lagen om mottagande av asylsökande” (Swedish Reception of Asylum Seekers’ Act). An LMA card is a plastic card that asylum-seekers receive. It verifies the status of the card holder and thereby that he is entitled to stay in Sweden.

**Personal number (personnummer)**
- The personal identity number consists of 10 digits and a hyphen. The first six correspond to the person’s birthday, in YYMMDD form. All people residing in Sweden for more than a year have a personal number, which is used for instance by authorities, health care, schools and universities, banks) and insurance companies.

**SFI (Swedish for Immigrants)**
- Swedish for Immigrants offers Swedish language course for all immigrants. In classes immigrants are being provided with basic knowledge of Swedish language and society.

**SSD (Strategic Sustainable Development)**
- A way of planning sustainable development designed to help bring clarity, rigor, and insight to planning and decision making to achieve a sustainable society in the biosphere. Grounded by a ‘backcasting from sustainability principles’ approach, whereby a vision of a sustainable future is set as the reference point for developing strategic actions.

**Swedish Public Employment Agency (Arbetsförmedlingen – AF)**
- The Public Employment Service offers several types of support for job-seekers who want to find a job quickly. Support can be anything from recruitment meetings to tips about the way to write a job application, to re-configuring a workplace for people with special needs. This all depends on the job-seeker’s situation and background. The goal is that everybody should find a job.
Swedish Migration Board (Migrationsverket)
- The Migration Agency is the authority which considers applications from people who want to visit, live in or seek asylum in Sweden, or who want to become Swedish citizens.

Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket)
- The Swedish National Agency for Education is tasked with ensuring that all children and students have access to the same high-quality standard of education and activities in secure environments. Our mission is to create the best conditions for the children’s development and learning and to help improve the students’ learning outcomes.

Welcoming Reception Center (Välkomsten)
- a reception center for temporary and permanent migrant children and their families. The center provides Swedish language education to children and youth, including pre-primary.

Refugee
- “A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it” (UNHCR 1951).
List of Abbreviations

5LF - Five Level Framework
AF - Swedish Public Employment Agency [Arbetsförmedlingen]
AMN - Karlskrona Municipality’s Labour Administration Office [Arbetsmarknadsnämnden]
EC - European Commission
EU - European Union
FSSD - Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development
IOM - International Organization for Migration
LMA - Swedish Reception of Asylum Seekers’ Act [Lagen om mottagande av asylsökande]
MV - Swedish Migration Board [Migrationsverket]
NGO - Non-governmental organization
SD - Sustainable Development
SFI - Swedish for Immigrants [Utbildning i svenska för invandrare]
SPs - Sustainability Principles
SSD - Strategic Sustainable Development
UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WHO - World Health Organization
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1 Introduction

1.1 Sustainability Challenge

Beginning with the industrial area, the global population has significantly grown. Sociopolitical, cultural and religious, demographic, economic, and scientific and technological drivers profoundly impact the health of the environment and the social system - in direct and indirect fashion (Nelson et al. 2006).

Human activities, such as fossil fuel consumption and deforestation, have played a significant role in global warming (IPCC 2013) and have impacted the Earth’s natural climate cycles and feedback loops on a global scale. As a result, the relative stability of the Earth’s System, which includes biophysical, human, and climate components and processes vital for Earth’s functioning (Steffen et al. 2004), has been disturbed. Anthropogenic drivers of climate change include a systematic increase in global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and net-land use change (IPCC 2013; Steffen et al. 2004). The cascading effects of climate change are manifested in various ways such as rising surface temperature, droughts, floods, desertification, glacial retreat, biodiversity loss, sea-level rise and ocean acidification. Changes are occurring rapidly, becoming less predictable, more intense, and increase serious risks and implications for the socio-ecological system (FAO 2008).

Coinciding with degradation of the ecological system, global population has been accelerating significantly over the last half of the 20th century. This has led to a dramatic rise in demand for continuously depleting, life-sustaining, natural resources - and, among other factors, has led to serious issues of unsustainability (WCED 1987 (a)). The competition over decreasing ecosystem services has compounded social problems and impeded the well-being of global society.

Social problems, such as poverty, starvation, conflicts and war, workers abuse, xenophobia and discrimination, are rising or remain high globally. Thus, in 2013, the number of people living in extreme poverty amounted to roughly 1.2 billion (World Bank 2016). The number of people forced to migrate from their country due to war and violence has never been as high as last year 2015, exceeding for the first time 60 million people (UNHCR 2015). Even within developing countries income inequalities are getting more extreme (Mackintosh 2013) and social segregation is rising. The social problems are not only individual incidents, but to a large extend caused by the way the global social system is structured and how societies function.

Degrading natural resources and ecosystem services along with an increasing demand for them due to population growth, as well as eroding social systems and the serious challenges to overcoming these problems, are known as the sustainability challenge (Broman & Robert 2015).

In light of the sustainability challenge, the ways in which society is structured requires changes for the survival of modern human civilization.
1.2 Sustainability and Sustainable Development

In order to achieve a sustainable society by safeguarding social and ecological capital, society must transition away from its current unsustainable effects on the global socio-ecological system through sustainable development (SD). The political definition of sustainable development is often referenced from the UN Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future (WCED 1987 (b)), in which SD is referred to as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

As the global socio-ecological system and the sustainability challenge are highly complex, comprising a multitude of actors, and behaviors impacting each other, a strategic approach needs to be applied to sustainable development.

1.2.1 Strategic Sustainable Development

Strategic Sustainable Development (SSD) employs a whole-systems approach for decision-making in complex adaptive systems. It can support a society (or an organization) to move strategically towards sustainability, by better structuring planning and actions.

Applying an SSD approach means that that planners have an understanding of the socio-ecological system as a complex adaptive system, meaning a system in which the diverse sub-systems are interlinked and interdependent. The different parts of the socio-ecological system, including, amongst others, humans, plants, animals and weather, are interdependent, acting and reacting in unpredictable, complex ways to each other. Planners need to understand the connectedness of diverse sub-systems and to sustainability issues. Strategic planning means to avoid solving problems in isolation, but rather with an understanding of their interconnectedness with the bigger socio-ecological system:

“[d]ealing with individual problems, without a thorough understanding of their interconnectedness at the appropriate systems level, often leads to sub-optimized investments and new and worse problems” (Robèrt 2009, 209).

Therefore, planning bodies must first understand how the specific sustainability issue they are working with is situated in the whole system. Further concepts of the Strategic Sustainable Development approach include the creation of a shared vision within the constraints of boundary conditions, backcasting from the shared vision of success, as means to consider which actions need to be taken to reach the vision in a sustainable society; and ways of prioritizing gathered actions to move strategically towards the desirable future.

Thus, Strategic Sustainable Development ensures that planning bodies develop and take decisions based on an understanding of the whole socio-ecological system considering social and ecological aspects of sustainability.
1.2.2 The Relationship between Forced Migration and the Sustainability Challenge

Forced migration is partly caused by diverse sustainability issues, whilst simultaneously leading to new sustainability challenges. As Boano et al. (2007) state “Increasing evidence suggests acute and accelerated changes to ecosystems actualized by human and climatic factors will have direct and ancillary consequences on societies which, with reduced coping strategies, will have few other options but to migrate” (Boano et al. 2007).

Rising and unpredictable changes to the global climate system are an enormous concern for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), an international agency mandated to protect refugees and address refugee situations worldwide (UNHCR (b) 2016). The multifaceted connections between population growth, poverty, social unrest and conflict, shortages of ecosystem services, deepening inequalities and inequitable distribution of resources and social opportunities considerably complicate the relationship between climate change and migration (IOM 2015). Thus, climate change, as one part of the sustainability challenge, is for an increasing number of people becoming a serious cause for leaving their home countries and seeking asylum in other parts of the world. Further compounding the problem, the UNHCR (2009) projects that climate-related issues will become an even more direct and common driver of conflicts.

“Should more conflicts of this nature manifest themselves in future, the demand for protection and assistance under the refugee framework will grow. This will, in turn, place a potentially unbearable strain on current standards and practices” (UNHCR 2009, 6).

In turn, new social and ecological sustainability challenges are caused in receiving countries when faced with immense and relative sudden increases in population. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) warns that “[m]igration, especially a mass influx of migrants, can affect the environment in places of destination. In particular, unmanaged urbanization as well as camps and temporary shelters may produce strains on the environment” (IOM 2015). On the social side, refugees face loss of social capital, unemployment, poverty, traumatic stress disorders, and erosion of their community, family and social fabric. Preventing migrants’ exclusion and marginalization is not only crucial for the well-being of the immigrant him- or herself, “but is also an important element for the functioning and social stability of the host country” (IOM 2008, 17). No or insufficient measures for integration lead to segregation of long established and newly arriving communities, accompanied by mistrust, xenophobia, fear of competition on the job market and over resources. As D’Ancona (2015) finds, the relative size of an immigrant population, personal and national economic outlook and the perception of immigrants as cultural threat to the national identity are factors leading to rejection of immigrants. Such social issues constitute a serious challenge to a sustainable and healthy society.

The next section outlines existing literature and research planning for refugee settlement and integration. Integration has been defined as “a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States” (EC 2016).
1.3 The State of Research: Planning and Best Practice

Upon migration of refugees seeking protection and asylum in new countries, agencies and governments plan accordingly to the different types of refugees. As a result, the definition of a refugee and an asylum seeker differs.

“A refugee is a person who has left his or her country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of persecution because of race, nationality and membership of a particular social group, or due to his/her religious or political beliefs, gender or sexual orientation and who because of this fear is unable or unwilling to avail him or herself the protection of that country” (UNHCR 1951).

On the other hand, “an asylum-seeker is someone who says he or she is a refugee, but whose claim has not yet been definitively evaluated” (UNHCR (a) 2016). Following the use of refugees and asylum seekers as terms in the publications of many organizations such as the UNHCR, in this paper, if not specified, the term refugee is used to refer to both.

Planning for refugee support, settlement and integration is guided by policies on international (the UN), national, regional and municipal levels, as well as by supporting non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that operate at the same scales. A literature review in academic journals and publications of diverse organizations working in the realm of refugee settlement and integration identified few guidelines, principles, lists or frameworks on planning for refugee settlement and integration. For example, the UNHCR developed the 3RP Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2015-16: A response to the Syria Crisis (3RP 2016), which relates specifically to regional countries surrounding Syria (such as Turkey, Egypt, Lebanon) with the aim to build regional resilience from a planning perspective.

Within a European context, in November 2004, the European Union (EU) formulated 11 Common Basic Principles (CBP) (Appendix A), which are the foundation of EU initiatives in the field of integration. Already as early as 1997, the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), an umbrella organization for several non-governmental organizations, provided research papers from European countries with good practices for integration. From 1997, the ECRE Task Force on Integration, a partnership of seven refugee-assisting organizations from different EU states, did a study to identify good practices on refugee integration in Europe. The good practice guide is sorted into six broader themes of integration: Community and Cultural Integration for Refugees, Education for Refugees, Health for Refugees, Housing for Refugees, Vocational Training for Refugees, and Employment for Refugees. However, research, particularly in Europe, has not been able to keep up with the development in studies on migration and integration (Penninx, Spencer and Van Hear 2008) and it is claimed that Europe met the recent refugee crisis of 2015 largely ill-prepared: “[m]any European states have been overwhelmed by the scale of the bureaucratic, financial and public order challenges faced in dealing with incoming population flows” (Sandvik 2016).

Examples of practices for refugee integration at the local level include a handbook (EFA 2015) documenting the meeting of more than one hundred mayors with experts from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), that was held in September 20015, to exchange experiences and knowledge on how to best respond at a local level to the Refugee Crisis in Europe. The handbook provides some valuable insight into hands-on actions that municipalities can take to prepare for the arrival and integration of refugees. Suggested
recommendations include: to inform and engage the local community; to prepare and coordinate facilities and structures for refugees, such as housing, language courses, education, and to provide an introduction into the culture of the host country, etc.; and to facilitate and exchange learning among refugees and locals leading to an easier and faster integration process (EFA 2015).

The literature thus identified multiple best practices and recommendations, at international, national and local scales for refugee settlement and integration from around the world which are publicly available (ECRE 1999; EP 2013; EC 2016; IOM 2009). However, of those accessible, they were either developed for a specific national-cultural context or concentrated on one specific need area, such as health. A framework that supports the planning process for sustainable refugee settlement and integration was not identified within the literature.

1.4 Relevance of the Topic

In light of the predicted increase in people that will be forced to leave their country and the potential impact migration has on the global socio-ecological system, as described in section 1.2.2 (The relationship between forced migration and the sustainability challenge), the importance for sustainable approaches in dealing with rising refugee challenges becomes clear. Not only do the causes of forced migration and possible solutions need to be addressed, but also the ways which need to be found in order to receive refugees and allow for a healthy, long-term integration process between the refugees and the host culture.

Organizations and governments are taking action to find possible solutions for integration. Actors in politics, as well as working under the mandate of organizations, are sourcing best practices and innovative ideas to improve refugee settlement and integration and have initiated diverse platforms and competitions to gather ideas from society. The European Commission (EC 2016) is requesting practitioners to submit good practices, which upon selection will be published on the European Website on Integration to enable exchange and mutual learning. Further, the Commission launched a competition in which it asked applicants to submit innovative ideas on products, technologies, services and models to support the integration of refugees and migrants. Similarly, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) launched an initiative with the heading ‘Local responses to refugee crisis: from initial reception to longer term integration’.

To address social challenges of refugees’ settlement and integration over the long-term, a sustainability lens should be used in planning. Further, as social challenges are a result of how society is structured they should not be addressed independently, but with a whole systems perspective. This thesis therefore argues that for successful integration, planning for refugee settlement and integration should incorporate an SSD approach.

1.5 Purpose

To respond to the need for sustainable planning in the context of the rising number of refugees seeking asylum worldwide and the lack of comprehensive, yet widely applicable sustainable planning frameworks, this thesis investigates what a SSD perspective can contribute to municipal planning for sustainable refugee settlement and integration. Thus, the purpose of this study is to construct a comprehensive strategic planning framework for
sustainable refugee settlement and integration from the lens of a SSD perspective by incorporating a social sustainability approach.

1.5.1 Research Question

The research question guiding this thesis research is: How can municipal planning for refugee settlement and integration be supported to move strategically towards sustainability?

To respond to the research question, a planning Framework was constructed. In order to investigate how a municipality establishes and implements municipal plans to settle and integrate a large and unprecedented influx of refugees, and to assess how the constructed Framework can assist municipalities in planning for sustainable refugee settlement and integration, a case study in Karlskrona, Sweden, was conducted.
2 Case study background

Karlskrona, Sweden, is a Northern European community that has been required by the Government of Sweden to take a share of the responsibility for the high number of asylum seekers that entered the country during 2014/15. The following section will guide through processes, legislation and statistics relevant to the topic of refugees and their settlement and integration, moving from European, to Swedish and local level. It provides the reader with a better understanding of Karlskrona in the bigger picture and an overview of all the regulations and event that might affect the Municipality and its planning in regards to refugees ‘integration. Figures depicting the different processes from the asylum investigation to integration processes in Karlskrona are depicted in Appendix B.

2.1 Refugee Migration to Europe

In 1999, the European Council agreed on building a common asylum and immigration policy among European Union countries under Schengen cooperation, in which Sweden joined in 2001, which led to an increase in the number of people seeking asylum to the region (City of Gothenburg et al. 2015). The International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2009, 13) affirms that “[m]igration into the EU is accepted by policy-makers and concerned practitioners alike as a phenomenon, as necessary (both for demographic and economic growth), as unavoidable”.

In 2010, Sweden had approximately 12,130 refugees coming to the country, a figure that nearly tripled by 2014 with 35,642 refugees (Swedish Institute 2016). In 2014, Sweden was only surpassed by Germany in the number of asylum seekers received. 2015 saw double the amount of first time asylum seekers in the EU over 2014, with close to 1.3 million applying for protection (Eurostat 2015). Further, measured per capita, Sweden accepted the highest number of refugees in Europe, with more than 300 refugees per 100,000 inhabitants (Levush 2015). Syrians make up the predominant number of refugees in Sweden and all Syrians in the country seeking asylum are granted permanent residence permits (Swedish Institute 2016). In addition, of those seeking asylum in Sweden, around 35,000 applicants were unaccompanied minors (Swedish Institute 2016).

2.2 Swedish Asylum and Refugee Policy

The agency responsible for asylum applications and for the initial accommodation and provision of asylum seekers in Sweden is Migrationsverket, which in English is called the Swedish Migration Board (Migrationsverket (a) 2015). As established by the Swedish Government, the Swedish Migration Board’s goal is to:

“ensure a long-term, sustainable migration policy that safeguards asylum rights and, within the framework of regulated immigration, facilitates mobility across borders and promotes a needs-driven labor immigration, while utilizing and considering the development effects of migration, and furthering European and international cooperation” (Migrationsverket (a) 2015).
The Swedish Migration Board provides different asylum application processes for refugees that independently arrive in Sweden seeking asylum, or are resettled to Sweden from a transit country by support of UNHCR. The following figure 2.2 depicts the Swedish asylum process for independently arriving refugees.

