



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Immigration and Citizenship**

## **About the research**

### **Economic, civic and social contributions of refugees and Humanitarian entrants – literature review**

#### **Refugee Council of Australia**

Research on the ways in which Australia's Humanitarian Program contributes to society can inform the development of enabling policies and increase public understanding of and support for the program. While there is continuing research in Australia on Humanitarian Program entrants' settlement needs, there was a scarcity of information on the benefits that Humanitarian resettlement brings to Australia.

This literature review was the initial stage of a project looking into the economic, social and civic contributions to Australia of first and second generation Humanitarian Program entrants. Subsequent primary research and data analysis aim to confirm, clarify and build on the findings of the literature review.

#### **Key messages**

The literature review found that while there may be short-term costs as refugees are resettled and adjust to their new surroundings, after successful integration they make permanent cultural, social and economic contributions.

- Humanitarian entrants are often entrepreneurial as they establish themselves in a new environment – in the year 2000, five of Australia's eight billionaires were people whose families had originally come to the country as refugees.
- Their impact has been positive in regional and rural Australia through providing labour and stimulating economic growth and service delivery.
- Available sources point to above average rates of success in education and employment for children of Humanitarian entrants.
- Informal volunteering plays an important role in building social capital, and volunteers from ethnic communities provide the greater part of their services to benefit society as a whole rather than their own ethnic group.

The literature review identified a relative lack of research differentiating Humanitarian entrants from other migrants and a need for longitudinal data collection and research into their economic progress. It is suggested that priority be given to further study of local conditions that promote or hamper economic integration and participation.

Policy Innovation, Research and Evaluation Unit

December 2010





Refugee Council  
of Australia



# ECONOMIC, CIVIC AND SOCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF REFUGEES AND HUMANITARIAN ENTRANTS

## A Literature Review

**Prepared by the Refugee Council of Australia for  
the Department of Immigration and Citizenship**

Released February 2010

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## **Cover photo:**

Moo Moo, a Karen refugee entrant and farmer originally from Burma, with Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) Community Guide Kaw Doh Htoo at a market garden in Werribee, Victoria. Moo Moo was assisted to find work through the AMES Labour Harvest Program (see page 38). Photo reproduced with permission from AMES © 2009

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This literature review on the economic, social and civic contributions of refugees covers relevant national and international sources while also seeking to identify information gaps and recommend future avenues of research.

## Key findings

The 740,000 refugees and humanitarian migrants settled by Australia since Federation have had a profound impact in enhancing the nation's social, cultural and economic life. Their resettlement has played a crucial role in international efforts to provide protection to persons whose life, liberty, safety and other fundamental rights are at risk. It has also enabled Australia to tangibly demonstrate its international solidarity with the mostly poor countries hosting the majority of the world's refugees. This should remain the primary focus of the resettlement component of Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program while at the same time exploring new ways to utilise better the huge potential that refugees have to enrich the nation. Refugees make substantial contributions to their new country – expanding consumer markets for local goods, opening new markets, bringing in new skills, creating employment and filling empty employment niches. There may be short-term costs as refugees are resettled and adjust to their new surroundings but once successful integration has occurred refugees are able to quickly make permanent cultural, social and economic contributions and infuse vitality, humanitarian values and multiculturalism into the communities into which they are resettled.

Australia's refugees and humanitarian entrants have found success in every field of endeavour, including the arts, sports, media, science, research, business and civic and community life. Refugees' stories are extremely diverse; however, there are some commonly mentioned "ingredients for success" including having had community support; feeling motivated to "give back" to society; and having access to training, English classes, mentoring and cultural, sporting and volunteering activities.

Migration and the intake of refugees can diversify and enhance the skill level of the population, increase economies of scale and foster innovation and flexibility. Refugees are often entrepreneurial as they face the need to set up and establish themselves in a new environment. One illustration of this was evident in the 2000 Business Review Weekly's annual "Rich 200" list which showed that five of Australia's eight billionaires were people whose families had originally come to the country as refugees. The efforts of refugee diasporas not only benefit Australia but often also their homelands. Outward remittances by migrants and refugees from Australia totalled over US\$2.815 billion in 2006. There is increasing evidence that remittances are crucial to the survival of communities in many developing countries, including many which have suffered conflict and produced refugees. These remittances represent a significant development resource to these countries.

The positive impact of refugees has also been especially felt in regional and rural Australia. In recent times rural areas have experienced large scale departures in population resulting in skills losses, lack of local entrepreneurship, business closures and the loss of social capital and services. Successful regional and rural refugee resettlement programs have helped plug some population gaps, supply much-needed labour and stimulate economic growth and services delivery. More generally, the young age profile of humanitarian entrants makes a very positive contribution to a labour market in which new retirees now exceed new labour force entrants.

While existing information about the educational and labour force outcomes of the children of refugees is limited, available sources point to above average rates of success in education and employment, consistent with the successes achieved by children of non-humanitarian migrants from similar non-English speaking countries. An analysis of information on the children of migrants from Poland and Hungary (two major source countries for post-war refugees) shows that they are

significantly more likely than third generation Australians to continue their education, to achieve a university degree or diploma, to work in a professional or managerial position and to have purchased or be purchasing their own home. Information on second generation Australians of Vietnamese background under 20 years of age show much higher than average rates of involvement in education, consistent with the commitment to education demonstrated by the first generation from Vietnam. This contributes to higher social mobility for people of Vietnamese background (both first and second generation) who live in lower income suburbs. Children of migrants with lower English proficiency are much more likely to remain in education longer, complete a university degree and work in a managerial or professional role than children of parents with higher English proficiency. One researcher suggests second generation children have a cognitive advantage in literacy skills owing to their proficiency in languages additional to English, while others describe levels of motivation among migrant parents as part of an “ethnic success ethic” or “ethnic advantage”.

While there is much evidence that humanitarian entrants do achieve positive employment outcomes over a period of time, it is equally important to acknowledge the short term barriers to economic progress encountered by refugees in order that these can be addressed with appropriate policy and program responses by Federal and State governments. Research suggests that targeted employment support programs may have better outcomes for refugees and can be more cost-effective than mainstream employment support services. Furthermore, vocational education and training programs linked with English language learning, and initiatives that provide opportunities for refugees to gain work experience, have both proven to facilitate successful pathways into employment. Other factors that contribute to labour market success include: professional mentoring programs; overseas skills and qualifications recognition; and programs that facilitate access to drivers’ licences.

Research conducted overseas confirms that, after overcoming initial barriers, refugees subsequently achieve a rapid convergence in earnings with other migrants and the native population, and thus a longer-term perspective is required. International studies also conclude that because refugees lack the option to return to their homelands, they are more likely than other migrants to invest in country-specific human capital (e.g. education, training and citizenship). While there is a divergence of views among countries as to how quickly refugees can be expected to achieve economic self-sufficiency, there is consensus internationally that it plays a pivotal role in successful integration.

Volunteering is also an important tool for integrating refugees into broader society. However, different meanings and ethnic-based understandings of the term “volunteer” can result in research failing to recognise the current extent of voluntary work by members of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. Studies show that informal volunteering plays an important role in building social capital, and also that CALD community volunteers provide the greater part of their services to benefitting mainstream society rather than their own ethno-specific group.

### Information gaps identified and future research recommended

One limitation identified during the research concerns the relative lack of literature or research differentiating between refugees and other migrants. While refugees face many challenges in common with other migrants, they also have needs peculiar to their own situation. It is therefore problematic that often the available literature proves to be limited to policies, services and integration issues for migrants generally. It is recommended that humanitarian entrants once again be included in the sample of the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia (LSIA), and be studied as a separate category within the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia surveys. This would facilitate a more accurate analysis of all factors relating to the economic, social and civic contributions of humanitarian entrants.

There is a need for longitudinal data collection and research into the economic progress made by refugees, including an exploration of factors contributing to differential labour market outcomes.

More empirical data is required concerning the skills, accreditation and former work experience of humanitarian entrants prior to their arrival in Australia in order to better determine how they could be best engaged in addressing skills shortage in the Australian economy. It is suggested that priority be given to further in-depth study of local conditions that promote or hamper economic integration and participation. More generally, future research should place greater emphasis on structural, physical and psycho-social factors impacting on refugee employment. Monitoring the implementation of the new Job Services Australia model will be vital for evaluating its effectiveness in supporting refugee jobseekers into work and identifying elements of good practice.

The absence of any comprehensive study of the educational, employment and social outcomes of the children of refugees leaves a major gap in understanding the long-term benefits of Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program. Research is required to understand the contribution of the second generation to Australian society and also how differences in the education, employment and settlement experiences of parents impact on outcomes for the children of refugees. Specific research should also be conducted into the experiences and outcomes of children of refugees and humanitarian migrants, to determine the role of the refugee experience, settlement support, parental motivation and educational opportunities in their educational and social development – comparing their experiences with those of children of non-humanitarian migrants.

Quantitative research is required on the impact of remittances from humanitarian entrants on receiving countries as well as the role that diasporic refugee populations play in development strategies with home and host nations. This would help contribute to a better understanding of potential spin-off benefits of Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program towards international development efforts and improving global peace and security. In-depth studies are also required to quantify the impact and influence that migrant and refugee diasporas have on development through trade, investments, business exchanges, social networks and human capital transfers.

While there is an abundance of individual refugee success stories, more empirical research is required into “factors contributing to success” in the resettlement of refugees and their participation into economic, social and cultural life in Australia.

# INTRODUCTION

In December 2008, the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) was contracted by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) to review available literature which explored factors relating to the economic, civic and social contributions of refugees and humanitarian entrants. As part of this literature review, RCOA was asked to explore available material on the following matters:

- avenues for overcoming barriers to successful economic progress, unemployment and underemployment, and factors that contribute to labour market success;
- labour force outcomes of second and third generations;
- the prevalence of non-paid and voluntary work among refugee communities;
- areas of skill shortage in the Australian economy and opportunities for humanitarian entrants to contribute;
- international comparisons of the labour force outcomes of humanitarian entrants; and
- the economic contributions of humanitarian entrants and other potential economic benefits of Australia's resettlement program resulting from our contribution to global security.

The report is divided into six sections. Each section identifies key findings and emerging themes as well as information gaps and future areas of research recommended. Each section contains a boxed summary highlighting significant findings. The report also contains an annotated bibliography by section of the most pertinent literature surveyed as well as a references section listing all publications consulted during the research.

Australia is the focus of the research. However, the literature review additionally covers the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the European Union, with an emphasis on Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom (UK) and United States (US) (particularly for section 5). Extensive web-based research has been conducted, supplemented by some library-based research to identify materials not available electronically. Individual approaches have also been made to several academics and experts both nationally and internationally in order to attain as wide a coverage of all existing literature as possible.

One limitation identified during the research concerns the relative lack of literature differentiating between refugees and other migrants. While refugees face many challenges in common with other migrants, they also have needs peculiar to their own situation. It is therefore unfortunate that often the available literature concerns policies, services and integration issues for migrants generally. Where this is the case, it can be difficult to assess or accurately convey how refugees fit into the broader picture. The terms "refugee" and "humanitarian entrant" are used interchangeably throughout the text, and concern persons arriving under both onshore and offshore components of Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program.

The research was conducted during January and February 2009 and takes account of literature published up until this point. This literature review has been coordinated by Chris Nash, with research conducted by Chris Nash, Rebecca Eckard, Paul Power, Louise Olliff, Zhi Yan, Victoria Vu and Michael Edwards.

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## Section 1

# BENEFITS OF AUSTRALIA'S REFUGEE AND HUMANITARIAN PROGRAM

### **Key findings:**

- The resettlement of refugees is not just an exercise in international goodwill. Refugees make substantial contributions to their new country – expanding consumer markets for local goods, opening new markets, bringing in new skills, creating employment and filling empty employment niches.
- There may be short-term costs as refugees are resettled and adjust to their new surroundings but, once successful resettlement has occurred, refugees are able to quickly make permanent cultural, social and economic contributions and infuse vitality and multiculturalism into the communities into which they are resettled.
- The profile of the humanitarian intake is also heavily skewed towards the younger age cohorts, with many arriving as children and receiving much of their education in Australia. The young age profile of humanitarian entrants makes a very positive contribution to a labour market in which new retirees now exceed new labour force entrants.
- Migration and the intake of refugees can diversify and enhance the skill level of the population, increase economies of scale and foster innovation and flexibility. Refugees are often entrepreneurial as they face the need to set up and establish themselves in a new environment. The 2000 Business Review Weekly's annual "Rich 200" list, for example, showed that five of Australia's eight billionaires were people whose families had originally come to the country as refugees.
- The entrepreneurial prowess of non-English speaking background (NESB) migrants is also evident in the New Enterprise Initiative Scheme (NEIS). An evaluation of the program found that NESB migrants had business survival rates (i.e. enterprises still running two years after the program) that were significantly higher (65%) than those rates for the native-born and for immigrants from English-speaking countries (55%).
- Outward remittances by migrants and refugees from Australia totalled over US\$2.815 billion in 2006. There is increasing evidence that remittances are crucial to the survival of communities in many developing countries, including many which have suffered conflict and produced refugees. The efforts of refugee diasporas should be acknowledged as a development resource to these countries.

### **Information gaps identified and future research recommended:**

- There is a need for longitudinal data collection and research into employment outcomes for refugees, including an exploration of factors contributing to differential labour market outcomes for those coming under the different streams of the humanitarian program.
- Quantitative research is required on the impact of remittances from humanitarian entrants on receiving countries as well as the role that diasporic refugee populations play in development strategies with home and host nations.
- Further in-depth studies are required to quantify the impact and influence that migrant and refugee diasporas have on development through trade, investments, business exchanges, social networks and human capital transfers.

## 1.1 Introduction

The 740,000 refugees and humanitarian migrants settled by Australia since Federation have had a profound impact on the nation's social, cultural and economic life. Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program has played a crucial role in international efforts to provide protection to persons whose life, liberty, safety, health and other fundamental rights are at risk. It has also

enabled Australia to tangibly demonstrate international solidarity and responsibility sharing with the mostly poor countries hosting the majority of the world’s refugees. This should remain the primary focus of Australia’s refugee resettlement program while at the same time exploring new ways to better maximise the huge potential that refugees have to enrich the nation.

Refugee communities have been highly successful in integrating into Australian society and making significant economic, social and civic contributions. For example, the Vietnamese refugees who arrived in the 1970s and 1980s have flourished remarkably after settling in Australia, despite the significant language barriers and cultural adjustment they faced on arrival. Today, the Vietnamese are well represented in the business sector and also play an important role in broadening social, cultural and business relationships between Australia and South-East Asia. Many former Vietnamese refugees and/or their children have prominent roles in their fields.

Because refugee resettlement is commonly viewed as an international obligation and an act of generosity by the country receiving refugees, the many benefits refugees bring to their new country are often overlooked. Refugees make substantial contributions to their new country – expanding consumer markets for local goods, opening new markets, bringing in new skills, creating employment and filling empty employment niches (Harrell-Bond 2002; Montemurro 2005, cited in McDonald et al 2008). Harrell-Bond (2002) argues that refugees should not be defined as a welfare problem requiring “relief” and “care and maintenance” but rather as people who have problems but who also have determination to survive and put their energies into productive work that can benefit their hosts. In the analysis of LSIA 1, Carrington et al (2007) found that the highest satisfaction rating among migrants was for refugee and humanitarian entrants.

While the benefits of resettling refugees can be great, it is important to recognise that the gains cannot be accrued unless investment is made in the settlement of new arrivals. This investment must be formulated with the ultimate goals of social inclusion, freedom from discrimination and access to economic resources in mind. In this sense, adequate planning that promotes inclusion in the cultural, economic, political and social systems that underpin the host community is critical.

A review of the literature on the economic contributions that humanitarian entrants make in Australia is outlined below.

## **1.2 Long-term economic benefits provided by humanitarian entrants**

The government-sponsored report, *The Economic Effects of Immigration in Australia* (1985), concluded that immigration more broadly had a positive impact on the economy and that migrants did not take jobs from the Australian-born; rather, they contributed to the expansion of the economy and employment generation. This report has contributed significantly to a general consensus that the benefits are positive, in economic terms, in the Australian context (Collins 1991, cited in Kyle et al 2004).

The significant positive economic contribution of migrants in Australia is well-established in robust empirical evidence. However, there is a relative lack of rigorous research into the long-term economic impacts of humanitarian entrants into Australia. Waxman (2001) notes this deficiency while exploring early economic adjustment experiences of recently arrived humanitarian entrants from the former Yugoslavia, Iraq and Afghanistan. Existing studies commonly use a very limited set of fiscal measures such as initial resettlement costs and short-term economic return and these studies sometimes provide an incomplete picture.

The more recent empirical research on migrants that classifies entrants into their visa categories – and, therefore, includes humanitarian entrants – reveals a mixed story. Richardson et al (2004) carried out one of the only longitudinal studies covering settlement experiences for migrants. The research was based on the Department of Immigration’s LSIA research which compares the labour force participation, income, expenditure, qualifications and English proficiency of different waves of migrants, including humanitarian entrants. The study found that humanitarian migrants had

employment levels substantially below average, but this was mostly due to low rates of participation in the labour force, rather than to unemployment.

The circumstances in which different groups of refugees arrive can greatly affect how positive a contribution each group is able to make to their new country. In their analysis of the Department of Immigration’s LSIA data, Thapa and Gørgens (2006) compared the data of the two cohorts (Cohort 1 arrived in Australia between 1993 and 1995 and Cohort 2 arrived in Australia in 1999-2000) to determine the labour market outcomes of each group. A decomposition of LSIA Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 suggests that the more favourable outcomes for Cohort 2 migrants are predominantly due to the setting of the Cohort 2 time period (2001-01). This effect is most pronounced for the sample of female entrants. Cohort 1 migrants would also have experienced much quicker pathways to a first job had they arrived under the macroeconomic and immigration policy setting of Cohort 2. When analysing data, the policy settings and macroeconomic conditions must be taken into account (Thapa and Gørgens 2006).

Carrington et al (2007) indicate that humanitarian entrants are the worst affected by economic restructuring and are at greatest risk of social exclusion due to unemployment, welfare dependency and poverty. Reasons for poor economic participation of humanitarian entrants include low English proficiency and under-resourcing of education in English and ESL. While the Productivity Commission’s (2006) report on the economic impacts of migration does not provide much detail on the contribution and experiences of humanitarian entrants, it found that English language proficiency stands out as a key factor determining the ease of settlement and labour market success of immigrants, as does length of time in Australia and qualification levels. The report also highlighted the comparatively lower incomes of humanitarian entrants when compared with other migrants and the Australian-born population.

Gaining stable, adequately-remunerated, fulfilling employment is a significant contributor towards successful resettlement for refugees and humanitarian entrants (RCOA 2009). Research clearly supports the anecdotal evidence about the high motivation levels and aspirations of refugees in terms of employment (Carrington et al 2007; Flanagan 2007). Despite refugees’ eagerness to participate in the Australian workforce, low official rates of unemployment, and the range of skills and qualifications refugees possess that match local shortages, they continue to confront significant difficulties in accessing employment opportunities. The limited research that has been undertaken (Richardson et al 2004; Liebig 2006; Carrington et al 2007; Flanagan 2007) supports the anecdotal evidence (RCOA 2008; RCOA 2009) that refugees are overrepresented among the ranks of underemployed, lowly-paid, low-skilled, precariously employed and casualised members of the labour force. While many refugees are well qualified and possess a broad range of technical and professional skills, these do not count for much when they arrive in a new country (Colic-Peisker 2003). Section 4 surveys in more detail the literature relating to these barriers to economic progress as well as successful strategies to overcome them.

Despite a relative lack of empirical data on the economic contribution of refugees, there are reports and stories of successful participation by refugees and asylum seekers. According to Stilwell (2003), the presence of the Afghans was generally advantageous for the local community, with the positive national publicity Young received providing excellent advertising for the town. The economic contribution of the Afghans to regional development was estimated at between \$2.4 million and \$2.7 million over 18 months from mid-2001 to 2003. Their contribution as workers was valued by employers who noted their record of hard work and low absenteeism. No significant social problems arose. More on the impact of refugee settlement in regional and rural Victoria is outlined in Section 2 of this literature review.

