

*Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI)
and Partners*

**Review of Settlement Services
for Migrants and Humanitarian
Entrants**

Submission to the Department of Immigration,
Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA)

October 2002

Setting the Agenda on Multicultural Youth Issues

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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview of Response

The Centre For Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI) would like to take this opportunity to support the initiative of the Hon. Gary Hardgrave, Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs and the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) in undertaking the *Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants*. CMYI believes that this review is timely in the context of the needs and issues arising for young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) and refugee backgrounds and their families as they settle in Victoria.

CMYI and the agencies participating in this submission, strongly support the Government's settlement policy objective that aims to achieve equitable participation by all migrants in Australian society. Through our committed and long standing work with CLD and refugee young people, and partnerships with community sector agencies, CMYI is in a unique position to articulate and advocate around the settlement barriers faced by this group of young people.

It is our intention to participate in this review process as partners with Government. We therefore aim to:

- provide an understanding of ways in which to improve and strengthen partnerships between settlement and mainstream services;
- put forward innovative strategies in relation to policy development and principles that will fundamentally impact on national and state relationships with local agencies; and
- voice the individual circumstances that impact on a young person's capacity to participate fully as an Australian resident.

1.2 The Partners to this Response

1.2.1 Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues.

The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI) has a long history of responding to the needs of young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds within Victoria. CMYI has a strong focus on the issues and needs of young people from refugee or newly arrived communities who face particular social and economic disadvantages as a result of their refugee experiences and subsequent resettlement in Australia.

As a statewide organisation, CMYI has a crucial role in providing current and informed advice to the government and the non-government sectors on trends and issues that are impacting on young people from CLD backgrounds. CMYI also has a role in promoting culturally sensitive and effective approaches for service providers working with CLD young people and their families.

Since 1988, CMYI has undertaken a broad range of projects and initiatives addressing the needs of CLD young people in Victoria and Australia. These responses have been initiated

as a result of issues identified by both government and services in contact with young people from CLD backgrounds. Significant projects undertaken by CMYI have focused on a range of areas including employment, education and training, sport and recreation, sexual and mental health, drugs and alcohol, young people and the law, racism and homelessness.

Reflecting CMYI's work in these areas, the organisation currently receives core funding from the Victorian Government to provide the following key services:

- supporting for youth groups/organisations, CLD communities, and service providers;
- providing cross cultural consultancy and training to organisations within the government and non-government sectors;
- developing cross cultural resources for government and non-government sectors;
- contributing to state and federal government policy on refugee and CLD young people;
- undertaking community education and sector support on cross cultural issues affecting young people from CLD background including distribution of CMYI Update (a quarterly newsletter) and the maintenance of a CMYI web site (currently under construction);
- communicating to the government and non-government sectors on trends and issues impacting on young people from CLD backgrounds;
- resourcing a state-wide network of over 300 individuals and community based organisations representing CLD communities;
- managing and providing innovative programs targeting CLD young people; and
- undertaking research on multicultural youth issues.

Acknowledging the roles outlined above, the key organisational goal of CMYI is to strengthen and provide leadership between young people, support services and the community to enhance life opportunities for young people from CLD backgrounds. CMYI believes it has an important role to play, in partnership with Government, to develop policies and programs that are responsive to the needs of CLD young people, particularly marginalised refugee young people. This organisation believes that the Victorian Youth Strategy, "Respect: A Framework for Policy and Program Development", also represents an important opportunity to further address the needs of this group of young people.

1.2.2 The Consortium Members of the Young Refugees In The Picture Project

CMYI is also undertaking a program on behalf of DIMIA called the *Young Refugees In the Picture* project. All members of the Project Consortium group support this response to the Review. Consortium group members include the following organisations:

- North West Region Migrant Resource Centre;
- Springvale Community Aid and Advice Bureau;
- Victorian Co-Operative on Children's Services for Ethnic Groups; and
- Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture.

