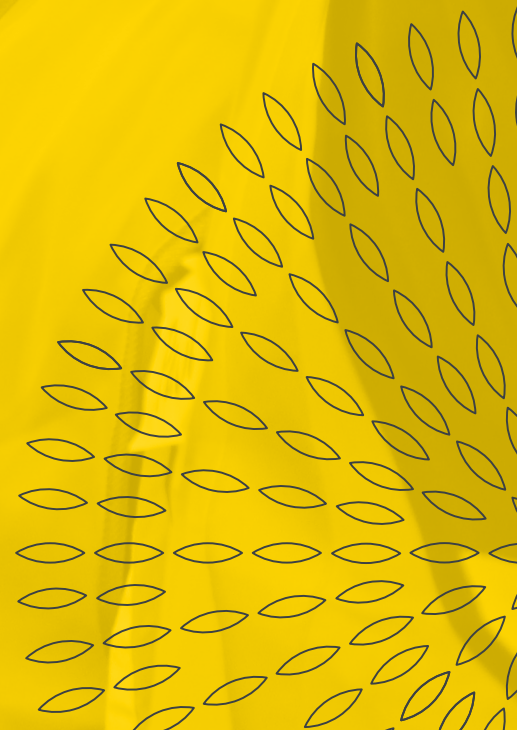


Making it Work

REFUGEE YOUNG PEOPLE & EMPLOYMENT



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Making it work: Refugee Young People and Employment

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The Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) is a Victorian not-for-profit organisation supporting young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds to build better lives in Australia.

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Introduction

Overview

Humanitarian entrants are much younger than any other new arrival group arriving in Australia. Between 2007 and 2011, 11,172 young people aged 16 to 24 settled in Australia under the Humanitarian program. In the 2010 – 2011 financial year, 51% of these new arrivals were under the age of 25. A significant proportion of young refugees have had little or no previous education. In 2010-11, 34% of humanitarian entrants aged between 12 and 24 years arrived with six or fewer years of education; many have an educational background that is interrupted, inadequate or that has little resemblance to the Victorian education system. (DIAC Settlement Database)

The refugee experience is by definition traumatic and characterised by persecution, displacement, loss, grief, and forced separation from family, home and belongings. This displacement has a profound impact on the individual, family and community. Those who are unable to return home often spend many years in a country of first asylum. For some young people, the majority of their lives have been spent in transition countries and this profoundly impacts their identity and settlement experience in Australia. For example, in 2009-10, 33% of refugees assisted through the Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) in Australia stated that they had spent more than 2 years in a refugee camp, 19% had spent more than 7 years in a camp, and 11% had spent 12 years or more in a camp. Growing numbers of humanitarian youth arrivals have spent time in Australian Immigration Detention Centres or in Community Detention.

New arrivals from refugee backgrounds are likely, as a result of their pre-migration and migration experiences, to face common challenges in adjusting to a new life in Australia. Young refugees also have needs that are distinct from those of older refugees. As well as adjusting to life in a new country, recovering from trauma, navigating education, employment and complex bureaucratic systems, refugee young people must also negotiate family, peer, individual and community expectations within the context of adolescence.

For refugee young people employment is fundamental; it provides the capacity to help support family members either here in Australia or overseas and has multiple benefits on an individual community level and is a conduit to broader social inclusion and community engagement. Employment is an important part of establishing identity and belonging and refugee young people have much to contribute.

Much of the current Australian literature suggests that employment outcomes for refugees of all ages are poor, especially through the early settlement period. The literature also indicate that humanitarian entrants are more susceptible to being unemployed even after five years of settlement. They are often under-employed, lowly-paid, in low-skilled and precarious employment. Aspirations for more stable and better paid employment are often hindered by complex pathways back into education and training. These pathways are often challenging to negotiate and inflexible.

The costs associated with poor employment outcomes for refugee young people include low income and poverty with reliance on Government income support payments, health care costs and the loss of social and community integration. (Kyle et al 2003:19). Despite these challenges refugee young people are overcoming them, particularly where there are targeted and well designed approaches.

Profile of Young People from Refugee Backgrounds

Humanitarian Youth Arrivals to Victoria

As at 1st October 2011, there were 6,068 humanitarian youth arrivals (12 – 24 years) living in Victoria who had arrived in Australia over the last five years. Figure 1 shows that the proportion of youth arrivals who received protection visas onshore (visa 866), rather than visas through the offshore humanitarian program, has been steadily increasing over the past few years to a total of 29% of those who arrived in 2010-11. It reflects the increased number of young people who resettle in Victoria from various Immigration Detention Centres. Continuing the pattern in recent years, young people from Afghanistan, Iraq and Burma represent the largest components of the Humanitarian Program for the age group 12 – 24 years.