While there are costs associated with settlement services, language tuition and income support in the years immediately after arrival in Australia, major studies show that the net economic contribution of humanitarian entrants is positive after about a decade and this economic contribution increases significantly over time (Williams 1995; Access Economics 2008). The profile of the humanitarian intake is also heavily skewed towards the younger age cohorts, with many arriving as children and receiving much of their education in Australia. The young age profile of

humanitarian entrants makes a very positive contribution to a labour market in which new retirees now exceed new labour force entrants. For humanitarian entrants of working age, labour force participation rates are low to begin with but move up steadily over time (Access Economics 2008).

Stevenson (2005) outlines how the long-term benefits of settling refugees outweigh the short-term costs. He warns of short-sighted assessments of the economic contributions of refugees and other migrants. There may be short-term costs as refugees are resettled and adjust to their new surroundings but, once successful resettlement has occurred, refugees are able to quickly make permanent cultural, social and economic contributions and infuse vitality and multiculturalism into the communities into which they are resettled. Although refugees can bring short-term costs, they are able to bring long-term benefits to their new country or region (Zucker 1983, cited in Stevenson 2005).

Tax revenues improve over time in real terms for humanitarian entrants. That reflects productivity growth being compensated by real wage rises. This improvement over time also reflects lower unemployment rates, particularly for humanitarian migrants. For some time it also reflects net labour force entry – more of the new migrant group is joining the labour force than is exiting it (Access Economics 2008). Humanitarian entrants, like other migrants, also create a service need in places they reside, while also providing increased demand through their purchasing power (Access Economics 2008).

### 1.3 Entrepreneurial endeavours and income generation

Migration and the intake of refugees can diversify and enhance the skill level of the population, increase economies of scale and foster innovation and flexibility. Refugees are often entrepreneurial as they face the need to set up and establish themselves in a new environment. They arrive with individual and collective skills, experiences and motivations and can create new businesses and employment opportunities that lead to positive direct and indirect fiscal effects (Stevenson 2005).

A good illustration of the entrepreneurial trait that refugee arrivals often have is evident in the 2000 Business Review Weekly’s annual “Rich 200” list which showed that five of Australia’s eight billionaires were people whose families had originally come to the country as refugees (Stevenson 2005).

Stevens (1998) also found that, although wages or salary were the main source of income of only 32% of all refugees, 21% received their main income from their own business, a proportion which was much higher than for any other migration category. Factors inherent to refugees may account for some of the observed pattern, and the data could be interpreted as an indicator of greater entrepreneurial behaviour among refugees than other groups. Cultural factors and predispositions, as well as niches of demand, can also explain this higher proportion of entrepreneurial activity. On the other hand, exclusionary processes and constraints on employment opportunities in mainstream enterprises in the host society may be other influences.

The entrepreneurial prowess of non-English speaking background (NESB) migrants is also evident in the New Enterprise Initiative Scheme (NEIS). An evaluation of the program found that NESB migrants had business survival rates (i.e. enterprises still running two years after the program) that were significantly higher (65%) than those rates for the native-born and for immigrants from English-speaking countries (55%) (Kelly et al 2002, cited in Liebig 2006).

### 1.4 Remittances and development

There is much anecdotal evidence that refugees who settle in Australia often send a percentage of their wage to family and friends abroad, including those who remain in refugee camps or in other impoverished situations. These remittances are an important method by which refugees and other migrants can have influence on their countries of origin. There is increasing evidence that



remittances are crucial to the survival of communities in many developing countries, including many which have suffered conflict and produced refugees (Van Hear 2003).

Worldwide, remittance flows are estimated to have exceeded US\$318 billion in 2007, of which developing countries received US\$240 billion. Outward remittances from Australia totalled over US\$2.815 billion in 2006, or 0.4% of GDP (Ratha and Xu 2008). The true size – including unrecorded flows through formal and informal channels – is believed to be significantly larger (Ratha and Xu 2008). Even with the global economic downturn, remittance flows to developing countries are expected to be resilient compared to private capital flows and official aid. The efforts of refugee diasporas should be acknowledged as a development resource to these countries (Van Hear 2003).

It is interesting to note that these estimates of remittances to developing countries significantly exceed official development assistance from OECD countries. OECD estimates that the total official development assistance from the 23 members of its Development Assistance Committee (the main OECD countries and the European Union) in 2006 was US\$104.37 billion (OECD 2007). Official development assistance from Australia in 2006 was US\$2.123 billion (OECD 2007).

The use of remittances in developing countries for consumption and investments in housing, small businesses and education can have positive multiplier effects and increase local economic activity, through which the benefits of remittances also accrue to non-migrant households. In the long term, the areas that receive remittances from refugees or migrants may have an increase in general prosperity (De Haas 2005). Remittances can help individuals and families to survive during conflict and to rebuild afterwards. The limited evidence available suggests that these transfers are used for daily subsistence needs, health care, housing and sometimes education. Paying off debt may also be prominent, especially when there have been substantial outlays to send refugee migrants abroad, or when assets have been destroyed, sold off or lost during conflict (Van Hear 2003).

Unfortunately, estimates of the extent to which refugees contribute to remittances are difficult to formulate precisely. The data on formal remittances broadly is irregular, and even more so for countries in conflict and which produce refugees. The existing worldwide data also does not allow the contribution of refugees to be disaggregated from that of other migrants (Van Hear 2003).

A recent but not yet published study in Australia focuses on the social networks of the Horn of Africa migrants in Australia and the impacts of remittances to their country of origin (Zewdu 2008). Zewdu found that, although Ethiopian and Somali refugees had an unemployment rate around 17%, 86% of his sample group still sent money to help family and friends. Over 65% of the group believed that their support facilitated a better life for their family than for those people who do not receive assistance. Zewdu found that past personal experience of refugee camp life, a sense of personal responsibility, altruism and social pressure were the driving forces that urged the group to send remittances.

In addition to their direct macroeconomic contribution, overseas labour markets (for country of origin entrants into Australia) are a politically important safety valve for pressures from rural poverty and unemployment. In Sri Lanka, the domestic economy has been unable to generate sufficient jobs to accommodate the growing labour force. This issue has been a factor associated with violent political unrest (Shaw 2007). Remittances assist the government to address politically sensitive fiscal pressures to reduce welfare expenditure.

## 1.5 Relationship between the humanitarian intake and international aid

Refugee and migrant diasporas can also be a direct source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and be effective liaisons to channel FDI towards the home country (Hugo 2005). Several overseas Indians who had reached upper management positions in Western multinationals, including Hewlett Packard, have helped to convince their companies to set up operations in India (Hugo 2005). The Asian Development Bank (2004) reported that 19 of the top 20 Indian software

businesses were founded or managed by professionals from the Indian diaspora. The software industry has created 400,000 new jobs in India and exported over US\$6 billion worth of goods and services (Asian Bank Development 2004).

In order to match the development concerns with available resources from related diasporas, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has developed country strategies for Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Cape Verde, Madagascar and Mali and has then shared these strategies with the respective governments and international donors (Ionescu 2006). The Ethiopian government has made a commitment to expand private sector activities by engaging the members of the Ethiopian diasporas. Ghana has also initiated a poverty reduction scheme that promotes small to medium enterprises in the agriculture industry. This strategy explicitly recognises diasporas as a source both of mobilising funds and of experience (Ionescu 2006).

Some host countries consult the relevant diasporic populations and organisations concerning the design and implementation of their country of origin development plans. Consultative initiatives exist in the United Kingdom (with Sierra Leoneans, Indian and Bangladeshi groups) and France (with groups from Senegal and Congo), as well as in the USA, the Netherlands and Sweden. The development agencies of Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway, New Zealand and Japan support activities engaging diasporas in specific professional sectors or regions (Ionescu 2006). Australia has a number of these valuable initiatives to support refugees, asylum seekers and displaced people in many countries, including financing development programs with a specific interest in remittance flows to Indonesia and Papua New Guinea (Ionescu 2006).

## 1.6 Forging trade links

Evidence suggests that the intake of immigrants – including refugees – over the last three decades has diversified and extended the skills and networks available throughout Australia’s industrial and business sectors as well as helping to increase trade and investment links to other markets, both regional and global (Withers 1999, cited in Stevenson 2005). Few studies, however, quantify the impact and influence that migrant and refugee diasporas have on development through trade, investments, business exchanges, social networks and human capital transfers (Ionescu 2006). The data is even more limited when looking at forced migration or refugee diasporas.

Within Australia, however, some evidence exists of refugee populations initiating trade links with their home countries. The Vietnam-born community in Australia is estimated at approximately 188,000. The environment in Vietnam since the advent of *doi moi* (renovation) has encouraged many Vietnamese expatriates to revisit their former homeland. A number of Vietnamese-Australians have successfully undertaken, or are seeking to open up, commercial opportunities in Vietnam (DFAT 2008).

Much of the literature in this area concludes that migration may foster or create trade between host and home countries (Bryant et al 2004). Higher global income would trigger a greater demand for traded goods and services. Bryant et al (2004) point out a possible gap in the literature: no studies seem to have focused on the effect of migrants on the exports of services, “even though migration could plausibly lower transaction costs for trade in services in the same way that it lowers costs for trade in goods”.

## 1.7 Areas for future research

Investment in empirical and longitudinal research is necessary to capture the whole picture. Unfortunately, steps towards this more holistic picture have gone backwards. The Commonwealth Government’s LSIA 3 did not survey migrants from the humanitarian stream (even though LSIA 1 and 2 did include this stream). The decision to omit this important data means that the most up-to-date data on humanitarian entrants will not be available for analysis in the coming years. To fill this gap, DIAC should consider not only including humanitarian entrants in the survey but also broadening the topics covered. Useful areas of research could include:

- Pre-migration experience
- The immigration process
- Initial settlement and location
- Sponsorship activity
- Perceptions of Australia
- Use of support services – government and NGO
- Return migration and visits
- Ancestry, religion and ethnicity
- Citizenship
- Views on immigration
- English language proficiency and learning
- Qualifications and skills assessment
- Education and training
- Labour force activity
- Health
- Housing arrangements
- Household budget
- Financial support received and given
- Transferral of assets and remittances
- Pensions and allowances
- Income and finances
- Use of interpreting services
- Use of qualifications
- Community participation
- Family and community responsibilities
- Government payments
- Experience with mainstream and specialised services

Empirical evidence, however, is not the only way of measuring either success (from the individual’s point of view) or contribution (from society’s perspective). Collins (1991) identifies the main approaches to migration research employed through the human capital perspective as being concerned with econometric modelling or cost-benefit analysis, both of which are fraught with complexity and limitations. Future costs and returns are predicted and calculated to identify the “rate of return” of a given migration scenario. As noted by Collins, the clear problem with this approach is that there are many aspects of migration that are impossible to quantify numerically – such as diversity in cultural life. The abundant anecdotal evidence should not be ignored when considering the many contributions of refugees to Australia’s economy.

In terms of refining the way data is collected, the ABS refugee category included all persons who said that they came to Australia as refugees. It is possible that individuals who arrived under other components of the Humanitarian Program may be classified as refugees, or they may appear as sponsored or unsponsored migrants, or in the “other” or “unknown” categories. The employer-sponsored sub-category of sponsored migrants was small. This means that only a small proportion of those arriving within the skilled migration stream had been sponsored by an employer. Most arrived as independent migrants and have been classified as unsponsored migrants by the ABS. Unsponsored migrants would also include the small number who arrive under special eligibility criteria (Stevenson 1998).

In addition to data on the labour-force status of immigrants, the ABS Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Migrants survey obtained information about the migrant’s year of arrival, age, main source of income, English-language fluency and other attributes. These data items can be cross-classified but as the survey is based on a sample only, there are limits to the level of sub-

division. Small cell numbers and cross-classifications which would produce them are unreliable (Stevenson 1998).

Quantitative research is required on the extent to which remittances and other payments affect both the Australian economy, the humanitarian entrants here in Australia and the receiving countries. The role that diasporic refugee populations play in development strategies with home and host nations is an area for further exploration. Consideration, however, must be made for refugee populations or individuals that do not want to play a role in their country of origin.

With little empirical research in Australia on the role that refugees or even migrants have on trade, the New Zealand Treasury report on trade and migrants is a useful template. Its methodology could be replicated in Australia in order to gauge the role that immigration has on trade opportunities. Australian research, however, should have the opportunity to disaggregate data down to humanitarian entrant contributions. Australian-based research could not only review the trends in migration and trade but also use econometric tests to gather information of the effects of refugee and other migration on trade.



## Section 2

# SKILL SHORTAGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR HUMANITARIAN ENTRANTS

### Key findings:

- Although the global and Australian economic conditions are unstable, data points to a continuing skills shortage in some sectors, including agriculture.
- The humanitarian intake has a positive contribution to net labour force entry (the number of new participants less retirees). No other migrant group provides a positive net labour force entry of the same duration or stability as the humanitarian intake, particularly with so many entrants being young.
- Regional and rural Australia has experienced large scale departures in population resulting in skills losses, lack of local entrepreneurship, many business closures and the loss of social capital and services. Some rural communities will cease to exist without a steady population.
- A number of regional and rural resettlement programs for refugees have been piloted in Australia, resulting in positive settlement outcomes for the refugee populations, as well as contributing to filling labour shortages and improving service provision in regional areas.
- Refugees originating from a rural background may benefit from being settled somewhere less crowded than major cities and where their skills can be most utilised. Regional and rural Australia can capitalise on techniques and experiences of refugees from rural areas, with many from dry or long-term drought ridden climates.

### Information gaps identified and future research recommended:

- More empirical data is required concerning the skills, accreditation and former work experience of humanitarian entrants prior to their arrival in Australia in order to better determine how they could be best engaged in addressing skills shortages in the Australian economy.
- Data regarding secondary migration should be collected and distributed to assist in planning and in funding. Currently, funding remains with the service providers located in the refugee's initial area of settlement. Data collection of secondary or subsequent migration within Australia would assist in developing funding models that follow the individual.

## 2.1 Introduction

As the skills shortage in Australia continues, the refugee population in Australia has an opportunity to contribute to filling this gap. With a decline in the Australian-born population in regional and rural Australia, humanitarian entrants not only can boost the population and fill the labour market, but also contribute to the revitalisation of these country towns. This section outlines the literature available on the current skills shortage in Australia and then reviews the reports published about the role that humanitarian entrants can play in regional Australia.

## 2.2 Skills shortages in the Australian economy

Despite the past year's global financial crisis and an economic slowdown, a skills shortage in Australia persists and there remains a gap between the demand for and availability of skilled labour in some sectors (Clarius Skills Index 2008). The slowing economy is not across all sectors and the skills shortages in many occupations may persist (Clarius Skills Index 2008). Government, business and individuals must plan for the economic recovery (Mercer 2008). In its recent Workplace report, Mercer (2008) ran an immigration scenario and projected that the Australian Government's injection of additional skilled migrants would boost gross domestic product (GDP)

and employment growth. By 2012-13, GDP is expected to rise 0.11% (in real terms) as a result of migration. The higher GDP is driven by increased population and productivity (Mercer 2008).

Demographic factors contribute to the continued skills shortages in engineering, where a very high proportion of employed engineers will be approaching retirement age in the next five to 10 years. For example, 80% of the current licensed survey engineers are aged over 50, suggesting the industry can expect a high proportion of engineers to leave the workforce in the next decade (Clarius Skills Index 2008). Agriculture is another sector that suffers ongoing labour shortages. The National Farmers Federation stresses that employment levels in agriculture will need to increase by 36%, or up to 123,000 over the next six years alone, if an employment shortfall is to be avoided (National Farmers' Federation 2008). Further analysis of the role that humanitarian entrants can play in regional and rural Australia is detailed in section 2.5.

Little data is available to indicate the skills, qualifications and experience of humanitarian entrants arriving in Australia. Without this information, it is difficult to identify precisely how humanitarian entrants can fill the need of the various sectors experiencing a skills or labour shortage. Approaches to this issue are discussed later in this section under future directions for research.

### 2.3 The ageing Australian population and immigration

Despite attempts in some popular public discourse to connect increased immigration with unemployment for Australian-born residents, studies have failed to find a link between immigration and unemployment among the existing population (Productivity Commission 2006). The ageing of this population, rather, is likely to place unprecedented pressure on the working population and on the economy. The proportion of Australians aged 65 years and over has increased from 10.8% to 13.3% in the last 10 years (ABS 2008) and will expand further to 23-25% in 2056, and 25-28% in 2101 (ABS 2008).

The humanitarian intake has a positive contribution on net labour force entry, or the number of new participants less retirees. No other migrant group provides a positive net labour force entry of the same duration or stability as the humanitarian intake (Access Economic 2008). The profile of the humanitarian intake is also heavily skewed towards the younger age cohorts, making a significant net contribution to the number of new labour force entrants (Access Economics 2008). Having the youngest age weighting of any migrant population in Australia — in 2004-05 over half of humanitarian entrants were aged 18 or under (Humanitarian Settlement 2006) — the humanitarian intake can provide economic and social benefit by helping to reduce the ageing trend.

### 2.4 International experience of regional dispersal of refugees

Related international research focuses on the integration of both immigrants broadly and refugees more specifically. The policy frameworks of the majority of these host nations are devised around the concept of regional dispersal. The idea of “spreading the burden” has been used to form policies towards asylum seekers and refugees in the United Kingdom, Germany and the Netherlands (Andersson 2003, cited in McDonald et al 2008). Each country directs all newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers away from immigrant-dense metropolitan areas. Moreover, the policies of Scandinavian countries have complex procedures aimed to affect the geography of refugee resettlement (Andersson 2003, cited in McDonald et al 2008). Of the three countries with the largest resettlement programs (United States, Canada and Australia), Canada and Australia also follow policies of regional resettlement.

The table below outlines the international policy frameworks that underpin the regional resettlement programs and/or dispersal policies of the key UNHCR Humanitarian Program Countries, their experiences and the outcomes of these policies (McDonald et al 2008).

COUNTRY	POLICY FRAMEWORK and APPROACHES
USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decision about where to resettle a refugee is made before the refugee arrives. Contracted voluntary resettlement agencies receive all accepted cases. Some of these resettlement agencies follow a policy of clustering refugees in geographic locations which have pre-existing ethnic communities</li> <li>“Cluster Model”: employment oriented approach to resettlement, based on the view that employment opportunities are maximised by increasing the sizes of ethnic communities</li> </ul>
Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy of geographical dispersal of refugees</li> <li>Minimum numbers of refugees from each visa post are sent to designated cities in each province. Provincial views influence the distribution of refugees and financial resources are transferred to each province based on targets</li> <li>Large numbers of secondary migrants (fuelled by the need to maximise their opportunities for social support and self-sufficiency)</li> </ul>
United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy of compulsory dispersion for refugees and asylum seekers not self-sufficient</li> <li>Groups are dispersed throughout regional areas, pushed by the need for accommodation and aims to decentralise</li> <li>Results in refugees unable to congregate in clustered ethnic communities</li> <li>Local organisations and authorities come together into consortia which are expected to provide a full range of services</li> <li>Consortia also expected provide for the long-term integration of refugees</li> </ul>
Sweden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Soft dispersal policy, with refugees having the option of organising their own settlement destination</li> <li>High levels of secondary migration (refugees tended to leave small municipalities in favour of large municipalities)</li> </ul>
Denmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New spatial dispersal policy, aimed at promoting better integration of refugees by means of mandatory and increased spatial dispersal</li> <li>Successful in the short term but less so in the medium term (in small municipalities, secondary migration was common)</li> </ul>
The Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dispersal policy is housing-driven and based on the fear of ethnic concentrations in particular cities (fuelled by the notion of “burden sharing”)</li> <li>High degree of goal attainment for the compulsory dispersal (Government goal) but outcomes of effective dispersal are not favourable for refugees (social exclusion)</li> </ul>

## 2.5 The role refugees can play in regional and rural Australia

There is fairly extensive Australian-based research on the experience of settlement in regional and rural areas of Australia. Several pilot programs and subsequent evaluations have been conducted recently in Australia. The release of the 2003 Australian Government’s Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants (DIMIA 2003) was the driver of initiatives introduced in January 2004 aimed at addressing settlement of humanitarian entrants in regional and rural Australia (McDonald et al 2008). In its 2004-05 Budget, the Australian Government committed \$12.4 million to further increase humanitarian resettlement in rural and regional areas (DIMIA 2005). The aim was to double the number of refugees settling in regional areas by 2005-06 (Taylor and Stanovic 2005).