1.2.3 Other Agency Partners

a. Vietnamese Community In Australia: Victoria Chapter (VCA/Vic)

The VCA/Vic is the peak representative body for Vietnamese-Australians in Victoria. The VCA/Vic provides general information, practical aid, referral and counselling to assist the settlement and integration of individuals and families in the Vietnamese-Australian community. The VCA/Vic also carries out community development work, which includes the development of projects and programs for various groups in the Vietnamese-Australian community such as the elderly and young people, as well as take part in research and policy work either independently or in collaboration with other relevant organisations.

b. Dianella Community Health Centre

Dianella Community Health (DCH) is a vibrant and dynamic community health service. The area serviced by Dianella Community Health is the City of Hume (excluding the north west for services currently provided by Sunbury CHC). DCH also continues to service the northern part of the City of Moreland.

The organisation is committed to providing services which are culturally, geographically and socio economically accessible to our clients. DCH values the cultural diversity of its community and will continue to provide services which promote multiculturalism. A sense of belonging to the community health service by all is critical to DCH's commitment to maintaining our local identity. The organisation forges close links with the community through greater service user input and by continuing to be a central meeting place for the community.

The health model utilised by DCH focuses on providing integrated services through a holistic approach, treating the "whole" person and taking account of physical, social and emotional aspects of well being. DCH's programs and services continue an emphasis on prevention and promotion of health and well being.

Community development continues to be a major component of the work and the organisation is committed to working with individuals and groups in our community to empower them and to advocate on their behalf. This is particularly, important given the socio-economic disadvantage of many members of our community.

Effective links and networks with other generalist and specialist agencies play a major role in the provision of programs and services. This is achieved through resource sharing, integrated service delivery and coordination and mutual co-operation and support. This has resulted in the development of specific links and protocols with other sectors such as local

government, acute care providers, other primary care service providers and community agencies.

1.2.4 Participating Agencies

Throughout the *Young Refugees In the Picture Project*, a range of agencies have been consulted including:

- AMES, Community.
- Australian Lebanese Welfare Committee.
- Cambodian Community Welfare Centre.
- City of Casey, Youth Services.
- Community Information Whittlesea.
- Dousta Galla Community Health Services.
- Eastern and Central African Communities of Victoria.
- Ethnic Communities Council of Shepparton.
- Fitzroy Learning Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues.
- Geelong Ethnic Communities Council.
- Gippsland Migrant Resource Centre.
- Inner Western Region MRC, WYPIN.
- Islamic Women's Welfare Council of Victoria.
- Khmer Community of Victoria.
- Kurdish Association of Victoria.
- Latin American Association of Community and Welfare Services.
- Merhamet Muslim Welfare Association.
- North West Region MRC, Youth Program.
- South Eastern Region MRC, Youth Program.
- Southern Ethnic Advisory and Advocacy Council.
- Springvale Community Aid and Advice Bureau.
- Victorian Arabic Social Services.
- Victorian Cooperative on Children's Services for Ethnic Groups.

2. The Target Group

2.1 CLD and Refugee Young People in Victoria: Demographic Overview

The population of Victoria consists of more than 25% of people from a CLD background. Young people between 16 and 24 years of age constitute almost one third of the total settler intake under Australia's Humanitarian Migration Program since 1996. Victoria settles almost one third of Australia's humanitarian youth settler arrivals. The top source countries for humanitarian youth arrivals in Victoria in 2000 were the Former Yugoslavia, Somalia, Iraq, Bosnia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Cambodia, Croatia, Eritrea and Afghanistan. From the period 1996 to 1999 there was an increase in Victorian humanitarian youth settler arrivals from 2, 079 in 1996 to 1,300 new arrivals in 1999.¹

According to the 1996 Census, 9% of Australians aged between 12 and 25 were born in a non-English speaking country. More than 15% of young Australians reported speaking a language other than English at home. The main source of countries for young people born overseas and living in Victoria are Vietnam, UK, New Zealand, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Indonesia (including East Timor). The main languages other than English that young Victorians spoke at home were Italian, Greek, Chinese languages, Vietnamese, Arabic and Macedonian. While these figures provide a useful snapshot, there are some deficiencies in that data on country of birth does not accurately reflect cultural identity.

There have been recent significant shifts in migration patterns to Victoria. While the late 1980's and early 1990's was characterised by large numbers of humanitarian youth arrivals from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, including a significant proportion of unaccompanied minors, the 1990's were characterised by a shift in the migration program to settling migrants from Europe and Africa.