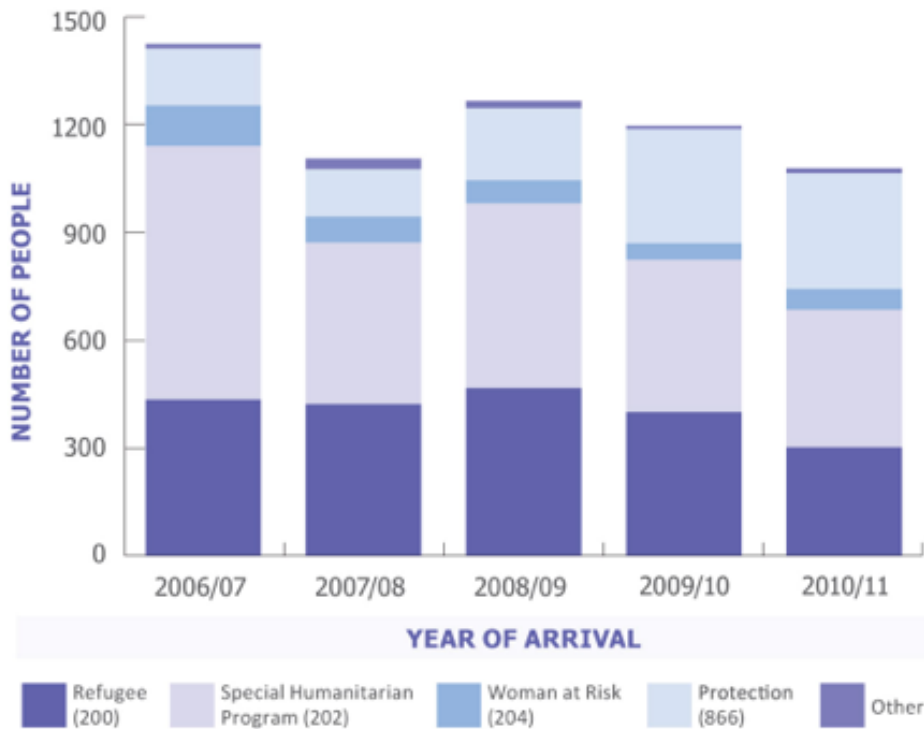


Figure 1: Humanitarian youth (12-24 years) resident in Victoria as at 1 October 2011, by visa subclass and year of arrival to Australia

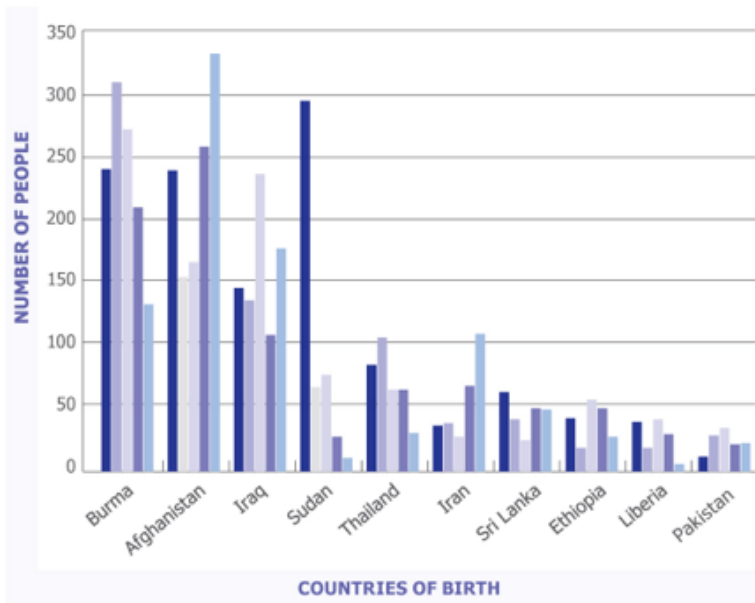


Figure 2: Top 10 countries of birth for humanitarian youth (12-24 years) arrivals over the past 5 years, living in Victoria in 2010-2011

Regional settlement patterns

Figure 3 below shows LGAs in Victoria with the largest numbers of newly-arrived humanitarian youth entrants who arrived in Australia between 2006-07 and 2010-11. Of the humanitarian entrants to Australia in 2010-11, who were living in Victoria as at 1 October 2011, 85% were living in the Greater Melbourne area, and 15% were living in rural/regional areas.