Upon arrival at the Swedish Migration Board to apply for asylum, refugees receive an appointment for an asylum investigation. The time from the date of which they first register to the investigation meeting currently (as of May 2016) amounts to around fifteen months (Migrationsverket 2016). After applying for asylum, refugees are distributed to different municipalities and placed into accommodation camps. For the time that they are waiting for a decision, asylum seekers receive an LMA-card, that demonstrates their identity and legal status. They are provided with shelter, food, clothes, financial assistance and other items necessary for basic living, but not with language courses or any other integration measures (apart from offers by volunteers). Further, during the time waiting they are entitled to do internships and, under certain, conditions to work. In the asylum investigation, it is decided whether the application is being approved or not. If it is, the asylum seeker gains refugee status, including residence permit, the right to work and live in Sweden. Some cases need further investigation. In case, the application is denied the asylum seeker is requested to return to his country of origin, but can request to this decision and request a new investigation (Migrationsverket 2016).

The process for resettled refugees is described in Appendix C.
2.3 Integration Issues

About 63% of Swedes regard immigration as good for Sweden according to a DN/Ipsos survey conducted in March 2015 (Ipsos 2016). However, opinions on refugee reception differ - 36% of Swedes responding to the survey feel Sweden should receive less refugees than it did in 2015, while 26% state that Sweden should not accept any more (Ipsos 2016). Demographics influence opinions on refugees in Sweden, with the young, urban and highly educated more supportive of immigration than older Swedes residing in smaller municipalities (Ipsos 2016). Opinions also differ according to political affiliation, as more Swedish Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna (SD)) are largely critical of immigration compared to other political parties in Sweden (Ipsos 2016). In terms of integration into Swedish society, around 60% of Swedish survey respondents think that it works poorly due to segregation, housing and employment issues (Ipsos 2016). With rising and diversified migrant populations seeking refuge in Sweden, challenges have the potential to hinder successful integration. Examples of challenges that migrants face in Sweden include racism, persistent segregation, lack of job opportunities, and housing issues (MPI 2014).

The issues of race, xenophobia, citizenship and belonging have recently been important topics discussed in the Swedish public arena (Mulinari et al. 2014). According to the DN/Ipsos study mentioned previously, 8 out of 10 Swedes are concerned about rising xenophobia in Swedish society (Ipsos 2016). Overlapped with xenophobia is racism, and an indication of racism is hate crimes against immigrants. According to Bunar (2007), the most common hate crimes against immigrants are threats, harassment, slander, ethnic agitation, and assault. Under the Ministry of Justice, the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brottsförebyggande rådet - Brå) is an agency which works to reduce crime and improve levels of safety in society. According to data published by Brå (2014), in 2014 an estimated number of 6,270 hate crimes were identified in police reports, in which 69% (4,310 reports) of these acts were motivated by xenophobia or racism.

Integration of refugee immigrants into the Swedish labor market is also a significant problem. According to statistics, refugees from culturally distant Iran, Iraq and Horn of Africa are able to get a job significantly later than refugees from the less-distant Eastern European countries and Latin America (Lunborg 2013). In terms of age groups, those who are older than 30, experience a higher number of unemployed days compared to refugees under 30 (Lunborg 2013). Moreover, the language barrier is another social problem related to refugees’ integration into society.

Overcrowded and segregated housing further hinders the capacity for asylum seekers, refugees, and other immigrants, to integrate effectively with the local population. The Swedish Migration Board (Migrationsverket (b) 2016) claims that although it was just able to provide accommodation to all new asylum seekers in early 2016, over 20,000 new accommodation places were needed in the spring. The new spots required are a result of many asylum seekers being placed in temporary accommodation such as seasonal facilities that must be vacated before the summer holiday season, as well as in evacuation places like gym halls offered to the Board by municipalities (Migrationsverket (b) 2016). To further increase accommodation spots available (up to 7,500), on a temporary basis the Swedish Migration Board reduced the standard space allowance from five square meters to three per person (Migrationsverket (b) 2016). Of the current spots that are available about 3,000 need to be replaced due to poor building conditions or isolation from community services (Migrationsverket (b) 2016). To alleviate some of the pressure on the Migration Board, a new
law came into effect March 1, 2016, that requires municipalities to accept refugees with permanent residence status (Migrationsverket (b) 2016). The aim of the law is to open up accommodation spaces actually intended only for asylum seekers, of which 10,000 spots are occupied by refugees that have already gained permanent residence (Migrationsverket (b) 2016).

2.4 The Municipality of Karlskrona

Karlskrona is a city located in the Blekinge County of South-East Sweden, home to 64,000 inhabitants (Karlskrona Municipality 2012). In 2004, Karlskrona became one of the 101 members of the “Sveriges EkoMunicipalityer” (Sekom), or, in English, “The National Association of Swedish Eco-municipalities”, and is home to Sekom’s national headquarters (Sekom 2016). The association’s starting point is an ecosystem in balance as the basis for economic and social development, with the principle of having development move towards a sustainable society - characterized by a healthy environment in which people have a high-quality of life (Sekom 2016). As a member of Sekom, Karlskrona adopts a strategic planning program to achieve local sustainability that is guided by a SSD approach in the Natural Step Framework (Sekom 2016).

In 2014, the number of received refugees, which indicates permanent residence was granted in Sweden, was over 46,500 (Migrationsverket 2016 (d)). In terms of the influx of refugees in Sweden during 2015, as highlighted in section 2.1, there were over 50,000 received in Sweden (Migrationsverket 2016 (d)). Out of those received in Sweden during the period, there were 1,650 refugees received within the province of Blekinge, with 435 of those received in Karlskrona (Migrationsverket (d) 2016). The number of received refugees within the Blekinge region in 2015 was slightly higher than other regions in Sweden with similar or even larger provincial populations (Migrationsverket 2016 (d)).

The settlement and integration services available differ between asylum seekers or those granted refugee status. The Swedish Migration board has the main responsibility for asylum seekers, and apart from the areas of housing and schooling for children in which Municipalities are obliged to support the Migration Board, Municipalities cannot influence or interfere any services and processes asylum seekers go through. It is only once people obtain official refugee status with permanent residence from the Swedish Migration Board that the Municipality of Karlskrona takes over a large part of the responsibility for service provision.
3 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Maxwell’s (2013) approach to qualitative research, as depicted in the Figure 3.1, supported the researchers in structuring their research to achieve clarity and overcome biases. His model suggests an iterative process between goals, research questions, conceptual framework, methods and validity. Thus, throughout the entirety of this thesis research, we iterated between those five aforementioned points, adding and adjusting parts as the research progressed. Regarding the research goal, the research team asked what the intention of the research was for, the aim, and why this study was important. In response to these questions, the research goals are: (1) to design a framework supporting strategic municipal planning for sustainable refugee settlement and integration; and (2) to understand the current reality of the Municipality of Karlskrona’s planning for refugee settlement and integration. A conceptual framework responds to the questions for what theories, beliefs and prior research will guide the research. In this study, a conceptual Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration was created that guided the analysis of the case study, while at the same time, responds to our research question. After several iterations the research question developed was “How can municipal planning for refugee settlement and integration be supported to move strategically towards sustainability?” As an example of one method, a literature review on best practices and recommendation for refugee settlement and integration was conducted. The identified practices and recommendations were combined with the FSSD to construct the aforementioned Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration. A Case Study was conducted to understand the current reality of planning for refugee settlement and integration in Karlskrona and to test the Framework in order to find gaps and opportunities for improvement. Methods applied were formal and informal interviews with stakeholders in Karlskrona to inform the Case Study and with stakeholders outside of Karlskrona to further inform the Framework. To ensure validity researchers need to constantly ask themselves how results and conclusions could possibly be wrong. As a research team of three we critically discussed each part of our research at all times and cross-evaluated each other’s findings and results. Thus, in each interview at least two people took notes which were subsequently reviewed by the other two members. The analysis of each interview was done by two people to avoid miss-interpretation. Further, it needs to be recognized that the created Framework is a first prototype that needs to be further developed by testing it in various contexts and feed learnings thereby achieved into a next iteration.
3.2 Constructing the Framework for Sustainable Refugee settlement and Integration

In strategically planning and transitioning towards sustainability in complex systems, there must be a link to connect the current reality through actions to the desired sustainable future. An overview of the sustainability challenge and how to choose actions strategically to move towards sustainability is available in the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD).

3.2.1 Development of the Framework

The Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration was developed by reviewing existing literature on international best practices and recommendations for refugee settlement and integration and combining it with aspects of the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD). The FSSD was employed as it provides a systems perspective to analyze the system one is planning for; structures the planning; provides boundary conditions for sustainable planning and strategic guidelines. By integrating best practices and the FSSD, the developed Framework works to support strategic planning for social cohesion and societal well-being among both refugees and local citizens. Once the Framework had been developed, interviews were undertaken with different stakeholders involved in planning or service provision for refugee settlement and integration in Karlskrona, as well as in other places in Sweden and Western Europe. Interviews served not only to inform the case study, but also to identify potential gaps in the Framework which are elaborated in the discussion and could serve to enrich and further develop the Framework in an iterative process.
3.2.2 The Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development

The FSSD is built upon the generic Five Level Framework (5LF) to support analysis, planning and decision-making in any complex system (Broman & Robèrt 2015). The FSSD is a scientifically-based, rigorous, and unifying framework for strategic planning towards sustainability. The foundational elements of the strategic planning process consist of five independent, yet interconnected, levels: System, Strategic, Success, Actions, and Tools. To structure and support a strategic sustainability planning process, the FSSD suggests planners:

1. better understand the System they are working in and planning for;
2. subsequently create a vision of success framed by success principles for sustainability;
3. develop strategic guidelines leading to success;
4. come up with actions in line with the sustainable vision and the strategic guidelines;
5. create and apply tools that ensure application (ibid).

To transition towards sustainability, the FSSD’s success level is guided by eight Sustainability Principles (SPs) (ibid). The SPs constitute the ecological and social boundaries within which planning towards a sustainable society should take place (ibid). The eight SPs that need to be considered in order to preserve the socio-ecological system state that:

In a sustainable society, nature is not subject to systematically increasing:
   1. concentrations of substances extracted from the Earth’s crust;
   2. concentrations produced by society;
   3. degradation by physical means;

Further, people in that society are not subject to structural obstacles to:
   2. Influence.
   3. Competence.
   4. Impartiality.

Planners use the eight SPs to analyze the system they are operating in; to better understand the shortcomings of the current structures when compared against those principles; and to subsequently make better decisions based on that analysis, and plan strategically towards sustainability. Although all of the SPs are important in planning towards a sustainable society, this study only uses the five Social Sustainability Principles (SSPs) as elements of the Success Level. It was decided to do so as this study was constructed in a Western context in which the problems that arise are mainly social ones.

Only the first four of the five levels of the FSSD were employed for the construction of the Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration. Tools can be very specific to implement actions and are dependent on the specific context of a municipality. It was thus decided to focus on the first four levels.

3.2.3 Research on Best Practices for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration

An illustration of the keywords used to search for and obtain data online to develop the Framework include: sustainable planning for refugee settlement and integration; framework
Commonalities identified among best practices, guidelines and recommendations were utilized as elements for the Systems, Success, Strategic, Actions Level of the Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration. Keywords mentioned previously were used to locate best practices and recommendations, as well as studies and guidelines; such documents were sourced primarily from the UNHCR, IOM, the European Parliament (EP), and the European Commission (EC), as well as the Journal for Refugee Studies. Furthermore, recommendations stemming from national governments and NGOs with experience in planning for diverse refugee situations, both protracted and temporary, were consulted and integrated into the Framework. Most of the literature surveyed referred to Western Europe, with a few publications focused on the Middle East, Africa, and North America. Information obtained was published within the seventeen-year time span from 1999 to 2016. In the prototype, perceived gaps in the Framework were filled with suggested goals identified through SSD thinking.

An excel table with multiple tabs was created to collect and organize data specific to the Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration. One tab was used to list referenced information categorized at the Success Level according to the five SSPs, as well as at the Actions Level, and to a lesser degree, the Tools Level. Thematic coding was employed to identify keywords related to both the most frequently cited recommendations, such as access to health services, as well as to less common recommendations, such as including a gender approach to service provision. On a subsequent tab, the identified keywords were placed along with the referenced sources from which information the keywords were drawn from.

3.3 Case Study of Karlskrona, Sweden

3.3.1 Methods for Data Collection – Current Reality

A case study was employed in order to test the Framework and to assess the current reality of existing structures and planning for refugee settlement and integration in Karlskrona. To do so, an analysis of the different policy levels comprising the system from the macro (international) to the micro (municipality) was conducted. To obtain data, a variety of qualitative methods were employed including document gathering and semi-structured and informal interviews.

Document Gathering: To help inform the research team about the background of the case study, primary-source, public, online documents such as international, national, municipal policies and frameworks for refugee settlement and integration were accessed; such documents were referred to as means to identify and understand the current reality of refugee policies that inform planning on the local scale. Information obtained was published within
the seventeen-year time span from 1999 to 2016. At the international level, information was regularly sourced from the UNHCR’s website, which included publications, reports, research articles, statistics, frequently asked questions and answers, guidelines and documents. Some of the key UNHCR publications and reports surrounding refugee issues and policy that were referred to inform the research included: the UNHCR Protection Manual; the 1951 Refugee Convention; annual Global Reports; and the UNHCR Resettlement Handbook. The European Commission’s (EC) website provided links to publications surrounding migration and refugee policy such as the Policy Agenda on Migration.

At the Swedish national level, the Swedish Migration Board’s (Migrationsverket) website provided a suite of key information on the government’s asylum seeker and refugee (migrant) policies, processes and statistics. Data obtained from the Swedish Migration Board provided insight into policies surrounding refugee settlement and integration. Further knowledge on refugee policy in Sweden was obtained by secondary literature analyzing Sweden’s policy in this field. At the local level, websites of the Municipality of Karlskrona, the Welcoming Reception Center (Välkomsten), Swedish for Immigrants (SFI), the Educational Association of the sobriety movement (NBV), and the Swedish Public Employment Agency (AF), as well as the Swedish Migration Board (Migrationsverket) provided insight into the current reality and regulations on refugee settlement and integration. The next paragraph gives a brief explanation of such organizations’ roles and responsibilities.

The Welcoming Reception Center is a bridging program that facilitates the entrance of migrant children into regular Swedish schools. At the beginning of the five-week program, a nurse examines children’s health. Then they are placed in classes and their knowledge and learning pace are evaluated, they are taught Swedish and learn about Swedish culture. At the same time, parents are provided with lectures on for instance the school and health system, on the police and social services. Similar organizations do exist in other, but not in all, Swedish Municipalities. Swedish for Immigrants offers Swedish language course for all immigrants. In classes immigrants are being providing basic knowledge of Swedish language and society. The Educational Association of the sobriety movement (NBV) works in the non-formal education sector by offering support for self-study circles. The aim of the organization is to help people to learn and to grow as individuals. In autumn 2015 the organization established a new focus of working with asylum seekers and refugees.

Semi-structured Interviews: All the interviews were conducted at the workplaces of interviewees. The interviewees working in providing services for refugees, showed us the facilities provided to refugees. Most interviews were conducted in an informal setting which allowed for an atmosphere in which people could feel comfortable to speak freely. As none of the research team’s members is fluent in Swedish all the interviews were conducted in English. Five out of the seven interviewees in Karlskrona explicitly remarked that they did not feel completely secure speaking English. Thus, they could not express themselves as eloquently as they might be able to in their mother tongue and possibly could not always clearly communicate what they wanted to say. Due to time constraints, the research team did not cross check that the interpretation of their words matched what they meant. The language barrier thus influenced our results by making analysis of spoken language more difficult. Further, as mentioned above we could not interview all the stakeholders we would have liked to interview, thus we could not analyze the whole system of planning and providing for refugees in Karlskrona.
Interview questions were formulated in line with the previously constructed Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration, to allow for an assessment of the current reality in comparison to the Framework.

The following key stakeholders in planning and service-provision for refugees in Karlskrona were interviewed:

*Interviewee A* represents a person who was contracted by the Karlskrona Municipality to establish a temporary refugee camp. The temporary camp was established by the Municipality in support of the Swedish Migration Board’s appeal for assistance to Swedish Municipalities as means to support the lack of accommodation spots in Sweden held by the Swedish Migration Board. The camp became one of the arrival accommodation for refugees until the end of April 2016, then the Migration Board decided on new accommodation. The Municipality of Karlskrona was responsible for setting up the camp, which mainly provided arriving asylum seekers with food and shelter.

*Interview B* was conducted with 2 people. Interviewee B1 is head of the Labor Administration Department, which took over the responsibility for refugee integration in the Municipality as of January 2016, and further initiated the Karlskrona Municipality Integration Group. Interviewee B2 is counselor at the Swedish Public Employment Service (AF) and takes part in the SKAPA project. The aim of SKAPA is to shorten waiting time from when participants registered to the Swedish Public Employment Service until participants get into regular employment.

*Interviewee C* was conducted with two teachers from the Welcoming Reception Center (Välkomsten). As explained above, the Welcoming Reception Center is a bridging programme that facilitates children’s entrance into regular schools and supports parents in orienting themselves in the Swedish society and system.

*Interviewee D* was conducted with the coordinator/leader of the integration project “Samordning Nyanlända” “Coordination for receiving the newly arrived” in the Municipality of Karlskrona. Interviewee D is working as integration coordinator at Karlskrona municipality and their job is to improve the integration process of refugees in Karlskrona. To that end, she interviewed several stakeholders involved with refugees in Karlskrona and set up two workshops with stakeholders in the Municipality.