As migration patterns shift and change, specific issues arise according to the needs of the particular group of newly arrived young people. Common social policy issues remain constant however for government and service agencies seeking to enhance the life opportunities of newly arrived and refugee young people. These include the issues of homelessness, education, social health, employment and training.

2.2 Where are young refugees living in Victoria?

Since 1982, young refugees have settled in significant numbers (of over 100) in 22 of the 78 Local Government Areas. Over half of this population group (or some 4899) have settled in seven of these Local Government areas: Greater Dandenong (18%), Brimbank (7%), Darebin (7%), Moreland (7%), Hume (6%), Moonee Valley (6%) and Maribyrnong (5.5%). These figures are an indicator of a person's first place of residence and consequently do not track movement.²

2.3 Difference, Values and Migration.

¹ DIMA Settlement Database 2001

² 2001, VSPC- Needs of Adolescent Humanitarian Entrants, Data Profile Report.

The years from age 12 to 25 are a significant period in a young person's life incorporating greater independence and responsibilities at a time of dramatic emotional and physical change. For CLD young people, particularly those with a refugee background or who are newly arrived, the impact of these changes is even more significant. Issues of particular relevance for CLD young people include family breakdown as a result of war and famine during the migration process, displacement from home country and culture, and inter-generational conflict arising from life in a country with often markedly different (Western) values.

2.4 Second Generation Young People

The service access issues affecting second-generation young people are also relevant to this review. These young people are born in Australia to parents who either migrated here or came as refugees. Although they do not currently fit within DIMIA's eligibility criteria of settlement based on the period they have been in Australia, some members of this target group continue to present with settlement-like issues including barriers to service access. These real experiences challenge contemporary policy definitions of settlement, and in turn impacts on program allocation and raises fundamental questions in relation to the success of the government's access and equity strategy.

2.5 Barriers to Service.

Migrant and refugee young people often do not have the language skills or confidence to advocate for themselves in accessing services. The Australian welfare service system is new to most newly arrived young people, and even first generation young people may be unfamiliar with the system due to reluctance on the part of their families or lack of knowledge of mainstream services. Many refugee young people and their families are fearful of services associated with government resulting from experiences of oppressive regimes in their home countries.

There are a number of recognised barriers inhibiting CLD young people from accessing mainstream services. These barriers include issues associated with the environment of the service such as lack of signage in relevant languages, lack of willingness by staff to learn about different cultural groups as well as more subtle work practice issues such as interviewing techniques that may be culturally inappropriate. Some of these barriers may be addressed through financial resourcing while others exist as a result of the values and attitudes of service providers which may be addressed through appropriate training and support.

The difficulties young people and their families face in accessing services have been further compounded by policy shifts in the past five years that have resulted in mainstreaming of ethno-specific service models in some areas (particularly in housing). Unless young people are able to choose among a range of service models, some CLD young people will continue to face social exclusion in service access.

3. Documenting Needs: Why focus on CLD and Refugee Young People?

The research cited below underscores a number of the issues raised in this submission. We have highlighted some key findings within these studies with the intention that DIMIA consider their relevance in the context of future policy directions and service planning for CLD and refugee young people.

3.1 Needs of Adolescent Humanitarian Entrants: Data Profile Project-August 2001

This study was conducted on behalf of the Victorian Settlement Planning Committee's (VSPC) three sub-working groups on the "Needs of Adolescent Humanitarian Entrants". The study aimed to outline a profile of service interaction by refugee young people through an investigation of data collection processes utilised by mainstream, community and ethno-specific service providers in Victoria. The study gathered information in relation to the data collected on clients and the nature of adolescent Humanitarian entrant use of services.

The research was proposed due to a "perceived lack of detailed reporting concerning the nature of settlement service use of the client group. Though it was possible to map the services available to refugee youth, no corresponding map existed outlining the level and extent of use of those services." ³ This work acknowledged that the sector did not have the knowledge required in order to undertake appropriate settlement planning for this client group.

The project identified inconsistent data collection strategies and systems across settlement services and made recommendations relating to:

- the improved standardisation of data collection on cultural and language diversity categories;
- the need for agencies to undertake audits on their data systems;
- that minimum core data be collected across agencies; and
- the inclusion of reporting on the refugee status of clients.