Regional Australia has experienced out-migration, particularly of young people. This large scale departure has led to a skills loss, a lack of local entrepreneurship, many business closures and the loss of social capital (Stevenson 2005). This loss in population has also led to the withdrawal of services (Stilwell 2003). Without a steady or even increasing population, rural areas have lost everything from banks to schools (Taylor and Stanovic 2005).

The decline in regional services and employment opportunities, economic restructuring and the globalisation of the world economy has withdrawn enterprise locations away from rural areas. Greater levels of mobility have allowed workers greater locational flexibility and greater pervasiveness of urban values (Stevenson 2005). These factors have all conspired to create a situation in which inland Australia now has only a limited number of urban centres that are self-sustaining (McKenzie 1994, cited in Stevenson 2005). Regional Australia has been increasingly

struggling as the youth are attracted to the more-globally integrated urban areas and businesses move away due to a lack of demand and insufficient workforce.

If refugees originally came from a rural area and/or have skills that are suited to rural areas, they may benefit from being settled somewhere less crowded than major cities and where their skills can be put to good use (Piper et al 2008). Regional and rural Australia can capitalise on techniques and experiences of refugees from rural areas, with many from dry or long-term drought ridden climates.

Stevenson (2005) notes that refugees are crucial to filling regional labour shortages and that research has shown that refugees are amongst the most hard-working and economically productive sections of the community. They will often do work that other Australians are not prepared to do. The work includes jobs in meat processing plants and jobs in horticulture (e.g. fruit-picking).

The agriculture sector has benefited from refugee settlement in regional areas. Anecdotal evidence put to the Parliament of Victoria Economic Development Committee (2004) strongly suggested high productivity levels were a common feature of ethnically based agricultural activity. In Victoria, federal Nationals MP John Forrest pushed for support of the 2000 refugees and asylum seekers living and working in his north-western electorate of Mallee, citing that their role in the agriculture sector was sustaining the local economy (Barnes 2005).

A number of studies have evaluated regional and rural resettlement programs in Australia (Mares 2004; Nsubuga-Kyobe 2004; Taylor and Stanovic 2005; Taylor 2005; Stevenson 2005; Broadbent et al 2007; Piper et al 2007 and 2008; McDonald et al 2008). The overall key indicators of a successful or failed settlement experience is dependent upon participation in the labour force, competence in English and the securing of housing that is affordable and allows access to community based resources. A recognition of qualifications, physical and psychological wellbeing and social connectedness are also measures of successful settlement and all these factors need to be considered by host communities involved in relocation programs (Broadbent et al 2007).

## 2.6 The design of regional refugee resettlement programs

The relocation of the refugee community does not negate the need for well planned and implemented resettlement services. Refugee communities have a higher risk of mental health problems and higher rates of unemployment. As such, the importance of these relocation programs is commensurate with the opportunity and risk they present. Both the acknowledgement of the potential benefits of relocation programs and the recognition of the significant consequences of failure must be considered in policy-making (Broadbent et al 2007).

Much of the research concluded that components of resettlement programs need to be included in the design and planning for any new refugee relocation projects and need to underpin policy development at both State/Territory and Federal government levels (Broadbent et al 2007; McDonald et al 2008). The components that are relevant to all communities planning such projects are (Broadbent et al 2007; McDonald et al 2008):

1. Relocation projects that are established in regional communities are about everyone's sustainability, employers, employees, service and education providers and the community itself;
2. Establishing a successful refugee relocation project is a partnership between host communities, the refugee community and their advocates;
3. A community development framework of practice that builds social capital must drive a refugee relocation project;
4. Planning for the demand for housing and establishing a diversity of housing options is essential for refugee relocation;
5. Community planning must happen previous to, at the beginning of and concurrent to the project implementation;

6. Financial support for relocation of the refugee community is an essential component for success;
7. A process that will engage a refugee community to relocate will assist in the providing a stable anchor for the refugee community to build both resettlement and relocation in the long term;
8. Women and children are an essential component of establishing a strong anchor community and network and connect the relocated community to the host community.

Refugee relocation projects are long-term community programs with several components necessary to ensure success, and consequently, they require resources and planning for the long term. The following table outlines the various evaluations and case studies of pilot projects around Australia (Stilwell 2003; Taylor and Stanovic 2005; Broadbent et al 2007; Piper et al 2007 and 2008; McDonald et al 2008).

Location <sup>1</sup>	Group	Attributes	Lessons Learnt
Shepparton, Vic	Iraqi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial refugee resettlement was informal due to perceptions of employment possibilities</li> <li>Initial settlement difficult because services did not have experience catering for refugee needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combination of Iraqi and Shepparton local effort addressed issues and has led to successful resettlement and long-term residence</li> <li>The Shepparton experience is often cited by both government and service providers as an example of successful regional settlement</li> </ul>
Shepparton, Vic	Congolese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targeted relocation program</li> <li>Openness and willingness of local community</li> <li>Effective partnership between tiers of government</li> <li>Support from Christian community (and participation from Congolese in faith-based activities)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed information provided to host community well in advance of refugee arrival</li> <li>Clearly defined roles, responsibilities and referral pathways</li> <li>Strategies that allowed refugees to make choices and be supported towards independence</li> </ul>
Mount Gambier, SA	Burmese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targeted relocation program</li> <li>Abundant skilled and unskilled employment opportunities</li> <li>Willing and open local community</li> <li>Strategic plan for resettlement</li> <li>Established services, including multicultural</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not a single person expressed any doubt about the suitability of Mount Gambier for future humanitarian settlement</li> <li>The town offered: affordable accommodation; a full range of core services; excellent coordination between service providers; plentiful water; a range of job opportunities; and a welcoming community</li> <li>Service providers in the area learnt a lot about working with refugees and are keen to put their knowledge to further use</li> </ul>
Swan Hill, Vic	Horn of Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiated by Horn of Africa community in partnership with training providers</li> <li>Employment-driven but approached from holistic settlement objectives</li> <li>Pre-location tours of Swan Hill and training for jobs</li> <li>Community engagement and positive promotion of refugee addition to area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sufficient long-term funding necessary for success (only short-term funding available in Swan Hill program)</li> <li>Stable anchor community necessary for resettlement and long-term relocation</li> <li>Planning for housing and diversity of housing</li> <li>Women require support services in order to willingly relocate to areas where husbands have employment</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> This table reviews the case studies and is not inclusive of all locations where humanitarian entrants reside.

Location <sup>1</sup>	Group	Attributes	Lessons Learnt
Gippsland, Vic	Bosnians, Nepalese, Sudanese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ad hoc approach to resettlement</li> <li>• Recent recruitment of humanitarian entrants to area because of identified skills shortage</li> <li>• Wider geographic area with few public transport options</li> <li>• Community groups from similar cultural backgrounds not previously established or existing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local government ownership, support and active participation in the planning and implementation of regional settlement</li> <li>• Well-planned, well-integrated, long-term funding commitments and service provision</li> <li>• Access to torture and trauma support services</li> <li>• Training to service providers (police, youth workers, etc) about responding effectively and sensitively to the needs of refugees, particularly women</li> </ul>
Colac, Vic	Sudanese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employer-initiated program to address skills shortage and population decline</li> <li>• Employment opportunities</li> <li>• Ease of transport</li> <li>• Lower cost of living</li> <li>• Assistance from local community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment opportunities useful in the short-term but further skills training and advancement limited</li> <li>• Settlement services lacking, particularly for new arrivals (local community assisted but coordinated effort and planning required)</li> <li>• Women's needs have to be considered when designing program based on men's employment</li> </ul>
Young, NSW	Afghan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment driven (meat-processing)</li> <li>• Long-term settlement not an option when evaluated because Afghans were on Temporary Protection Visas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workplace was major source of support, including providing loans for rental bonds</li> <li>• Social cohesion between locals and Afghans</li> <li>• Coordination and cooperation among local community groups, the council, local business people and TAFE teachers</li> </ul>
Warrnambool, Vic	Sudanese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiated by local council due to population decline and loss of services</li> <li>• Employment and education opportunities</li> <li>• Welcoming local communities</li> <li>• Accessible housing, transport, etc</li> <li>• Opportunity for new arrivals to connect with their own community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relocating refugees already resident in Australia, rather than resettling refugees directly from overseas is an important first step (allows refugees relatively well progressed in their settlement to establish an "anchor community" to support subsequent new settlers)</li> <li>• Beneficial to prepare the local community gauging the community's needs – local government should initiate community consultation and listen and respond to public opinion</li> <li>• Cross-cultural training is required for essential service providers</li> <li>• Need to establish means of communicating with refugees who have English as a second language</li> <li>• Issues such as respect, privacy, communication and culture shock must be considered</li> <li>• Strategic plan should be put in place, along with the human resources, funding and infrastructure for implementation</li> </ul>

It has been pointed out that much of the research material on settlement in regional Australia has focused on practical concerns about the capacity of services to support refugee settlement and that, therefore, there is a lack of research with positive findings in this area. However, it has also been noted that the research runs counter to much anecdotal information which suggests that there are many positive aspects to the experience of settling in regional Australia (Campbell 2007, cited in Flanagan 2007).

## 2.7 Segmentation of the labour market

While humanitarian entrants may have capacity to fill the labour market, care must be given on the reliance of resettlement in regional and rural areas. Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2006) warn of an emerging segmented, second tier labour force. The data show massive loss of occupational status among migrants and confirm the existence of a segmented labour market, a place where racially and culturally visible migrants are allocated the bottom jobs regardless of their human capital (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2006).

In order to ensure that refugees are not relegated to long-term low-paying employment with little to no chance of advancement, regional and rural resettlement strategies must include programs that open opportunities for skills advancement and progression. Consistent with the understanding of refugee resettlement as a humanitarian venture, the rights of refugees to make informed choices about their place of settlement and to retain their right to freedom of movement should be clearly stated in any future policy development (McDonald et al 2008). This strategy will provide mutual benefit of relocation for both host communities and refugee groups.

## 2.8 Areas for future research

Without data regarding the skills, accreditation and former work experience of humanitarian entrants prior to their arrival in Australia, it is difficult to identify precisely how refugees could be best engaged in addressing the skills shortage. The information that DIAC collects on humanitarian entrants' education, skills, qualifications and work experience prior to arrival in Australia could provide a useful source of information in understanding this. The release of this information (to settlement providers in the first instance and other agencies as necessary) would aid in planning and location strategies. This data would not only provide steps towards solutions to the barriers refugees face in seeking employment but also assist in filling the gap in data about the skill sets of refugees prior to their arrival in Australia. This data would assist in settlement planning, particularly as the department develops its multi-year approach.

A second step to increasing the scope of skilled work available to humanitarian entrants is rigorous evaluation then expansion and streamlining of processes towards the recognition of overseas qualifications — both at a governmental level and at the local, employer level. Akin to this recognition is an increase in opportunities for further training and education to achieve Australian accreditation, particularly for high-demand occupations like medical professionals. See Section 4 of this report for further information on accreditation.

With several recent and comprehensive reviews of programs aimed at settling humanitarian entrants in regional and rural Australia to assist in both positive settlement outcomes and positive economic outcomes for the local area, the gap is not in the available research but in the application and implementation of the recommendations in local, state and federal government policy. Data regarding secondary migration should be collected and distributed to assist in planning and in funding. Currently, funding remains with the service providers located in the refugee's initial area of settlement. Data collection of secondary or subsequent migration within Australia would assist in developing funding models that follow the individual.

Future work should also include planning, implementation and evaluation of programs in regional and rural Australia to address concerns of systemic low-paying employment for refugees.

## Section 3

# EDUCATIONAL AND LABOUR FORCE OUTCOMES OF THE SECOND GENERATION

### **Key findings:**

- While the information available about the educational and labour force outcomes of the children of refugees is limited, available sources point to above average rates of success in education and employment, consistent with the successes achieved by children of non-humanitarian migrants from similar non-English speaking countries.
- An analysis of information on the children of migrants from Poland and Hungary (two major source countries for post-war refugees) shows that they are significantly more likely than third generation Australians to continue their education, to achieve a university degree or diploma, to work in a professional or managerial position and to have purchased or be purchasing their own home.
- Information on second generation Australians of Vietnamese background under 20 years of age shows much higher than average rates of involvement in education, consistent with the commitment to education demonstrated by the first generation from Vietnam. This contributes to higher social mobility for people of Vietnamese background (both first and second generation) who live in lower income suburbs.
- Children of migrants with lower English proficiency are much more likely to remain in education longer, complete a university degree and work in a managerial or professional role than children of parents with higher English proficiency. One researcher suggests second generation children have a cognitive advantage in literacy skills owing to their proficiency in languages additional to English, while others describe levels of motivation among migrant parents as part of an “ethnic success ethic” or “ethnic advantage”.

### **Information gaps identified and future research recommended:**

- The absence of any comprehensive study of the educational, employment and social outcomes of the children of refugees leaves a major gap in understanding the long-term benefits of Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program. Research is required to understand the contribution of the second generation to Australian society and also how differences in the education, employment and settlement experiences of parents impact on outcomes for the children of refugees.
- It is recommended that humanitarian entrants once again be included in the sample of the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia, and be studied as a separate category within the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia surveys.
- Specific research should also be conducted into the experiences and outcomes of children of refugees and humanitarian migrants, to determine the role of the refugee experience, settlement support, parental motivation and educational opportunities in their educational and social development – comparing their experiences with those of children of non-humanitarian migrants.

### **3.1 Limited availability of source material**

No research has been conducted specifically on the labour force outcomes of the Australian-born children and grandchildren of refugee and humanitarian entrants. There is, however, some research on outcomes for the children of migrants – second generation Australians. The available research shows that second generation Australians are generally higher achievers in education and the labour market than Australians of third or later generations. Thomas Liebig sees a link between the second generation's success and the paucity of research on how they are faring, suggesting that little research has been conducted because the integration of second generation Australians into the labour market is not viewed as a major problem (2006: 46).



In considering the limited material on second generation Australians, priority was afforded to information relating to communities which have been built largely through humanitarian migration. In particular, attention was paid to the children of migrants from the former Soviet Bloc countries of Eastern Europe (excluding the former Yugoslavia) and countries in South-East Asia (particularly Vietnam). While it is recognised that significant numbers of refugees and humanitarian migrants were received from the former Yugoslavia and countries in Latin America and the Middle East, they were not included in this analysis because non-humanitarian migration to Australia from those countries appears to have significantly exceeded humanitarian migration (although definitive statistics on this are not available). Humanitarian migration from Africa has generally been too recent to draw any conclusions about the educational or labour outcomes of their Australian-born children.

It is only in relatively recent years that it has been possible to investigate levels of achievement of Australian-born children of refugees. The majority of children of post-war humanitarian entrants from Central and Eastern Europe would have only reached adulthood in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, while children of those humanitarian entrants from Southeast Asia and Eastern Europe who arrived after 1975 are now following in growing numbers (Khoo et al 2002: 2).

### 3.2 Comparing second and third generation Australians

In 2006, there were 3.6 million people in Australia who had at least one parent born overseas. This means that 26% of the Australian-born population can be identified as second generation Australians. The most comprehensive exploration of the labour force and educational outcomes of this group can be found in *Second Generation Australians*, a report written in 2002 for the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs using data from the 1996 census. The report also follows specific age cohorts from 1986 to 1996, analysing changes in labour market, educational and housing outcomes as they age. The authors (Khoo et al 2002) conclude that second generation Australians whose parents are from non-English speaking countries are more likely to stay at school longer and seek university and TAFE qualifications than Australians of English speaking background. While some second generation groups experience higher unemployment rates than the Australian average, others do not and, overall, the difference between the unemployment rates of second and third generation groups is relatively small. Second generation youth (15 to 24 years) from non-English speaking origins living in low income suburbs in Sydney and Melbourne are more likely to be involved in education and are likely to enjoy better employment prospects than their counterparts of UK origins or third generation Australians, demonstrating a greater capacity to overcome class disadvantage. Of Australian-born people aged 25 to 44 years, second generation Australians of non-English speaking origins are more likely to have university qualifications, to be working in managerial and professional occupations and to own or be purchasing their own home than other Australian-born people.

### 3.3 How the children of refugees are faring

Of the main refugee source countries of Eastern Europe and South-East Asia nominated above, the study by Khoo et al (2002) casts light on the educational and employment outcomes of children whose parents were born in Poland, Hungary and Vietnam. However, as the study was based on the 1996 census, the statistics on Australian-born children of Vietnamese migrants were limited to those under 25 years, with the vast majority then being under the age of 18.

The findings point to a very high commitment to education among the families of the main refugee source countries. Second generation Australians of Vietnamese, Polish and Hungarian background are more likely to remain in education longer than third generation Australians and second generation Australians of English speaking background.

**Table 3.1: Enrolment in education for Australian-born people aged 15-21 years, by parents' birthplace, 1996**

	15-17 years		18-19 years		20-21 years	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Vietnam	95.8%	97.3%	82.4%	86.5%	77.8%	64.3%
Poland	89.3%	91.8%	64.7%	67.7%	52.8%	43.2%
Hungary	87.1%	93.6%	65.6%	55.6%	41.2%	45.4%
UK	81.6%	85.7%	44.0%	48.3%	30.9%	33.7%
Australia	76.9%	81.0%	40.4%	45.2%	28.7%	31.4%

The figures for young people of these backgrounds are similar to those of other non-English speaking origins, suggesting that the outcomes for second generation Australians have little to do with whether their parents arrived in Australia as humanitarian or non-humanitarian migrants. The high priority given to education among Australian-born people of Vietnamese background is consistent with the attitude of Vietnamese-born Australians. Khoo et al point out that Vietnamese-born people aged 20-21 in 1996 were much more likely to be at university (41.0% for males, 39.0% for females) than third generation Australians (16.4% for males, 22.2% for females).

This commitment to education is consistent with another interesting finding (Khoo et al 2002: 55) – that the second generation groups whose parents have the lowest English proficiency are the most likely to be enrolled in education and to have degree or diploma qualifications. The study uses the Department of Immigration's definition of migrant groups by English proficiency, dividing migrant groups into four English proficiency categories in line with the level of English proficiency recorded in the census. English Proficiency Group 4 (EP4) has the lowest proficiency and, in 1996, was largely made up of migrants from South-East and East Asia, with Vietnamese being a predominant group. Noting the education success of children of EP4 migrants, Khoo et al (2002) observe that "this suggests that second generation youth coming from immigrant communities that may not have very good English skills have nonetheless been fairly successful in remaining with the Australian education system through secondary school and tertiary study" (2002: 55). This education success for the EP4 second generation is translated into a higher rate of involvement in managerial and professional work (22.0%, compared to 13.3% for third or later generation Australians).

In comparing rates of university qualifications and involvement in professional and managerial employment, the study also shows positive outcomes for second generation Australians of Polish and Hungarian background aged between 25 and 44.

**Table 3.2: University qualifications and managerial employment, 1996**

	Polish 2nd generation	Hungarian 2 <sup>nd</sup> generation	3rd generation Australians
Diploma or degree, males, 25-34 years	31.0%	26.9%	18.7%
Diploma or degree, females, 25-34 years	37.6%	31.2%	24.9%
Diploma or degree, males, 35-44 years	31.9%	33.6%	22.5%
Diploma or degree, females, 35-44 years	29.6%	35.1%	26.5%
Managerial/professional jobs, males, 20-24 years	18.1%	20.1%	13.3%
Managerial/professional jobs, females, 20-24 years	22.4%	17.2%	17.7%
Managerial/professional jobs, males, 25-34 years	33.1%	29.3%	23.9%
Managerial/professional jobs, females, 25-34 years	35.1%	31.7%	28.9%
Managerial/professional jobs, males, 35-44 years	36.7%	39.5%	32.5%
Managerial/professional jobs, females, 35-44 years	35.1%	31.7%	28.9%

The study by Khoo et al (2002) also shows that Australian-born children of Polish and Hungarian migrants have income rates comparable with the rest of the population and, like many Australians of migrant background, are significantly more likely to own or be purchasing their home (particularly those aged between 25 and 34 years).