*Interviewee E* was conducted with one guidance counselor at SFI (Swedish for immigrants). Interviewee E is a student counselor for SFI and Särvux (Särvux is there for people who are 20 years old or older who have a developmental disability, autism or autism-like conditions, or have had a significant and permanent intellectual disability rate). At SFI they offer Swedish language courses, and as part of these courses, participants are educated on the Swedish society as well.

Selection of interviewees was done by snowballing as there was no official document pointing to all municipal stakeholders for this process.

In our initial search for the key stakeholders for municipal planning for refugee settlement and integration, we were recommended to first talk to interviewee B1 as they are the head of the Labor Administration Department of the Municipality, which is the Municipality’s main department for refugees. Thus, they are at the higher level of planning for refugees within the Municipality of Karlskrona and the person in charge of coordinating the overall planning.
Interviewee B2 was chosen as he has been working for a long time with integrating immigrants into the job market and is currently working in a program, SKAPPA, that aims for a quicker and more efficient entry of refugees/immigrants into the job market. Furthermore, personal connections to him were identified as an advantage of receiving information.

In the interview with interviewees B1 and B2 they recommended us to contact interviewee D as they are the main responsible for a project that can be translated to “Coordination for receiving the newly arrived” (Samordning Nyanlända). This project is the key piece of the Municipality’s effort to adjust/change their planning in order to handle the enormous increase of refugees during summer 2015. For this purpose, interviewee D identified all stakeholders within the Municipality and the main external stakeholders, met with each of them separately and prepared two workshops

As one reaction to the refugee crisis, Sweden ratified a new law according to which municipalities need to support the Swedish Migration Board in the provision of accommodation/housing to asylum seekers. Thus, the Municipality of Karlskrona paid and employed people to organize the setup of 2 or 3 temporary refugee camps. Shelter being basic human need and a responsibility of the Municipality, we wanted to learn more how such accommodation was planned and provided for, on which basis they made decisions in planning for it, what resources were allocated for asylum seekers accommodation and how those were used, what the Municipality identified as crucial day to day needs and how they accordingly provided services for asylum-seekers. Therefore, we decided to have an interview with interviewee A.

The research team met interviewee C on an event about the lesson’s learned on refugee reception in Karlskrona, organized by the Municipality. Interviewee C was very interested in the topic of this thesis. Schooling for children is one further exemption in which Municipalities are entitled to provide for asylum seekers. Further, education is one of the key factors for integration. Based on this two reasons that the Municipality was planning for the Welcoming Reception Center and that such education bridging programs may have a significant influence on refugees’ integration process, the research team wanted to have an interview with a teacher of the organization.

Language is a key factor for integration and has been identified as such by the Municipality of Karlskrona. Further, in our first interviews language was always mentioned as crucial for refugees’ integration. Therefore, we wanted to have an interview with someone working SFI. Interviewee is working as a counselor of SFI for several years, so she knows the organization and its working very well. Moreover, one of the team members knows her and the personal relationship guaranteed a high level of trust and access.

It needs to be acknowledged that due to time constraints and difficulties in access, a full assessment of the whole system of Karlskrona was not achievable. To provide for an extensive assessment of the current reality of planning and providing for refugees, the research team would have liked to also interview further stakeholders identified in Appendix D.

**Informal Interviews:** Informal interviews were conducted with refugees in Karlskrona, as well as with volunteers, planners and providers of refugee services outside of Karlskrona. This was primarily done to gain a better understanding of the topic but during the research
process the research team realized that it gained a lot of valuable information in these interviews. The data gathered in these interviews was, next to results from the Case Study used to suggest improvements for the Framework. Only the data that served to suggest iteration of the Framework or that was significant for the fact that it was similar to what was found in the Case study was used. It is presented in Appendix E and discussed in the Discussion. Informal interviews were conducted with the following three interviewees:

*Interviewee F* is working at a German municipality.

*Interviewee G* constituted a person that was in charge of setting up an emergency shelter in Germany in summer 2015.

*Interviewee H* is an independent volunteer in the Netherlands and has been extremely active in providing any kind of support needed to refugees.

### 3.3.2 Methods for Data Analysis

Interview data were analyzed through the lens of the Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration to investigate gaps or contributions to sustainability.

In order to analyze the data, keywords of the four first levels of the constructed Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration (Systems, Success, Strategic and Actions Levels), were taken. Those keywords represent the main categories of best practices identified in the literature and by SSD thinking. They were used as a priori codes (Savin-Baden and Major 2013) to code the data gathered in the interviews. Using keywords of the Framework allowed for an evaluation of the current state of planning in Karlskrona with the recommended way of planning. Thus, it allowed to see in which areas (categories), Karlskrona is planning well for and in which there might be room for improvement. Coding the interviews, allowed to find out how much which interviewee spoke about a particular category, how they spoke about it, what concerns became obvious, which categories were talked most to, rarely or not at all. In this process, the data being coded was constantly compared to data that had already been coded, as well as to the whole Framework, to find consistencies and differences. The Framework is presented in the next section.
The Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration

The Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration that planners may follow to guide their planning towards social sustainability.

**Table 4. The Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SSP: Removal of structural obstacles to health</th>
<th>Goal:</th>
<th>Key Current Challenge:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The municipality's shared vision for refugee settlement and integration, within the constraints of the success criteria and thus the SSPs</td>
<td>- provision of housing (ECRE 1999, 32)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- equitable access to physical, mental and emotional health service (IOM 2009, 14; ECRE 1999, 32:33)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- family reunification within 6 months (ECRE 1999, 33)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- provision of the fundamental human need of subsistence (food and clothing) (derived from SSD)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- provision of financial social support (derived from SSD)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- access to physical activity (derived from SSD)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- provision of space for privacy (derived from SSD)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- limited health access (ECRE 1999, 33; IOM 2009, 13)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- lack of provision and education of health services (IOM 2009, 13; UNHCR 2001)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- vulnerability and increased health risks connected to social and environmental determinants of health (IOM 2009, 13)</td>
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<tr>
<th>SSP: Removal of structural obstacles to influence</th>
<th>Goal:</th>
<th>Key Current Challenge:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The municipality in the global social system of the human society within the biosphere.</td>
<td>- full and equal participation in society (ECRE 1999, 29; EP 2013, 9)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- participation in creation and evaluation of integration services and policies (ECRE 1999, 46; CBP 9)</td>
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<tr>
<th>SSP: Removal of structural obstacles to competence</th>
<th>Goal:</th>
<th>Key Current Challenge:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The municipalities as complex adaptive systems &amp; the five essential elements for their adaptive capacity (Mumford 2016)</td>
<td>- acquisition of local language (CBP 4)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>- knowledge on host society’s history and institutions (CBP 4)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- school and professional-development training for refugees (ECRE 1999; CBP 5, UNHCR 2013, 44)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- opportunities for refugees to engage in meaningful employment (ECRE 1999, 37)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- reformation of qualifications (CBP 3, EC; 2006; UNHCR 2013, 44)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- opportunities for refugees life-long learning (EC 2006; UNHCR 2013, 44)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- absence of official documents (UNHCR 2013, 36)</td>
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<tr>
<th>SSP: Removal of structural obstacles to impartiality</th>
<th>Goal:</th>
<th>Key Current Challenge:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The municipalities as complex adaptive systems &amp; the five essential elements for their adaptive capacity (Mumford 2016)</td>
<td>- freedom of individual religious beliefs, political opinions, values, customs, cultural affiliation, personal and cultural identities (ECRE 1999, 57; CBP 8)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- interaction and dialogue between all groups in society (CBP 7)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- people working with refugees are well-trained in handling cultural and religious differences and language barriers (derived from SSPs)</td>
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**STRATEGIC**
The strategic guidelines to choose actions to reach success

- include stakeholders (planners, refugees, locals) around a shared vision (FSSD)
- backcast from the municipality’s vision and SSPs and Success Level goals (FSSD)
- three prioritization questions (Does it lead in the right direction? Does it serve as a flexible platform? Does it provide sufficient ROI?) (FSSD)
- co-operation and communication (ECRE 1999)
### How to use the Framework for Refugee Settlement and Integration

The Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration is intended to support planning bodies to strategically move their planning for refugee settlement and integration towards sustainability. Using it, planners should first understand the system in which they are operating and planning for. The Framework provides them with a list of key elements constituting the Systems Level, as well as a theory through which to analyze the system. At the Success Level, key characteristics of best practices identified in the literature have been reformulated as success criteria and organized under goals for the five social SPs. Planners apply the success criteria as boundary conditions for sustainable refugee settlement and integration.

#### Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SSP: Removal of structural obstacles to health</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- provide shelter as a basic human right (ECRE 1999, 32) and support refugees in finding/acquiring suitable housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- secure access to health care and information, considering barriers caused by linguistic, cultural and socioeconomic divide, misinformation and discrimination and stigmatization (IOM 2009, 14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- establish specific refugee health services focused on specific care and treatment need, that serve as a bridge to mainstream health provision (ECRE 1999, 60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- abolish restrictions to family reunification (ECRE 1999, 61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- provision of training for people working with refugees on the consequences of trauma (ECRE 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- clinical care for victims of sexual and gender-based violence (UNHCR 2001, 23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- provide basic daily needs of food, clothing and economical support until refugees reach self-sufficiency (derived from SSPs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- provide sufficient income/wages to cover basic living costs (derived from SSPs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- psychological support for people working with refugees (derived from SSPs)</td>
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<tr>
<th>SSP: Removal of structural obstacles to influence</th>
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<tr>
<td>- build up structures through which refugees and locals can give input on local planning (derived from SSPs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- grant the right to vote and stand for election in local authority elections (ECRE 1999, 43)</td>
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<tr>
<th>SSP: Removal of structural obstacles to competence</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- provide free language training (ECRE 1999) promptly considering different levels and learning abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- provide educational measures to enable access to job market (ECRE 1999, 54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- expanding access to adult education especially for low-skilled, unemployed, adults with special needs and elderly (UNHCR 2013, 44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- set up system to recognize previous experience and qualifications (ECRE 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- educate refugees on the host society's culture and history (CBP 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- training for people working with refugees on the consequences of language difficulties (ECRE 1999)</td>
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<tr>
<th>SSP: Removal of structural obstacles to impartiality</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- refugees are taught their rights &amp; general citizenship rights (Ager &amp; Strang 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ease acquisition of citizenship (ECRE 1999, 40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- introduce legislation, monitoring systems and easily-accessible complaints systems to fight discrimination in the labour market and promote equality of opportunity (ECRE 1999, 52)</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SSP: Removal of structural obstacles to meaning-making</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- address migrants’ concerns and questions” (IOM 2015, 42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- provide immigrants and refugees with accurate information about life in host country (IOM 2015, 42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- cultural exchange and trainings and inter-cultural dialogue for mutual understanding among host society and refugees (CBP 7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- engage refugees in dialogue and cooperation (ECRE 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- employ intercultural mediators to facilitate introduction of refugee children (ECRE 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- organize political &amp; cultural events, promote media (literature, films, etc.) to communicate information on refugees (ECRE 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- training for people working with refugees on cultural and religious differences (ECRE 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- include intercultural aspects into schools curricula, as education has an important role in shaping public perspective (ECRE 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- social events for refugees (derived from SSPs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- enable cultural/religious practices (derived from SSPs)</td>
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integration. Under success criteria, two categories were identified: goals to strive for and current key challenges to avoid. From the FSSD and the literature, certain strategies were incorporated into the Framework that give guidance when choosing and prioritizing concrete actions. At the Actions Level, planners can find a list of concrete actions suggested to reach the relevant goals in the Success Level.

As tools are means to implement actions, they can be very specific and detailed. Due to limitations in time, tools were not sourced from the literature. The Framework presented is a first prototype, and further literature, as well as learnings through application, need to be built in a next iteration. The learnings from the application of the Framework on the case study of Karlskrona, as well as informal interviews with external stakeholders, are discussed in the Overall Discussion, section 7, as a mean to improve the Framework. Thus, the key points presented subsequently are an initial iteration. In line with the key points presented at each level, planners should conduct an analysis of their specific system, craft a vision within the boundaries of the presented key points under the Success Level, brainstorm actions and decide on how to prioritize them, in order to set up a strategic action plan for sustainable refugee settlement and integration.

4.1.1 The Systems Level

Before starting the actual planning process, planning bodies need to analyze the system they are planning in, and for, and base subsequent planning on the gained understanding. A thorough analysis is important to avoid missing any crucial aspects later or implementing actions that move away from success.

An Overview of the Global Social Sustainability Challenge: Any municipality is part of the local, national and international society within the biosphere. Its actions and choices, therefore, unavoidably influence the bigger system they are part of, and vice versa. Municipal planners need to understand the social sustainability challenge, that the municipality is a system nested in a bigger system, and how the municipality is contributing to the social sustainability challenge.

Societies as Complex Adaptive Systems and the Five Essential Elements for their Adaptive Capacity: Human societies can be defined as complex adaptive systems, consisting of many parts (individuals, groups, formal organizations, etc.) acting and reacting to each other in unpredictable, complex ways. No one has complete control and information about the whole system, and thus individual parts rely on each other for the whole system to function well. Human societies are adaptive over time, responding to changes in their environment. This adaptive capacity, or resilience, has been defined as “the ability of groups or communities to cope with external stresses and disturbances as a result of social, political and environmental change” (Adger 2000). The adaptive capacity, which enables human societies to be flexible and adjust to changing environments, allows human societies to survive and sustain over the long run.

Missimer et al. (2016) identified five essential elements of adaptive capacity required for survival of social systems: diversity, learning, self-organization, trust and common meaning.
Diversity ensures that systems have many different ideas, perspectives and understandings, and thus many response options to whatever might happen in the future, increasing the chance to having some suitable ones.

Learning allows the whole system to develop and try different responses to changing circumstances and surroundings. Understanding the system as a whole is important here as individual learning is not enough.

Self-organization is a spontaneous process in which some patterns of order or coordination emerge out of the interaction among the relevant stakeholders, and without any centralized form of control.

Trust has been defined as the glue that holds society together (Hollis 1998). In any system, the individual parts need to trust and rely on one another as no single agent can fulfill all relevant exercises needed to keep the system running.

Meaning-making and meaning seeking are innate to human species. Common meaning leads to reliance that others in the system are working for the same purpose. It can thus guide in responding to complexity.

An example is presented for how to think about the dynamics between the five elements: in the context of refugees coming into a country, diversity increases. Initially, there might not be common meaning amongst locals and the newly arriving migrants, which makes it difficult to keep up a high level of trust in the whole society, and the risk for social segregation increases. Without trust and common meaning, learning and self-organization of the whole system might be disturbed. However, knowing about these elements and the potential dynamics between them, planning bodies can provide platforms and structures that allow for exchange, as getting to know each other can promote trust-building. Furthermore, they can lead to new common meanings and mutual learning on both an individual and a system’s level, which allows for self-organization by individuals. With increased diversity, knowledge and skills in a society increase as well, and when well-integrated, they can add value to a society.

It is beneficial to grasp the five essential elements for adaptive capacity, and the dynamics between them, and base planning on this understanding. The SSPs are based on the reasoning of what structural conditions or obstacles would undermine the elements and should therefore be avoided. Thus, by following the SSPs as boundary conditions of planning, it is assured that the elements are incorporated. Therefore, the success criteria specific to the context of refugee settlement and integration has been structured under the SSPs.

Questions that planners can ask to facilitate the analysis of their system include:

- **For Diversity**
  - How diverse is the current composition of the system in terms of culture, religion, socio-economic, education level?
  - Are people with different backgrounds, in terms of the above, segregated or is there some/significant exchange among groups?

- **For Learning**
  - Are there platforms (formal or informal) for different people to meet, exchange and learn from each other? If so, what are they?

- **For Self-Organization**
  - Is there opportunity or space for individuals to freely organize without a central/controlling governing authority?

- **For Trust**
Is the society plagued by fear, exclusion, segregation and serious social issues (homelessness, extreme poverty, violent crime, racial, gender and/or socio-economic inequality)?

For Meaning-Making
- Are platforms available that allow for the development of a common meaning among/between/within social groups?

**International, National and Local Legislation and Guidelines for Refugee Settlement and Integration:** A thorough understanding and overview of legislation and guidelines is essential as they give the first frame and parameters in which planners can operate.

**Networks and Relationships of Stakeholders who are Involved in Planning and Service-provision:** All stakeholders engaged in planning or providing services for refugees need to be identified. These include public institutions, NGOs and private initiatives providing services ranging from health and education, to language cafés.

**The Economic, Educational, Cultural, Infrastructural, and Social Context in Host Country, as well as in Refugees’ Countries of Origin:** The cultural, social, political, economic, educational and infrastructural context of the municipality needs to be considered. The milieu in which people live their daily lives has an impact on how much or how little a municipality can abide by the Framework (i.e. an economically-depressed town, ethnically/socially segregated society, a city with inadequate or crumbling infrastructure, in a region affected by natural disasters, etc.). Thus, questions planners should pose entail:

- What are the main cultural aspects of the host society and refugee communities?
  - What are the core cultural values? For instance, freedom of speech, democracy, gender equality, patriarchy, etc.
  - What are the local social norms? For instance, punctuality, waiting in line at a ticket counter, having fixed prices in the supermarket, etc.
  - What are cultural norms of interaction? For instance, great hospitality, meeting acquaintances only outside of home, etc.