3.2 DIMIA National Settlement Project 2002.

The Victorian Settlement Planning and Information Unit conducted consultations on the needs of refugee young people with a variety of local settlement planning committees and service providers. The consultations asked the following questions:

- Which services do refugee young people access/utilise in their catchment areas?
- What are the major problems/hurdles facing refugee young people in their catchment area?
- What programs or initiatives exist to assist refugee young people in their area?

Some of the comments from the consultations include:

- "There is a low level of service use by the relatively large population of refugee people in

³ 2001, VSPC- Needs of Adolescent Humanitarian Entrants, Data Profile Report.

the northern region”.

- “The North needs more local youth settlement workers”.
- “Services in the Eastern region face a number of challenges, not least of which appears to be the distribution of young refugee clients over a large geographical area”, which makes targeting information and programs difficult.
- “Currently in the South Eastern Regions there is a definite lack of resources available to the community, not only in workers available, but also in additional resources for communities activities”.
- “There is underutilisation of mainstream services in the Western region by refugee young people and there are insufficient specialised programs to patch up the gap.”
- “While many local service providers are able to provide anecdotal accounts of service use by refugee young people, few providers systematically collect data that identifies refugee clients and even fewer have the capacity to centrally collate and report on this information.”
- “The better targeting of services needs reshaped data collection to target refugee populations in the Northern Mallee Region of Victoria”.

The consultations identified that many Victorian service providers are continuing to emphasize holistic and coordinated approaches to the delivery of support services to refugee young people. Major hurdles or gaps identified across the regions included:

- lack of transitional programs in education and employment;
- the need for more programs that enhance social connectedness;
- culturally appropriate family support;
- lack of service information to young people their families and networks; and
- issues facing young TPV holders in accessing services particularly education.

3.3 Young Refugees In the Picture Project

In 2001 The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues was funded by DIMIA to coordinate a project called *Young Refugees In The Picture* which aims to assist the development of a coordinated service response to newly arrived young refugee people through the implementation of strategic planning, training and support and the establishment of partnerships with key agencies across Victoria.

The need for the project was identified through ongoing work and research undertaken by CMYI, Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture and the Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council discussion paper on refugee young people focussed on indicating problems with current support services to young refugees.

The Young Refugees In the Picture Project undertook a sample study of Victorian

settlement services (Community Settlement Support Scheme–CSSS) to better understand how well settlement services were coping with assisting young refugees. The study asked CSSS agencies about their current program effectiveness in servicing young refugees and what support mechanisms were required to assist their agencies' capacity to improve access to this target group.

The study identified that settlement services, particularly those who service smaller and newly arrived communities, require specific support and additional program resources to work effectively with young refugees and their families. Settlement service workers appear to have high levels of expertise regarding refugees and cross cultural service delivery but generally lacked skills required to undertake youth work.

Study participants identified a number of needs that would assist with their individual client work and agency program planning:

- New skills for CSSS workers through information and training;
- Professional support and supervision in complex client work;
- The building of relationships and partnerships with their local youth sector;
- Support to CSSS program managers on planning services for young refugees;
- Recognition from DIMIA that further program resources and access to specific training is required that will enable generic settlement programs to extend and adapt their services for young refugees.

The study also found that CSSS workers require more information and practical skills on:

- Working with young people and their families;
- Case management practices;
- Ways to engage with young people;
- A better understanding of the school system;
- Working with young refugees who have experienced trauma;
- Running group activities and programs for young people.

CSSS participants also expressed a need for direct supervision and moral support from within their agencies to enable them to expand their programs to young refugees in their catchment area. This was evident where the CSSS program was based in a smaller and newly established organisation rather than a larger organisation with an established infrastructure.

3.4 Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council-A Strategy for Refugee Young People

The Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council strongly identifies “young refugees as a potentially vulnerable group who may have difficulty gaining access to mainstream support services because of a range of cultural, health and language barriers”. The Council believes that the needs of young refugees “are not currently being addressed by governments in a coordinated and strategic manner.”

Recently the Council produced a *National Strategy for Refugee Young People* that offers an

opportunity to focus on and improve the quality of life of refugee young people in Australia. In developing the strategy the council undertook consultations that revealed strong support for the many programs and services currently funded at the local, state and territory, and Commonwealth levels. The intention is to encourage understanding of, and build on, what is already happening in the community and at all levels of government.