The Victorian LGA with the highest proportion of humanitarian youth arrivals was Greater Dandenong (19%), followed by Hume (18%), Casey (9%), Brimbank (8%), Greater Geelong (6%), Maribyrnong (5%), Maroondah (4%), and Greater Shepparton, Moreland and Wyndham (each with 3%).

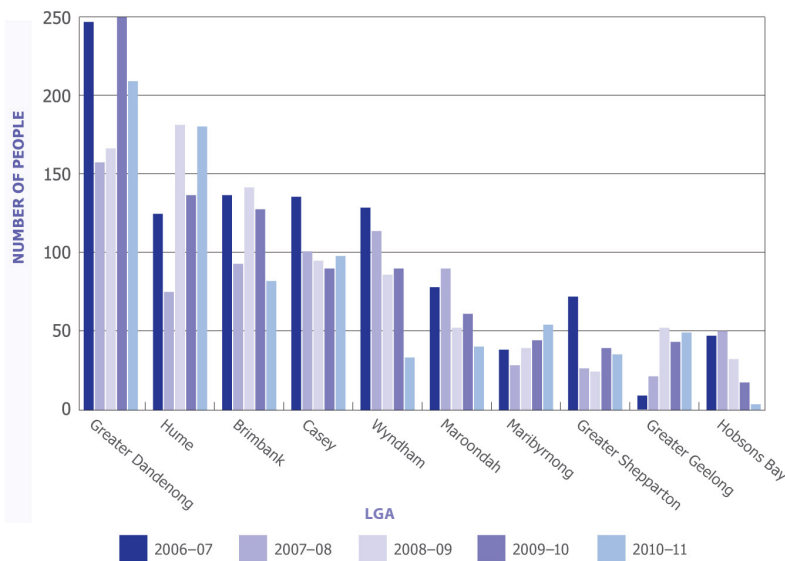


Figure 3: 12-24 year old humanitarian entrants settling in select LGAs of Greater Melbourne 2006-07 to 2009-10

Young People's Aspirations and Experiences of Finding Work

Career aspirations

Despite (or perhaps, because of) their pre-settlement experiences, migrant and refugee young people often have very high aspirations in terms of education and employment. The young people CMY consulted identified a wide range of career aspirations – from becoming doctors and lawyers, to hotel managers, journalists, auto mechanics and community workers – and many articulate a strong sense of wanting to take every opportunity Australia has to offer to learn, succeed and be able to 'give back' to those who have helped them on their journey, both in Australia and overseas.

I want to work in a hotel as the boss. I am happy to work my way up to the top starting in the office.

Chinese/Timorese young woman

I would like to do my own business – maybe hospitality – and to help other young people.

Horn of Africa young man

When talking about career aspirations and goals, a common thread among young people's responses was their acute awareness of the high aspirations of their parents/families. Some felt that there was enormous (and sometimes unrealistic) pressure put on them by their families:

We feel upset with ourselves. When we were in Thailand we had to run from the enemy. In Australia we cannot perform our parents' dream. Our parents had no education. There is a lot of pressure for us to get a university degree.

Karen young man

Finding work

Meaningful and sustainable employment can often play a significant role in an individual's sense of belonging and identity. It often gives young people a sense of value and how they see themselves within the wider community. A VicHealth study has found that employment plays a critical role in mental health; unemployed people experience higher levels of depression, anxiety and distress, as well as lower self-esteem, than those who are employed.¹ The link between employment and mental health is more important for refugee young people who have pre-migration experiences of torture and/or trauma and may already have poor mental health. Finally employment can act as a pathway to broader community engagement and for refugee young people these opportunities can facilitate greater integration in the critical early stages of settlement.

Between May 2008 and May 2009, and only a year after the global financial crisis, overall unemployment rose by one third in Australia but the unemployment rate for 15-19 year olds rose by half.² In 2012, the reported rate of unemployment for young people (aged 15 – 19 years) in Victoria is at 22%, well above the national rate of 18%.

In the context of high rates of youth unemployment, the transition to work for newly arrived young people is particularly fraught. In the DIAC study mentioned above, 9.2% of 18-24 year olds were unemployed, and only 32.3% were employed.