- What are important social aspects of the host society and refugee communities?
  - How are the structures in different societal institutions, such as in school, the workplace, and in public institutions, shaped? Are there strict vertical hierarchies or rather a flat distribution of power? What are the rights and responsibilities in different positions of power, etc.?
  - Is there a social system in place that supports people in need? What does it provide for? How easy or hard is it to access?
  - What kind of vital records and rules of public life are required in the host country? For instance, how can one acquire a birth certificate, an ID card, a personal number, a driver’s license, proof of residence, what is the tax system? How do these systems work? And how do they work for refugees?

- What are political attitudes towards refugees?
  - What is the government in power’s stance towards refugees? What are the attitudes of the parties in opposition?
  - Which main political stances are prevalent in the local society that is part of the system for which planning is being conducted?
  - How much political willingness exists to support refugees?

- What is the general economic situation in the host society?
  - Is it a wealthy country with a high-standard of living?
From a purely financial perspective, how much support in terms of goods and financial assistance can be given to refugees?

- What is the average educational level of members in the host society and the diverse refugee communities?
  - Is school obligatory? If so, up to which age?
  - How many school places are available? How many are estimated to be needed for refugee children?
  - How many and what kind of educational and professional qualifications do refugees have?
  - What are the processes to get prior qualifications recognized? Are they in need of improvement?

- What is the situation in the host country in terms of infrastructure?
  - How much housing is available? In what condition is the housing and where is it located?
  - How are built and natural environments managed? How much public transport possibilities exist?
  - How well-developed are water-supply, electricity, heating and telecommunication systems?

**Dynamics Between the Host and Refugee Population (as a Community and as Individuals):** Planners need to take into account the dynamics between the host society and the diverse refugee communities:

- What is the general attitude and opinion of the local population towards refugees?
- What are the attitudes and cultural backgrounds of the refugee communities?
- What are differences and commonalities, that need to be communicated and that allow for exchange?

## 4.1.2 The Success Level

Success in the Framework is defined as the municipality's shared vision for refugee settlement and integration, within the constraints of the success criteria and thus the SSPs. After having analyzed the system they are planning in and for, municipal planners are advised to craft a shared vision with all the relevant stakeholders, which is tailored to the specific system of the relevant municipality. This is ideally done in a cooperative process including all stakeholders. In their visioning process, planners would benefit from using the following success criteria of refugee settlement and integration as orientation and boundary conditions. The specific criteria are ordered under the five SSPs.

**Removal of Structural Obstacles to Health:** To remove any structural obstacles to health, refugees should be provided with equitable access and information to physical, mental and emotional health service. It needs to be considered that many refugees experienced poor health conditions back home or during transit, and that adjustment to the new environment can be difficult, particularly due to hard working conditions in the type of jobs often done by refugees (IOM 2009, 14; ECRE 1999, 33). Access to health services is crucial as a part of how refugees are, and feel to be, received; it is therefore critical for the integration process. As the European Council for Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) (1999, 60) states:
“Limited or no access to health provision together with lack of adequate and healthy reception conditions during the initial phase of arrival can seriously undermine refugee long-term health and integration prospects.”

Second, as shelter, is an essential condition for physical health and a basic human right, refugees need to be provided with housing (ECRE 1999, 32). As a third success criteria under health, options for family reunion need to be considered.

The current key challenges to health are a limited access to health (ECRE 1999, 33; IOM 2009, 13) and insufficient education of health services (IOM 2009, 13; UNHCR 2001). In consideration of these challenges, it is advised municipalities review local health systems to evaluate their functioning and accessibility, and note which types of health information are provided to who and when. Another key challenge is refugees’ vulnerability and increased health risks connected to social and environmental determinants of health (IOM 2009, 13).

Removal of Structural Obstacles to Influence: To remove structural obstacles to influence, the goal is for refugees to receive full and equal participation in society (ECRE 1999, 29; European Parliament 2013, 9). Second, to allow for influence refugees should “actively participate in the creation and evaluation of integration services and policies and (b) in the public social life” (ECRE 1999, 37, 46).

Removal of Structural Obstacles to Competence: A key measure to integration is the acquisition of the local language and knowledge on the host society’s history and institutions (CBP 4). To remove structural obstacles to competencies, refugees should receive school and professional-development training for refugees (ECRE 1999; CBP 5; UNHCR 2013, 44) to gain the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve employment. A subsequent success criterion is to have opportunities for refugees’ meaningful employment. Recognition of qualifications previously gained is an important success criterion as it allows for employment and self-sufficiency as soon as possible (ECRE 1999, 37). A great current key challenge in this regard is the absence of official documents (UNHCR 2013, 36); refugees may not have the opportunity to gather or apply for official documents prior to fleeing their homelands. Lastly, it is suggested to adopt opportunities for refugees’ life-long learning as a goal (European Commission 2006; UNHCR 2013, 44).

Removal of Structural Obstacles to Impartiality: Relating to the removal of structural obstacles to impartiality, CBP 6 is the main success principle: “Access for immigrants to institutions, as well as to public and private goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way is a critical foundation for better integration” (equitable and non-discriminatory access to public and private goods and services). As second success criteria everyone in a society has equal access to the labor market. A key challenge in this regard is the lack of access to the formal labor market [which] often forces asylum-seekers to take on irregular employment, [...] increasing the risk of exploitation with detrimental consequences for their well-being and future integration” (UNHCR 2013, 32).

Another challenge to allow for equitable access to the formal labor market is the lack of relevant documentation or recognition of qualification which complicates equivalence assessments (UNHCR 2013, 36-37).
Removal of Structural Obstacles to Meaning-making:
As a goal in removing structural obstacles to meaning-making, society grants freedom of religious beliefs, political opinions, values, customs, cultural affiliations, personal and cultural identities (ECRE 1999, 37; CBP 8). "The practice of diverse cultures and religions is guaranteed under the Charter of Fundamental Rights" (CBP 8). Further, planners aim for interaction and dialogue between all groups in society (CBP 7), which potentially would support reaching the third aim of a host society which is well-informed about diversity/different cultures/cultural behaviour. Particularly, people working with refugees are well-trained in handling cultural and religious differences, language barriers and know the consequences of trauma.

4.1.3 The Strategic Level

The strategic level of the Framework provides planners with strategic guidelines to choose actions to reach success. The first suggested strategy is to include stakeholders (planners, refugees, locals) around a shared vision (FSSD). Having a shared vision ensures that all stakeholders work towards the same final aim, which can potentially increase stakeholders’ awareness of the impact of their individual work in the bigger system. The second strategy is backcasting from the shared vision of success. When backcasting, planners ask what actions need to be taken in order to reach success. This question helps to generate actions, which subsequently need to be organized and prioritized. Prioritizing is led by at least the three following prioritization questions which stem from the FSSD (Broman & Robèrt 2015):

1. Does the action lead in the right direction?
2. Does it serve as a flexible platform?
3. Does it provide sufficient return on investment?

Asking these three questions, planning bodies evaluate each action whether it is relevant enough, whether it can serve as a stepping stone for another action, and whether the action provides sufficient return on investment (ROI) (financial, cultural, environmental)? The ROI question also helps to determine at which point in time an action is to be implemented. In the whole process of planning for refugee settlement and integration, as well as when carrying relevant services out, co-operation and communication between the relevant stakeholders should be applied as strategy (ECRE 1999).

4.1.4 The Actions Level

Any actions taken need to lead the system towards success. In this section, suggestions are provided for actions that respond to the success criteria outlined in section 4.2.

Removal of Structural Obstacles to Health: An action to reach equitable access to health care is to offer such access, irrespective of the status of an asylum-seeker or refugee. Thus, any actions should be taken to secure access to healthcare and information, considering barriers caused by linguistic, cultural and socioeconomic divide, misinformation and discrimination and stigmatization (IOM 2009, 14). Moreover, taking into consideration that many refugees experienced very hard situations of violence in their home countries, and
during transit, it is recommended to establish specific refugee health services focused on specific care and treatment need, that serve as a bridge to mainstream health provision (ECRE 1999, 60). Furthermore, it is suggested to establish clinical care for victims of sexual and gender-based violence (UNHCR 2001, 23). As many refugees are traumatized, a further suggested action is the provision of training for people working with refugees on the consequences of trauma (ECRE 1999). Not knowing what happens to one’s family who remain in regions of conflict or natural disaster have serious impacts to one’s emotional and mental health. In line with the success criteria, it is therefore recommended to abolish restrictions to family reunification (ECRE 1999, 61) so that: "refugee families reunite with the least possible delay and at a minimum within the first six months from status determination" (ECRE 1999, 33).

**Removal of Structural Obstacles to Influence:** As a stepping stone to achieve the goal of full and equal participation in society, ECRE suggests to grant refugees [...] the right to vote and stand for election in local authority elections (1999, 43). Further, any actions should be taken to build up structures through which refugees and locals can give input on local planning of integration services, so as to actively shape the services created for them.

**Removal of Structural Obstacles to Competence:** As language acquisition is one of the key means to integration, it is recommended to provide free language training (ECRE 1999) promptly considering different levels and learning abilities. To reach the goal of having opportunities for refugees’ meaningful employment refugee planning must set up systems to recognize previous experience and qualifications (ECRE 1999); provide educational measures to enable access the job market (ECRE 1999, 54); and expand access to adult education especially for low-skilled, unemployed, adults with special needs and elderly (Council of the European Union, 2010, 5; UNHCR 2013, 44). For integration to happen, refugees need to know about the host society and to provide for that goal measures need to be taken to educate refugees on the host society’s culture and history. To facilitate communication between refugees and people working with them, ECRE (1999) recommends training for people working with refugees on the consequences of language difficulties and training.

**Removal of Structural Obstacles to Impartiality:** To reach the success criteria of refugees having equitable access to private goods and services and being respected and accepted by society, a first critical action to be taken is to teach refugees their rights & general citizenship rights (Ager & Strang 2008). A second measure to reach that goal would be to ease acquisition of citizenship (ECRE 1999, 40), which would lead to the assurance of equal rights. Even though the right to work is a fundamental human right, refugees often face discrimination and partial treatment in the labor market (Asylum Access 2014). To reach the goal of equal access to the labor market, it is proposed to introduce legislation, monitoring systems and easily-accessible complaints systems to fight discrimination in the labor market and promote equality of opportunity (ECRE 1999, 52).

**Removal of Structural Obstacles to Meaning-making:** To allow refugees to make meaning in their new country of residence it is essential to address migrants’ concerns and questions (IOM 2015, 42) and to provide them with accurate information about life in host country (IOM 2015. 42). Further, to allow for acceptance and thus true freedom of diverse individual beliefs, opinions and values platforms need to be established to allow for cultural exchange and trainings for mutual understandings among host society and refugees (CBP 7). To allow for such actions to be successful any actions need to be taken simultaneously that engage
refugees in dialogue and cooperation (ECRE 1999). These actions would also provide for the goal of interaction and dialogue between all groups in society, subsequently allowing for mutual knowledge and understanding necessary to create common meaning of locals and newly arriving. Integration is a two-way process and to allow for it the goal needs to be reached to have a host society well-informed on diversity. Therefore, actions need to be taken to inform the native public as to allow for a common meaning-making. Of particular importance in this regard are children and youth as the key asset in shaping future outlook. It is thus recommended to include intercultural aspects into schools’ curricula, as education has an important role in shaping public perspective (ECRE 1999) and to employ intercultural mediators to facilitate introduction of refugee children (ECRE 1999). To further enhance natives’ knowledge and understanding of refugee communities, including the situations and circumstances that forced them to leave ECRE (1999) recommends to organize political & cultural events, promote media (literature, films, etc.) to communicate information on refugees. Particularly, people working with refugees need to have an understanding of their background so as to avoid problems caused by misunderstanding. Actions thus need to include training for people working with refugees on cultural and religious differences (ECRE 1999).
5 Case Study – Understanding the Current Reality

To gain insights into the application of the Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration’s approach, a case study was conducted in the Municipality of Karlskrona. Interviews were held with stakeholders in the municipality, as depicted in section 3.3.1 (Methods for data collection – current reality), involved with planning or service provision for refugee settlement and integration. The interview data was analyzed by coding the content in a table that aligned with the Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration’s keywords at the Systems, Success, Strategic, and Actions Levels. The analyzed results are presented subsequently according to each level of the Framework, and include alignments and gaps to the Municipality’s current reality of planning for refugee settlement and integration as assessed through the Framework. The research team acknowledges that due to limitations in time and access to all stakeholders (especially lack of access to the Swedish Migration Board), the results presented below may not depict a comprehensive and complete assessment. Nevertheless, it provides insight into the application of the Framework and represents one version of the current reality of the case study, as, for example, a lack of access to some stakeholders were also brought up by other interviewees.

5.1 The Systems Level

Planning for refugee settlement and integration in the Municipality of Karlskrona takes place under the recently established Integration Office, which is under the umbrella of the larger Labour Administration Department. The Integration Office’s project leader, interviewee D, established a project, loosely translated in English as “Coordination for receiving the newly arrived” (Samordning Nyanlända). The objective of the project is to identify gaps and areas for improvement in the settlement and integration processes for refugees in Karlskrona. Based on the outcomes of the project, interviewee D has been developing a proposal to be presented to local politicians prior to the summer of 2016. All of the planning for refugee settlement and integration in Karlskrona must abide by Sweden’s policies, and proposals must be approved by local politicians for implementation.

Data obtained and coded from the interviews did not indicate that the interviewees had a theoretical understanding or explicit knowledge about the dynamics at the Systems Level of the FSSD. However, the analysis of the interviews revealed that the interviewees worked practically with aspects of the Systems Level as presented subsequently. The majority of interviewee statements connected to the Systems Level referred to stakeholders, as well as legislation and guidelines, and to a lesser extent about interactions between the local and refugee populations.

5.1.1 Societies as Complex Adaptive Systems and the Five Essential Elements for their Adaptive Capacity

All interviewees talked about at least one of the essential elements (self-organization, diversity, learning, trust and common-meaning) for the adaptive capacity of the social system in an indirect way. However, the interviewees did not seem to have a theoretical understanding of the approach at the Systems Level as presented in the Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration.
Both benefits of and challenges to diversity were highlighted in interviews. Interviewee A coordinated the activities related to running a temporary refugee camp and to the engagement of asylum seekers by a variety of different people - volunteers from a local church and community organizations such as the Adult Education Association NBV. Moreover, in hiring camp staff, interviewee A required 50% of the staff to be foreign nationals with a second language such as Arabic or Dari as a means to ease communication for the predominantly Syrian and Afghan asylum seekers. None of the interviewees spoke to the importance of diversity for the community of Karlskrona, which is one element for the adaptive capacity of the social system. In terms of challenges to diversity, interviewee A mentioned difficulties and social tension between the diverse refugee groups accommodated at the temporary camp, as well as hostility and threats towards refugees at the camp from members of the local population. Furthermore, interviewee B2 remarked that local companies didn’t want to take the time to deal with the people with limited language skills.

Learning Swedish to function well in society and enter the job market, thereby on some level, integrating, is one of the larger focus areas of the Municipality for refugees in Karlskrona. Furthermore, all asylum seeking children and youth (from ages 6-16) are entitled to and provided with schooling, as reported by interviewee C1, as a means to continue learning after a likely period of interrupted education while in the pre-, peri-, and post-migration phase. The interviews did not speak to the added value or subtraction of value for the community’s learning due to the refugees. However, in regards to subtraction of value for the refugee youth’s learning, interviewee C1 explained that the over-demand for available spots in Karlskrona schools has resulted in some minors unable to attend school immediately after the Welcoming Reception Center’s five-week program. As a result, interviewee C suggested that it creates fear and disappointment among the refugee youth. Consequently, such an experience not only hinders learning, it may lead to an erosion of trust in the system among refugees.

Within the society of Karlskrona, interviewee C1 depicted a challenge to trust: “there are a lot of fantastic people [locals], but they [the local population in Karlskrona] are afraid in Karlskrona; it is different in Karlskrona, it is a more closed society”. This comment was made in reference to the local population’s exclusion of newcomers, as a result of lacking trust in or fearing people coming from other regions or countries to Karlskrona. Although xenophobia was not directly mentioned in any of the interviews, the statements illustrated above from interviewee C1 suggest that there may be a social issue surrounding the local population’s acceptance of outsiders, and in particular, foreigners.

To generate common-meaning and a clear purpose about planning for improved refugee settlement and integration in Karlskrona, a workshop was organized and held by interviewee D who invited thirty stakeholders from various Municipal departments involved in planning and service provision for refugees. The overall aim of the workshop was to discuss what could be done better and how stakeholders could work together to improve the situation for refugee settlement and integration in Karlskrona. At the beginning of the workshop, participants were introduced to each other’s tasks and responsibilities briefed on the process for asylum seekers and refugees as means to establish common-meaning for the workshop’s goals and generate more understanding among all participants about the process asylum seekers and refugees face in Karlskrona. The creation of common meaning throughout the larger society of Karlskrona was not touched on in the interviews, and based on the interview data it was unclear if the Municipality understands the importance of doing so.
Self-organization as one of the essential elements for adaptive capacity was not touched on during the interviews. Interviews were held with individuals who had specific mandates and did not have the authority to lead a spontaneous process without control or permission from directors of departments or upper management in the Municipality.

