



The People They Make Us Welcome

Australia has a long history as a settlement destination for migrants and refugees. Our population is now one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse in the world, but to what extent do newly-arrived people really feel like they belong?

The People They Make Us Welcome, a new policy paper by the Centre for Multicultural Youth explores how well newly arrived young people are settling by exploring their sense of belonging in the Australian community.

Why this topic?

Research around young people's experiences of belonging is limited. Although we know a lot about youth transitions we know less about how young people belong. The degree to which newly arrived young people are able to build a sense of self and social connectedness in Australia has a profound impact on other aspects of their settlement and overall health and wellbeing.

The issue

Positive settlement in Australia for young people is inextricably connected to a sense of belonging among family members, peers, their own cultural community and the broader community. In this context, newly arrived migrant and refugee young people's experiences of belonging are unique. Not only are they navigating the significant changes that occur during adolescence, but are doing so in a new country, culture and language, with the need to establish new supportive relationships and a sense of place.

Settlement services in Australia are often focused on assisting newly arrived families and young people to access tangible supports (such as enrolling at school, learning English, accessing income support, and finding stable housing). Less tangible aspects, such as building social connections and a sense of belonging in a new country can

sometimes be overlooked as significant elements to settling well.

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Factors that support a sense of belonging

- Experiences of welcome or practical help provided by members of the broader community
- High levels of cultural diversity in their local community or school environment
- A sense of safety
- A sense of freedom – the ability to exercise choice and agency in their lives

Factors that diminish a sense of belonging

- Experiences of racism and intolerance, particularly religious intolerance
- Stereotypes and ignorance towards their homeland and their experiences
- Experiencing partial belonging - not achieving a sense of belonging in both family/culture of origin and the broader Australian community

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www.cmy.net.au/publications/people-they-make-us-welcome