Depending on individual experiences, many people who are refugees often have fragmented education and or gaps in their education, as well as trauma and physical health issues. This can make successful entry to the labour market and ongoing employment extremely hard.³ A longitudinal study by the

1. VicHealth (2002) Promoting Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing through Participation in Economic Activities: Key Learnings and Promising Practices

2. ACOSS (August 2010) 'Times are still tough for young unemployed people'

3. Kyle L, Macdonald F, Doughney J and Pyke J (2004), Refugees in the labour market: Looking for cost effective models of assistance, Research report prepared by the Equity Research Centre Inc. and the Work and Economic Policy Unit, Victoria University

Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) tracking clients of its AMEP English Language programs, found that ‘young people are less likely to have overseas work experience, a recognised qualification and or information about the kinds of jobs or training they might undertake in the future’.⁴

Young people of refugee and migrant backgrounds also experience additional disadvantage in terms of employment, earning, and occupational attainment (Ransly, C. and Drummond, S.2001). These include:

- Lack of knowledge about post compulsory training pathways;
- Experiences of racism and discrimination in looking for work and in the interview and selection processes;
- Lack of familiarity with employment services and Australian systems in relation to searching for and securing paid employment – e.g. job applications, interviews, developing a CV - and lack of job search skills;
- Limited English language skills;
- A significant proportion of young refugees have had little or no previous education. In 2009–10, 40% of humanitarian entrants aged between 12–24 years arrived with six or fewer years of education⁵, and
- Limited resources and/or cultural competency within the employment services sector to respond to the needs of this group of young people.

In May 2011, CMY consulted with a group of Sudanese young people about issues of concern, including employment. All reported their dissatisfaction with job agencies, and their belief that Job Services Australia providers did not have the skills, experience or time to work effectively with refugee young people. This is particularly relevant where the assistance required to place a newly-arrived refugee young person into suitable employment may require more intensive strategies due to many barriers including those outlined above.

suggest that the employment-related needs of refugees – including young people who are making the transition to adult and working life – are not being adequately addressed by available settlement and employment services. A closer look at the range and target groups of employment services and programs suggests there is some recognition of the particular needs of refugees in the labour market but that these needs are not consistently addressed.⁶

The transition into employment for young refugees is undeniably complex, and the system which is designed to support these transitions is not easily navigated. The programs and policies in place present a multifaceted and convoluted system with particular challenges for refugee young people with limited English proficiency and knowledge of Australian systems. The lack of integration between employment support services, welfare services and education & training providers was identified as a major challenge that sometimes lead to young people falling through service gaps.

Finally, through the consultations and literature review, it was apparent that the lack of data collected with respect to refugees and humanitarian entrants and employment outcomes, there is a major gap in terms of being able to map transitions and plan for better employment outcomes.

Both the labour market outcomes research and other reports

4. AMES (2009) Longitudinal Study 2008-2010, Wave 1 report

5. Centre for Multicultural Youth (2010) Humanitarian youth arrivals to Victoria available at: <http://www.cmy.net.au/Assets/1592/1/HumanitarianYouthArrivalsToVictoria--UpdateOctober2010.pdf>

6. Kyle et al, as above

Rates of Economic Participation

A recent study for the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 'Settlement outcomes for new arrivals'⁷ stated that 'of the migration streams represented (in this survey), humanitarian entrants are most likely to be unemployed, even after five years of settlement. (...) If they are working, they tend to work in jobs with fewer hours and receive less remuneration.' In the DIAC study 9.2% of 18-24 year olds were unemployed, and only 32.3% were employed.

The early years of settlement appear to be the most difficult, as only 18% of humanitarian entrants find employment in the first 2 years of being in Australia.⁸ There is also a particular concern for women and young women from refugee backgrounds who are experiencing greater difficulty than males entering the labour market. This disparity is greater than the national average.⁹

7. Department of Immigration and Citizenship (April 2011) 'Settlement outcomes for new arrivals', study conducted by the Australian Survey Research Group

8. Department of Immigration and Citizenship (April 2011) 'Settlement outcomes for new arrivals', study conducted by the Australian Survey Research Group

9. DIAC (2011) A Significant Contribution: The Economic, Social and Civic Contributions of First and Second Generation Humanitarian Entrants Summary of Findings