**Table 3.3: Home ownership, by age group, 1996**

	Polish 2nd generation	Hungarian 2 <sup>nd</sup> generation	3rd generation Australians
Full home ownership, 25-34 years	40.8%	27.1%	18.5%
Own or purchasing home, 25-34 years	77.4%	66.1%	57.8%
Full home ownership, 35-44 years	47.7%	34.3%	30.1%
Own or purchasing home, 35-44 years	83.7%	75.9%	74.4%

### 3.4 International comparisons

It is worth considering the labour force outcomes of second generation Australians in an international context. Australia ranks second highest behind Luxembourg amongst OECD countries as having the largest number of the second generation as a proportion of the total population (Liebig 2007: 111). In comparison with many European countries, the second generation of both migrants and humanitarian entrants have largely positive labour force outcomes and high levels of educational attainment. Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) scores amongst OECD countries demonstrate the second generation in Australia outperforms their counterparts in the OECD pool, except Canada and the United States whose second generation's results were as good if not better than those of children of the native-born (Liebig 2007: 112). An OECD report suggests European problems can be partly attributed to negative public discourse surrounding the immigration, integration and settlement of migrants and humanitarian entrants. This can induce a sense of insecurity of status and belonging in entrants, which can discourage entrants from making long-term investments in host-country human capital such as language, education and training qualifications (Liebig 2007: 113).

### 3.5 The role of motivation and ambition

In considering the success of the second generation, researchers have explored the impact of the motivation and ambition of migrant parents (Windle 2005: 5). Comparisons of the scholastic progress of the children of Australian-born and children of migrants have noted higher average rates of educational success among children of migrants. One study, for instance, showed that 84% of students of non-English speaking background completed the Victorian Certificate of Education, higher than the Victorian average of 79%, in spite of linguistic and (in some cases) social disadvantage. This positive impact of higher aspirations and family support has been termed the “ethnic success ethic” or “ethnic advantage”.

Of the second generation aged 10 to 14 years, almost all were proficient in English regardless of the proficiency of their parents (Khoo et al 2002: 27). Moreover, according to the English Language and Literacy Assessment (ELLA), teenage children who speak a language other than English at home perform better than their third plus generation Australian classmates. It has been argued by Dr Maureen Walsh at the Australian Catholic University that these second generation children actually have a cognitive advantage in literacy skills owing to their proficiency in languages additional to English (Linda Doherty in Economic Development Committee 2004: 30). Data from OECD-PISA scores shows more broadly that there are no significant differences between second and third plus generations in mathematics and reading and literacy scores (Liebig 2007: 112).

It appears that the experience of language barriers have the effect of reinforcing parental commitment to investing in their Australian-born children's education. This is supported by the finding that children of migrants and humanitarian entrants from non-English speaking

backgrounds spend 3.5 months longer in school than children with an English speaking background (Liebig 2007: 113).

Khoo et al (2002: 145) support the view that parental motivation is a significant factor in education success, noting that “the long-term prospects of ethnic communities created by contemporary immigration hinge on the second generation’s social adaptation and educational success. Indeed, achievement of this end, the future benefit of their children, is often found to be a motivating force of the migration of the first generation.” The available evidence suggests that this parental motivation is at least as strong among humanitarian migrants to Australia as it is among non-humanitarian migrants of non-English speaking background.

### 3.6 Areas for future research

Further investigation of the educational, employment and social outcomes of children of refugees must take place, both to test the veracity of the apparently positive information available and to understand reasons for the inevitable differences which do occur for people in the same cultural communities. The absence of any specific Australian research on the children of refugees undermines attempts to understand the long-term benefits of Australia’s Refugee and Humanitarian Program.

Second Generation Australians provides a useful model for future research on the labour force outcomes of the second and third generations. A cohort analysis enables the isolation of important contextual factors such as age and parents’ birthplace. These factors are relevant in considering the different waves of humanitarian intake to Australia and the labour force conditions in which they worked at any given time. Future research must be undertaken to capture and track the increasing numbers of second generation Australians entering and advancing through the labour market as they age.

An additional imperative is to compare sub-groups according to age and ethnic background within the humanitarian intake in order to account for differences in levels of labour market success and discern any factors which produce these differences. These factors may include geographic and socio-economic distribution of communities, the extent of parental commitment and investment in human capital such as language and education, or a sense of personal belonging and enfranchisement within Australian society. Therefore, research relating to the second generation should not preclude broader issues of integration, even though their effects would have been more pronounced in the first generation.

For these reasons, it is recommended that humanitarian entrants once again be included in the sample of the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia, and studied as a separate category within the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia surveys. These comprehensive nationwide surveys are key instruments for obtaining and analysing comparative data on changes in the labour force outcomes of humanitarian entrants, migrants and the general population. Such data collection and research is essential in bringing to the fore of public discourse the considerable economic contributions of humanitarian entrants to Australian society. Furthermore, it is a vital component in providing the basis for future policy formulation relating to the settlement needs and employment outcomes of more recent humanitarian arrivals and their Australian-born children.

Forrest and Johnson also propose a useful framework for measuring labour market success of second generation humanitarian entrants, which uses five principal indicators: labour force participation rates, unemployment rates, earnings or income, occupational status and quality of work life (2000: 270). This model is recommended for future research.

It is important to examine humanitarian entrants and their children as a group distinct from migrants to Australia, to understand better the differences in their settlement needs and outcomes. However, the difficulties in establishing this distinction based on available data of humanitarian and migrant intake throughout Australia’s history has been evidenced by the lack of clarity about the relevance of the refugee experience in communities where people have migrated in significant

numbers through both the humanitarian and general migration streams (e.g. the former Yugoslavia, Lebanon, Chile). This is clearly an area which demands further research so that more accurate comparisons can be made for the purpose of recognising and analysing labour force outcomes of the second generation of both humanitarian entrants and migrants.

As has been noted in studies of the second generation in the United States, the long-term integration of ethnic minority communities depends upon the adaptation of the second generation in education, training and the labour force (Khoo et al 2002: 1). Studies of the educational and occupational mobility among second generation groups would be an essential resource in determining the impact of their parents' background on their own academic and professional success. Such studies would indicate any need for policy targeting the ways in which children of humanitarian entrants may experience an intergenerational transmission of disadvantage.

## Section 4

# OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO ECONOMIC PROGRESS

### Key findings:

- Refugees are strongly motivated to secure employment as quickly as possible after arriving in Australia and bring high levels of overseas qualifications, skills and work experience that are currently under-utilised (e.g. as many of 49.3% of refugee participants in one West Australian study were employed in occupations below their skill level).
- There are significant and particular barriers faced by refugees (over and above those experienced by other migrants) in making the successful transition into employment, requiring targeted policy and program responses.
- Research suggests that targeted employment support programs have better outcomes for refugees and are more cost-effective than mainstream employment support services (e.g. at 13 weeks, participants in the Given the Chance refugee employment program had 58% successful outcomes compared to 42% successful outcomes generated through Job Network intensive assistance. Over the same period, the average cost per program participant of Given the Chance was \$1,925 compared to \$2,900 for Job Network intensive assistance).
- Structural and interpersonal discrimination has a significant impact on labour market outcomes for refugees (e.g. one study found “visible difference” was a major factor in the differential labour market outcomes of three groups of refugees with similar human capital [English proficiency and qualifications] and length of residence). A range of strategies are needed to tackle discrimination in employment.
- Vocational education and training programs linked with English language learning, and initiatives that provide opportunities for refugees to gain work experience, have both proven to facilitate pathways into employment (e.g. of the 140 refugees who have been trained as Community Guides through Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) in Victoria, 110 have gone on to secure ongoing employment either with AMES or other organisations).
- Other factors that contribute to labour market success include: professional mentoring programs; overseas skills and qualifications recognition; and programs that facilitate access to drivers’ licences.

### Information gaps identified and future research recommended:

- There is a need for longitudinal data collection and research into employment outcomes for refugees, including an exploration of factors contributing to differential labour market outcomes for those coming under the different streams of the humanitarian program.
- Monitoring the implementation of the Job Services Australia (JSA) model will be vital for evaluating its effectiveness in supporting refugee and humanitarian jobseekers into work and identifying elements of good practice.
- Empirical research is required to explore the impact of transport disadvantage on employment outcomes, the barriers experienced by refugees in obtaining drivers’ licences, and strategies to overcome this.
- While there is sound evidence on the significant impact of discrimination on labour market outcomes for refugees, there is a gap in research exploring and evaluating effective strategies for combating different types of discrimination.

## 4.1 Introduction

Literature exploring the employment experiences of humanitarian arrivals settling in Australia consistently emphasise the strong motivation and desire of newly arrived refugees to find work and become economically self-sufficient as quickly as possible (Flanagan 2007; Kyle et al 2004; Taylor and Stanovic 2005; AMES 2008). Finding meaningful and secure employment has been linked to

better settlement outcomes (Liebig 2006; Carrington et al 2007), and literature suggests that refugees are socialised into viewing work as a personal obligation to family and community, derive personal satisfaction from engaging in productive work; and believe that work is a way in which they can express their gratitude, “repay” and contribute positively to the new country in which they have been resettled (RCOA 2008).

In terms of existing literature, an extensive amount has been written pertaining to the barriers faced by refugees in securing meaningful employment, and far less explores the factors that contribute to labour market success. Section 4.2 presents an overview of the compendious literature focused on employment barriers. Section 4.3 outlines evidence focused on strategies to overcome these barriers, as well as other factors that contribute positively to labour market outcomes for humanitarian entrants. Finally, section 4.4 suggests gaps in information and areas for future research that will enhance understanding of the experiences of refugees in the Australian labour market and factors that contribute to successful outcomes.

## **4.2 Barriers to successful economic progress**

The barriers to successful economic progress for refugees and humanitarian entrants have been documented by the Refugee Council of Australia (2008; 2009) and through a wide array of literature (AMES 2008; Berman et al 2008; Carrington et al 2007; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007; Dunlop 2005; ECCV 2009; Flanagan 2007; Ho and Alcorso 2004; JSCM 2006; Junankar and Mahuteau 2004; Kamp 2008; Khoo 2007; Kyle et al 2004; Liebig 2006; Productivity Commission 2006; Richardson et al 2004; Taylor and Stanovic 2005; Stevens 1998).

While the fundamental issues may not have changed in recent years, refugees are arguably finding different, additional structural barriers to employment associated with changes to employment and settlement service provision, and compounded by other settlement challenges such as finding affordable housing near work, obtaining a drivers’ licence, and discrimination (Kyle et al 2004:ii; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007:77; RCOA 2008; RCOA 2009). Flanagan (2007) and the Productivity Commission (2006) both report that employment outcomes for refugees in the first phases of settlement have deteriorated, with proportionally fewer new arrivals in employment after six and 18 months than was found in the early 1990s (National Institute of Labour Studies data also quoted in DIMIA 2003:67). These differences in labour market outcomes have been largely attributed to the fact that more recent arrivals have experienced greater disruption and longer periods of instability than previous arrivals (DIMIA 2003). However, a recent review of refugees’ experience of the labour market suggests that a lack of appropriate post-arrival support could also be a contributing factor (Kyle et al 2004; Liebig 2006).

The following provides an overview of findings regarding some of the historically-consistent and newer factors impinging on refugees’ successful economic progress and participation in the Australian labour market.

### **4.2.1 The Australian labour market and disadvantage**

Like all Australians attempting to secure stable, decently-remunerated employment, refugees and humanitarian migrants are confronting a domestic employment landscape that is markedly different from that of previous generations. These changes include an increase in precariousness of employment attributed, among other things, to: growing casualisation, the demise of collective bargaining, reduced award conditions, and less protection against unfair dismissal, as well as the global financial crisis and reductions in blue collar manufacturing jobs (Dunlop 2005; Kamp 2008:29; Carrington et al 2007:34; Flanagan 2007). As Richardson et al (2004:57) report, “less skilled migrants are a particularly good barometer of improved economic conditions because they tend to have the most tenuous connections to the labour market; they are often the first to be laid off in times of recession, and they are most prone to being ‘churned’ through short-term, low-paid jobs (which discourages their continued participation).”

Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2007:77) further argue that the humanitarian intake in Australia ensures that “profit-seeking capital has access to a supply of labour to cover undesirable jobs that the local population shuns”. Their findings from a comparative study of employment outcomes for three refugee groups found that lower levels of employment and employment in jobs below their qualifications indicate that refugees are “disadvantaged generally”, and within that disadvantage there are degrees of disadvantage resulting from “visible difference” (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007:77).

#### **4.2.2 Downward mobility and pressure to accept insecure employment**

The literature indicates that, contrary to popular belief, refugees are not concentrated in poor jobs because they are all unskilled, cannot communicate well in English, and/or do not have work experience readily transferable to the Australian context (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007). Results from the 2006 Australian Census show, for example, that 38.8% of Sudanese, 36.9% of Iraqis and 33.7% of Afghans held post-high-school-level qualifications, as compared with 52.5% of the general Australian population (DIAC 2007b).

There are a number of recent studies which suggest skilled refugees suffer substantial occupational downward mobility and loss of occupational status, even many years after arriving in Australia (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007:68-9; Richardson et al 2004; Flanagan 2007; Junankar and Mahuteau 2005). Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2007) report that as many as 49.3% of refugees in their sample were employed in occupations below their skill level.

The reasons given in the literature for why refugees are concentrated in low-paid work with poor conditions well below their capabilities include:

- The perception among the general Australian community, some employers and Job Network providers that refugees should be available for unattractive jobs where labour shortages are acute (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007; Castles et al 1992:89). For example, JSCM (2006:262) provided a case study of a 34-year-old skilled refugee from Sierra Leone who has his post-graduate qualifications in engineering assessed and recognised, but is told by job network agencies that “he consider working in factories or as a manual labourer” as he is “a strong and healthy young man, able to lift heavy boxes”.
- Refugees cannot afford to wait until the best job for them becomes available due to economic necessity (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007:69; Dunlop 2005:10). Not only is there pressure to support their family in Australia and to send remittances to relatives who remain in unsafe situations in home countries, there is also enormous pressures placed on refugees by Centrelink and Job Network providers to find work as quickly as possible once registered (Kyle et al 2004:5). These pressures are exacerbated by the system of “non-compliance” which threatens their income (Flanagan 2007:61-3).
- The capacity for refugees to leave low-paid and low-skilled jobs decreases the longer refugees remain in those industries, due to loss of original skills and missed opportunities for networking and career progression (Richardson et al 2004; Kyle et al 2004). This is a dual loss to both Australia (through under-utilisation of skilled workers) and to individuals.
- The preparedness of Australian-born job-seekers to settle for low-status and low-paid jobs is at an historic low, in part due to high employment rates (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007:69; Junankar and Mahuteau 2005)

#### **4.2.3 Problems with recognition of overseas skills, qualifications and experience**

A large proportion of refugee and humanitarian entrant populations were occupationally well-established before arriving in Australia (DIAC 2007b; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007). Many of these individuals hold tertiary qualifications and/or have many years experience in specialist vocations. Anecdotally, quite a number of refugees also have skills and experience that are a good occupational fit for the apparent labour shortages currently a feature of Australian job market (AMES 2008:2; RCOA 2008; RCOA 2009). However, refugees find that these skills, qualifications



and experience are not sufficient for securing work in occupations at the same level or close to the

level of that enjoyed in their home countries (Flanagan 2007; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007:73; Liebig 2006:35).

The obstacles encountered by skilled refugees of having prior experience and qualifications recognised include:

- Prohibitive costs for bridging courses and supplementary examinations (JSCM 2006; Berman et al 2008). Many refugees could have their qualifications recognised through a simple completion of additional course or examinations, but the high cost of undertaking these processes can place them beyond the reach of new entrants coping with other financial burdens. Often upgrading qualifications is delayed because pressing and current financial needs leave no option but to enter the low-skilled labour market, from which many refugees never re-emerge (JSCM 2006: 267);
- Limitations on translation services. Refugees only receive a limited number of free document translations. Not uncommonly, documents evidencing qualifications exceed this number and require full translation to be useful, not the partial translations generally provided (RCOA 2008);
- Refugees are placed in a situation where they are required to demonstrate Australian workplace experience before being considered eligible for employment, but are unable to obtain the jobs that will provide them with that experience. Some have extensive and relevant work experience overseas, but this is not recognised by employers (Flanagan 2007; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007:72; Berman et al 2008); and,
- Research has indicated that there are overly complex processes and structures across national and state regulatory bodies that prevent qualifications and experience from being recognised (JSCM 2006; Carrington et al 2007:Ch 3; Liebig 2006; Productivity Commission 2006:Ch 9; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury:78; Berman et al 2008).

#### **4.2.4 Lack of qualifications**

While some refugees bring to Australia high levels of skills and experience, a number of refugees have not had the opportunity to attain qualifications and employment experience because of the nature of their migration experience. Those refugees who were born or spent protracted periods of time in refugee camps, have been detained, or have been in constant transition between countries of residence, are unlikely to have been presented with opportunities to undertake formal education and training of the variety that is considered useful in the Australian job market. For many women arriving under the humanitarian program, a lack of education is likely to be a significant barrier to either integration into employment or further training (ECCV 2009:9).

For this sub-group of humanitarian entrants, a lack of qualifications or work experience is a major barrier to entry even in low-skilled occupations. For example, Flanagan (2007) reports that the formal qualifications required to get even low skilled work were a significant barrier to work for research participants. Interviewees reported being told that they were required to achieve IELTS Level 58 in English plus certification in work place skills in order to get low skilled manual work as kitchen hands or cleaners.

#### **4.2.5 Lack of Australian work experience**

A lack of Australian work experience is a barrier for many refugee and humanitarian entrants in securing employment. Many employers do not recognise overseas work experience and require applicants to demonstrate they have had experience in like-employment in Australia, but refugees struggle to get the entry-level jobs that will allow them to gain that experience (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007; ECCV 2009). Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2007:72) found that a lack of Australian work experience and the related inability to provide Australian references were significant issues in the employment outcomes for participants in their study. Even for those whose formal qualifications were recognised, this did not seem to be of much worth without local experience.

With regards to work experience, women confront additional challenges that flow, not only from their family responsibilities, but from the gendered nature of the labour markets in their home

countries (ECCV 2009; RCOA 2008). Many refugee women have a long history of engaging in paid work outside the home, but often such work has been located within the informal economy (e.g. in local markets). While the skills women have obtained in these sectors are invaluable and provide evidence of aptitude and application, they are not necessarily readily recognised within Western employment models.

#### **4.2.6 Lack of knowledge of the Australian workplace and employment conditions**

Studies have found that a lack of knowledge of Australian workplace culture and systems can be a barrier to both finding and sustaining employment (Flanagan 2007; ECCV 2009:3). For example, Australian employers expect prospective employees to “sell” themselves and their experience in interviews, which can run counter to the cultural values and norms of some refugee communities, who are socialised to value modesty and to defer to authority (ECCV 2009:13).

In terms of sustaining employment, a lack of knowledge of workplace practices and culture can also have negative impact on job safety and the longer-term engagement of refugees in the workforce. For example, WorkSafe in Victoria report that there has been a significant rise in the number of injuries to people of African background (especially women), and it is the highest of any community (Centacare and JewishAid 2007).

#### **4.2.7 Discrimination in employment**

Discrimination has been identified in literature as a profound barrier to refugees and humanitarian entrants accessing employment and remaining in employment (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007; Berman et al 2008; Liebig 2006; Carrington et al 2007; Flanagan 2007; ECCV 2009). For example, Junankar et al (2004) show that the unemployment probability of Asian immigrants surveyed in the first three waves of the LSIA is significantly higher than that of the other immigrant groups, even after controlling for socio-economic characteristics – including visa-group and English proficiency (cited in Liebig 2006:42). In her study of experiences of refugees in Tasmania, Flanagan (2007:52) found that participants reported experiencing discriminatory and racist comments in work environments and this was named directly as a barrier to employment. Similarly, interviews of refugees and employers conducted by Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2007:25) found that “some employers suggested that it was the migrants’ fault that they could not get jobs, due to ‘personality differences’, ‘bad attitudes’ such as ‘lack of gratitude’ or being ‘too proud’ of their country of origin, being ‘too enthusiastic’ or not enthusiastic enough, exaggerating their abilities or ‘not selling themselves enough’, or simply because they lacked understanding of Australian work culture (including racist jokes)”.