The council hopes that state and territory, local government and community organisations will work together to further develop and implement the strategy through the *National Integrated Settlement Strategy Planning* framework. The strategy has documented initiatives and good practice examples that may support pathways for young refugees and intends to inform and influence current policy and program initiatives at Commonwealth and state and territory levels.

3.5 Wealth of All Nations Report: Identification of Strategies to Assist Refugee Young People in Transition to Independence (*In Press*).

The National Youth Affairs Research Scheme commissioned this study as a first step in consolidating what is known about young refugees, as a specific needs group. Working in partnership with CMYI, the study focused on providing an information base on which to build more effective strategies to address the complex needs of these young people and assist their long-term independence within Australia. The report brings together insights from consultation and interviews with young refugees, refugee families, policy makers and service providers, and a range of information from previous research and official statistics.

The study has reported significant findings and made a range of recommendations that should be considered in this review process. General areas covered in the recommendations include:

- Ensuring agency commitment to access and equity for young refugees;
- Ensuring the co-ordination and integration of service delivery;
- Encouraging continuous improvement by consultation with young refugee people;
- Ensuring data is available to evaluate the effectiveness of policy and programs;
- Ensuring appropriate goals of intervention: independence and settlement;
- Fostering community support and understanding;
- Cultural awareness and staff training; and
- Funding further research.

4. Response to DIMIA Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants

4.1 Access and Equity

4.1.1 Settlement Programs and the Youth Sector Partners

Young migrants and humanitarian entrants require support in their settlement from both specialised and mainstream services. The key to success is in creating partnerships between agencies that have expertise in working with culturally and linguistically diverse communities (ethno specific agencies) and the youth sector that specialise in youth programs, have knowledge of youth policies and can facilitate links to accessing mainstream services.

A recent study undertaken by CMYI identified that although settlement services have good intentions in relation to integrating family and youth issues within their programs, they do not have adequate knowledge of working with young people, professional youth work training, program infrastructure, resources and finances to run activities, and support from management to initiate youth programs beyond their current service agreement arrangements with DIMIA. These agencies are already stretched attempting to meet the demands made by direct client settlement work. Equally, IHSS and CSSS providers often have the first point of contact with this client group and are in a unique position to identify the specific needs of their young clients and to work closely with youth and mainstream services on intervention strategies.

4.1.2 Recommendations

To ensure that these agencies are adequately resourced to cross provide for young clients and enhance young people's access opportunities to services, CMYI proposes the following recommendations.

Recommendation 1: For IHSS and CSSS generalist providers

Where there are significant populations of young migrants and humanitarian entrants residing in IHSS and CSSS provider areas, that these providers are resourced and supported through:

- youth training and information;
- additional program and activities finances to work with their young clients;
- supervision from their agencies; and
- additional resource time to be factored into their work programs to build partnerships with mainstream services for the purposes of creating pathways and linking and referring clients.

Focusing on young people should not be at the expense of current settlement clients, rather this should involve a further commitment of resources by DIMIA to support currently funded IHSS and CSSS providers.

Recommendation 2: For IHSS and CSSS generalist agency managers

That the managers of these services and programs gain a better understanding of the complexities of working with young people and prioritise the needs of their youth population and related family issues in their agency planning processes.

That IHSS and CSSS program managers are fully supported and guided by DIMIA to undertake agency planning and program development initiatives that will ensure they meet service equity principles and standards.

Recommendation 3: For the youth sector and mainstream agencies

That youth and mainstream sectors are supported, educated and guided to work with and include young CLD and refugee people in their programs. DIMIA to support and resource partnerships between IHSS and CSSS providers with youth and mainstream agencies locally and at the statewide level.

Recommendation 4: For Federal, State and local Government Departments

That expanded communications, shared social planning and policy initiatives occur across Departments nationally, and at state and local government levels on issues affecting the settlement of young CLD and Refugee People.

The VSPC is a good example of successful partnerships established at national, state and local level on issues of youth settlement. CMYI also recommends that DIMIA refer to the HACC model which has brought together common stakeholders for the purposes of broad strategic planning, shared responsibility and local program initiatives. CMYI also encourages further dialogue at the national level between DIMIA and Family and Community services with the intention to formulate a national youth refugee and CLD support policy with other relevant stakeholders at the federal, state and local levels.