Quality of Employment Versus Need

Much of the existing data and research indicates that employment outcomes for refugees regardless of age are poor, especially in the early period of arriving in Australia. According to the Refugee Council of Australia (2010), refugees are over-represented among the under employed, lowly-paid, low-skilled, precariously employed and casualised members of the labour force.¹⁰ The effects of this may endure into the next generation. In a comparative study, it was found that despite second generation migrants in China and Canada having higher education attainment levels, they continue to be concentrated in low status and low paying positions.¹¹ Similarly in Australia, first generation humanitarian entrants with tertiary degrees were about 12% less likely to be employed in professional and managerial positions than those who were Australian born and the gap, while smaller, remains for the second generation particularly more for recent arrivals.¹²

Consequently, many new arrivals depend on the secondary employment market facilitated by community and social networks. While this highlights a level of resilience and independence, relying on the secondary labour market can further entrench the experience of precarious employment. It is further noted that these labour markets are not effective for upward occupational mobility.¹³ Re-settlement pressures may push many to find any employment, including low skilled work, in order to provide for the family, rather than undertake further study or wait for better employment opportunities. This is made evident by the fact that one third of recent humanitarian entrants were employed in Australia as labourers, three times the rate for other recently arrived migrants.¹⁴ As a result humanitarian entrants have a less positive attitude to their job than other

migrants; 53% responded that they thought their job was okay but could be better, that they did not care and it was just a job, or that they did not like their job at all.¹⁵

The need to work is heightened for young people who need to earn an income, either for themselves, to support their family in Australia, or to support the family left behind. The financial circumstance of newly arrived families is a major factor in the decision making process for those 16 years and older. Family units are often financially disadvantaged in the first few years of re-settlement. The pressure to leave school and take up work or to work part-time is very high. Young people often feel responsible for helping to pay family debt and may also send money home to support family and friends, and to assist further family members to migrate.

10. RCOA (2010) What Works: Employment strategies for refugee and humanitarian entrants

11. Hasmath R (2011) The Ethnic Penalty: Immigration, Education and the Labour Market University of Melbourne

12. DIAC (2011) A Significant Contribution: The Economic, Social and Civic Contributions of First and Second Generation Humanitarian Entrants Summary of Findings

13. Mestan K (2008) 'Given the Chance: An evaluation of an employment and education pathways program for refugees' Brotherhood of St Laurence

14. DIAC (2011) A Significant Contribution: The Economic, Social and Civic Contributions of First and Second Generation Humanitarian Entrants Summary of Findings

15. Department of Immigration and Citizenship (April 2011) 'Settlement outcomes for new arrivals', study conducted by the Australian Survey Research Group

The Current System

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) is the department largely responsible for labour market policy. Within the plethora of employment support programs in DEEWR, there are none that specifically target young people from refugee-like backgrounds. The overall policy landscape is a complex system of employment and training programs that are not particularly well integrated nor easily navigated. The current model for supporting young people into employment includes the following components:

- The Australian Government's Compact with Young Australians, agreed to by COAG in 2009 as part of the COAG National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions. Young people are required to undertake study or training to raise their qualifications to Year 12 or equivalent. The compact includes a guarantee of a training place in State Government funded programs. Additionally, there are 'strengthened participation requirements for some types of income support'.¹⁶
- Job Services Australia (JSA) aims to provide tailored approaches to identifying and addressing barriers for individual job seekers;
- Australian Apprenticeship Access Program provides pre-employment training and support for job seekers moving into apprenticeships and traineeships;
- Incentives to employers encouraging the recruitment and retention of apprenticeships and traineeships;
- National Green Jobs Corp that provides 17-24 year olds with the skills and accredited training to meet emerging green employment opportunities;
- The Youth Connections Program helps young people who have left school, or who are thinking of leaving school, to continue with their education and ultimately gain a Year 12 (or equivalent) level education.
- School Business Community Partnership Brokers Program is focused on building partnerships to support young people to attain Year 12 or equivalent qualifications.

There are also a number of regional and locally based employment programs that add to and complement the federal system.

Systemic Barriers to Entry

Job Services Australia (JSA)

JSA providers are funded to deliver personalised assistance to job seekers and address barriers faced by individuals. Currently, job seekers are initially assessed by Centrelink and placed in one of four streams; Stream 1 being for job seekers with minimal disadvantage and Stream 4 for those experiencing the greatest disadvantage. The JSA provider and job seeker develop an Employment Pathway Plan (EPP) to identify aims of the job seeker, facilitate links to relevant employment and training opportunities and evaluate progress. The EPP sets out activities that the job seeker must undertake and failure to do so affect Centrelink payments under the "no show, no pay" policy.¹⁷ In addition, employment providers can use an Employment Pathway Fund (EPF) to help job seekers pay for items such as training and equipment. For early school leavers there is an additional \$500 allocated.¹⁸