5.1.2 Legislation and Guidelines

Nearly all interviewees spoke about guidelines, or an absence of guidelines, which influence the delivery of services within their scope of work.

When it comes to settling and integrating refugees within the Municipality of Karlskrona, the Municipality’s formal involvement does not start upon the immediate arrival of asylum seekers. Expressing concern, both interviewees B1 and B2 stated their desire to start working with asylum seekers once they arrive in Karlskrona, yet although they want to do something, it is difficult due to the authority of the Swedish Migration Board at this stage in the asylum seekers process.

Interviewee D illustrated that the Municipality’s responsibility starts when the refugee receives a personal number in Sweden once their asylum application is approved, a process that takes an average of about two years. However, in contradiction, interviewee D and other interviewees depicted ways in which the Municipality of Karlskrona is responsible for providing some services to asylum seekers; such services include providing schooling for minors, and equipping asylum seeking parents with general information about health and safety, the local police, fire, and health departments, and basic knowledge about life and social norms in Sweden. Additionally, due to the Swedish Migration Board’s considerable lack of available accommodation spots for asylum seekers resulting from the 2015 Refugee Crisis, as of March 1, 2016, a new law requires all Swedish municipalities to provide support in terms of temporary accommodation for asylum seekers. The number of accommodation spots each municipality is obligated to contribute depends on the approximate availability as decided by the Swedish Migration Board.

In establishment of the temporary accommodation camp for asylum seekers, interviewee A said that there was no legislation or guidelines provided and that they, together with their boss in the municipal department Arrival Group (Ankomstgrupper), were responsible in developing guidelines and rules for the camp. Whilst interviewee A lacked any guidelines on how to set up the refugee camp, all interviewees of the municipality expressed concern about the law which prohibited them to work in other domains with asylum seekers, beyond the provision of emergency/temporary accommodation, schooling of children and youth, and giving general information about life in Sweden to parents.

In the two interviews conducted with stakeholders in Swedish language education (the Welcoming Reception Center and SFI), it was noted that they receive guidelines on educational content from the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket). It was understood by the research team that the Swedish National Agency for Education’s guidelines were to be followed as means to ensure all children and students have access to the same quality education in Sweden. Regarding the provision of Swedish language education to children and youth at the Welcoming Reception Center, interviewee C1 claimed that prior to 2016 there were no frameworks to where the work began and ended, or what information
or education was to be provided. Besides providing Swedish language and cultural education, during orientation (introduction week) the Welcoming Reception Center is responsible for interviewing students and evaluating their abilities in preparation to get the students into the mainstream Swedish school system at the end of the five-week program. While hosting standard introductory interviews with new students, interviewee C1 revealed that staff used to be able to ask personal questions about the student’s family life and background, gathering a holistic perspective of each individual (similar to a life history interview); there was freedom to adapt the process to the needs of the diversifying student population and the backgrounds from which students came. However, a new law was introduced April 1, 2016, that contains a standardized process and specific interview questions that the Welcoming Reception Center and all other similar organizations in Sweden must abide by. To gain control over previous and inconsistent processes by organizations like the Welcoming Reception Center, the Swedish Government changed the guidelines so that all organizations working in this capacity have a standardized interviewing process to assist schools in preparation for new coming foreign students.

5.1.4 Stakeholders Involved in Planning for Refugee Settlement and Integration in Karlskrona:

On a Systems Level, interviewees mostly discussed stakeholders. Thirty-two statements were obtained from the interviewees about stakeholders that included those working in the provision of services for refugees, officials planning for improved refugee settlement and integration, asylum seekers/refugees, and, to a much more limited extent, the local population in Karlskrona. As a larger theme, the interviewees mainly spoke directly about stakeholders in the sense of the network of organizations that are connected to providing services, and less about the service users or the public that pays for such services through municipal taxes. Interviewee D provided the research team with a structured overview of the stakeholders involved in service provision for refugees in Karlskrona, as illustrated in Figure 5.1.

![Figure 5.1.4 Key Stakeholders. Adapted from Integration Group workshop, Municipality of Karlskrona, May 2016.](image-url)
Based on the outcomes of a workshop involving 30 stakeholders from departments across the Municipality, interviewee D recognized that multiple stakeholders expressed a desire for improved and enhanced cooperation between and among all actors involved in providing services for refugees. Interviewee D specifically conveyed a high desire for improved cooperation between the Municipality of Karlskrona and the Swedish Public Employment Service, as well as the Swedish Migration Board. In particular, interviewee D stated the Municipality of Karlskrona needed better support from the Swedish Public Employment Service as there is a gap in support from employment counselors assisting refugees with placements in the job market. As a result, many refugees face long-term unemployment in which time the Municipality must pay for their social assistance. Interviewee D emphasized the need for improved cooperation with the Swedish Public Employment Service (AF) as important: “AF is the most important stakeholder. They decide on what the person should do for 2 years, so that they can go straight to work instead of staying on social assistance”.

Interviewee E mentioned that SFI is working mostly with the Swedish Public Employment Service and the Municipality’s Social Services Department as key stakeholders. Furthermore, interviewee E asserted that the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket) is an important stakeholder as it supplies the guidelines for what, and how, content is taught at SFI. In addition, interviewee E claimed other organizations are involved in supporting SFI such as NBV, the local community college (Folkuniversiteiten), Sweden’s largest adult education association titled the Workers’ Educational Association (ABF), and the Adult Education in Karlskrona organization (Vuxenskolan), as well as other SFI institutions all over the Blekinge region that they meet with once a month to exchange ideas and experiences.

The importance of local volunteers and NGOs as stakeholders supporting asylum seekers was acknowledged in interview D. Local organizations such as the Lions Club International (an international service club for humanitarian projects and community service work), the Rotary Club (an international service organization committed to providing humanitarian service projects), the Swedish Church (Svenska Kyrkan), and members of civil society provide asylum seekers with services such as Swedish language training or community activities in which the Municipality is unable to provide, even though interviewee D claimed they want to.

5.1.5 Dynamics Between the Local and Refugee Populations:

Interaction and engagement between the local and refugee populations was a theme touched on in all of the interviews. It was identified that there are some, although limited or insufficient, opportunities for locals and refugees to meet socially. Interviewee E revealed “I have friends who want to have foreign friends but they don’t know how to”. They further explained that there is a need for more structures and platforms, like dance classes or a cooking course, for locals and refugees to meet. It was suggested that Swedish people need structures to get in contact and meet with people and that they are less likely to engage with people they don’t know outside of formal structures. Interviewee E alleged, “Swedes need it slowly, they go a thousand times to a café to meet someone before they invite someone home”.

One way for locals to engage and meet with refugees is through volunteering, in which both locals and newcomers are able to learn about each other socially and culturally. Interviewees A, C1, D, and E provided examples of locals working, or how they could work, with asylum
seekers and refugees, although interviewee C1 explicitly claimed not many people call or email Välkomsten to volunteer. Locals are volunteering in a range of capacities that are mostly centered on providing Swedish language education. At SFI, volunteers give their time to help newcomers in Sweden practice Swedish during the weekly initiative *Café Speech Bubble (Café Pratbubblan)*. The Municipality has also established an initiative, *Integration for all - all for integration*, which matches volunteering locals with interested newcomers together as language friends. Besides supporting Swedish language acquisition, locals had been volunteering at the temporary refugee camp, managed by interviewee A, by taking asylum seekers on picnics, singing and reading with them, or taking them out on excursions. Interviewee C felt that the local community doesn't need more people to work in the field of service provision for refugees; rather, locals need to volunteer their time by taking refugees out to dinner or a soccer match, and by doing so, it would better facilitate integration of refugees in society.

### 5.2 The Success Level

The Success Level of the Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration, uses the FSSD’s SSPs and associated goals, as highlighted in section 3.2.1, to backcast from sustainable refugee settlement and integration. The succeeding sub-sections depict an analysis of the Municipality of Karlskrona’s compliance with - and gaps to - the elimination of contributions to structural obstacles for refugees’ health, influence, competence, impartiality, and meaning-making, in addition to other success criteria. The largest quantity of data obtained from the interviews related to goals for refugee settlement and integration revolved around developing refugees’ competence to learn Swedish, which by doing so would enhance people’s ability to integrate as well as increase adult’s employment eligibility.

In each interview, interviewees were asked what they and the organization they are working for see as key goals to be reached for successful integration. This question was asked to discover how interviewees would define success. In this regard, interviewee B1 stated the Municipality’s main goal is to establish an all-encompassing, centralized organization for integration (Integrationscentrum) which can compile information from all stakeholders to give thorough information and address refugee concerns. Amalgamating services was identified by interviewee B1 as an opportunity for the Municipality as they regarded the current approach to be ineffective. In follow up, interviewee B2 expressed that the ideal situation would be that refugees can come to one organization for all their needs and that the information is centralized: “*One way in, several ways out*”. Interviewee B2 told the research team, “*it’s important work, and something we need to do*”.

Based on the outcomes of the Municipality’s workshop regarding refugee settlement and integration, interviewee D explained the next step identified was to reach the following goals: a centralized organization for refugees to obtain information (1 way in); early personal contact (with Swedish people); clear, overall information on services available to refugees; increased cooperation and follow up among stakeholders and their work; language training; more and earlier information on community/society; bridging school programs for high school as well; and increased focus on housing.
5.2.1 Removal of Structural Obstacles to Health

Interview data was assessed to determine how planning goals for refugee settlement and integration in Karlskrona address the removal of structural obstacles to refugees’ health. The majority of interviews did not significantly reference access to or provision of health services in terms of success for refugee settlement and integration. However, if the research team had held interviews with stakeholders at the Blekinge County Council, the organization responsible for health services in Karlskrona, there likely would have been information gained that speaks to goals of providing refugees (and all members of society) with equitable access to quality health services. A theme concerning mental health was touched upon lightly as a goal; interviewee B1 made the comment that municipal planners did not want refugees to get sick waiting and this was in reference to mental sickness and idleness. Interviewee B1 stated next to refugee children being enrolled in school, their main concern was housing and that having housing is a main step towards integration. Interviewee B1 also discussed the goal for refugees to be involved with sporting activities as means to achieve integration, and interviewee C1 depicted examples of engaging and encouraging students in sports activities. Family reunification was not discussed as it is under the Swedish Migration Board’s responsibility. Interviewee A spoke to the provision of the fundamental human need of subsistence, declaring that food, shelter and safety were the first and main aspects the Camp had to provide for. In regards to the provision of financial social support interviewee D mentioned that the Municipality has to pay living costs to all unemployed persons, thus also refugees, and that therefore they want them to start working as soon as possible. To provide refugees with spaces for privacy was not discussed as a goal in any of the interviews and, in fact, the research team observed that it was violated in the refugee camp. All refugees living there (at any given time) had to share all facilities, including a repurposed gym as sleeping quarters, a kitchen-community-space, and bathrooms; in particular, as sleeping quarters for everyone at the camp (women, children, families, singles) were contained in one space (a former gymnasium) stress, anxiety and conflict may heighten.

5.2.2 Removal of Structural Obstacles to Influence

In terms of influence, planning for refugee participation in the creation and evaluation of integration services and policies is a key element to move society towards sustainability. None of the interviewees spoke about the involvement of refugees in planning, creating or evaluating services as a goal and no direct structures were found to exist which allow refugees to do so. When asked, interviewee B1 remarked that refugees do not really have any opportunity to influence planning. At the most, interviewee D reported that, in the workshop held at the Municipality focused on improving refugee settlement and integration, concerns and wishes of refugees were incorporated; such concerns were identified by three refugees interviewed prior to the workshop and by stakeholders who were told such concerns by refugees. Further, in a follow up email responding to the remaining questions to interviewee D, they said that the Municipality is “planning for a workshop specifically for refugees in order to get their feedback. Interviewee A stated that neither refugees, nor locals, were consulted in developing the refugee camps plans, or the activities or services which would be provided and how. Establishing full and equal participation of refugees in society as a planning goal was not directly spoken about during the interviews. However, in the workshop at the Municipality the following four goals were outlined that indirectly speak to participation of refugees in society: A Way In; Public Service Announcement; Internship + Language = Job; Children and their Wellbeing.
5.2.3 Removal of Structural Obstacles to Competence

In early 2016, the Labour Administration Department in the Karlskrona Municipality established a new office under its organizational structure responsible for integration in Karlskrona. The vision of the Labour Administration Department, as well as the Integration Office, is “One Karlskrona with work and education for all”. As such, a goal for removing structural obstacles to competence for refugees revolves around ensuring structures are available and accessible for refugees to obtain work and education. Refugees gaining access to the job market in Karlskrona was a major theme in the majority of interviews as a goal of success.

Interviewees B1, B2 and D from the Municipality talked about identified obstacles to the success of reaching self-sufficiency in terms of access to the job market. Obstacles to refugees obtaining jobs were stated as a lack of Swedish language fluency and long wait times associated with verification of documents and credentials, as reported by interviewees B1 and B2. A major topic in this regard was language acquisition; at least basic fluency in Swedish is required for jobs and without it, obtaining work can be challenging. Interviewee B1 discussed the difficulties of refugees finding a job, especially with the lengthy average time period of 7-12 years before refugees often gain stable access to the labor market. In response to the long period of unemployment, interviewee B1 remarked that they would like to significantly reduce this time period to 1-2 years and establish refugees in the job market much more quickly than the current process does.

For highly educated and skilled refugees, such as doctors, who must have their credentials validated before they can be employed, the wait time is an additional barrier to their entry into the labor market. Interviewee B1 stated a big challenge was that refugees must send their academic degrees to Stockholm to be verified which takes approximately 1-2 years, hindering the ability of educated and professional refugees to gain employment in a timely manner. In addition, interviewee B1 reported that the Blekinge County Council also needs to better support foreign-qualified doctors and nurses in gaining efficient access to the job market, especially as there is a skills shortage for these occupations in Sweden.

Planning for sustainable refugee settlement and integration includes equipping refugees with knowledge on the host society's language, history and institutions. In Karlskrona, SFI and the Welcoming Reception Center give refugees the opportunity to study Swedish and gain understanding about Sweden's history and socio-cultural context. For SFI, interviewee E stated that success would be for refugees to learn Swedish, to have the highest amount of people learning Swedish, and for SFI to provide the learning as individual as possible. When asked what the goal of the Welcoming Reception Center was, interviewee C1 and C2 could not articulate what it was and consulted and referred the research team to the Center’s 2014/15 information publication. The brochure highlights the Welcoming Reception Center’s aim: that every child will quickly be offered the support and education they need, thanks to an early assessment. Additionally, the brochure states the Welcoming Reception Center’s targets are: to offer a professional and welcoming introduction to children, with other first languages than Swedish, who with their parent/guardian move to the Municipality of Karlskrona; to create a first image (assessment) of the newly arrived child’s conditions and needs in order to succeed in preschool/school; and to provide support to the child, the family, and the receiving preschool/school. On a personal level, interviewee C1 communicated that success to them would be to meet a former student in five years speaking Swedish with their friends in Karlskrona.
Learning and being able to correspond in Swedish was also highlighted by other interviewees as goal to achieve success for refugee settlement and integration. Interviewee A declared that refugees have to learn Swedish as a goal and interviewee B2 remarked that a vision (as an opportunity for the Municipality) is that refugees are taught and practice Swedish to be able to get a job as means to provide for their self-sufficiency.

What was not identified as an explicit goal was providing structures for lifelong learning; however, interviewee D did present goals that relate to lifelong learning, illustrated in the previous section 5.2.2, as outcomes of the workshop they held with stakeholders in the Municipality. Had the research team interviewed stakeholders from the Municipality’s Culture, Sports and Recreation Department, goals for projects and initiatives focused on refugees’ (and locals’) lifelong learning may have been discovered.

5.2.4 Removal of Structural Obstacles to Impartiality

Goals related to the removal of structural obstacles to impartial treatment were only a point of discussion in terms of providing refugees with quicker access to the labour market. However, even when speaking to efforts made to improve refugees access to the job market, it was not spoken about it in terms of reaching access to the labour market on equal terms as Swedes. Furthermore, equitable and non-discriminatory access to public and private goods and services was not mentioned as a goal to achieve better integration of asylum seekers and refugees. Towards the end of the thesis project, the research team identified that the Municipality has a Diversity-Network (Mångfaldsnätverk) and a Discrimination Ombudsman (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen) which, had they been interviewed, may have afforded the team with understanding about goals to provide refugees with avenues to receive support or lodge complaints about experiences of discrimination or racism.

5.2.5 Removal of Structural Obstacles to Meaning-making

Interviews did not touch on any aspects related to specific planning goals that would remove structural obstacles to meaning-making for refugees. As put forth in the Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration under the Success Level’s removal of structural obstacles to meaning-making, the practice of Fundamental Rights of individual religious beliefs, political opinions, cultural affiliation, personal and cultural identities was not discussed as a planning goal for refugee settlement and integration in Karlskrona. Interviewee A mentioned refugees’ respect and acceptance of the local society (refugees must respect Swedish laws and rules and adapt to Swedish food), as well as the need for locals’ respect and acceptance of refugees as key elements for integration.