Colic-Peisker and Tilbury’s (2007) compelling study exploring the effects of “visible difference” on employment outcomes of three recently arrived refugee groups (ex-Yugoslavs, black Africans, and people from the Middle East), found different outcomes for respondents from the three backgrounds despite similar levels of human capital (English proficiency and qualification level) and similar length of residence. The authors contend that these differential outcomes are due to both structural and interpersonal racism, and cannot be explained using the traditional analysis that contends there are only four main factors influencing employment outcomes: English proficiency, length of residence in Australia, educational qualifications and visa type.

Types of interpersonal or direct discrimination cited in research include: language ability, accent, name, appearance, gender and religious customs (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007:70; ECCV 2009), as well as structural (indirect) racism in the failure to recognise qualifications or experience obtained overseas in non-Western European countries (see 1.3) and in recruitment processes. Berman et al’s (2008:iv-v) comprehensive research on this topic found evidence of: discrimination in recruitment; underemployment and lack of recognition of qualifications; discrimination and disadvantage in accessing and utilising job search agencies; over-representation of migrants in low skilled, low paid employment; under-representation of migrants in the public sector; bias against migrants in promotion; intimidation in the workplace; religious discrimination; additional

discrimination related to gender; discrimination in small and medium enterprises; racism in the media and stereotyping of communities; and difficulties accessing the complaints process.

#### **4.2.8 Lack of appropriate employment services to support employment transitions**

Recent literature has highlighted the lack of settlement services targeted at labour market integration that can provide the support needed to facilitate employment transitions for refugees (Liebig 2006:4; Kyle et al 2004:iii; Flanagan 2007). Since the establishment of the Job Network in 1998 there are no longer migrant-specific employment service providers let alone service providers catering specially for refugees and humanitarian entrants (although some Job Network providers claim to have particular expertise in assisting migrants).

With regards to mainstream employment services that are meant to support refugees and humanitarian entrants to make the transition into work, a number of studies have highlighted the deficiencies of the Job Network<sup>2</sup> and Job Placement Employment and Training (JPET) program<sup>3</sup>, and the poor employment outcomes achieved by this group of job-seekers (Flanagan 2007; Kyle et al 2004:iii; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007:27; ECCV 2009:12-3; Berman et al 2008; Dunlop 2005). Common concerns about mainstream employment services include:

- A lack of appreciation among Job Network providers of the particular needs or refugee job-seekers and their employment histories (Kyle et al 2004; RCOA 2008; Berman et al 2008);
- Inadequate emphasis on finding work that is appropriate to refugees' skill levels, interest and experience. This is in part attributed to Job Network providers being remunerated based on the numbers of clients they place as opposed to the quality or sustainability of those placements (Flanagan 2007:29; RCOA 2008);
- Poor information provision by Job Network providers (including lack of use of interpreters) leading to a poor understanding of the division between Centrelink and Job Network services (Kyle et al 2004:iii; RCOA 2008);
- Employment support services requiring high-level computer and English literacy that may be outside of refugees' experience (i.e. use of computer job kiosks for self-directed job search), with no support by Job Network staff in using this technology (Kyle et al 2004; Dunlop 2005:43);
- Overly complex systems and requirements with many refugee clients having a poor understanding of rights and obligations, and of the appeal mechanisms available to them (Kyle et al 2004:iii; Berman et al 2008); and
- Adverse impact of Job Network requirements on refugees' capacity to attend English classes. Because compliance with Job Network requirements is a condition of receiving Centrelink support but attendance at Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) classes is voluntary, refugees feel that they have no choice but to adhere to Job Network demands, even if doing so may compromise their longer term settlement outcomes (Flanagan 2007).

#### **4.2.9 The refugee experience and resettlement**

Literature about Australia's responsibility regarding refugees have reiterated the point that, while successful employment pathways are a crucial part of ensuring and measuring sound settlement for refugees and humanitarian entrants, the nature of the migration experience for these individuals means that employment along the lines of what may be expected of other migrants or those in the general Australian population may not always be appropriate or desirable (Kyle et al 2004:iii; Stevens 1998; Stevens 1997; RCOA 2008). Further, refugees and humanitarian entrants are not, and should not be, selected on the basis of their "human capital" (i.e. labour market potential) (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007:63).

<sup>2</sup> The Job Network was replaced by Job Services Australia in 2009.

<sup>3</sup> The JPET program was de-funded in 2008.

In terms of how the refugee experience impacts on employment, torture, trauma, destitution and extended periods of time living in refugee camps can and do give rise to profound physical and psycho-social impacts on refugees that may mean pressure to engage in paid employment soon after arrival can compound trauma and make settlement even more difficult (Stevens 1998; Flanagan 2007:54; RCOA 2008; ECCV 2009). As a result of their experiences, many refugees have developed chronic physical and mental health problems that impact adversely on their capacity to maintain “acceptable” forms of employment within the context of the Australian labour market (Khoo 2007). Compounding already existing pre-arrival health problems, Kyle et al (2004:ii) report that, for the vast majority of recent refugees, unemployment means low income, which in turn can exacerbate health issues and present a barrier to well-being in a range of other ways. In the same vein, while there is much evidence to suggest that gaining paid employment is an important contributor towards assisting refugees to overcome the mental health impacts of their migration experience, it is also true that especially some physical health problems can be intensified by pressure to find and keep a job (Khoo 2007).

### **4.2.10 English proficiency**

Much of the literature indicates that a relatively sound capacity to communicate in English is one of the most important requirements for refugees and humanitarian entrants attempting to compete in the Australian labour market (Productivity Commission 2006; Richardson et al 2004; Stevens 1998; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007:66; ECCV 2009).

In addition to the basic challenges of developing proficiency in a language, studies have highlighted the tension that refugees feel between an awareness of the importance of persisting with English classes to improve future job prospects and the pressure to take up employment immediately, even if this compromises their capacity to continue English classes (Kyle et al 2004; RCOA 2008; Flanagan 2007).

While the difficulties confronting refugees with little to no proficiency in English are relatively well known, Junankar and Mahuteau (2004) outline particular challenges for those who are able to communicate at a basic or even competent level in English. Junankar and Mahuteau highlight the somewhat paradoxical situation in which highly-skilled refugees with reasonable English proficiency may end up unemployed while their less-fluent counterparts can find work more easily. This may be because, even though their English comprehension is high, they are not well-versed in the nuances of the language that are required for some of the more specialised occupations. While a general expansion of vocabulary is useful, it has been found that a greater focus on vocational English that is ideally matched with work experience would be more valuable (JSCM 2006:268).

### **4.2.11 Pressure to juggle employment and domestic responsibilities**

Just as in the overwhelming majority of non-refugee households, the responsibility for undertaking necessary caring and household duties among refugees and humanitarian entrants tends to fall disproportionately to women (ECCV 2009). This is especially so when it comes to providing primary care for children, infirm and elderly relatives, and in the context of families migrating without extended family members (e.g. grandparents) who may otherwise have provided such care. Ho and Alcorso (2004) note that upon arrival, men’s employment generally assumes priority within migrant families, while women’s primary responsibility is to facilitate the settlement of the family into a new environment. This is further supported by a report on culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women in Victoria (VOMA et al 2005) which states that, in the context of migration, “women generally bear the responsibility for ‘setting up the house’ and caring for family after arrival”. As such, the act of migration itself often results in an escalation in women’s roles as wives or mothers to the extent that women’s careers and employment status are often considered secondary to those of men (cited in ECCV 2009).

Compounding this situation, Flanagan (2007:46) highlights the issue of poor access to childcare for refugee communities being a barrier to women entering the labour force or participating in Economic, Civic and Social Contributions of Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants – A Literature Review

language or other training (see also Kyle et al 2004; ECCV 2009). ECCV (2009:10-1) notes that the high cost and lack of culturally-appropriate childcare options are significant barriers to women's ability to participate in the workforce.

#### **4.2.12 Limited access to affordable housing close to workplaces, and to transport**

The issues of limited access to affordable housing and transport are closely correlated with participation in the labour force, and present a particular challenge for newly arrived and refugee communities. That is, the ability to secure decent housing is dependent on income and, in turn, sustainable employment (Kyle et al 2004:6). As accommodation costs and housing shortages force refugees to live further and further away from employment opportunities, educational facilities and other amenities, the need for a readily accessible, efficient form of transportation is vital (RCOA 2009:51-6; ECCV 2008). The lack of safe, efficient and affordable public transport in outer metropolitan and regional areas is therefore a major barrier in accessing employment opportunities (RCOA 2008:62), particularly where the types of occupations in which refugees are being employed (such as industrial cleaning or factory shift work) require them to attend workplaces at times when it is frequently impossible to access public transport. In addition, for refugees who have to balance family responsibilities, such as sending children to school, as well as other obligations such as AMEP classes, negotiating infrequent and indirect public transport is excessively complicated, tiring and time-consuming (RCOA 2008; RCOA 2009).

Where public transport is not viable or accessible, private transportation is a necessity and the importance of holding a drivers' licence cannot be overstated (particularly in rural areas). Furthermore, the difficulties refugees face in obtaining a drivers' licence has been identified as a major barrier to employment (RCOA 2008:64; Flanagan 2007). In addition to getting to and from work, there are many basic job opportunities – such as employment in car yards as vehicle cleaners – that are closed off to refugees who do not hold licences. These problems are compounded by the increasingly tough and expensive requirements for obtaining a licence. Without access to a car and affordable or free driving lessons, the cost of obtaining a licence is becoming so prohibitive for refugees and humanitarian entrants that some risk driving unlicensed (Flanagan 2007).

### **4.3. Factors that contribute to labour market success**

Literature pertaining to factors that contribute to the labour market success of refugees are less numerous than studies dealing with the barriers. However, there are a number of key studies that suggest promising ways forward (AMES 2008; Berman et al 2008; Bevelander and Lundh 2007; Carr 2004; Carrington et al 2007; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007a; ECCV 2009; Flanagan 2007; JSCM 2006; Kyle et al 2004; Liebig 2006; RCOA 2009; RCOA 2008; RCOA 2005; Richardson et al 2004; Taylor and Stanovic 2005; Stevens 1998). The following highlights strategies and recommendations documented in literature.

#### **4.3.1 Targeted employment services for refugees and migrant job-seekers**

The effectiveness of targeted or specialist employment support services for refugees and migrants focused on supporting their transition to employment has been suggested in a number of studies (Kyle et al 2004; Flanagan 2007; Stevens 1998; Taylor and Stanovic 2005). Kyle et al's (2004) review of labour market programs which have specifically targeted assistance for refugees, found that these services are more effective because they use a more holistic approach to working with refugees (they have partnerships with other agencies and/or link with other service providers such as language and counselling services), they take time to understand individual needs, they provide long-term services, they have good relationships with employers and offer work experience and support for workers in the workplace.

Other benefits of these services are that they understand cultural differences and the needs of refugee groups, they employ multilingual workers, they have close relationships with employers

(especially employers who are from non-English speaking backgrounds), they link up with relevant services and they provide information in an appropriate way about industrial relations, income support, taxation etc.

Moreover, Kyle et al (2004) suggest that specialist employment services produce better outcomes for clients and are more cost effective than generalist employment. The Given the Chance program, run by the Brotherhood of St Laurence's Ecumenical Migration Centre (EMC) in Melbourne, is discussed at length as a model with successful outcomes (when compared to Job Network and JPET costs and outcomes). Adopting a case management model, Given the Chance combines pathways planning with job skills training, work experience, mentoring and other support (e.g. counselling) as required. Support and assistance are provided for up to a year, and there is flexibility in the program, with various elements provided in different combinations based on the case manager's assessment of each individual's needs. The Given the Chance program's average total cost per actual participant (\$1117) is considerably less than either JPET (\$1500) or Job Network (\$2900)

In terms of outcomes, evaluation of the program indicates higher participation in education, training and employment for participants when compared to outcomes of those 'disadvantaged jobseekers' participating in Job Network intensive training and JPET over the same period. The proportion of successful outcomes through participation in the programs was measured at 13 weeks, 26 weeks and 52 weeks. The Given the Chance program had the highest percentage of success at all stages (58% at 13 weeks compared to 42% for Job Network). The highest proportion of success for Given the Chance was at 52 weeks with 73%. Data for JPET was not available, and Job Network data was only available for the 13 weeks evaluation.

Kyle et al (2004:17) suggest that Given the Chance has had successful outcomes because of its recognition of the barriers and challenges that this particular group of job-seekers face. The four main components of Given the Chance are:

- Individual pathways planning, case management and referral: In addition to career planning, the program coordinator provides ongoing support and case management assistance for up to one year. Participants are referred as necessary to counselling and other services, many of which are provided by EMC.
- Training: "Employment Skills for Refugees", provided over three days (15 hours) a week for 12 weeks. A specific training course was designed to meet the needs of the target group, with, for example, one focus on identifying the skills developed through individuals' experience as refugees. Later, existing modules from the accredited short course "Workforce re-entry skills" were customised after reviewing the first pilot.
- Work experience: A work experience placement in a work area relevant to the participant's skills and aspirations is undertaken for two days a week for 12 weeks. This operates concurrently with the training component to maximise effectiveness of training regarding Australian workplace cultures and practices. The program coordinator provides pre- and post-placement briefings.
- Mentoring: Participants are matched with a volunteer mentor. Matches are based on the skills and employment goals of the participant. Mentoring is regarded as an essential component of the program, providing the refugees with access to relevant industry networks. Mentoring is provided for up to a year and mentors are also provided with ongoing training and support over this time.

Kyle et al's study (p.iv) further identifies elements for an "ideal service" that could link refugees more effectively into employment, including:

- Job Club model of intensive supervised training and job hunting experience;
- Work experience combined flexibly with language tuition and other training options;
- Specialist services that understand differences between refugee groups, their cultures, and needs; employs workers who speak a number of different languages; work closely with ethnic employers; have much closer relationships with employers generally; provide information in the

appropriate form about industrial relations in Australia, income support, taxation etc; and are able to link up with services such as local settlement services;

- Partnerships with other agencies and/or link with other service providers (English tuition, counselling, other training) to support refugees using an “holistic” approach;
- Taking enough time to understand each individual’s needs (and to enable establishment of trust);
- Being able to provide a long-term service;
- Having good relationships with employers, and offering work experience and support in the workplace.

Along similar lines, Liebig’s (2006:45) suggestion is that Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) address the question of the integration of humanitarian migrants through a long-term strategy on a local level, with the support of networks of the principal stakeholders. In supporting this approach, Liebig references a client satisfaction survey (Urbis 2003) that observed that employment officers in MRCs were particularly valued by migrants to overcome barriers on the job market.

Another targeted employment and training initiative focusing specifically on refugee women is the New Futures Training Program run by the Victorian Cooperative on Children’s Services For Ethnic Groups (VICSEG) (case study cited in ECCV 2009:11). The program trains people, predominantly women, from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to be certified childcare workers. The aim of New Futures Training is two-pronged:

- to provide women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds with training so that they can participate in the workforce, and
- to diversify the childcare sector so that it is better equipped to meet the needs of families from various backgrounds.

The main component of the New Futures Training program is training women for Certificate 3 in Childcare, but also involves pre-employment training that familiarises jobseekers with the Australian job market, mentoring from community members currently in the childcare sector, and follow-up supervision in the workplace. The program has been successful in increasing labour force participation and levels of employment for women.

### **4.3.2 Professional mentoring programs**

Flanagan (2007:58) among others (Carr 2004; RCOA 2005; JSCM 2006:269; Kyle et al 2004; Stevens 1998; ECCV 2009:14) highlights the potential of group projects which provide mentoring or work placement experience as useful opportunities for new entrants to get an introduction to Australian workplaces and to build community networks. Flanagan suggests mentoring projects offer opportunities to promote the benefits of training and gaining employment, and provide exposure to workplace culture and workplace norms that can lead to positive employment outcomes. Further, RCOA’s (2005) review of mentoring programs indicated that the most effective are those that are specifically targeted to the needs and experiences of humanitarian and refugee entrants.

Although not specific to humanitarian entrants, Liebig (2006) also highlights the potential of professional mentoring programs to link migrant job-seekers into employment. The model suggested is for “mentors” to meet with migrants on a regular basis and share their experiences and knowledge (e.g. how to conduct a job interview, how to contact potential employers). Matching mentors with migrants on the basis of a common professional background may also provide the migrant with access to professional networks. Liebig goes on to argue that mentoring in Australia is relatively low-cost for the public budget since the mentors are generally unpaid volunteers, although there are some costs associated with coordination and providing mentor training. Liebig also acknowledges that, due to the personal element which is key to mentoring and a general lack of data on the outcomes, it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of such programs (pp.39-40).



The Joint Standing Committee on Migration (2006:269) likewise acknowledges the value of mentoring programs for humanitarian entrants, and commends state governments for funding mentoring initiatives through various community grants schemes. Further, the Committee through its recommendations encourages governments to support employment related mentoring programs targeting humanitarian entrants.

#### **4.3.3 Initiatives providing opportunities to gain Australian work experience**

Programs and initiatives that provide refugee and humanitarian entrants with opportunities to gain Australian work experience have been suggested as key to longer-term employment outcomes (Kyle et al 2004; Flanagan 2007; Taylor and Stanovic 2005; AMES 2008).

An effective approach that has provided a pathway for newly arrived refugees into longer-term employment is the Community Guides Initiative developed and piloted by AMES in Victoria (AMES 2008:10). Community Guides are recruited from within newly arrived refugee communities on a casual basis in order to:

1. Assist refugees in their early settlement to become linked to broader community and mainstream networks by providing Community Guides who speak the refugee's first language, are culturally matched to the refugee and who share the refugee experience;
2. Provide employment opportunities for refugee community members who become Community Guides.

AMES (2008) reports that, approximately 140 people from refugee backgrounds have worked as Community Guides. Since the start of the "first work opportunity" initiative in 2005, 110 Community Guides have obtained employment outside of AMES or have become AMES employees on a part-time or full-time basis. As AMES argues, building on existing skills, rather than matching skilled individuals to any available vacancy, has clearly paid dividends.

However, research also suggests that work placement programs can themselves become a source of frustration to new arrivals if they do not provide a pathway to paid employment for a significant enough proportion of participants (Flanagan 2007).

#### **4.3.4 Vocational education and training linked to English language skills**

As outlined in the barriers section, English proficiency is a key determinant of successful labour market integration. The efficacy of English language training for humanitarian entrants is therefore key to longer-term successful employment outcomes (Stevens 1997; AMES 2008; Carrington et al 2007). Richardson et al (2004:68) argues that the "interdependence of English proficiency and employability highlights the importance of providing ongoing training to migrants who would like to work but have comparatively poor skills in Australia's main spoken language".

In terms of strategies for overcoming English language barriers, a number of studies suggest the effectiveness of combining vocational English programs with clear employment and training pathways (Kyle et al 2004; Flanagan 2007:83; AMES 2008). For example, Flanagan's (2007:42) study of refugee settlement in Tasmania found that "vocational English courses were clearly highly valued as they were seen as useful and a clear pathway to employment. A number of participants made specific requests for more vocationally focused English courses and suggested extending these into classes where people could learn trade skills as they learnt English."

An example of an initiative that highlights the value of this kind of model is the Labour Harvest Program run by AMES in Victoria. The Program linked job seekers from the Burmese (Karen) community who were recently arrived and who had limited English with casual employment opportunities that allowed them to continue with English language learning (AMES 2008:10). In supporting these newly arrived refugees to both learn English and find employment, AMES identified the needs of local employers; worked closely with the refugee community to assist them

in identifying matching skills, aspirations and people; and provided support to both employees and the employers.