There are some aspects of the JSA model that are seen as positive. For example the Brotherhood of St Laurence indicates that the current JSA model works reasonably well for the majority of people, particularly those who have the 'work experience, skills and capacities to take up work...'¹⁹ However, assistance to highly disadvantaged job seekers who are not 'job ready' and face multiple barriers remain poor. Employment outcomes result for only 15% of Stream 4 clients and 28% of the most disadvantaged job seekers reported achieving positive outcomes. Only one-third of those obtaining employment have permanent jobs.²⁰ Melbourne Citymission, a specialist youth JSA provider reported, 'that the needs of this most vulnerable group are not being sufficiently met under JSA to enable young people to achieve a lasting connection to employment, education and training.'²¹ A greater focus on Stream 4 clients is needed and this can only be achieved through more targeted approaches.

17. Refugee Council of Australia (2012) 'Job Services Australia: refugee community and service provider views' Draft discussion paper March 2012

18. Rose et al (2011) 'Swimming Upstream: Young people and service provision under Job Services Australia' Youth Affairs Council of Victoria

19. Rose et al (2011) 'Swimming Upstream: Young people and service provision under Job Services Australia' Youth Affairs Council of Victoria: 24

20. Brotherhood of St Laurence (2011) 'Line of sight: better tailored services for highly disadvantaged job seekers' Submission to the Australian Government on future employment services from 2012

21. Cull E (2011) Finding the right track: A snapshot study of Young People's experiences looking for work with Job Services Australia (JSA) Melbourne Citymission

16. Rose et al (2011) 'Swimming Upstream: Young people and service provision under Job Services Australia' Youth Affairs Council of Victoria

While there are 35 national youth specialist sites designed to address gaps in the generalist system²² there has been a decreasing specialisation within JSA providers to provide expert information and support to young people and young people from refugee backgrounds. Without a coordinated employment strategy capacity to appropriately and effectively support refugee young people is significantly reduced.²³ These concerns are mirrored in the Compact with Young Australians where the need for intensive and specialised case management services is critical and will enable disadvantaged young people to successfully achieve requirements under the new 'learn or earn' rules.²⁴

The need for greater specialisation within the JSA system is echoed by refugee young people. Consultations with refugee young people consistently identify significant gaps in the way job services are currently provided. In May 2011, CMY consulted with a group of Sudanese young people about issues of concern, including employment. All reported their dissatisfaction with job agencies, and their belief that Job Services Australia providers did not have the skills, experience or time to work effectively with refugee young people.

"The job agencies, in particular, need to give us more opportunities ... Some agencies just don't care. As long as we go in to see them, then that's all. No follow up. Some agencies are better than others".²⁵

Job Network don't do anything. They say: "Do this, do that..." but they don't help you. They give you some information about a job. Not a reference. They don't tell you how to get it. they say: 'Go to the Internet'. They only help you half way.

African young man

This is particularly relevant where the assistance required to place a newly-arrived refugee young person into suitable employment may require more intensive pre and post-employment strategies to overcome barriers resulting from pre-migration and settlement experiences.

There are also contractual management arrangements within the JSA that require further thinking. For instance there are no incentives for JSA's to work in partnership with service providers and organisations that hold this expertise. Greater collaboration between refugee youth services and JSA's would lead to an improved JSA skill base and establish greater links between young people and supported employment transitions. Incentives within the JSA fee structure and performance management continue to create a standardised model of service delivery that further marginalises the most disadvantaged job seekers²⁶

22. Mission Australia (March 2010) 'Youth Employment Strategy: preventing a lost generation'

23. Oliff L (2010) 'What Works: Employment strategies for refugee and humanitarian entrants' Refugee Council of Australia

24. ACOSS (August 2010) 'Times are still tough for young unemployed people'

25. Turnbull M & Stokes H (2012) The Brimbank Young Men's Project 2011-2012 (Interim Report)

26. ACOSS (2012) 'Towards more efficient and responsive employment services: submission to APESAA' ACOSS Paper 184

Discrimination Barriers

For refugee young people there are additional systemic barriers including difficulties with recognition of skills, qualifications and experience and prohibitive costs for bridging courses and supplementary examinations.²⁷ Discriminatory behaviours, practices and systems combine as additional barriers that have a real impact on unemployment and under-employment.

There is discrimination by agencies and organisations. If you are called Abdul or Mohammed they don't want you. You get fobbed off. They say: 'fax your resume' and you never hear back from them. You have a job interview and you never hear back from them.