In discussing interaction and dialogue between all groups in society as a goal for improved settlement and integration, interviewee B2 referred to the importance of making social connections and friends, and talked about the importance of interactions between Swedish and newcomers. For integration to work, they declared making social connections and friends were vital. In addition, interviewee E also stated that interactions between the refugee community and the host society are crucial for successful integration. Specifically, interviewee B2 suggested it would be great for local populations, in their free time, to invite refugees to sports or special interest activities. Fostering relationships between Swedish and newcomers around activities that were interest-based was recommended. To facilitate this,
interviewee B2 stated the Municipality could figure out how to create meeting places and activities to bring people together.

5.3 The Strategic Level

In order for the research team to comprehend how the Municipality of Karlskrona elects actions to reach a vision of success for refugee settlement and integration, questions were posed to interviewee B1, B2 and D about how the Municipality make planning decisions. Interviewees B1 and B2 replied that decisions are made in dialogue with people already working in organizations, departments and authorities; which was not shared were guidelines or ways in which priorities were set. Moreover, interviewees B1, B2 and D claimed that plans and proposals are presented to municipal politicians who make the ultimate decisions and approvals.

The research team asked interviewees B1 and B2 about the Municipality’s planning for integration and what integration meant to the municipality. In response, interviewee B1 noted that they could not understand the research team’s question as the subject (planning for integration) hadn’t been discussed in the organization; such a response reveals potential challenges in communication due to the language barrier between the interviewers and interviewees. In contrast, even though interviewee B1 remarked that plans for integration were missing in Karlskrona, they also revealed that a municipal study was conducted in 2015 that examined what was missing in the process for refugee settlement and integration. The outcomes of the study suggested that a centralized organization needed to be established to guide and support refugees in their settlement and integration. The centralized organization would be able to offer asylum seekers and refugees the relevant information they require and refer them to the correct service providers for their needs. On January 1, 2016, interviewee B1 had taken over the responsibility for integration planning and employed interviewee D under the Municipality’s Labor Administration Department as a project leader to work on building such capacity.

To come up with ideas and craft a proposal plan for improving the process of refugee settlement and integration in Karlskrona two workshops were held in the Municipality by interviewee D. Although not identified by interviewee B, according to the research team the workshops seemed to follow a strategic planning process along the lines of SSD. In the first workshop, 30 stakeholders working inside Municipal Departments were invited together around the project’s purpose and goal to improve the Municipality’s planning for refugees. During the workshop, interviewee D requested stakeholders in the Municipality backcast from the established vision of the Labour Administration Department, “One Karlskrona with jobs and education for all”. To generate understanding among the participants of the current reality for the process of refugee settlement and integration in Karlskrona, interviewee D presented the 3 phases of refugees’ establishment in the workshop. Figure 5.3 illustrates the process for those new in Sweden until they become self-sufficient.
After the current reality was presented, workshop participants generated actions to address the gaps in service provision that the participants identified as the needs expressed by refugees. As the top prioritized actions, eighteen stakeholders wanted one contact person, seventeen advocated for one way in (a centralized organization), and sixteen desired more accommodation/apartments for refugees. With the results from the workshop, a proposal was created by interviewee D and will be formally delivered to local politicians for approval. Throughout the interviews, interviewees B and D from the Municipality and interviewee C from the Welcoming Reception Center all talked about the planning workshop; interviewee C remarked the workshop was “a systematic approach to spot loose ends”.

When interviewing stakeholders in Karlskrona on planning for refugee settlement and integration, two intertwined issues came up a great deal: a lack in communication and cooperation among stakeholders, and gaps between the various services for refugees. Interviewees A and C, who are both providing services for refugees (managing a refugee camp and offering a school bridging program for foreign youth) expressed their desire for better communication with other service-providing organizations. Further, they both found that the service they offered was well-received and beneficial to asylum-seekers and refugees. However, neither interviewees knew when and where refugees would be placed when the temporary camp would be closed and whether or not children would indeed get a place in a regular school after finishing the five-week program at the Welcoming Reception Center; there is a gap between their services and the next step for refugees. As interpreted from interviews A, B and C, the research team understood in some instances asylum-seekers and refugees have to return to a state of complete uncertainty in regards to what will happen in the next phase of their asylum/settlement and integration process and have to simply wait for an undetermined time before they can proceed. Interviewees B and D had identified that such gaps and lack in communication are a concern for most stakeholders in planning or providing for asylum-seekers and refugees in Karlskrona. Hence, an aspect of the two workshops organized was to investigate how stakeholders within the Municipality should work together and with external stakeholders. Thus, people were introduced to each other’s work in order to learn what their colleagues are doing and to gain an understanding of the whole picture of what Karlskrona Municipality is doing for refugees. In addition, a few of the
Interviewees indirectly expressed that there was a lack of coordinated response and support from the Swedish Migration Board.

### 5.4 The Actions Level

Assessed from the Framework’s Actions Level, the Municipality is taking actions and measures that can both move towards social sustainability as well as away from it. Based on the data collected and analyzed from the interviews, the research team found some actions that demonstrate strengths with the Framework, as well as potential challenges. These are illustrated in Table 5.4.

**Table 5.4. Case Study Results: Actions Level.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
<th>The actions that help move municipal planning for refugee settlement and integration strategically towards compliance with success AND global sustainability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Removal of structural obstacles to health</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview A</strong></td>
<td>Strengths - provided asylum seekers with shelter - provided asylum seekers at the temporary accommodation camp with food and clothing (items for subsistence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview B</strong></td>
<td>Strengths - website established asking locals to rent out an available room or a house to refugees as a solution to the lack of housing - refugees are encouraged to join sports clubs and participate in physical activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview C</strong></td>
<td>Strengths - nurses conduct a mental health assessment for children and minors upon entry to the Welcoming Reception Center - provision of health and community information to parents - staff are able to receive psychological support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potential Challenge</strong></td>
<td>Standardized, knowledge-based interview questions upon enrollment at the Welcoming Reception Center do not allow for a well-rounded awareness of the student (personal needs, family, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview D</strong></td>
<td>Strengths - assistance for up to two years, if refugees are not self-sufficient after two years, Social Services provides welfare as it does for Swedish citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Removal of structural obstacles to influence</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview A</strong></td>
<td>Strengths - interview of these refugees to gain perspective on the refugees' experiences and needs presented in the initial coordination of receiving the newly arrived workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview B</strong></td>
<td>Strengths - community organizations came to the temporary refugee camp twice a week to teach asylum seekers Swedish and Swedish culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potential Challenge</strong></td>
<td>Swedish Migration Board gives limited and shallow information to refugees about the host society upon their arrival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview C</strong></td>
<td>Strengths - program called Fast Track (Stabbebryt) for highly educated, professionals to receive additional support in accessing the job market - opportunity for refugees on SFI's waiting list to attend basic Swedish classes two days a week - refugees can attend the SFI-organized two-hour Swedish language-practice event Café Pratthällan held weekly - refugees can connect with local relationships with Swedes to practice Swedish through Language Friend initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potential Challenge</strong></td>
<td>Many highly-skilled refugees are waiting an average of 7-12 years to access suitable employment reflective of their profession or training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview D</strong></td>
<td>Strengths - an initial 1-2 year wait for refugees to get their academic or professional credentials recognized and verified in Stockholm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview E</strong></td>
<td>Strengths - Welcoming Reception Center’s five-week school bridging program for minors new in Sweden, children’s previous knowledge and skills are assessed, and they’re taught basic Swedish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potential Challenge</strong></td>
<td>Sweden, but, due to the recent influx in newcomers in Karlshamn, the students end up living in Sweden for more than three months before they begin the school bridging program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview D</strong></td>
<td>Strengths - Fast Track (Stabbebryt) program for highly educated, professionals to receive additional support in accessing the job market - SKAPA program for low-skilled, unemployed, or special-needs adults which provides skills training and internships for an easier quicker transition into stable employment - local NGOs and volunteers are instrumental in providing language training for asylum seekers - update of the Municipality’s website to provide information to refugees in three languages: Swedish, English, and Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview E</strong></td>
<td>Strengths - foreigners who have a personal number in Sweden can attend 600 hours of annual Swedish language classes at SFI - SFI students taught 60 hours a year about Swedish society - refugees encouraged to attend peer groups learning new skills through special-interest clubs and courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Removal of structural obstacles to impartiality</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview E</strong></td>
<td>Strengths - SFI’s book, “About Sweden,” has a section about gender equality as an important characteristic of Swedish society, which fosters awareness and work to reduce discrimination or impartial treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Removal of structural obstacles to meaning-making</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview A</strong></td>
<td>Strengths - social events and children’s activities organized for asylum seekers at the temporary accommodation camp - monthly party for the refugees to cook their own food, dance and listen to their cultural music at the camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potential Challenge</strong></td>
<td>Refugees at a temporary accommodation camp unable to eat halal meat, or prepare and eat their cultural food (except for one night every three weeks) - Internees &amp; unskilled refugees must adapt to eat Swedish food, and if they do not like it, they should learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview E</strong></td>
<td>Strengths - refugees students at SFI were able to participate in social activities such as going to play golf with the local golf club - female students in SFI classes not allowed to have their faces concealed by a niqab or hijab, symbols of femininity in Islamic dress - Muslim students at SFI who wanted to miss class on Fridays to attend Mosque were suggested to stop SFI classes if they didn’t want to attend on Fridays</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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6 Discussion of Case Study Results and Recommendations

Throughout the interview process the research team identified several gaps in the Municipality’s planning efforts that have implications in planning for sustainable refugee settlement and integration. The following section discusses those gaps and provides recommendations as support for the Municipality of Karlskrona to help Karlskrona strategically in its transition towards sustainable refugee settlement and integration. The following sections are structured and presented similar to the results. Under each sub-heading the main points of the results to be discussed are summarized.

6.1 The Systems Level

6.1.1 Societies as Complex Adaptive Systems and the Five Essential Elements for their Adaptive Capacity

- Municipal planners do not have a theoretical understanding on adaptive capacity and the five essential elements

The five elements necessary for a society’s adaptive capacity have only been defined recently (see Missimer et al. 2016), which may be the reason for why the Municipality has not yet gained awareness of them. The research team recommends municipal planners in Karlskrona look into this new approach and gain an understanding of the five essential elements in order to base planning on understanding which elements are insufficient or missing in their system. With those elements in mind, while analyzing the system they are planning for, planners would know which elements are insufficiently represented in their system to plan actions accordingly.

6.1.2 Legislation and Guidelines

- interviewees of the Municipality concerned about being prohibited to work with asylum seekers in domains other than housing and schooling for children

Legislation guides planning as it sets a frame/boundary within which planning takes place. It can be helpful to have a set scope, but it can also constrain the possibilities for acting and become an obstacle to reaching a vision. In the case of Karlskrona, the Municipality expressed their concern on only being able to start part of the integration process with refugees upon their arrival in Karlskrona. As expressed in the literature, starting the integration process as soon as possible is essential to the wellbeing of individuals and to their achievement of integration in the longer term (ECRE 1999, 11; EFA 2015). Thus, it will be of benefit to the host society to start integration as soon as possible. Of course, it is not in the power of the Municipality to change the national laws regarding processes for asylum seekers which the Swedish Migration Board is responsible for. However, it needs to be recognized that the relevant legislation constitutes a structural obstacle for Municipalities to positively influence the settlement and integration process.
6.1.3 Stakeholders Involved in Planning for Refugee Settlement and Integration in Karlskrona

- whole-systems perspective is missing
- desire for improved and enhanced cooperation between and among all actors involved in providing services for refugees
- interviewees spoke mainly about stakeholders providing services and less about the service users (refugees) or the public that pays for such services

It was identified in the analysis that stakeholders in planning and service-provision for refugees are working more independently and have little knowledge about other stakeholders and their work. By conducting the two workshops, the Municipality started a process in which stakeholders can get to know each other, and each other’s work and responsibilities. It is recommended to continue such work for all stakeholders planning and providing for refugees, thus for people working in - and outside - the Municipality. Such efforts would allow stakeholders to gain an understanding of the whole system they are working in and better understand the importance of their working within it; show the gaps between the diverse services; and allow for more and improved communication to potentially cooperate in closing gaps.

6.1.4 Dynamics Between the Local and Refugee Populations

- some, although limited, social opportunities for locals and refugees to meet
- Swedish people need structures to get in contact and meet with people

After the interviews the research team found that there some more opportunities for interaction between locals and refugees. Thus, for instance, the Culture and Leisure Administration Department encourages and supports local sports associations to admit refugees. If additional stakeholders, such as people working in the Culture and Leisure Administration Department, were interviewed, potential data may have been discovered about more avenues and platforms for locals and refugees to meet and interact.

6.2 The Success Level

As depicted in the Results, section 5.2.3 (Removal of structural obstacles to competence) the Municipality’s Labour Administration Department has a vision centered on competence for all people in Karlskrona. This vision also serves as the vision for refugee settlement and integration, of which planning has begun to work towards. Potentially, other Municipal Departments have goals corresponding to other success criteria outlined in the Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration that the research team is unaware of. Even if so, it is recommended that the Municipality crafts an overarching shared vision among all stakeholder departments, considering all the success criteria of the Framework. Further, it is proposed to communicate the vision well to all the stakeholders in the system of Karlskrona - those responsible for refugee planning in the Municipality, organizations providing for refugees, as well as refugees, locals and public organizations. The aim of a clearly communicated vision is that all stakeholders are united around one common goal which they plan and work towards.
In follow up with interviewee D after the interview, the research team learned that the Municipality is planning to hold a workshop for refugees to get their feedback and opinions on planning for settlement and integration. In order to reach a common vision including all the stakeholders, it is recommended the Municipality hold two further workshops: one with external organizations providing for refugees, and one with the local public society (including public and private organizations, such as academic institutions and local business). The outcomes of these future workshops and the two internal workshops could be amalgamated to help create an overarching vision. In line with such an overarching vision, each stakeholder group might craft their own sub-vision or decide on their own specific goals bounded by the criterion at the Success Level of the Framework. Having a clear and shared vision of success, the Municipality would then need to decide on a strategic approach for reaching it.

6.2.1 Removal of Structural Obstacles to Health

- not significantly reference access to or provision of health services
- mental health was touched upon lightly as a goal
- main concern was housing
- identified gap to health: new standardized questions used in the Welcoming Center’s interview are solely knowledge-based and do not allow for a well-rounded awareness of the student

It was reported by interviewee C1 that due to a new law, questions asked in the introductory interviews by the Welcoming Reception Center are solely knowledge-based (i.e. math and English) and do not allow for a well-rounded awareness of the student, their personal needs, or family situation - aspects which can all influence and impact their learning and integration in school. With an interview focus only on academics, and not the whole story of a child, issues of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that affect many children having to flee from war and conflict go undetected at the initial entry point. Without proper support, the student’s full capacity for learning can be prevented or cause behavioral or academic problems that could have been initially identified in a more comprehensive interview process. It is thus suggested that the Welcoming Reception Center hires additional staff, so that teachers can take the time necessary to conduct comprehensive interviews and initiate necessary measures to work on any identified problems associated with the mental, emotional and physical health of new students.

It needs to be recognized that there is a general lack of housing in Karlskrona, and that locals have difficulties in finding an apartment. The task of finding housing for refugees in Karlskrona is challenging and a recommendation that can be made here would be to build more accommodation, which would also reduce employment and stimulate the local economy.

6.2.2 Removal of Structural Obstacles to Influence

- no structures for refugees and locals to influence planning
- plans on holding a workshop for refugees to get their feedback

It is encouraged that the Municipality increase involvement of refugees in planning for refugee settlement and integration as a goal. Including refugees in planning for the services
that will affect them directly, can avoid planning and investing in structures that might not be relevant to refugee communities or that are inappropriate for their cultural backgrounds. Involving refugees allows for a better understanding of their background and the current problems and difficulties they face, aspects to be considered in planning. Additionally, involving locals in the planning process may improve the public’s awareness and support of Municipal plans. Including both refugees and locals in planning for settlement and integration may lead to an increased interaction between the groups, which subsequently can foster better understanding and integration among them. As such, one suggestion is for the Municipality to hold regular workshops or forums with a diverse mix of refugees and locals to give their input into planning for refugee settlement and integration. In doing so they need to consider refugees’ previous experience. Many of the countries refugees come from are torn by war, systems are corrupted and censorship part of daily life. The Municipality needs to be aware of these factors, which might result in refugees not feeling able to give their honest feedback.

6.2.3 Removal of Structural Obstacles to Competence

- vision of the Labour Administration Department: “One Karlskrona with work and education for all”
- Swedish fluency is largely required for refugees to gain access to the job market
- long wait times for validation of professional qualification as barrier

The Municipality is making strong efforts on providing refugees with access to the local job market and are encouraged to continue their work in this area.

6.2.4 Removal of Structural Obstacles to Impartiality

- removal of structural obstacles to impartial treatment were not a point of discussion for any of the interviewees, neither was equitable and non-discriminatory access to public and private goods and services

Women wearing the traditional hijab have more difficulties in finding employment, forcing them to either take the decision of not wearing a hijab or accept those disadvantages. As outlined in section 1.2.2 (The relationship between forced migration and the sustainability challenge), hate crimes motivated by xenophobia are increasing in Sweden and integration. News on crimes against migrants in Karlskrona indicate that xenophobia is an issue in Karlskrona as well.

It is recommended the Municipality makes significant effort to allow for the development of respect and impartial treatment amongst all residents in Karlskrona, no matter what their national, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds.