In practice, AMES worked with large market gardeners who required vegetable pickers and packers in the outer-west of Melbourne. These growers had a labour shortage but were initially reluctant to employ members of the Burmese community, perceiving them to be inexperienced and lacking sufficient English. The community from Burma had many members who came from rural and farming backgrounds. In this context, AMES:

- Acted as a broker and arranged some casual work in the local market gardens;
- Organised an employment liaison person from the Karen community to work with both the employers and the workers who had very limited English on the job; and
- Provided first language training in Occupational Health and Safety for workers before starting their jobs.

AMES reports (2008:10) that the outcomes in terms of employment are promising. To date 35 members of the Burmese community are working at four market gardens. Of these, 18 have completed occupational health and safety training and a further 17 will undertake the training in 2008. 17 of the trained workers are employed, eight of them now on a full-time basis. Employers are impressed by their speed, reliability and work ethic. The level of resources required for this project is significant (e.g. to meet the requirements of the employers who did not want to directly employ these workers, AMES undertook a labour hire function) but the long term benefits will be enduring for this community. AMES is also establishing ways to ensure that these new arrivals can continue to learn English in the AMEP while taking up what is initially unpredictable casual work.

For those refugees already in employment, ensuring there are opportunities for ongoing flexible English language training was desired for refugees to be able to juggle the economic necessity of working, alongside the desire to continue studying and improving English proficiency to enhance longer-term employment outcomes (AMES 2008; Flanagan 2007; Carrington et al 2007). For example, Flanagan (2007:59) found that many of the refugees interviewed in her study expressed a desire for part-time work opportunities which would allow continued enrolment in English language courses or other courses of study, but would also relieve the pressure they felt to generate income and support their families, and that this required employers who were supportive of their requests to go to part-time work.

#### **4.3.5 Resettlement programs in regional and rural areas**

Studies have indicated that the local labour market in which refugees settle will have an impact on their success rate in finding jobs (Flanagan 2007; Bevelander and Lundh 2007). For example, Flanagan (2007) explores factors accounting for the exodus from Tasmania of recently-arrived refugees, and finds that high unemployment rates in the State and the limited pathways out of unemployment for people with literacy and numeracy issues are major factors in inter-state secondary settlement patterns. Likewise, Bevelander and Lundh (2007), in their study of refugee dispersal and labour market integration in Sweden, found that variations in refugees participation in employment was partly a result of internal migration and local market factors in areas where refugees were settling (i.e. local unemployment and employment rates significantly affected refugees' chances of obtaining employment, as did the size of the local labour market and the education and skill levels of the resident population). However, Carrington et al (2007:67) caution that sending migrants to regional areas will not necessarily ensure better employment outcomes, as "skilled designated area sponsored immigrants have been shown to have worse labour outcomes six months after arrival than immigrants under other skilled visa types" (Richardson 2005a).

In terms of a planned local response to ensure greater labour market integration, Flanagan (2007) argues that the settlement of refugees in regional areas requires policies that support long-term settlement, including the development of vigorous regional economies to ensure pathways into employment. Taylor and Stanovic (2005:57) likewise argue that a key goal for refugee settlement

should be to both promote informed choice for the refugees and to ensure advance planning and capacity building in areas of resettlement, in consultation with appropriate refugee groups. See section 2.5 of this literature review for further discussion.

#### **4.3.6 Overseas skills and qualification recognition**

The Joint Standing Committee on Migration's report (2006) provides a number of recommendations for ways forward in overcoming obstacles faced by skilled refugees in the assessment and recognition of overseas qualifications and skills. JSCM (2006: 267-8) suggests that, while the Assessment Fee Subsidy for Disadvantaged Overseas Trained Australians (ASDOT) funding program provided by the then Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) aims to assist overseas trained Australians pay for the cost of examinations and, in some instances, the cost of having professional qualifications assessed, humanitarian entrants who are in work (often not in their professional field) may be ineligible as the criteria for ASDOT is very limited. It was suggested that humanitarian entrants should automatically qualify for access to ASDOT to cover examination and assessment fees, and that DEST should conduct a review of the ASDOT funding program to assess its accessibility to humanitarian entrants.

Berman et al (2008:viii) also recommend specialist job search assistance for migrants and refugees about qualification recognition processes, education (including English as a Second Language classes), training opportunities, and scholarships and higher education loan programs (such as FEE-HELP) for bridging courses; and that scholarships for bridging courses be made available by relevant government departments in areas of skill shortages based on the Victorian nursing model.

In addition, RCOA (2008) consultations suggest that there also needs to be more employer education to ensure a better understanding of the assets and capabilities of refugees (see also Section 4.3.7 below). Additional incentives may need to be provided to employers who hire refugees and humanitarian entrants (AMES 2008). Without this education and awareness-raising among employers, efforts to improve skills recognition or training will be in vain.

#### **4.3.7 Initiatives that tackle discrimination in employment and employer education**

Recent research suggests that discrimination by employers is playing a greater role in recruitment of workers than had been previously thought (Berman et al 2008; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007a). As Berman et al (2008:iii) strongly argue: "eradicating discrimination in employment will reduce unemployment and underemployment of migrants and allow for the greater utilisation of migrants' skills, leading to increased productivity. A diverse workforce has also been shown to increase innovation. Participation in the workforce also has considerable impact on reducing the social isolation of migrants, which in turn has an impact on their health and wellbeing. There are therefore clear economic and human rights reasons to address this issue."

In overcoming disadvantage related to discrimination, Flanagan (2007) suggests (on a state level) that the Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner in Tasmania provide training to employers in recruitment and selection practices which focuses on the obligations of employers under the Anti-Discrimination Act. This training package needs to be developed also to highlight the social and economic value of a culturally diverse workforce, and the cultural assumptions which distort the application of the merit principle in employment processes. Flanagan (2007:85) also suggests enhanced data collection on ethnic diversity statistics by larger employers.

Berman et al's (2008:v-viii) Victorian study further recommends:

- Changes to the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission functions and processes;
- Changes to Victorian public service processes and policies – such as collecting demographic data on employees and analysing data biannually;
- Encouragement of business to value and support diversity and equity – through initiatives such as social marketing campaigns, voluntary benchmarking and promotion of best practice; and

- Improved support for migrants seeking employment – such as enhancing strategies for greater skills recognition and providing scholarships for approved bridging courses, and ensuring Job Network providers receive regular training on equal opportunity and human rights.

Other initiatives that have been trialled or suggested to deal with employment discrimination include: MRCs and some Legal Aid offices providing training to employers on their obligations under anti-discrimination legislation and the refugee experience in an effort to encourage them to avoid discriminatory employment practices (RCOA 2008; see also AMES 2008:2).

#### **4.3.8 Supporting refugee communities to establish businesses**

An assessment of the Federal Government's New Enterprise Initiative Scheme (NEIS) indicated that this scheme has been relatively effective in promoting self-employment among non-English-speaking migrants, with survival rates (i.e. enterprises still running two years after the program) being significantly higher than among the native-born (including immigrants from English-speaking countries) (65% versus 55%) (Kelly et al 2002 cited in Liebig 2006:41). Stevens (1998) also found that, although wages or salary were the main source of income of only 32% of all refugees, 21% received their main income from their own business, a proportion which was much higher than for any other migration category.

Stevens (1998) outlines factors inherent to refugees that may account for some of the observed pattern, and the data could be interpreted as an indicator of greater entrepreneurial behaviour among refugees than other groups, or of cultural factors and predispositions, as well as niches of demand. On the other hand, Stevens also cites exclusionary processes and constraints on employment opportunities in mainstream enterprises as another less positive influence on the tendency to self-employment.

In light of positive entrepreneurial outcomes, Liebig (2006) contends that mentoring-oriented schemes such as NEIS may be particularly effective in fostering immigrant self-employment, arguing that there is some value in enabling and assisting migrants from newer communities to establish their own businesses because this can and will contribute to creating employment opportunities for other refugees and humanitarian entrants arriving in Australia, although the benefits of such initiatives are likely to be seen only in the longer term.

#### **4.3.9 Programs to facilitate access to drivers' licences**

Flanagan's (2007) research found that obtaining a driver's licence was a high priority for many of the research participants and was one of their key areas of recommendation for action. The study highlights that obtaining a driver's licence was the underpinning requirement for many of the jobs that refugees were applying for, and that barriers to achieving this were significant and included: financing driving lessons and tests, getting access to a car and a driving instructor, being able to complete the required hours of tutored driving, and passing the driving test. In terms of overcoming this barrier, there are examples of SGP-funded projects which have successfully supported humanitarian entrants to obtain driving licences, and these types of projects could be replicated or explored more systemically (RCOA 2008).

### **4.4 Areas for future research**

#### **4.4.1 Longitudinal data collection and research into the employment outcomes**

Comprehensive survey data on the employment experiences of refugees has been lacking in recent years because independent agencies that traditionally acted as consolidators of this information, such as the Office of Multicultural Affairs, are no longer in existence and other government agencies have not stepped in to fill this breach (Dunlop 2005).

Currently, the most compendious publication of employment outcomes of all migrants is based on the Department of Immigration's LSIA. However, the most recent wave of data collected by the Department for the LSIA (DIAC 2007a) fails to include humanitarian entrants among its subjects, a significant loss of comparative information available for analysing the change in employment and other settlement outcomes for migrants under the Humanitarian Program. One of the key reasons for not including humanitarian entrants in the survey was that they possessed "significantly different characteristics, experiences and settlement outcomes" (p.8) when compared with migrant groups. Arguably, it is these distinctions that perhaps provide the best reasons for continuing to include humanitarian entrants in the survey, to enable more accurate comparisons between these individuals and other migrants.

Of particular interest in terms of information gaps about labour market outcomes for refugees is an exploration into the reason for discrepancies in labour participation between Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) and refugee entrants, as highlighted by Liebig (2006:51):

About half of the current humanitarian intake in Australia consists of resettlers who have some kind of sponsorship in Australia. One would expect these migrants to have better outcomes than refugees, as the former should have access to networks, etc. which refugees do not have. Despite this, sponsored humanitarian immigrants seem to do less well in the labour market than refugees. One possible explanation for this is that sponsored humanitarian immigrants originally did not have access to all initial settlement services like formal refugees. Although sponsored migrants now have formal access to most services, initial settlement support is still expected to be generally provided by the sponsors where they are able to do so. The links between this somewhat more limited integration support and the lower employment of this group should be subject to further investigation. It is expected that SHP migrants will experience greater labour market integration following the introduction of access to initial settlement support under the IHSS.

Understanding the reasons for discrepancies in employment outcomes between these two groups of humanitarian settlers may provide a clearer picture regarding what type of services are needed and effective in ensuring successful labour market integration for refugees and humanitarian entrants.

### **4.4.2 Sharing models of best practice**

While Kyle et al's (2004) analysis of employment support services for refugees is useful, the methodology used is largely based on the evaluation of one targeted refugee employment service (Given the Chance). A gap in literature and research therefore exists in more comprehensively evaluating employment services that work well with this target group and documenting elements of good practice for replication. In addressing this gap, the Refugee Council of Australia has received funding from the Sidney Myer Foundation to investigate models of employment support services for humanitarian entrants.

### **4.4.3 Evaluating the employment support services model**

Liebig (2006:41) writes that, given the lack of disaggregated data within Job Network evaluations, a further analysis of the Job Network services is unfortunately not possible. Further, "to do this, more detailed data on the program outcomes for certain immigrant groups, in particular for recent arrivals and by qualification level, would be needed. Ideally, such data would encompass visa category and country of origin – as recommended by the Review of Settlement Services" (DIMIA 2003). The need for disaggregated data collection and evaluation of mainstream employment support services is also supported by Kyle et al (2004:iii), who argue that "information regarding refugee and migrant status is often not collected in program data, making outcomes evaluation very difficult".

With the replacement of the Job Network with Job Services Australia, the need for disaggregated data based on country of birth and visa type, as well as the evaluation of this new model in terms of outcomes of refugees and other humanitarian entrants, still remains. Research into how this new model meets the needs of refugee jobseekers – for example, ensuring humanitarian entrants who require more frequent and longer contact with providers are able to access these services – is essential (RCOA 2009).

#### **4.4.4 Strategies to assist refugees to obtain a driver's licence**

While there is considerable anecdotal evidence about the difficulties experienced by refugees in obtaining a driver's licence and the impact this has on labour market participation (for example Flanagan 2007; RCOA 2008; RCOA 2009), there is little empirical data. Furthermore, strategies to overcome barriers experienced by refugees in obtaining a licence are largely undertaken on a local community level, and are such are ad hoc and documented sporadically. The Refugee Council of Australia (2009) has recommended that, as a first step towards a national strategy to reduce the additional disadvantage faced by humanitarian entrants who do not have drivers' licences, research be undertaken into community responses to this issue.

#### **4.4.5 Pathways from AMEP into employment**

Liebig (2006:41) highlights that: "Despite Australia's substantial investment with respect to language training – which is by far the most important item on the budget with respect to integration services – there has been no evaluation on how much and what kind of language training is most effective with respect to the aim of labour market integration. Indeed, there are no data publicly available on employment status after completion of language courses."

Recognising that the AMEP has recently been reviewed in 2008 and that a new model is to be introduced, it may be timely to ensure that appropriate data collection framework is introduced and monitored to ensure that employment outcomes and pathways are identified. A high priority should be assigned to evaluating what kinds of language training and how much best contribute to labour market integration (Liebig 2006:51).

#### **4.4.6 Strategies for addressing discrimination in small and medium businesses**

Berman et al (2008:viii) recommend that research be undertaken into the nature and prevalence of discrimination in small and medium businesses and on the knowledge among business owners of equal opportunity principles. Further, they recommend that consultations be held on effective, appropriate and reasonable measures to address any gaps in knowledge and effective implementation of equal opportunity principles within these businesses.

## Section 5

# INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS OF LABOUR FORCE OUTCOMES

### **Key findings:**

- Research across many countries demonstrates the important economic contributions made by migrants to their host countries (e.g. in Canada migrants accounted for over 70% of economic growth during the 1990s; in the UK tax revenue from migrants amounted to 41.2 billion GBP in 2003-04).
- Several studies show that refugees initially encounter barriers to employment but subsequently achieve a rapid convergence in earnings with other migrants and the native population, and thus a longer-term perspective is necessary.
- Evidence from some countries suggests that, because refugees lack the option to return to their homelands, they are more likely than other migrants to invest in country-specific human capital (e.g. education, training and citizenship).
- Investigation into refugees' qualifications points to high levels of educational attainment and professional experience among refugees (e.g. UK research found 55% had a qualification on arrival of which 23% had a degree or higher).
- While there is divergence among countries as to how quickly refugees can be expected to achieve economic self-sufficiency, there is consensus internationally that it plays a pivotal role in successful integration.

### **Information gaps identified and future research recommended:**

- Current gaps in census or equivalent data frustrate efforts to achieve a more comprehensive analysis of the economic contribution of refugees compared to other migrants or native inhabitants. There is a need for more differentiated research on the impact of migration.
- Future research should place greater emphasis on structural, physical and psycho-social factors impacting on refugee employment.
- There is a need to prioritise further in-depth study of local conditions that promote or hamper economic integration and participation.

## 5.1 Introduction

Anecdotal evidence would suggest that in many developed countries, particularly in Europe, there remains scepticism about the economic costs for states in fulfilling their humanitarian obligations. Refugees are often perceived as being a drain on state welfare and social support systems, and there is widespread debate about the ability of refugees and humanitarian entrants to make positive economic contributions to their host countries. Efforts to test the accuracy of such beliefs are frustrated by the lack of comparative empirical data distinguishing between the economic contributions of humanitarian entrants and the contributions of other migrants. This relative scarcity of data applies both in Australia and when making a wider international comparison. However, the available literature does provide some evidence that refugees – like other migrants – have successful labour force outcomes and can make important economic contributions. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that experience from other countries mirrors an abundance of research in Australia documenting the barriers faced by humanitarian entrants who can contribute to lower rates of economic participation, at least in the short term.

This section sets out the available literature internationally relating to different facets surrounding the economic participation of refugees. The language limitations inherent in this type of comparative study mean that the research covered derives primarily from the UK, the US, Canada, New Zealand and Scandinavia.

## 5.2 Paying their way – economic contribution of migrants and refugees

Notwithstanding the relative lack of refugee-specific data, there is strong evidence from overseas concerning the economic contribution of immigrants generally. For example, a UK Home Office study in 2002 estimates that migrants contributed 2.5 billion GBP more in taxes than they consumed in benefits and services in 1999-2000 (Gott and Johnston 2002). Research in Canada reveals that the labour power and investments made by migrants arriving in Canada during the 1990s accounted for over 70% of economic growth during that decade (Wilkinson 2008).

Migration in a broader sense can influence per capita income in a variety of ways. It can increase the available capital per head of population, in part by attracting foreign capital to a growing economy. As Lord Keynes famously commented: “it was largely because of migration that the United States’ economy was always growing rapidly and outstripping capacity ... There was consequently less risk in undertaking investment, and capital formation was larger, more rapid and more confident” (cited in Withers 1999). Furthermore, migration can increase workforce participation rates and reduce unemployment. It can enhance the average skill level of the workforce and increase economies of scale. It can foster innovation and flexibility because migrants are characteristically entrepreneurial, particularly in small business, as they face the need to set up in a new society (Withers 1999).

The mindset of Hong Kong’s residents is often said to be the reason behind that state’s standing as an economic powerhouse – most of the island’s residents were originally refugees from mainland China (Mares 2002). In the US, the Vietnamese refugees who started arriving in the mid 1970s revitalised commercial neighbourhoods by establishing restaurants, shops and other businesses while Miami’s economic rebirth has often been attributed to the Cuban refugees who began to arrive in the 1960s (2<sup>nd</sup> Triennial Comprehensive Report on Immigration, submitted to US Congress, May 1999).

## 5.3 Differences between refugees and economic migrants

Given the distinct characteristics of humanitarian entrants and economic migrants, some researchers have asked whether these differences have any economic implications (Cortes, 2004). It has been pointed out that given they lack the opportunity of emigrating back to their homeland, refugees have a longer time horizon in the host country and thus may be more minded to invest in country-specific human capital. For example, this could take the form of improving language skills, enrolling in the host nation’s educational system and naturalising as citizens. This line of reasoning suggests that humanitarian entrants are more likely to assimilate to the earnings growth path of the native-born population. It has been suggested that previous research that averages over all migrants may overlook this important distinction (Cortes 2004).

Recent research in the United States found that refugees on average have lower annual earnings upon arrival but that their annual earnings grow faster over time than those of economic migrants (Cortes 2004). Similar findings have arisen from research in other countries. Studies in Canada have demonstrated a rapid convergence in earnings among migrants and refugees over time, and that refugees can demonstrate a relatively more rapid increase in earnings (DeSilva 1997). Research in New Zealand demonstrates that individuals born in predominantly refugee source countries have lower incomes on average than New Zealand-born people but incomes relative to the New Zealand-born population improve over time. For example, by 2006, Iraqi born migrants who moved to New Zealand between 1991 and 1996 had median incomes on par with the New Zealand-born population (Ministry of Social Development 2008).

Therefore when considering the economic contribution of humanitarian entrants versus other migrants, the available literature points to the need to avoid being short-sighted. There may be short term costs as refugees are resettled and adjust to their new surroundings but following integration refugees are often able to quickly make permanent cultural, social and economic contributions and infuse vitality and multiculturalism in to the communities into which they are



resettled. Although refugees can bring short-term costs they are able to bring long-term benefits to their new country or region (Zucker 1983). Research in the US has shown that over time humanitarian entrants tend to have higher country-specific human capital investment than other migrants, including refugees having improved their English language skills by 11% more than economic migrants during a 10-year period analysed (Cortes 2004).

#### 5.4 Role of economic participation in successful integration

The available literature suggests that economic participation is a key factor in settlement and goes beyond employment. It includes having access to an income that allows an acceptable standard of living and having access, equal to the host population, to goods and services, such as education and health. Employment is presented in the literature as a key component of integration. It gives refugees an income, the possibility of access to credit, a social context and identity and, in theory, an opportunity to step onto a career ladder. Respondents themselves identify access to employment as pivotal to the process of settlement and integration.