Young African man

A national study conducted by the Foundation for Young Australians found that over 80% of research participants from non-Anglo-Australian backgrounds reported being subjected to some form of racism.²⁸ In a comparative study of employment outcomes for three refugee entrant groups found that humanitarian entrants were employed in lower levels and in jobs below their qualifications indicating that refugee and humanitarian entrants are disadvantaged generally, and to varying degrees this is a result of visible difference.²⁹ Recent feedback gathered by the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria indicates that young graduates from new and emerging communities experience significant difficulty gaining employment as a result of discrimination and racism.³⁰

27. Oliff L (2010) 'What Works: Employment strategies for refugee and humanitarian entrants' Refugee Council of Australia

28. MYAN (2012) 'Submission to the race discrimination team Australian Human Rights Commission: National Anti-Racism Strategy'

29. Oliff L (2010) 'What Works: Employment strategies for refugee and humanitarian entrants' Refugee Council of Australia

30. ECCV (February 2012) 'ECCV Submission to the Attorney General's Department on the Consolidation of Commonwealth Anti-discrimination Laws February 2012'

Individual Barriers

While refugee young people may harness a range of diverse skills and experiences, many also experience individual barriers to achieving sustainable employment outcomes. Settlement issues include physical and mental health related issues, limited community infrastructure and social networks and disrupted or no schooling.

On arrival and early settlement issues include limited or disrupted social support networks, varied awareness levels of and access to appropriate support services and a lack of understanding or misinformation about education pathways and employment outcomes in Australia.

Even if you are educated you still need to know someone to get a job at the other end.

Sierra Leonean young woman

I would like to get a part-time job... however it is hard to get anything. I would do anything. However I am now working in an Afghani restaurant where I was introduced. I got it through a contact and am working two nights. So it's not what you know, it's who you know.

Afghani young man

The lack of family and social networks is exacerbated by language and cultural barriers, parental and community expectations, gender and family issues. There may also be some unrealistic expectations about job opportunities in Australia.

A longitudinal study by the Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) tracking clients of its AMEP English Language programs found that 'young people are less likely to have overseas work experience, a recognised qualification and or information about the kinds of jobs or training they might undertake in the future'.³¹

31. AMES (2009) Longitudinal Study 2008-2010, Wave 1 report

What Leads to Successful Outcomes? Some Good Practice Examples

Sustainable Employment and Economic Development (SEED) Project

Established in 2009 the SEED project helps young people aged 16-25 living in the City of Moonee Valley to re-engage in employment and training. Many of the young people participating live in public housing and come from refugee backgrounds. Young people undertake a paid placement through flexible work placement options including work experience, traineeships and support into apprenticeships. After three years the project has had great success and has expanded to Melbourne, Maribyrnong and Hobsons Bay councils.

Women in Work Community Enterprise

Women in Work Community Enterprise offers local training and employment opportunities to refugee and migrant women who face systemic barriers to workforce participation. Women are supported to access the Certificate 3 and Diploma in Children's Services and employed as childcare workers in a mobile childcare service. The program maximizes the strengths of refugee and migrant women who speak multiple languages and have extensive formal and informal childcare experience. Some women have had no prior formal education before coming to Australia, while others overseas qualifications but have experienced difficulties gaining local recognition.

The women are supported with additional training on communication, orientation to Australian workplace culture and job search skills. The women must also complete a work placement and offered casual employment when qualified as part of a multi ethnic mobile childcare service.

The 'Women in Work' childcare community enterprise is illustrative of a successful innovative approach that combines training, support and employment whilst simultaneously building participant's confidence, self-esteem and employability.

ReSource – EMC

ReSource is a multi-faceted pre-employment program that targets marginalised young people living in public housing including refugee young people. The program addresses a range of barriers such as unfamiliarity with the education system through the use of peer education, career counselling and connections to volunteer opportunities. There are four elements to the program and they include:

1. **EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS FOR REFUGEE YOUTH:** an experiential learning program designed to empower refugee young people to make informed choices about education and employment options. The program was developed in consultation with refugee young people living in the City of Yarra who felt they needed more support looking for work. The need to learn about the Australian workplace and alternative education and training pathways was also identified. The program combines practical learning (eg preparing resumes, cover letters and practice interviews) with work place visits and career advice. In 2013 a peer educator model will be developed training young people to facilitate the program themselves.
2. **PHUCHA (FUTURE) CLUB:** a weekly informal job club for refugee young people supported by paid staff and volunteers. Job seekers are encouraged to explore diverse career options and learning pathways and are linked into other support services. Feedback from participants highlights the benefits of individual and intensive job search assistance that allows young people to articulate their skills and strengths.
3. **COMMUNITY SERVICE VOLUNTEERING PROGRAM:** successfully piloted with NMIT YAMEC students in 2011, this program introduces migrant and refugee young people to volunteering. Guest speakers talk about the benefits of volunteering followed by on-site visits to community led activities. Connections to organisations with volunteer opportunities are supported to develop ongoing volunteering opportunities.