6.2.5 Removal of Structural Obstacles to Meaning-making

- individual religious beliefs, political opinions, cultural affiliation, personal and cultural identities was not discussed as a planning goal
- importance of interactions between Swedish and newcomers
It is recommended that the Municipality consider religious and cultural traditions that support meaning-making and incorporate related goals into their vision.

### 6.3 The Strategic Level

- two workshops were held in the Municipality by interviewee D to create an understanding amongst the different people in the Municipality on what their colleagues are doing, assess the current reality, backcast from the established vision of the Labour Administration Department to generate actions and draft a proposal to deliver to politicians
- lack and desire for more communication and cooperation among stakeholders
- gaps between the various services for refugees

Karlskrona is an eco-municipality, meaning planning throughout all municipal departments is supposed to occur along the lines of strategic sustainable development. The Municipality of Karlskrona has made some significant efforts to assess gaps in the current reality of planning and to backcast from the established vision of the Labour Administration Department. It is recommended to hold further workshops, broadening the participants to include representatives of all stakeholder groups/all organizations and individuals in planning and providing services in Karlskrona, instead of those working in the Municipality alone. In this regard, it is also recommended to build up more structures for refugees and locals to influence the planning process. As suggested under the Success Level, a shared vision is crafted and, in the suggested workshops presented previously, participants would backcast from this vision including all the goals to reach success. Subsequently, the gathered actions should be organized by applying at a minimum the three prioritization questions:

1. Does the action lead into the right direction with respect to the success criteria identified in the Framework?
2. Does the action provide a ‘stepping stone’ for future improvement?
3. Is the action likely to produce a sufficient return on investment to further catalyze the process?

Organizing actions according to those questions can help the Municipality to set up a strategic plan that will move towards a socially sustainable society.

As touched upon in the System’s Level, workshops would also constitute a platform to enhance communication and cooperation amongst stakeholders. Finally, it needs to be acknowledged that, as stated by interviewee C1, all planning can only be implemented if politicians approve it. In order, to increase politicians’ awareness of the planning and initiate potential support, it is advised they are invited to participate in the workshops.

### 6.4 The Actions Level

As identified in the results most of the actions planned and provided for aim for language acquisition and employment eligibility. These are important areas and the research team encourages taking further actions in this regard. Additionally, it is proposed to employ actions that lead to the removal of structural obstacles in the areas of health, influence, impartiality and meaning-making. Some concrete suggestions on actions can be found in the Appendix G.
6.4.1 Improved Communication on Existing Offers

The research team sees significant potential in the potential central organization (Integrationscentrum) the Labour Administration Department’s Integration Office is proposing. It is recommended the Municipality not only puts emphasis on informing refugees about all the existing services available to them, but also to ensure that the diverse organizations know about each other’s work to also be able to inform refugees about all kinds of existing support. As many refugees are equipped with Smartphones and can easily access information online, it is recommended the Municipality utilizes social media to provide key information about accessing services in Karlskrona, as well as to connect the host community with the refugees.

6.4.2 Limitations/Difficulties in Research Process of Case Study

In the research process to discover more information about the case of Karlskrona, the first contact to potential interviewees was much harder to establish than expected. One of the reasons for that was the language barrier. Due to not being fluent in English, one of the interviewees was initially hesitant to speak with us. Only after getting to know us in person, they agreed to an interview, which turned out to be one of the key interviews of our research. We would have liked to have a follow up interview to it, however, as this was already towards the end of the thesis research project, the timing to do so was unfeasible. Had there been earlier access to interviewees, it could have created space to build trust which may have granted the research team with increased access and participation in the current planning initiatives. Thus, the research team might have been allowed to attend the Municipality’s workshops or offer a workshop with all stakeholders involved in planning, as intended at the beginning of the research process.

In terms of access, a particular struggle was getting contact and information from the Swedish Migration Board. The Swedish Migration Board is one of the main agencies in Sweden working with asylum seekers and refugees and their role and way of working is influencing the Municipality’s work with refugees. Therefore, obtaining information around the Swedish Migration Board’s process of planning and the elements on which that planning is placed, would have added value to the thesis research. As the Migration board is such an important player in the area of migration and asylum, the research team had not expected to discover such difficulties. In addition, what was revealed by the interviewees which was not anticipated was that stakeholders in planning and service-providing organizations also experienced certain difficulties in accessing, or effectively communicating and working with the Swedish Migration Board. One reason for this may be, as interviewee E expressed, that the Swedish Migration Board is understaffed for the current situation to deal effectively with a rather unexpected high influx of refugees along with the volume of applications it must process.

From interviews and informal conversations, in particular with interviewee F, it was understood that similar to the Swedish Migration Board, the German agency responsible for the asylum process is also difficult to access to obtain information in-person. It would be interesting to investigate the reasons for why those institutions are closed to some stakeholders, as well as possibilities for an improved cooperation process between such agencies and other stakeholders involved in planning and providing for refugees.
7 Overall Discussion and Usefulness of Approach

In the following sub-sections, the value of the Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration is discussed.

7.1 Value of the Framework

Applying the Framework when planning for refugee settlement and integration means to be aware of the five essential elements necessary for a society to flourish (diversity, learning, self-organization, trust and common meaning) and their interplay. To illustrate, segregation and xenophobia are fostered by a high level of diversity without trust and common meaning. If planners understand those interplays and provide structures that allow and foster trust, people could take advantage from diversity and learn from each other, create a common meaning and build the platform for self-organization. The created Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration aims to support planning bodies to strategically structure their planning for refugee settlement and integration, guiding them through the four levels that include criterion as means to transition a municipality towards social sustainability.

From the research conducted on the current state of planning within, but also outside of, Karlskrona and Sweden, the research team found that a whole systems perspective, its relatedness to the broader global social system, and the dynamics of societies as complex systems, are missing. The research team suggests that the major contribution of the Framework is that it requests planners take a whole systems perspective and understand society as a complex adaptive system; with this knowledge, planners analyze the system in which planning occurs, and base their planning on it. The SSPs are based on the five essential elements necessary for individuals and societies as communities to create the space to fulfill their needs. Those principles and the success criteria the research team structured under them, serve as concrete support for planners.

7.2 Potential Iteration of the Framework

Although the Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration provides a solid starting point for planning, due to time constraints the research team faced, the Framework has some limitations. Additional literature could have been sourced to build up the Framework more robustly. Best practices and recommendations were mainly sourced in English, except one handbook from Austria. They could have been obtained from various parts of the world, also outside of Europe, and in several languages, or from smaller NGOs instead of solely from large intergovernmental agencies such as UNHCR, IOM and ECRE. Similarly, experts from different countries could have been interviewed and their views incorporated into the Framework. Moreover, the research team had many connections with refugees (those with an LMA card and personal number), and through such fostered relationships the current reality of the situation, needs, and experiences from the refugees’ perspective was comprehended. It would have been ideal to consider refugees’ opinions in the Success and Actions Levels of the Framework, instead of having all the literature based from a planning or service-provider perspective. Moreover, the Framework didn’t include a list of well-rounded tools or additional resources to implement suggested actions. As stated,
the Framework was developed mainly for a western context and therefore it was decided to concentrate on social sustainability exclusively. In many non-western countries, however, a drastic increase in refugees constitutes not only a serious challenge for the social system, but also for the preservation of natural areas and natural resources due to, for instance, degradation or depletion of such resources. For the Framework to be applicable in countries that may not have quite the same standard of living as in Sweden or Europe, ecological aspects may need to be incorporated into the Framework. Ideally, after further developing the Framework by incorporating additional literature, opinions of practitioners and refugees, the Framework should be tested in different countries and contexts and experiences should be integrated.

The research team decided not to refer to budgets or organizational resources that would be required to plan the implementation of actions for refugee settlement and integration along the lines of the Framework, as available resources, capacity and development differ amongst countries, regions and organizations. Thus, when planning for refugee settlement and integration, planners need to understand and consider financial, human and other resources specific to the system they are planning for.

7.3 Suggestions for Iterations Based on the Case Study

As was identified in the data analysis, there may not be sufficient platforms in Karlskrona for refugees and locals to meet; furthermore, refugees are accommodated in rather removed locations. As interviewee E pointed out locals do not know how to interact with refugees even if they would like to know them. The research team suggests that locals may find it easier to meet refugees if they would be provided with more information on them. Thus, the research team suggests to add a further goal under meaning-making: *a host society is well-informed about diversity/different cultures/cultural behavior.*

From the Case Study and informal interviews with people outside of Sweden, it was discovered that some services have different tracks based on refugees’ backgrounds. For example, SFI offers different classes depending on refugees’ previous knowledge and learning speed. Interviewee G suggested one needs to offer differentiated avenues in terms of language, job, culture and health to different groups of refugees. This is a point not considered in the current version of the Framework and we suggest adding it.

Further, as stressed by interviewee G and H private and voluntary initiatives have and are still providing for a lot of structures and services that the state does not provide for due to lacking means or preparation. Those self-organized initiatives are a valuable asset and the research team would add ‘providing structures to allow for citizens’ support initiatives’ as further success criteria under the removal of structural obstacles to meaning-making. Relevant actions would be to increase citizens’ awareness of refugees and their situations, including profound knowledge on the situations in their home country causing them to flee; cultural and religious differences and similarities; the consequences of trauma; and linguistic barriers; as well as structures that facilitate access to resources that support creating such initiatives.
7.4 Significance of the Findings

As perceived in our case study there is no full understanding of the importance of reaching social sustainability and all the essential aspects needed to achieve it. From interviews with practitioners outside of Karlskrona, the research team also perceived that understanding of social sustainability is also lacking in other places in Europe.

As stated by all informal interviewees, communication and coordination between stakeholders is also missing in Germany and the Netherlands. Particularly, it needs to be mentioned that, similar to the regulation according to which only the Swedish Migration Board is allowed to work with asylum seekers (apart from schooling and housing), in Germany and the Netherlands there are also laws which prohibit access and influence to processes for certain stakeholders. Thus, the institution responsible for asylum applications in Germany, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees [Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge] does not give any information or options to municipalities to influence that process. In the Netherlands, the work of volunteers has been greatly restricted due to new regulation. If the diverse stakeholders would have a whole system’s perspective and increased communication and cooperation, they might be able to avoid such instances in which they mutually hinder each other's work.

Further, refugees and locals are not involved in the planning process and are not being sufficiently informed about the different cultural, traditional and religious backgrounds of refugees; neither on the situations in their home country forcing them to flee and the consequences of trauma. The examples point to a lack of understanding or awareness about social sustainability. As social sustainability is a quite recent concept, this might not be surprising.

In Sweden, just like in any country, there are also voices that argue against spending money, time, and manpower into integration efforts. On the economic side, it might be a considerable financial investment that needs to be made upfront to provide for good integration measures. However, it needs to be considered that investing in integration measures, means investing in the future. Research by Ingvar Nilsson (2008) on investing in assistance measures for children and youth with special needs due to illness or social problems, has concluded that the initial costs for investing in special assistance is much lower than the costs that will emerge if students don’t receive assistance and become welfare-dependent. Under the title of his work a quote states “An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure” (Nilsson 2008).

A comparison can be drawn to the situation of refugees. Refugees, but also the local population, need some assistance to allow for integration and to prevent social segregation, dependency, discrimination, crime, etc. A study (BASS 2008) conducted in Germany in 2008 concluded that the lack of immigrants cost the German Federal and State Governments 3.6 billion euros and the municipalities 1.3 billion euros per year. This is as it loses income taxes and contributions in the pension and social security due to insufficient language skills, lack of social networks and poor integration of immigrants into the labor market (BASS 2008). It needs to be noted here that Nilsson’s (2008) study did not consider the costs of potentially arising social issues. Thus, the initial costs for integration measures might be high, but in the long run costs will diminish, as planning for integration prevents future social problems.
8 Conclusion

Forced migration is likely to continue increasing in the next years causing diverse social sustainability challenges in the receiving countries. To reach wellbeing of the global social system, those challenges need to be addressed. To respond to them, this thesis has crafted a first prototype of a Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration. The Framework supports planning bodies, such as municipalities, to approach sustainable planning strategically by (1) considering the whole system their planning, (2) crafting a vision within the boundaries of the suggested success criteria, shared with all the stakeholders, (3) backcast from the crafted vision to generate (4) actions, that need to be prioritized. The Framework was subsequently applied to the case study of the Municipality of Karlskrona to assess the current state of planning and integration. The main recommendations to the Municipality of Karlskrona are to take measures to ensure stakeholders, particularly planners, gain an understanding of the whole system they are working in; and to craft a common vision shared by all organizations and individuals working in planning and providing for refugees, considering the success criteria suggested in the Framework. Having a shared vision and taking a whole systems perspective, all planning and providing stakeholders could work towards the shared goal and would understand how they can cooperate their actions to avoid gaps in the integration process.

Further research needs to be done and it is suggested to test the Framework in different contexts and incorporate learnings from both, to make the Framework more robust and comprehensive.
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Appendices

Appendix A - Common Basic Principles (CBP) on Integration in the EU

The Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU were adopted by the Justice and Home Affairs Council in November 2004 and form the foundations of EU initiatives in the field of integration (EC 2016).

- CBP 1 ‘Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States’

- CBP 2 ‘Integration implies respect for the basic values of the European Union’

- CBP 3 ‘Employment is a key part of the integration process and is central to the participation of immigrants, to the contributions immigrants make to the host society, and to making such contributions visible’

- CBP 4 ‘Basic knowledge of the host society’s language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration’

- CBP 5 ‘Efforts in education are critical to preparing immigrants, and particularly their descendants, to be more successful and more active participants in society’

- CBP 6 ‘Access for immigrants to institutions, as well as to public and private goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way is a critical foundation for better integration’

- CBP 7 ‘Frequent interaction between immigrants and Member State citizens is a fundamental mechanism for integration. Shared forums, intercultural dialogue, education about immigrants and immigrant cultures, and stimulating living conditions in urban environments enhance the interactions between immigrants and Member State citizens’

- CBP 8 ‘The practice of diverse cultures and religions is guaranteed under the Charter of Fundamental Rights and must be safeguarded, unless practices conflict with other inviolable European rights or with national law’

- CBP 9 ‘The participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies and measures, especially at the local level, supports their integration’

- CBP 10 ‘Mainstreaming integration policies and measures in all relevant policy portfolios and levels of government and public services is an important consideration in public policy formation and implementation.’

- CBP 11 ‘Developing clear goals, indicators and evaluation mechanisms are necessary to adjust policy, evaluate progress on integration and to make the exchange of information more effective.’
Appendix B - Asylum and Integration Processes in Sweden and Karlskrona

The following charts, adapted from the Karlskrona Municipality (2016), are an illustration of the Swedish Migration Board’s continuing investigation for asylum seekers, including the process for their integration.
Asylum Seekers Acceptance Process in Migration Office of Sweden

Migration Office asylum integration process
Appendix C - Resettled Refugees

Since 1950, Sweden has had a resettlement program, which process is carried out by the main actor for resettlement in Sweden - the Swedish Migration Board (UNHCR 2014). Resettlement is for people considered refugees according to the Aliens Act, which is essentially the same definition as the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, described previously in section 1.4, as well as other individuals who may qualify for asylum (UNHCR 2014). Upon approval by the Swedish Parliament, the Ministry of Justice establishes the guidelines for the Swedish resettlement program annually, in which the guidelines and resettlement are implemented in cooperation with UNHCR (UNHCR 2014).

Since the start of Sweden’s resettlement program in 1950, the country has been receiving quota refugees (Migrationsverket (b) 2015, often called or labeled “UN refugees” or “real refugees”). The annual budget for the resettlement of quota refugees is determined by the Swedish Parliament that gives funding to the Swedish Migration Agency to transfer an average of 1,900 people annually (Migrationsverket (b) 2015). In 2014, Sweden allocated the majority of its quota refugees for resettlement to 600 people in need of protection from regions in North Africa and the Middle East, as well as 450 from Africa (UNHCR 2014).

Resettlement to Sweden occurs when an asylum-seeker registers with UNHCR in a transit country. The selection and resettlement process of refugees heading to Sweden is depicted in the following table, as adapted from the Swedish Migration Board (Migrationsverket (c) 2015.

| Selection phase | The persons who are to be examined for resettlement are proposed by UNHCR. In the UNHCR file, the refugees and their reasons to come to Sweden are described. Based on this file and sometimes interviews conducted in the missions where the applicants are residing, the Migration Board reaches a decision. The applicants are examined based on Swedish law and court practice. The ones who are judged to be refugees receive a permanent residence permit.

| Preparation phase | Refugees who are accepted for resettlement are offered residence and an initial support program in a municipality. If possible, staff from the Migration Board, the municipalities, and sometimes the Swedish Public Employment Service, implement a preparation program prior to the refugees’ departure to Sweden.

| Travel arrangements | The Migration Board arranges the travel of refugees with the help of the International Organization for Migration. The resident permit is already prepared once resettled refugees arrive in Sweden. Quota refugees usually arrive at Arlanda Airport and are directed to various municipalities.

| Resettlement | The new lives of refugees are planned in the municipalities. The Swedish Public Employment Service helps adults to seek employment, learn Swedish and integrate in Swedish society. Children are registered to preschools or schools. |
Appendix D - List of not interviewed stakeholders

To provide for an extensive assessment of the current reality of planning and providing for refugees, the research team would have liked to also interview further stakeholders identified

- The Swedish Migration Board, as the main stakeholder of planning and providing for asylum-seekers

- The Social Department as it used to have the main responsibility of planning for refugees (which only recently was moved to the Labor Administration Department) and still has a big share in working with refugee. Moreover, the Social Department decides how much money is spent on diverse social services for refugees, such as school and housing.