While there is a consensus internationally that economic self-sufficiency has a pivotal role in integration, there are significant differences in expectations about how soon after arrival this can be expected to be achieved, and about the importance of self-sufficiency in the integration process. In this context, self-sufficiency is defined as the capacity to live independently of government and other sources of income support (New Zealand Department of Labour 2008). Labour market policies adopted in relation to resettled refugees are often framed within the host country's expectations for self-sufficiency among new arrivals. Some countries appear to have high expectations of early economic and social self-sufficiency through early employment. For example, self-sufficiency goals can vary from eight months in the US to between two and five years in the Nordic resettlement countries (MORE project 2005).

Attempts to monitor outcomes for refugees have been hampered by definitional issues, difficulties in gathering data and complexities in measuring other elements such as the quality of inter-relationships between people. While the US has relatively developed mechanisms for measuring economic self-sufficiency among refugees<sup>4</sup>, there is less evidence of mechanisms to assess the quality of social or other links with the established community. Studies have highlighted the importance of maintaining realistic expectations of what refugees can achieve within a specified timeframe which is likely to be less than the population as a whole (Home Office 2005). The UK has developed a set of indicators which would enable the success or failure of refugee integration to be measured. The indicator framework includes indicators in areas of employment, education, housing, health, social bridges (including participation level), social bonds (sense of identification with a community), social links (engagement with services and political processes), language/cultural knowledge, safety and stability and rights/citizenship. Examples of employment indicators include the mean length of time before securing employment after being granted refugee status as well as employment and unemployment rates of refugees compared with rates among the general population (Home Office 2004). This study further emphasised that employment achievements should not be viewed purely as an “outcome” of integration; they also clearly serve as a “means” to integration.

Most refugees want and need to find work on arrival in a host country and as a means to longer-term integration. A major study in the UK (Charlaffe et al 2004) found that over a third of the refugees surveyed would like to find any kind of work, while 58% would like to find work that matched their skills and experience. However, the latter group are unlikely to fulfil their aspirations in the medium or even the longer term.

<sup>4</sup> As well as standard monitoring of federal expenditure and contracts, the US undertakes an annual survey of refugees who have been in the country for less than five years in order to assess employment status, economic self-sufficiency and medical and cash assistance. The ORR requires states to establish annual outcome goals aimed at continuous improvement along five outcome measures: entered employment; termination of cash assistance due to earnings; reduction in cash assistance due to earnings; average wage at placement; and job retention (New Zealand Department of Labour, 2007).

## 5.5 Barriers to successful labour force outcomes

As in Australia, there is fairly extensive research internationally on the barriers faced by refugees and humanitarian entrants in obtaining employment.

Some studies suggest that receiving countries across the globe are not only unwilling to recognise refugees' qualifications but are often also poor at providing appropriate conversion courses or training that will enable refugees to demonstrate their qualifications (Charlaff et al 2004; Chile and Brown 1999). This means that many highly skilled refugees are forced to take employment below their skill levels. High numbers of refugees surveyed believe that their human capital has limited value in their host country's labour market and their networks are often unable to restore their former occupational status (Lamba 2002).

Research in the US suggests that, over the longer term, residency, acculturation and community characteristics all have a relatively small effect on refugees' economic status and integration. The determinants most strongly associated with economic status are education, disability, gender and household composition. These determinants are the same as for the population as a whole. While English proficiency is a desirable outcome in itself and a prerequisite to obtaining degree level qualifications, it is not necessarily in itself sufficient for enhancing refugee economic status (Charlaff et al 2004; Potocky-Tripodi 2001; Potocky-Tripodi 2003; Ugbe 2007).

Several studies confirm that experiences of discrimination also interfere with positive employment outcomes, particularly for visible minority refugees (Lamba 2003; Shields et al 2006; Chile 2002). Middle Eastern and African refugees are much less likely to be employed than East Europeans (Bevelander and Veenman 2006; Bevelander and Lundh 2007). In New Zealand, studies of Somali refugees have found that gender constraints on socialising and religious implications concerning food can inhibit socialising and employment opportunities with New Zealanders of European descent (Guerin and Guerin 2002).

In some countries having citizenship is positively connected with employment rates and wages for refugees (Bevelander and Veenman 2006; Potocky-Tripodi 2004). It is not clear whether this is because refugees become more easily accepted as employees or because they themselves feel more integrated into society.

Many researchers conclude that, because the economic status of humanitarian entrants does not improve simply as a function of time, active intervention is needed (Potocky-Tripodi 2001). Suggested measures include increased provision of protective employment legislation, language tuition, skills training, partnerships between agencies to access jobs and work experience (Valtonen 2004) and greater collaboration between the professional bodies, the training institutions and accreditation authorities (Chile and Brown 1999). Several reports argue that the voluntary sector is inhibited in its efforts to support pathways into employment as a result of low, precarious and inconsistent funding (Brahmbhatt et al 2007; Valtonen 2001).

Equally, the widespread existence of discrimination needs to be addressed through state intervention. Resources need to be directed to achieving change in the receiving society, to complement the individual adjustment efforts of refugees (Valtonen 2004; Zimmerman et al 2008). General initiatives are recommended in order to create an institutional and social environment inhibiting discrimination and facilitating targeted action.

## 5.6 Labour force outcomes

This study is restricted to a review of literature written in English so unsurprisingly the material is primarily from the UK, US, Canada, New Zealand and also Scandinavia. Given the high volume of literature arising from the UK (including on wider migrant economic outcomes), this is covered in a separate section.

## The United Kingdom

Applying the methodology used for the 2002 Home Office Study, *The Migrant Population in the UK: Fiscal Effects* (Gott and Johnston 2002), the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) undertook a longer study over a period of five years. The study assessed the economic benefits of migration rather than of refugees specifically. Their analysis concluded that the contribution of immigrants to public finances is growing, and is likely to continue to grow in the near future. In 1999-2000 immigrants accounted for 8.8% of government tax receipts rising to 10% by 2003-04. Total revenue in real terms grew from 33.8 billion GBP in 1999-2000 to 41.2 billion GBP in 2003-04. This 22% increase compares favourably to the 6% increase for the UK-born population. Furthermore, in each of the years examined, immigrants have become proportionately greater net contributors to public finances than non-immigrants (IPPR 2005). However, the researchers caution that the paper discusses aggregate contributions by immigrants who are not a homogenous group. Some groups will make relatively large fiscal contributions and others relatively small or negative ones. A similar trend was found in a later report *Britain's Immigrants* (IPPR, 2007). Researchers need to explore this diversity further and policy makers need to take account of the circumstances of different groups of migrants.

From the limited research by group available, unsurprisingly the different characteristics of migrant communities results in different outcomes in the UK labour market (Cangiano, 2008). Most male migrant groups have higher employment rates than the UK-born population. Overall female migrants have a significantly lower employment rate than UK-born women. Migrants from Western Europe and other high income countries are significantly overrepresented in managerial and professional positions in the financial and business services sector. Asians are more concentrated than the local labour force in the hospitality and retail sector. Africans are especially to be found in the transport and communication industry. The process of adaption of migrant workers over time suggests that the initial gap in terms of employment levels and participation tends to narrow over the migration cycle (Cangiano, 2008).

There has been quite extensive research in the UK charting the skills and qualifications of refugees. The 2004 Home Office report, *Skills Audit of Refugees*, analysed 2000 questionnaires completed by recognised refugees. Overall, two thirds of respondents were working prior to leaving their country of origin, one in 10 were students and less than 5% were unemployed or looking for work. This suggested an economic distribution of activity similar to UK-born residents. About a third recorded English language skills as fluent or fairly good. The results highlighted the differences in skills and experiences of persons from different countries of origin. For example, almost 90% of Zimbabwean refugees had received over 10 years of education and over 90% had qualifications before coming to the UK. In comparison just over a quarter of respondents who had originated from Iraq had received 10 years of education or held qualifications before coming to the UK (Kirk 2004).

An earlier study by Bloch found that 56% of the refugees profiled had a qualification on arrival of which 23% had a degree or higher. Other pre-migration characteristics included 42% of respondents in employment of whom 28% were employees and 14% self-employed. Areas of employment were diverse though the most common jobs were shop-keeping, teaching, office and clerical work, trades, farming and catering as well as professional jobs including doctors, dentists, engineers and accountants (Bloch 2002). The study also revealed interesting findings on participation post-arrival in the UK. At the time of the survey, 15% of respondents were studying, of which 22% were studying for a degree. More than two thirds attended groups or meetings for refugees and 29% had been involved in voluntary work in the UK. The study found a relatively low level of labour market participation with 29% of those refugees profiled currently in employment. Diversity of employment was more limited than the work carried out prior to coming to the UK and there was a notable lack of involvement in professional jobs in spite of relevant pre-migration experience. Almost a third identified English language learning as the assistance that would most help them to find a job (Bloch 2002).

Other research evaluating the skills and qualifications of refugees has referenced programs such as that developed by the London Framework of Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESA) and the London Skills Commission targeting refugees to help fill the chronic skills shortages in the teaching, health and construction sectors (ICAR 2003). In recent years the National Health Service (NHS) has struggled to fill vacant posts with staff trained in the UK. Migrant workers have increasingly been recruited to fill these gaps and the migration of health professionals to industrialised countries is predicted to increase in coming years. For example, in 2003 nearly a third of doctors working in the NHS obtained their qualifications overseas (IPPR 2005). The Nursery and Midwifery Council has estimated the number of nurses and midwives on the register who trained overseas at 65,000, around 10% of the total numbers registered (IPPR 2005). In 2003 the number of dentists registered on the General Dental Councils register was over 5000, 17% of the total register (IPPR 2005). This study also found that a number of asylum seekers and refugees have arrived in the UK with medical experience and qualifications, with 1007 doctors registered on the British Medical Association/British Refugee Council database (53% from Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan and Somalia). Many were found to be ineligible to work in the UK or to have had problems with the recognition of qualifications. The tendency of refugee doctors to be underemployed was replicated in the situation faced by refugee nurses, with only 55% of the 148 with permission to work actually employed (IPPR 2005).

It is worth noting that the collection of evidence showing the relative exclusion of refugees from the labour market collected at the beginning of the 2000s urged the UK government to plan targeted intervention. Since then policy makers across a range of government departments – including the Home Office and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) – have devised new strategies aimed at getting refugees into the labour market. These include the establishment of the National Refugee Integration Forum led by the Home Office and supported by a range of advisory subgroups to examine and report on ways in which refugees may better integrate. Subsequently in 2005 the Home Office published its refugee integration strategy *Integration Matters* along with the DWP document *Working to Rebuild Lives* (Cangiano 2008).

### **Other countries**

Generally refugees are less likely to be employed than other migrants. Those who do find work tend to be employed in a few industries or types of jobs, typically with poor terms and conditions of employment and low rates of pay and/or high levels of temporary or part-time jobs (Ministry of Social Development 2008; Brahmhatt et al 2007; Lamba 2003; Shields et al 2006). Generally, refugees' low economic participation rates are of concern.

In Canada the academic literature has primarily focused on legal or political issues surrounding refugees and thus the economic participation of refugees has received relatively little attention. The lack of comprehensive studies on the economic status of refugees partially is due to inadequate census data which only discloses foreign birth status and does not reveal entry status (e.g. refugee, family class immigrant etc) and thus does not easily facilitate economic analysis of the refugee sub-group (DeVoretz et al 2004). DeVoretz et al therefore used other longitudinal data to assess the economic participation of refugees. They found that refugees do not constitute a major drain on the economy and, that while their economic performance is not as impressive as that of other migrants (for whom human capital is the selection criteria), it is generally robust. Notwithstanding there being no evidence of a deficit effect on the economy, lower than average earnings do, however, consign ever-greater proportions of refugees to the ranks of Canada's poor, and this therefore calls for further investigation and effective policy response (DeVoretz et al 2004).

A study by Valtonen looking at Vietnamese refugees in Finland and Canada found that self-employment in areas serving the ethnic community can be a viable alternative in sizeable communities that are able to sustain such enterprises. Longitudinal data revealed that one in five refugees had started his or her own business, often employing Canadians. Ethnic small businesses were one of the few strategies to sustaining economic and occupational mobility, a strategy used by resettling persons to cope with the limited access to economic opportunity. It found that a spin-off of ethnic enterprises is some employment for fellow refugees, including those

who had done a considerable amount of job-searching in the mainstream employment market without success (Valtonen, 1999).

Humanitarian entrants who socialise primarily with their compatriots are less likely to be employed than those who have wider networks (Potocky-Tripodi 2004). Friends (especially friends from the host community) are a good source of jobs and residential stability may increase opportunities to broaden the range of network ties instrumental in employment adjustment and advancement (Shields et al 2006). As ethnic communities became numerically stronger and more established, refugees may be able to develop networks that spread vital information, assistance and support.

## 5.7 Local and regional factors impacting on labour force outcomes

Conducting research on refugee experiences in Sweden, Bevelander and Lundh reported that the few studies on the regional level show large differences in economic integration for different groups and regions, thereby supporting the approach of studying the economic integration of refugees on the local and regional levels more systematically (Bevelander and Lundh 2007). Studies in Canada have also shown that, in addition to entrance category and time, the place of settlement may exert an independent effect on economic performance (DeVoretz and Pivnenko 2004).

Local unemployment and employment rates can significantly affect refugees' chances of obtaining employment. The size of the local labour market has also been found to be significant in that refugees are likely to find work in a bigger labour market because of the greater variation in number of jobs, even if there is more competition for jobs. Refugees are more likely to obtain employment in areas with lower general education and skill levels (Bevelander and Lundh 2007).

## 5.8 Areas for future research

The international literature contains some useful models of pertinent research conducted overseas, as well as possible future avenues for research in Australia.

It is widely acknowledged that current gaps in census or other data make it difficult to distinguish refugee economic contributions from those of other migrants. DeVoretz et al (2004) identify relevant economic questions as:

- 1) Do refugees experience economic integration after a period of time?
- 2) How does the refugee economic experience compare to other singly selected immigrant group or the family class?
- 3) Does a refugee's economic performance depend on which particular refugee gate she/he entered?
- 4) Does the year of arrival and the associated macro-economic conditions affect the economic performance of refugees?

Other papers have suggested the need for more differentiated research between migrant groups due to the fact that much existing research looks at aggregate contributions of immigrants (IPPR 2005). They point out that immigrants are not a homogenous group and that some groups will make relatively large fiscal contributions and others relatively small or negative ones. Therefore, researchers need to explore this diversity further and policy makers need to take account of the circumstances of different groups of migrants.

Studies also support the need for more systematic research concerning the skills and qualifications of refugees in order to help change public perceptions, foster community cohesion and aid integration (Kirk 2004). Kirk highlights that this can be done by sending self-completion questionnaires to refugees and outlines improvements that could be made to the methodology used in her research. She suggests, for example, conducting research over a longer time period as well as targeting the dependants of refugees or all adults in a bid to yield more female respondents and therefore be more representative of the refugee population. Given the difficulties encountered in analysing and reporting the skill level and qualifications of migrants and refugees, further work

on overseas education and qualifications would be helpful in order to provide a better understanding of what these entail and their applicability to the domestic context. This could include aspects such as an in-depth analysis of the education systems in countries of origin, details of qualifications and the comparison of these to domestic qualifications, details of training received, and the application of overseas qualifications domestically to investigate whether migrants are able to gain full use of their relevant qualifications (Kirk 2004).

Bloch notes that a criticism levelled at refugee employment research is the tendency to place emphasis on human capital rather than structural, physical and psycho-social factors (Bloch 2007). Other researchers have observed the relative absence of an analysis of racism and systematic discrimination from the research on refugee employment and in government integration policy (Archer et al 2005, cited in Bloch 2007).

A number of studies suggest that further in-depth study of local conditions that promote or hamper economic integration should be a matter of high priority (DeVoretz et al 2004; Bevelander and Lundh 2007). Key questions for such research would be:

- 1) Is there a regional variation in the employment chances of refugees, and if so
- 2) What factors explain this variation (individual and human capital characteristics, size and features of the municipality of residence, characteristics of the local labour market and the local economy)?

## Section 6

# VOLUNTARY WORK AMONG REFUGEE COMMUNITIES

### Key findings:

- Different meanings and ethnic-based understandings of the term “volunteer” can result in research failing to recognise the extent of voluntary work by members of CALD communities. Studies have shown that “informal” volunteering plays an important role in building social capital.
- Research has revealed that CALD community volunteers provide the greater part of their services to mainstream society rather than their own ethno-specific group (e.g. one study found this to be 61% versus 39% respectively).
- Volunteering is an important tool for integrating refugees into broader society, for providing experience that can lead to paid employment and for affording refugees the opportunity to be seen as actively shaping and improving society.
- The concept of community self-help is observed across ethnic communities throughout Australia (e.g. Vietnamese former refugees who traditionally turn to family members for assistance). Such support (e.g. in aged care) is likely to represent a significant contribution in kind through reduced reliance on state support services.

### Information gaps identified and future research recommended:

- The ABS Volunteer Work Survey, a report that provides data on volunteer participation, should in future distinguish between migrant populations and humanitarian entrants as well as integrate a more culturally-sensitive understanding and recording of voluntary work.
- Research is required to better quantify refugees’ social capital contributions as well as cost “in kind” contributions arising from community self-help or other voluntary work in the community.

## 6.1 Introduction

This section reviews the social and civic contributions made by humanitarian entrants. The review of literature in this area covers research on participation in volunteering, the way in which volunteering can act as a pathway to paid work, the social capital that refugees generate and the non-paid work that humanitarian entrants perform in their homes and communities. There is evidence that humanitarian entrants make significant social and civic contributions to Australia.

## 6.2 The extent of volunteering among multicultural communities

A review of literature concerning the prevalence of non-paid and voluntary work among refugee communities reveals a relative scarcity of empirical evidence. More broadly, there is limited research concerning people of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) or non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB). This lack of research on volunteering from multicultural communities has led to assertions that these communities are under-represented in the voluntary sector, or less likely to volunteer than their Anglo-Australian-born counterparts (ABS 2008).

However, Kerr et al (2001) argue that the converse is likely to be true. They suggest that different meanings and ethnic-based understandings of the term “volunteer” hide the fact that actually multicultural communities participate in voluntary activities in a variety of ways. Kerr et al (2001) have also identified that “informal” volunteering – where people are providing community, family and individual support to others in an unstructured or unmanaged but nevertheless committed way – plays just as an important a role in building social capital as does formal or more recognisable

forms of volunteering. The non-remunerated activity is no less important if it is carried out by an unmanaged volunteer outside of a formal organisational structure (Kerr et al 2001).

The National Survey of Australian Volunteers from Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds (AMF and VA 2007) reviewed the limited materials available regarding participation in the voluntary sector by people of CALD backgrounds. The review uncovered a number of state-based research projects, but not a comprehensive, national assessment. The table below outlines these reports and programs.

Report/Program	Organisations/State	Key findings
Kerr, et al. Experiences and perceptions of volunteering in Indigenous and non-English speaking background communities, 2001	Department of State Aboriginal Affairs, the South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission, Volunteering SA, the Unaipon School (University of SA) and the Social Policy Research Group (University of SA) / SA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little evidence to date which reflects the experiences and perceptions of NESB volunteers themselves.</li> <li>• Cultural factors played an important part in the valuing of and attitudes towards volunteering.</li> <li>• “Western” concept of volunteering does not recognise the cultural and linguistic differences, which means that much of the volunteering or community effort /activity is not formalised and is then not acknowledged and fails to attract both material support and wider recognition.</li> </ul>
Celebrating Volunteers of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds, 1999	Australian Multicultural Foundation, RMIT University, Volunteering Victoria and Department of Premier and Cabinet Multicultural Affairs Unit / Vic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot study that could be developed into a national project on the amount of volunteer work carried out in culturally diverse communities.</li> <li>• Study found that a surprisingly large number of the volunteers surveyed (63%) volunteered with mainstream organisations, not ethno-specific or multicultural organisations.</li> <li>• People were overwhelmingly motivated by a desire to help their communities and others; therefore, it is important to include community-based non-structured activities in empirical studies to give a better understanding of the formal and informal nature of the voluntary sector.</li> </ul>
Managing Diversity Among Volunteers	Volunteering NSW / NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Module in the Diploma of Volunteer Management Practices course.</li> <li>• Explores issues involving and managing volunteers from diverse backgrounds.</li> </ul>
Pilot Project “Buddy System”	Centrelink and Volunteering Queensland / Qld	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project that encourages more people from CALD backgrounds, especially those with some problem with the English language, to take up volunteering.</li> <li>• A bilingual person accompanies the volunteers from CALD backgrounds to the workplace to give support and help.</li> </ul>

Research conducted by Kerr et al (2001) found that people from CALD<sup>5</sup> backgrounds are engaged in informal volunteering within their community and family sectors, as well as formal voluntary activity within the non-profit sector. This study found a significant gap in the literature on people from CALD backgrounds with regards to their volunteer efforts and community involvement both within and outside their own cultural groups. The Victorian-based AMF (1999) research also acknowledged that CALD communities participate in voluntary and non-paid work in mainstream organisations, not just multicultural associations. Sixty-one per cent of volunteers provided services to the broader mainstream community, more than the 39% who worked exclusively with their own communities, challenging the idea that Australians from CALD backgrounds mainly volunteer within their own communities (AMF and VA 2007). Although these research projects recognise the

<sup>5</sup> Kerr et al refer to CALD background as NESB.



significant contributions of people from CALD backgrounds, they also detect a lack of public recognition or funding support.