4. YOUTH VOICES: in partnership with the Fitzroy Learning Network 'Youth Voices' creates a space for young people to share and develop project ideas that respond to common issues through the use of multimedia. As part of this program young people regularly participate in the Gertrude Street Projection Festival and other local arts based initiatives.

Outcomes & Learnings

While in its early stages ReSource has already had successful outcomes. Two young women are enrolled in hospitality traineeships, three are engaged in volunteer roles and others have gained employment at Coles, KFC, Cotton on Clothing, Hoyts and in factories in the outer North. Participants have also indicated that they feel more equipped to look for work in the new cultural context.

The learning and experience of ReSource indicates that:

- a. Having a local focus helps develop links with local employers and training providers that will help young people make sustainable employment choices.
- b. Targeted approaches are required to specifically address young people's job readiness in a new cultural context.
- c. Refugee young people require ongoing support at different stages of their chosen employment pathway.

What have we learnt?

The case studies reinforce research findings that an integrated approach that includes case management, skill development, pre-employment support and strong partnerships with employers is needed to create meaningful and sustainable job opportunities for disadvantaged job seekers such as refugee young people. Elements of this integrated approach include:

- Intensive case management and personal support: the complex and multiple barriers experienced by refugee young people and other highly disadvantaged jobseekers requires better engagement, case management and placement support to maintain both social and employment outcomes.
- Pre-employment and basic skill training: for refugee young people with limited or no experience of the Australian work place culture a focus on pre-employment skill development is critical.
- Careers counselling and pathway planning: informed decision-making is critical in making the transition from education to employment. Tailored assistance to young adults about career pathways need to be realistic, goal-oriented and individually tailored to maximise employment outcomes.
- Supported work experience and industry links: opportunities to undertake volunteering, work placements or internships is key to improving employment outcomes for refugee young people and communities. Local industry based experience provides an opportunity to learn and adapt to Australian work cultures, enhance language skills and build networks relevant to future employment pathways.
- Building social networks and social trust: New arrival refugee young people and communities have less social trust and fewer social networks relevant to new employment opportunities and upward mobility. While expanded opportunities for local work experience can help develop people's social networks more needs to be done to improve public perception of new arrival communities and young people.
- Employment support and liaison as part of the case management support to ensure the transition to employment is sustained.

- Having targeted specific programs for refugee young people to complement mainstream employment service providers.

'Making it work: Refugee young people and employment' identifies many of the systemic and individual challenges in entering and maintaining meaningful employment within the context of an enormously complex post-compulsory education, training and employment system. In ensuring that young people who settle in Australia are given every opportunity to gain the skills and experience necessary to become active participants in the labour market, Federal and State Governments must work in partnership, including partnership with service providers to target and coordinate employment support services to achieve quality outcomes for refugee young people.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

That the Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council (RRAC) work closely with DEEWR and DIAC to develop and implement an approach that aligns various transition and employment programs, as well as develop specific refugee youth programs to support employment outcomes for young adults from refugee-like backgrounds.

Recommendation 2

That State and Federal Governments support successful refugee youth specific transition employment programs and scale them up to other areas of high refugee settlement, including regional Victoria.

Recommendation 3

That State Government work closely with Federal Government to showcase good practice approaches in Victoria to ensure that more targeted and specific programs are complementary to the mainstream JSA model.

Recommendation 4

That the State Government, in partnership with the Victorian Equal Opportunities and Human Rights Commission, develop initiatives to tackle discrimination of young people, particularly refugee young people, in the employment process and in the workplace.

Recommendation 5

That DEEWR, in collaboration with RRAC:

- assess the effectiveness of JSA services in attaining outcomes for refugee young people,
- engage with CALD communities to deliver appropriate services,
- develop specific refugee youth employment programs to complement the main JSA model, and
- develop incentives for JSA providers to develop partnerships with relevant local agencies/ organisations

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