Recommendation 5: For State and Local Government Departments

That State and Local Government Departments also formulate complimentary policy and service standards stemming from national youth refugee and CLD principles. A progressive forum should be held that opens a dialogue between DIMIA Victorian Office, Department of Human Services, Department of Education and Training, Department of Justice, Sport and Recreation Victoria and the Municipal Association of Victoria based on a shared and common responsibility toward the well being and settlement of young Victorians of a refugee and CLD background.

4.1.3 Access and Equity: Experiences of CSSS Youth Programs in Victoria

In recent years, DIMIA has demonstrated responsiveness to young client populations by funding a number of Youth Specific CSSS Programs across Victoria. CMYI fully supports these initiatives and wherever possible will offer sector support to DIMIA to continue to support youth specific programs. However, it is through the experience of implementing these programs that the CSSS program workers and CMYI have identified valid flaws with the model. It appears that problems arise where DIMIA has applied the standard CSSS program structure and resource allocation to this client population. CMYI has facilitated

discussions with CSSS Youth Programs and identified that resource allocation for program activities is fundamental for the achievement of quality service delivery and to improve young people's access to services. Where CSSS grants are expected to provide outreach, program activities for young people and their families and capacity building activities with young people and the sector, DIMIA grants do not include program and operational funding to achieve these aims successfully.

Further, program youth workers believe that the client and group work that they undertake are difficult to record and report to DIMIA through the current client contact and group services data collection format. Where workplans and milestones indicate targets, the regular reporting requirements do not allow for relevant youth data to be recorded. Data categories often refer to areas of intervention such as: citizenship and aged care but there are no references to youth issues. Youth workers would like to see a reporting format that includes new categories relating to youth issues/services.

4.1.4 Recommendations

Recommendation 4

That DIMIA immediately review its current CSSS Youth Grants and support their continuation by resourcing these programs with operational budgets to meet the needs and service gaps that their programs have identified.

Recommendation 5

That any future funding allocation to Youth Specific Programs include scope for funds to support operational and capacity building activities for the young person and related family activities. Support would also be provided to the sector in building pathway opportunities and increasing service access.

Recommendation 6

That the CSSS client contact and group services data collection and reporting format include new categories related to youth issues and programs.

4.1.5 Access and equity hurdles in new growth areas

Families and communities are moving out to new residencies in outer suburbs known as new estate areas. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2001 Census data also confirms this shift in the place of residence of young refugee and CLD people. Where once they were located in close proximity to support services there is a growing number of young people living in new areas such as the City of Casey, City of Brimbank, City of Whittlesea and the new estate areas in the North West such as Craigieburn. In some instances whole communities have moved rapidly from one part of town to the next. A good example is the large population of Hmong community members who have moved from inner city Melbourne to the north-western suburbs.

4.1.6 Recommendations.

Recommendation 7

That DIMIA respond to the emerging needs of migrant and humanitarian entrants living in these new estate areas.

Recommendation 8

For the purposes of future planning and grant allocations, that DIMIA consult with relevant settlement and mainstream services, government departments, community groups and social planners to assist with establishing new priority areas based on community needs within these new estate areas.

Recommendation 9

That the DIMIA settlement statistical research unit in collaboration with the ABS, develop a process of monitoring trends in population residency movement by cultural and language diversity, year of arrival and other related factors such as age.

Recommendation 10

That DIMIA support current grants-holders to undertake local analysis of their client's movement patterns and report to DIMIA on any trends and arising service needs.

4.1.7 Second Generation Young People

Within some sections of the Victorian community, second generation young people are still presenting with support issues related to their settlement experiences. Agencies like the Vietnamese Community of Australia (Victoria Chapter) are asking a fundamental question: How well have our young Victorian born community members settled? Where most second-generation Italian and Greek young people were born into and spent their youth in a stable economic boom period during the late 1950's to 1970's, our young Vietnamese Victorians did not. Further, their family's refugee settlement experiences were very different to that of these earlier migrant settlers.