- The Culture and Leisure Administration Department of the Municipality as it would have added knowledge on the provision of activities for refugees in this field

- The Diversity Network of the Municipality to fully inform the current reality regarding the principle of impartiality

- The integration group of the Municipality in addition to meeting two members of it (interviewees B1 and D)

- The Blekinge County Council (Landstinget) which is the main provider for health services to get information how refugees can access which health services

- The Swedish Public Employment Service (Arbetsformedlingen) because the Municipality is placing a focus on jobs as a means for integrating, and as it was mentioned as one of the Municipality’s main stakeholders

- NGOs such as the Red Cross and the Swedish church which are offering a lot of activities and initiatives for refugees (food, furniture, basic language, cloth, praktik)

- Refugees as the users of services

- Locals as an important stakeholder group within the system

- Local politicians to gain a better understanding of the current political stance in Karlskrona regarding refugees
Appendix E - Results from informal interviews

Interviewee F mentioned that there was a lot of support among volunteers which were constantly exchanging advice and helpful material. Speaking to volunteer initiatives, they stated that such “private initiatives are important for integration. Especially small towns don’t have the money and structure to do so”. When asked what they deem important for integration, they responded that one needs to offer different services to each refugee, considering aspects of their background and experiences that can influence their individual integration. These aspects include cultural background, knowledge, learning pace, health status, personal motivation to integrate and previous experiences. In this regard he further stated his observation that refugees that know they cannot go back to their home countries soon due to for instance war, are generally more motivated to learn and integrate themselves.

Difficulties in planning for refugee settlement and integration interviewee F mentioned included a bad communication by politicians to citizens about refugees and about what needs to be done. Particularly, they found that knowledge about the consequences of trauma amongst native citizens are missing, leading to misunderstanding and irritation when meeting refugees.

Interviewee G is working as an independent volunteer. On Facebook and other social media, they connect with other volunteers to communicate what refugees need and self-organize it. As an example, they mentioned that in winter time volunteers would use Facebook posts to determine in which camps winter clothes were still needed. The three challenges they mentioned in reference to integration were a lack of housing, language barriers and the increased difficulty of volunteers to support refugees due to stricter laws currently being issued that regulate who is allowed to enter the camps.

Interviewee H also mentioned housing as challenge. However, they said that the main problem was not so much the availability of housing but rather reluctance from landlords to rent their apartments/houses to refugees, particularly if the latter ones were not speaking German. As the main difficulty in the integration processes they stated the in-accessibility of the agency responsible for asylum applications. Municipalities cannot interfere with the work of the neither get information on the stage of individual applications or reasons for delay. Similar to Karlskrona, the German municipality that interviewee H is working in, is also focusing on providing a better access to the labour market to refugees. The first step for refugees thereby is also to get an internship and the municipality supports asylum seekers and refugees alike in the search for one.
Appendix F - Results of the Municipality of Karlskrona’s Actions

The following data provides a detailed illustration of the actions the Municipality is either implementing or not, as assessed by the Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration.

Removal of Structural Obstacles to Health

As an action put forth in the Framework, ensuring equitable access to physical, mental and emotional health services was not discussed in the interviews; however, an interview was not conducted with local health authorities which may have demonstrated that access to health services is available to asylum seekers and refugees. Although the interviewees did not directly refer to psycho-social support available for refugees, it was expressed by interviewee C1 that nurses working at the Welcoming Reception Center conduct a mental health assessment for cases of concern and that a routine and framework for support is present; however, this assistance is only in regards to youth enrolled at the Welcoming Reception Center and there was no further elaboration from interviewee C1 on the types of mental health support (psychologist, psychiatrist, social worker, counsellor, family therapist, etc.) available for those in need.

Another action outlined in the Framework that the Municipality is in alignment with is supporting refugees in the search for suitable housing. Interviewee B2 discussed a website that was established asking locals to rent out an available room or a house to refugees as a solution to the lack of housing for refugees in Karlskrona. Moreover, as mentioned in the result speaking to the set goals, interviewee A provides refugees with basic daily needs of food and clothing, as suggested in this Framework; the Swedish Migration Board provides sufficient income to asylum seekers to cover their basic living costs. From the three providing organizations working directly with refugees, only the Welcoming Reception center offers psychological support to their staff as requested in the Framework. Interviewee C1 said “We have a psychologist that we as staff can see”, and she further explained that there are monthly group sessions which staff can partake in, as well as the option to make an individual appointment with the psychologist to receive support.

Actions recommended in the Framework for Sustainable Refugee Settlement and Integration which were not discussed in any of the interviews include: training for people working with refugees on the consequences of trauma; abolishing restrictions to family reunification; securing access to healthcare and information, considering barriers caused by linguistic, cultural and socioeconomic divide, misinformation and discrimination and stigmatization; and establishing specific refugee health services focused on specific care and treatment need that serve as a bridge to mainstream health provision.

An identified gap to health was reported by interviewee C1 stating that the new standardized questions used in the Welcoming Center’s interview are solely knowledge-based (i.e. math and English) and do not allow for a well-rounded awareness of the student, their personal needs, or family situation - aspects which can all influence and impact their learning and integration in school. It was noted that, in addition to the standard interview questions, the Welcoming Reception Center can ask other, more personal questions as they had done before the law was introduced, but doing so requires more time, money and resources which are not available.
Removal of Structural Obstacles to Influence

Data was not thoroughly obtained about actions the Municipality is taking to remove structural obstacles to influence. Of that which was, interviewee D noted that they had interviewed three refugees to gain perspective on the refugees’ experiences and needs, which were then presented in the initial ‘Coordination for receiving the newly arrived’ (Samordning Nyanlända) workshop held at the Municipality. Further, they stated in a follow up email that the Municipality was planning for a workshop only with refugees to gain their feedback on the existing integration structures and processes. As perceived from the interviews there are no structures or plans to build up platforms through which refugees and locals can give input on local planning. The right to vote and stand for election in local authority elections was not an action discussed in any of the interviews; had the research team held an interview with political members governing the Municipality or the Blekinge County, data may have been obtained regarding such an action.

Removal of Structural Obstacles to Competence

The Municipality is taking strong actions to remove structural obstacles to competence for refugees that have a personal number. Asylum seekers with an LMA card are also provided with support to enhance their competence, but not to the same extent as refugees with a personal number.

Interviewees B1 and D mentioned that for highly educated, professionals, who have refugee status and a personal number, there is an option to receive additional support in accessing the job market through a program called Fast Track (Snabbspår). They said Fast Track (Snabbspår) attempts to find a quicker match between refugees with high-level skills and industries where there is a skills shortage and that, in particular, the Blekinge County Council needs to better support newcomers who are qualified doctors and nurses as there is a skills shortage for these types of jobs in Sweden. In follow up, interviewee D explained Fast Track (Snabbspår) is for people who are currently students in SFI and who have a professional background; the program offers a special opportunity for people to get a position, such as for foreign-qualified teachers to work as Language Trainees in schools, making it easier and faster for them to get a job in Karlskrona. Interviewee B1 revealed that many highly-skilled refugees are waiting to access suitable employment reflective of their profession or training for an average of 7-12 years. They explained that such a lengthy delay is the result of an initial 1-2 year wait for refugees to get their academic or professional credentials recognized and verified in Stockholm, which can only occur after the average 1-2-year duration for the Swedish Migration Board to accept an asylum seeker as a refugee. The Framework recommends there is a system to recognize refugees’ previous experience and qualifications, and, although interviewee B1 suggested there is such a system based out of Stockholm, the research team did not follow up on what system is in place or the process that refugees must go through to verify their documents.

The Municipality is also in alignment with the Framework’s action to provide adult education especially for low-skilled, unemployed, adults with special needs. Interviewee D talked about a program called SKAPA that the Municipality is currently setting up to get people into the job market faster. They stated refugees (and all people with a personal number) who do not have higher education and are unemployed, are provided with skills training and internships to make an easier and quicker transition into stable employment.
Measures are taken in the Municipality to ensure both asylum seekers and refugees have access to Swedish language education. Interviewee D remarked local NGOs and volunteers are instrumental in providing language training to asylum seekers, as the Municipality does not have the authority to do so. As an example, interviewee A illustrated organizations such as NBV that came to the temporary refugee camp about twice a week to teach asylum seekers Swedish and Swedish culture. Interviewee C1 discussed the school bridging program at the Welcoming Reception Center, a five-week program for minors new in Sweden, in which children’s previous knowledge and skills are assessed, they learn basic Swedish, and upon completion are placed in schools that have available spots open; this illustrates how Karlskrona is taking action that align with that recommended in the Framework - establishing bridge programs to regular education. As a potential obstacle to competence for asylum seeking children and youth, although enrollment at the Welcoming Reception Center should begin approximately within their first 3 months of their residence in Sweden, interviewee C1 revealed that due to the recent influx in newcomers in Karlskrona, the students end up living in Sweden for more than three months before they begin the school bridging program.

Action surrounding language training for adults has also been taken in Karlskrona. SFI is a Swedish language training institute for foreigners who have a personal number in Sweden; interviewee E reported SFI provides each individual with approximately 600 hours of language education per year at the appropriate level for the student. When refugees have been enrolled in SFI for a longer time period without progressing, interviewee E stated they are encouraged to stop attending classes, go to AF and connect with their job counselor to find an internship so that they can practice the language in a new environment. After some experience using the language in a different context, interviewee E claimed refugees may return to SFI and continue studying in a classroom setting.

Next to language learning in SFI classes, interviewee E claimed students are taught 60 hours a year about society with the book ‘Om Sverige’ or, in English, ‘About Sweden’, demonstrating compliance with the Framework’s recommended action that refugees are provided with learning about the host society. In addition, interviewee D claimed that the Municipality is working on updating their website to provide information to refugees in three languages: Swedish, English and Arabic. In providing avenues for refugees to learn about the host society, an obstacle to competence was revealed by interviewee A in that the Swedish Migration Board gives limited and shallow information (two pages) to refugees about the host society upon their arrival.

Interviewee E remarked that there is a waiting list to access SFI’s regular classes, and that irrespective of a refugee’s level of Swedish fluency, if they are on the wait list there is the opportunity to attend a general class, called Slussen two days a week to obtain basic Swedish language education. As additional actions that provide refugees with language training, interviewee B1 stated that apart from going to SFI, refugees can attend the SFI-organized two-hour Swedish language-practice event Café Pratbubble held weekly. Additionally, they reported that refugees can connect with and develop relationships with Swedes to practice Swedish through Language Friend, a separate initiative.

Aligning with actions to allow lifelong learning, as presented in the Framework, interviewee E referred to special-interest clubs, such as running clubs, and initiatives like art classes and golf lessons, where refugees were encouraged to attend and participate in learning new skills. Interviewee E described an event held at a local school in Karlskrona with a significant international student population, representing 80 countries, that supports lifelong learning.
The project, Kreative Verkstad, is hosted by an art teacher, as claimed by interviewee E, and is held for students’ parents to do crafts or art projects once a week, and to also serves as a meeting place for parents to get to know and learn about each other’s diverse socio-cultural backgrounds.

**Removal of Structural Obstacles to Impartiality**

Actions presented in the Framework to remove structural obstacles to impartiality include: enablement of access to the job market; having a legislation and complaints systems to fight discrimination in the labor market and promote equality of opportunity; that refugees are taught their rights and general citizenship rights; measures to ease acquisition of citizenship are available; and refugees’ access to the social system is considered. Of these actions, none of them were discussed in any of the interviews. However, interviewee E revealed that in SFI’s book, ‘About Sweden’, a section does speak to gender equality as an important characteristic of Swedish society, which fosters awareness and may work to reduce discrimination or impartial treatment.

**Removal of Structural Obstacles to Meaning-making**

There were specific instances in which interviewees A and E spoke of actions that correspond with structural obstacles to meaning-making. In violation of the Framework’s suggested action to enable cultural/religious practices, interviewee A stated that in the camp, refugees were not able to eat halal meat, or prepare and eat their cultural food (except for one night every three weeks). This was a result of coordinating the provision of Swedish food prepared off-site and trucked into the camp. Furthermore, interviewee A declared that as the asylum seekers were now in Sweden, they must adapt and eat Swedish food, and if they did not like it, they could leave. In a different setting, interviewee E mentioned that female students in SFI classes were not allowed to have their faces concealed by a *niqab* or *burka*, symbols of feminine Islamic dress. Additionally, interviewee E remarked that some Muslim students did not want to attend classes on Fridays as Fridays are holy days in Islam and many male students wanted to attend Mosque. In response, interviewee E mentioned that the headmaster told the men Fridays were for SFI and if they didn’t want to attend classes, they should leave. Interviewee E expressed that although in the beginning some of the men wanted to leave, they are always in classes on Fridays at SFI.

Ensuring refugees are able to have social events aligns with actions to remove structural obstacles to meaning-making. Interviewee A planned different activities for children and adults at a local church where the children could play and the parents could craft something and learn Swedish. Interviewee A also established a monthly party for the refugees to cook their own food, dance and listen to their cultural music. Moreover, interviewee D talked about a project, Kreative Verkstad, and interviewee E described social events for refugees to partake in outings to play golf and join in running clubs. Cultural exchange and trainings for mutual understanding (to establish common meaning-making) and training for people working with refugees on cultural and religious differences, actions highlighted in the Framework, were not discussed in the interviews.

Although none of the interviews spoke to organizing political and cultural events or promoting media (literature, films, etc.) to communicate information on refugees - actions depicted in the Framework - early in the research phase, the research team attended a local
public forum in Karlskrona on refugee settlement and integration organized by the Municipality. The forum was conducted entirely in Swedish and was thus difficult for the research team to fully comprehend what was discussed. In follow-up about the forum with interviewee A, they informed the research team that the event aimed to only discuss positive aspects of refugees settling and integrating in Karlskrona.

The Municipality is taking actions to engage refugees in dialogue and cooperation by interviewee D’s involvement of three refugees offering their experiences and needs for the workshop’s presentation to multiple stakeholders. Proposing the establishment of Integration Center (Integrationssentrum) in Karlskrona aligns with the Framework’s actions that speak to addressing migrants’ concerns and questions, although the proposal’s implementation still requires political approval at the Municipal level. Actions that demonstrate Karlskrona is providing immigrants and refugees with accurate information about life in the host country were presented under removal of structural obstacles to competence. SFI students are taught a book - “Om Sverige”- and the Welcoming Reception Center provides an introduction week that educates parents on health and community services, as well as cultural life in Sweden.
Appendix G - Recommended Actions

Removal of Structural Obstacles to Health

Many people leaving their home countries and fleeing to other countries are heavily traumatized. They experienced extreme situations of war and violence in their home countries, stress and continuous uncertainty on their journey and in the host country. As recommended in the literature, they need specific treatment and care and we thus recommend to establish according health measures. Additionally, people working with refugees should receive a training on the consequences of trauma.

Removal of Structural Obstacles to Influence

It is recommended to initiate actions through which refugees can influence the processes they have to go through. The Municipality is planning on a workshop to get refugees feedback, which could serve to commonly identify possible structures through which refugees can participate in creating services for themselves, such as monthly feedback meetings. Further, it is recommended to allow for more feedback of the local population, which could also increase their buy in, in measures taken for refugees.

Removal of Structural Obstacles to Competence

A suggestion for improvement, would be to move professionals with a personal number quickly into the Swedish job market by establishing a fast-track process for the verification of their professional or academic credentials. We recognize that such procedures are not set at local level but at national level, however it is recommended to the Municipality to communicate the need for faster recognition of qualification to the national level.

Removal of Structural Obstacles to Meaning-making

The Karlskrona Municipality should place more emphasis on providing opportunities for common meaning-making between the local and refugee populations, as well as focus on removing structural obstacles to the asylum seekers and refugees’ forms of meaning-making. For example, to remove structural obstacles to meaning-making for refugees in camps, the Karlskrona Municipality should provide options to prepare and eat cultural food. While providing traditional Swedish food for the refugees promotes learning about the host-culture norms and ways of life, if it is the only source of food available, it is a structural obstacle which hinders the ability of refugees to make meaning.

As expressed by Interviewee E there the research team also sees a need for more platforms that allow for locals and foreigners to meet. There are a few established platforms in Karlskrona in which Swedes (which have been understood to be a bit shy) and refugees feel comfortable to meet, and it is recommended to continue with such initiatives. The Municipality has taken initiative to spread awareness of such activities (mostly related to sports, for example gymnastics, parkour) on its website. Additionally, the research team recommends to spread more information on such initiatives and promote them in such a way as to encourage locals to participate.
Further important in this regard is to inform locals about refugee communities, on the diverse cultures and most importantly on the benefits in and importance of engaging for a flourishing society. In line with that, it is recommended the Karlskrona Municipality designs and hosts a bi-annual public forum for refugees (both those with an LMA card and a personal number) and locals to interact. To have a platform for refugees to introduce themselves, their stories, their needs and desires, and for locals to voice their opinions, concerns, support and advice would promote more interaction and awareness between the two groups. Such an event facilitated by the Municipality would help the two-way process of integration and work to reduce structural obstacles to meaning-making, influence, and impartiality.