

Extension Material 7.1

Alternative challenges and perspectives

The use of recruitment as an instrument of social engineering, particularly in the public sector, can also be seen in the way in which police forces have been tackling issues of ethnic minority representation and accusations of institutional racism. As an example, the Sussex Police Race Equality Scheme made an explicit commitment to increase the proportion of ethnic minorities in its workforce from then current levels of 2.1 per cent of police staff and 1.2 per cent of police officers, to 3.5 per cent for each by 2010. This represents a strategic commitment to developing new and more effective recruitment policies and practices, and suggests that major challenges will have to be overcome in understanding and managing labour markets, communication media, and the limitations of existing selection procedures and standards. Such a commitment will also have implications for the design and implementation of support and access mechanisms, and for the training requirements of those who will be directly involved in assessment and selection decisions. (See www.sussex.police.uk, for more information.)

Other kinds of recruitment challenge may also exist. Specific organizations may be suffering from serious and structural shortages of skilled labour that might well be sector-specific or countrywide. Such shortages may be related to demographic change, shifts in career patterns, inflexible employment conditions, or perceptions of low pay. These may not easily be overcome by conventional recruitment strategies or by exploiting existing labour markets. The shortage of nurses within the National Health Service (NHS) in the early years of this century illustrates the scale of the recruitment challenge faced by the NHS. Its response was to develop a four-part strategy to solve the labour shortage, involving:

- increasing the supply of trained nurses by expanding the number of training places available;
- working to increase retention rates to attract nurses who have left the NHS back into employment;
- addressing the pay problem by improving salaries; and
- mounting an international recruitment strategy.

By the end of 2004, evidence was emerging of the scale of overseas recruitment and its impact on nursing numbers (Batata, 2005). From his analysis of international nurse recruitment, Batata found that in 2001 nurse recruits trained overseas exceeded the number of new UK-trained recruits on the UK nurse register for the first time, with healthcare service providers increasingly relying on overseas nurses to fill the void.

But foreign recruitment comes at a price, particularly for the countries from which the nurses are recruited. Source countries suffer from their own nursing shortages and experience distortions in their healthcare provision. In some situations, recruitment strategies involve exploiting new labour markets and the migration of large numbers of skilled workers, and the issues and implications associated with these strategies extend beyond the assessment and selection of candidates.



STUDENT ACTIVITY 7.6

Prepare a presentation outlining the advantages and disadvantages associated with the recruitment of overseas nurses, as well as the implications of such a strategy, and consider the ethical issues involved in this recruitment practice.



REFERENCE

Batata, A. S. (2005) 'International nurse recruitment and NHS vacancies: A cross-sectional analysis', *Globalisation and Health*, 1(7), at: <https://globalizationandhealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1744-8603-1-7>