We believe that further investigation of the experience of the Vietnamese community would challenge us to better understand the complexities of settlement, including the successes and failures, faced by different migrant and humanitarian communities. CMYI and the Vietnamese Community Australia believe that failed settlement experiences for this group may have impacted on the high number of young Vietnamese represented in the Juvenile Justice System. Further, similar experiences of settlement are currently impacting on young men from the Horn of Africa with consequent over-representation in juvenile justice.

This issue raises questions around the current relevancy of the five year residency eligibility criteria as a sufficient indicator of completed settlement. While this period may have applied in the past, five years is often not enough time for small and emerging communities, particularly our humanitarian entrants, who may have suffered experiences of torture and trauma.

Further, CMYI believes that this second generation group has also fallen through the gaps within the youth sector. There is a low participation rate of second generation young people within mainstream youth programs. As a result, this particular group is neither serviced

adequately by the Settlement sector or the Youth sector.

4.1.8 Recommendations.

Recommendation 11

That DIMIA undertake a national analysis and review of its policy definition of settlement and eligibility criterion service access requirements.

Recommendation 12

That DIMIA and The Department of Justice (state) with other stakeholders discuss and aim to better understand the links between settlement experiences and incidences with the Juvenile Justice System.

Recommendation 13

That DIMIA invite the Youth Sector to meet and openly discuss the particular needs of second generation young people, in light of clarifying government responsibilities and sharing youth policy and program roles.

4.2 Planning

4.2.1 NISS

CMYI is extremely encouraged by NISS's recent work on *The Needs of Adolescent Humanitarian Entrants-Data profile Project and the National Settlement Project 2002-Promoting Awareness of the Needs of Newly Arrived Young People, Especially Refugee Youth* and believes that there is a commitment to have youth issues on the planning agenda. Key questions to be addressed in response to this however is: How does the sector keep youth issues on the agenda and how will DIMIA meet service gaps as identified in these research and planning processes?

4.2.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 14

That DIMIA makes a commitment to link the planning processes it undertakes with local and regional agencies.

Recommendation 15

That the findings within these and other studies are to be discussed with local agencies and local strategies devised.

4.2.3 Regional Settlement Services Planning Committees and Social Planning

CMYI would like to support the development of stronger links between local issues raised at the regional settlement services planning committees with statewide planning processes. Currently youth issues are discussed in an *ad hoc* way and only when initiated. We encourage the regional Social Planners to filter local issues to DIMIA and in return a commitment made to link local service issues affecting youth people in DIMIA's program

planning processes.

4.2.4 Recommendation

Recommendation 16

That the Settlement Social Planners across Victoria meet with DIMIA to discuss local issues impacting on refugee and CLD young people and develop strategies for future local and statewide service planning and development initiatives. CMYI is keen to facilitate a forum of this nature.

4.2.5 The Development of Youth Sector Principles

Through CMYI's project, *Young Refugee In The Picture*, it has been identified that the settlement sector lacks any guiding principles and service standards on working with young people. CMYI has made a commitment with members of the VSPC to develop values and principles on working with young refugee and CLD people that aims to assist settlement agencies to provide for this target group. This task has commenced and will provide a written framework on sector guiding principles that could then be interpreted locally through agency plans. Resources will be required for the implementation phase with settlement agencies. The future aim of this initiative is that once established and piloted, sector principles on working with young refugee and CLD people will form part of future service agreements between DIMIA and settlement service providers.

4.2.6 Recommendation

Recommendation 17

That DIMIA supports the continuation of this initiative and provide the resources that may be required to formalise the documentation of the principles into a report, promote the publication and then consider ways to resource the implementation phase of the frameworks principals within local planning process and service agreements across Victoria and Australia.

Recommendation 18

That the progress of this initiative be communicated to DIMIA ensuring that it is reflected in DIMIA's policy and social planning future directions and initiatives.

4.3 Service Delivery

A recent study undertaken by CMYI with settlement services has identified that there is a low level of settlement service usage among young refugees. Settlement workers, especially those from small and emerging communities, recognise the need to be working with their young community members but do not always have the appropriate knowledge, practical expertise and funds to work with this client group. These findings have been recently supported by consultations undertaken by the Settlement Planning and Information Unit's study on the needs of newly arrived and refugee young people in settlement services. The findings from this process also indicated a low participation rate by young refugees in settlement programs.

Further, the implementation of the Victorian Youth CSSS programs tells us that such programs require workers with a strong youth and cultural community development background. In order to ensure the successful participation of young people and their families, these programs need to be funded to undertake operational activities. These programs also need to operate within agencies that are youth friendly, have a commitment to youth participation issues and have support from the agency's management. Agencies need to identify young people as a priority group among other client needs while CSSS youth program workers need to be supported to undertake direct client and capacity building work.

4.3.1 Recommendations

Recommendation 19: For CSSS Generalist Programs

That DIMIA continue to support the work undertaken by CMYI's *Young Refugees In The Picture* project to support and resource CSSS workers to work more effectively with young refugees. Additional resources are also required however in the area of training for the development and delivery of educational programs to these workers.

Recommendation 20

That DIMIA also support CMYI in working with the managers and social planners in these agencies to ensure that their CSSS staff are supported and supervised to work effectively with young people.

Recommendation 21: For CSSS Generalist Programs

That DIMIA and CMYI establish a strategy on how the Youth Principles (once developed) will be communicated and implemented in agency plans and service agreements.

Recommendation 22: For Youth CSSS Programs

That DIMIA reflect on models of service delivery in its future funding to the youth area. Youth programs and services need to be based on developmental and action processes that include an initial stage of action research, community consultation and community relationship building. This stage focuses on planning and direction setting as local partnerships are being built and communities are recognising the value of the service. The second stage focuses on programs and project development and implementation with outcomes for individuals and groups. The implementation stage also provides opportunities for the service to link clients to appropriate mainstream and youth services. Youth and Mainstream services will need to be supported and resourced to take responsibility for the referral.

It is suggested that DIMIA consult with the current CSSS Youth Funded services and CMYI on possible service models that aim to improve delivery and access. CMYI could support this dialogue by facilitating a meeting with current CSSS Youth Providers.

4.4 Telephone Interpreter Service

It is our experience that some Interpreters tend to breach professional boundaries by communicating with young clients in a paternalistic manner. Where their task is to interpret the conversation, there is a tendency for some interpreters (who may believe that they are acting in a compassionate way) to take on the role and attitude of a guardian, trying to influence conversation and decisions on behalf of the young client. This is disruptive to the communication and service intervention process. The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture in particular, has found this to be a common problem.

4.4.1 Recommendations

Recommendation 23

That TIS, onsite and telephone interpreters become more aware of the problem of paternalistic behaviour and be trained to communicate more effectively with young people.

4.5 Adult Multicultural Education Program

We commend educational initiatives such as the program in Springvale where AMES and ELC have partnered to develop educational programs for young people geared at the learning needs of this target group. This initiative demonstrates that young people learn differently to adults and that educational programs require modifications, appropriate teaching resources and specific planning goals.

4.5.1 Recommendation

Recommendation 24

That DIMIA support the continuation of this current initiative and resource AMEP to adapt future programs for young learners across Victoria.

4.6 Migrant Resource Centres

Working with young refugees and CLD people is a new area for some Migrant Resource Centres (MRC). CMYI's consultation with the CSSS Youth Programs and CSSS generalist programs tells us that some MRC's work with young people better than others. Where traditionally MRC's have worked with adults, aged communities and family units, the needs of young people will most likely not have been a core program issue.

Where youth programs have worked well in the MRC structure it has been fully supported by management and the CSSS worker has been supervised on client issues that have a youth intervention focus. Successful programs always have an outreach component where the worker has an office space in the community in places of high youth frequency such as schools and recreational centers. These MRC's recognise that their offices are not youth friendly and that their worker must go to where the client group feels most comfortable to seek settlement support. These programs work on the premise of partnerships with their youth agencies and other bodies such as local government and that local issues are reported to state planning forums such as the VSPC.

4.6.1 Recommendation

Recommendation 25

That DIMIA consider what attributes an auspice agency should have to effectively administer and manage a youth program. DIMIA should consult with the settlement sector, youth and mainstream agencies, look to other service model examples and develop protocols and guidelines that will assist them in deciding the appropriateness of suitable grant holders. These youth funding guidelines would also assist agencies to determine their relevancy in seeking to submit for grants.