While there is only relatively limited research on CALD participants in the voluntary sector, studies specifically focusing specifically on refugees are even scarcer. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Voluntary Work Survey 2006 only classifies people as those born elsewhere (of Australia), and then by those people born in the main English-speaking countries (ABS 2008). Research that explicitly references the unpaid and voluntary work of refugees is, however, available in the United Kingdom. The Working Lives research evaluates the role of volunteering for refugee women. Initially, the research set out to support the view that volunteering can act as a pathway into employment, but later discovered that participation in voluntary work not only has the potential to act as a pathway into employment but also can provide other benefits to both refugees and to the broader community (Working Lives 2005).

### 6.3 Voluntary work as a pathway to employment

In the Working Lives research, volunteering was found not only to integrate refugee women into broader society but also to provide the opportunity for refugee women to view themselves as actively shaping and improving society (Working Lives 2005). The voluntary work provided important benefits to refugee women who, for various reasons, were unable to undertake paid employment, while simultaneously benefiting the organisations who were recipients of their unpaid work. The research also noted volunteering could enable access to resources including job and training networks, social connections and information unlikely to be available to those outside of the organisation (Working Lives 2005).

Research by Bloch (2005), while focusing on refugees' participation in the labour market, education and training, did also collect information on the role of voluntary work in the lives of refugees. Overall, 29% of respondents to the survey participated in voluntary work. Their contribution was also most often long-term and significant in the number of hours per week (Bloch 2005). The major reason given by volunteers for stopping non-paid work was to take up paid employment or to become a student, suggesting voluntary work represents a positive pathway to employment or further education.

The research of both the UK-based and Australian state-based organisations suggests that voluntary work for refugees and for people of CALD backgrounds is of mutual benefit to the volunteer, the organisation and broader society. Volunteering is a way of contributing to civic society, garnering networks and social capital and generating the initial pathway to paid employment.

### 6.4 Social capital contributions of humanitarian entrants

Acknowledging the social capital of refugees is important, as it refers to all activity within a society that contributes to strengthening the life of the community (Madkhul 2007). While official definitions of volunteering may exclude unpaid work done in the home or within families, social capital provided by refugees represents a significant portion of their contribution to Australia.

The social capital and connections that refugees bring to their community are powerful. These community links, or social bridges, can be developed in a number of ways, including through social contacts in neighbourhoods and through engaging in voluntary activities (Atfield et al 2007). These social connections and networks, particularly those that include host country members, contribute significantly to positive settlement outcomes. This positive impact is not only social but also practical; the connections can help when seeking employment (Atfield et al 2007). The critical role of social capital and, in particular, bridging social capital (the link between refugee populations and mainstream society) needs to be recognised as valuable by governments and built into economic and social policies for both refugee communities as well as for the wider Australian community (Miralles-Lombardo et al 2008).

Social connections can also produce community capital. Studies have demonstrated the contribution of migrants to the community infrastructure through business development, community facilities and diversity in cultural life. Lalich (2003) identifies the considerable resources invested by ethnic communities in Sydney in building places of worship, social and sport clubs, child-care facilities, schools, welfare centres and aged care facilities.

## 6.5 Non-paid work in the home and the community

The concept of community self-help is observed across ethnic-bound communities throughout Australia, including Vietnamese people who traditionally turn to family members for assistance (Madkhul 2007). Likewise for members of the Arabic-speaking communities, assisting family, neighbours and friends “was a given” (AMF and VA 2007). This self-help not only benefits the individual or family but is also likely to contribute to significant savings for government-sponsored social support, particularly for aged care and child care.

As Colic-Peisker (2003) observes, Bosnian refugees in Australia nominated or sponsored their aged parents and other relatives to migrate and also financially supported them following their arrival (also in Waxman 2001). In the case of refugee resettlement, extended family and “ethnic” community are a source of practical support as well as identity (Colic-Peisker 2003). An empirical study by Rump et al (2000) found that among a Serbian refugee group in South Australia, community support was fundamental in ameliorating health problems. This support came from both the refugee community and from the family unit (Rump et al 2000). The fact that refugee populations are often culturally driven to support family members, particularly in aged care, has the potential to represent a significant contribution in kind through reduced reliance on state support.

There is also anecdotal evidence that family and community support helps to ensure faster integration and improved settlement outcomes for newly arrived refugees. Many refugee community representatives perform a variety of services to assist their communities, including assistance with the orientation of recently arrived refugees (RCOA 2009). Programs have evolved which seek to make use of such resources in a structured and systematic manner, which additionally will often provide an effective pathway into employment. The Migrant Resource Centre of South Australia has an extensive network of over 300 bilingual volunteers who provide assistance across all program areas. The volunteer program is geared to provide a first entry point into work experience and pathway to vocational training and employment for people of refugee background. Approximately 60% of volunteers go on to further training and or secure employment (MRCSA 2008).

The community guides program at AMES Victoria is another example of a system of a successful pathway from volunteering to employment (AMES 2008). The program both assists new arrivals in their early settlement by linking them with a culturally matched refugee and provides meaningful employment to the refugee community member. For many, the Community Guides work in their first paid job in Australia (AMES 2008). The work not only provides access to income but also presents the opportunity to be coached and mentored by AMES staff, to attend training and network meetings and to achieve local work experience. Employment outcomes for former Community Guides include community health, welfare and youth workers; employment consultants and counsellors; bilingual workers, and positions within retail, hospitality, customer service and administration (AMES 2008).

## 6.6 The role of community organisations

Community organisations (CALD, refugee-based or mainstream) play a significant and often unrecognised role in refugee settlement and in broader society. Representatives from such organisations often provide entirely voluntary (unpaid) support and on occasions are left to fill gaps (e.g. out of hours work) in funded services (RCOA 2009). Flanagan (2007) notes that charitable non-governmental organisations used their professional and community links to network with

employers and then to connect jobseekers from new communities to work opportunities. They created a specialist service that could provide training for job-seekers based on feedback from employers on skills gaps among refugee applicants. Flanagan identified refugees that were part of a new community group that had formed their own unofficial “job agency”. They hoped to use this as a mechanism for such networking (Flanagan 2007).

In their recent report, Miralles-Lombardo et al (2008) set out to identify the role that multicultural community organisations play in the lives of refugees. The research explicitly moved away from the tendency to position all people from a language other than English background, regardless of cultural, religious, educational and migration history, into a homogenous group with common experiences and needs. Instead, the study evaluated the experiences of refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq and Sudan and found that multicultural community organisations created informal networks and learning spaces that connected people from refugee backgrounds to the wider Australian community (Miralles-Lombardo et al 2008). These community organisations provide critical public and community space for practical experience in the activities that Australian-born people often take for granted, including the use of telephones, the internet, email and word processing. The study also found that the multicultural community organisations provided avenues for those refugees that had previously utilised services to give back through mentoring and advising new arrivals (Miralles-Lombardo et al 2008).

## 6.7 Areas for future research

There are a number of useful avenues for future research. There is widely acknowledged anecdotal evidence of refugees’ social and civic contributions to society but relatively little in-depth research, let alone empirical evidence data to quantify this. Demonstrating the benefit of refugee civic and social capital contributions could be achieved through costing their efforts in the community and within family. Demonstrating the significant taxpayer savings in aged care services because family members care for one another, for example, would provide measurable data that could positively enter the public discourse on the humanitarian settlement program in Australia.

Another approach could be by “piggy-backing” on current data collection on volunteer participation, such as the ABS Volunteer Work Survey. This survey has evolved since its initial collection in 1995, so seeking information on community-identity and humanitarian status could be relatively easily included in the next edition. The most recent survey (2006) collected information on informal unpaid community work, e.g. caring for people with a disability and providing assistance to relatives, friends and others in the wider community (ABS 2006). The inclusion of this kind of non-paid work and contribution in the classification of voluntary work would help capture much of the work done by refugees, particularly women.

A further possibility for raw data collection could be through the use of DIAC-generated information and/or the reports of service providers and ethno-specific community organisations (e.g. IHSS and SGP providers).

In seeking more careful analysis and meaningful understanding of the role that humanitarian entrants play in the community via voluntary and non-paid work, a research project could be developed based on the methods and scope of both the UK’s Working Lives Research Institute (2005) report and the National Survey of Australian Volunteers from Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds (2006). The UK report’s focus on women refugees could be either expanded to include men and young people or replicated to collect data and gain an understanding of refugee women’s role in the family, the voluntary sector and the broader community.

To fill the gap of empirical research on the role of community organisations in refugee settlement, the recent work of Newland et al in *Bridging Divides: The Role of Ethnic Community-based Organisations in Refugee Integration* (2007) in the USA provides a useful model. The work goes a long way towards quantifying and understanding the substantial role that community organisations play.

# ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

## 1. Benefits of Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program

**Bryant, J, Genç, M and Law, D (2004). Trade and Migration to New Zealand. New Zealand Treasury Working Paper 01/18, September.**

This report examines the hypothesis that a greater stock of migrants in New Zealand from a particular country leads to more trade between that country and New Zealand. The literature suggests that migrants can stimulate trade by lowering transaction costs and by bringing with them preferences for goods produced in their home country. The study used panel data techniques within the framework of a standard gravity model of trade. The sample included an average of over 170 countries for the years 1981 to 2001. Although the work does not organise the migrants into categories or identify the role of the humanitarian entrant population, the work does provide robust quantitative analysis of the positive impact migrants can have on trade aspects of the economy.

<http://ideas.repec.org/p/nzt/nztwps/04-18.html>

**Carrington, K, McIntosh, A and Walmsley, J (eds) (2007). The Social Costs and Benefits of Migration to Australia. Centre for Applied Research in Social Science, University of New England.**

Using the four capitals framework (human, social, produced and financial, and natural), Carrington et al's study synthesises a vast amount of quantitative and qualitative evidence with a particular focus on the social costs and benefits of migration. The study consolidated material from 49 different data sets and a large volume of existing although disparate research; and gathered original empirical material through four community studies, two in regional Australia and two in metropolitan cities on the east coast of Australia. Carrington et al do not focus specifically on humanitarian entrants, although do refer to visa type in some of their analysis. The main conclusion drawn from this study is that the social benefits of migration far outweigh the costs, especially in the longer term. The evidence that is available overwhelmingly supports the view that migrants to Australia have made and continue to make substantial contributions to Australia's stock of human, social and produced capital.

<http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/research/social-costs-benefits/>

**Ionescu, D (2006). Engaging Diasporas as Development Partners for Home and Destination Countries: Challenges for Policymakers. International Organization for Migration, IOM Migration Research Series No. 26, Geneva.**

This report reviews the existing policies aimed at engaging migrant diasporas (although not exclusively refugee populations) for development purposes and also discusses the policy context and factors that facilitate their mobilisation. It addresses a number of key policy challenges in the light of ongoing national practices, general research evidence, and IOM's research and operational experience. The research includes a review of policy approaches and pilot programs. With most previous research focused on remittances and remittance policies, this paper also examines how policymakers could enhance the non-financial contributions made by diasporas. The material presented aims to inform policymakers in home and host countries on existing practices and to provide a guide for those engaged in formulating policies to engage diasporas as active partners for development, in particular in countries of origin.

[http://www.duplaoportunidade.org/IMG/pdf/mrs26\\_20interior.pdf](http://www.duplaoportunidade.org/IMG/pdf/mrs26_20interior.pdf)

**Liebig, T (2006). The Labour Market Integration of Immigrants to Australia. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, Paris.**

Liebig synthesises current research on the labour market integration of immigrants to Australia and compares this with outcomes in other countries of refugee settlement. Liebig's study indicates that employment of the humanitarian group in Australia is significantly below that of humanitarian immigrants to Canada. Liebig finds that those who are sponsored through the Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) appear to have lower employment probabilities in the long run, which

he hypothesises may be due to lower levels of assistance provided to SHP entrants on arrival and in early stages of settlement. Liebig argues that migrants from all visa categories struggle to find work that matches their qualification levels, and this may be due to the complexity of the state and national qualification recognition processes. In terms of reasons for the poor employment outcomes of humanitarian entrants, Liebig argues that the principal integration aid is provided in the form of language training (i.e. AMEP), but there is little measurement of its effectiveness with respect to employment. Furthermore, he argues, few settlement services are directly targeted at labour market integration. Liebig attributes discrimination as another possible contributing factor to poor labour market success among immigrants from non-English speaking backgrounds, including humanitarian entrants.

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/28/12/38164878.pdf>

**Richardson, S, Healy, S, Stack, S, Ilsley, D, Lester, L and Horrocks, J (2004). The Changing Labour Force Experience of New Migrants: Inter-Wave Comparisons for Cohort 1 and 2 of the LSIA. Report to the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Canberra.**

One of the very few longitudinal studies covering settlement experiences for migrants (including employment outcomes) based on the Department of Immigration's Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia (LSIA). Research compares the labour force participation, income, expenditure, qualifications and English proficiency of different waves of migrants, including humanitarian entrants. The study found that humanitarian migrants had employment levels substantially below average, but this was mostly due to low rates of participation in the labour force, rather than to unemployment. Reasons identified by Richardson et al for the poor employment outcomes of humanitarian arrivals included: low levels of English proficiency, lower qualification levels, and a larger proportion of humanitarian entrants reporting their main activity as studying or "home duties" (i.e. not "unemployed"). As this longitudinal study interviewed participants at only six months and 18 months after arrival, and the time it takes to learn English and gain qualifications for refugees who have not had the same access to education as their non-humanitarian counterparts is likely to be much longer than 18 months, this outcome is to be expected.

<http://www.immi.gov.au/media/research/projects/economic/labour-force-settlement.htm>

**Stevens, C (1998). Migration Category and Labour-Force Status: Policy Implications of the Performance of Refugees. People and Place, 6(1). Centre for Population and Urban Research, Monash University.**

This article presents findings from analysis of data from the Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Migrants survey undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in November 1996 and explores the labour force status of immigrants according to migration category, with particular focus on the policy implications of the experience of refugees. 3,078 persons were interviewed in the ABS survey and were categorised under: New Zealanders, refugees, sponsored or unsponsored immigrants. There is some discrepancy in the ABS categories and Department of Immigration visa streams as participants were able to self-identify as refugees, regardless of whether they came to Australia under the humanitarian program. Stevens found that humanitarian entrants had poor labour market outcomes compared to the other migration categories, although unemployment levels declined with length of time in Australia. Stevens found that 21% of refugees received their main income from their own business, a proportion which was much higher than for any other migration category. Factors inherent to refugees may account for some of the observed pattern, and the data could be interpreted as an indicator of greater entrepreneurial behaviour among refugees than other groups, or of cultural factors and predispositions, as well as niches of demand. Exclusionary processes and constraints on employment opportunities in mainstream enterprises in the host society may be other influences. Policy implications (although some addressed in the 10 years since publication) to redress this situation include increased access and flexibility in English language training for refugees, long-term mentoring, case management and active assistance in finding work to increase links and contacts as well as knowledge of suitable employers. Social supports and networks could also be fostered through programs conducted by ethnic organisations, local

government and other mainstream organisations. Further initiatives could include the provision of more personal support for victims of torture and trauma.

<http://elecpress.monash.edu.au/pnp/free/pnpv6n1/stevens.html>

**Van Hear, N (2003). Refugee Diasporas, Remittances, Development, and Conflict. Migration Policy, Migration Information Source Featured Article, June.**

This discussion paper reviews the factors that influence the contribution that refugees and other migrants can make in influencing their homelands. Van Hear believes that the extent to which refugees can influence their country of origin is dependent on what resources they can mobilise (and this may depend on where they are located, e.g. communications technologies). The article also found that remittances are an important influence on the country of origin. It is, however, difficult to estimate the extent to which refugees contribute to global flows because the data on remittances is patchy, the existing data may not disaggregate the contribution from refugees (versus other migrants), and refugees in richer countries may remit both to homeland and to neighbouring countries of first asylum, making contributions more diffuse than for other migrants.

<http://www.migrationinformation.org/feature/display.cfm?ID=125>

**Waxman, P (2001). The Economic Adjustment of Recently Arrived Bosnian, Afghan and Iraqi Refugees in Sydney, Australia. International Migration Review, 35(2).**

Research on the early settlement experience of refugees from Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan is absent, both in Australia and overseas. The current study, based on questionnaire results and the application of SPSS results, explores the impact that pre-migration and post-arrival experiences have on the initial post-arrival economic adjustment in Sydney of recently arrived refugees from these three countries. Guided by a summary of previous findings and surveyed results of key service providers in Sydney, two propositions based on pre-migration and post-migration background variables have been developed and tested with mixed results. The purpose of the report is to examine the impact that the pre-migration and post-migration experiences have on the economic adjustment of recently arrived humanitarian entrants from emerging communities, and to provide a comparative analysis of the initial economic adaptation process of humanitarian entrants from various regional and ethnic backgrounds arriving in the receiving country at approximately the same time. This comparative framework allows insights to be provided into the economic adjustment process that would be absent had a single refugee group been nominated.

## 2. Skill Shortages and Opportunities for Humanitarian Entrants

**Broadbent, R, Cacciattolo, M and Carpenter, C (2007). A Tale of Two Communities: Refugee Relocation in Australia. Australian Journal of Social Issues, 42(4).**

This research evaluated the knowledge base of practices in regional migrant and refugee relocation. It aimed to better understand ways to improve access to economic resources, facilitate social inclusion and address discrimination and violence. Other aims included promoting the mental health and well-being of migrants, refugees and regional communities. The methodology included establishing reference and focus groups, with aims to ensure that key stakeholders — in particular refugee and migrant communities — contributed to the evaluation processes and outcomes.

The evaluation documented the processes involved in establishing refugee migrant and relocation projects in Swan Hill and Warrnambool and the perceptions of all key stakeholders as to the extent to which the relocation projects had successfully met their original aims. The report has several recommendations for all levels of government in planning regional refugee resettlement programs and, overall, points to the benefit of these programs for both humanitarian entrants and the host communities.

**Carrington, K, McIntosh, A and Walmsley, J (eds) (2007).**

See citation on page 57.



**Clarius Skills Index (2008). September 08/09 Quarter. Clarius Group and KPMG Econtech.**

The Clarius Skills Index is the only report that indexes the shortage or oversupply of skilled labour. It uses ABS statistics, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations data, and a modelling system to index and analyse the labour skills shortage or oversupply across 19 occupation categories for the September quarter of 2008/09, as well as the preceding quarters to 2001. This latest edition concludes that Australia's skills shortage remains despite the global economic downturn.

[http://www.clarius.com.au/PDF/Clarius%20Skills%20Index\\_December%202008.pdf](http://www.clarius.com.au/PDF/Clarius%20Skills%20Index_December%202008.pdf)

**Colic-Peisker, V and Tilbury, F (2006). Employment Niches for Recent Refugees: Segmented Labour Market in Twenty First Century Australia.**

This survey of three refugee groups (ex-Yugoslavs, black Africans and people from the Middle East) in Western Australia indicates that the recent humanitarian arrivals are concentrated in labour market niches such as cleaning services, care of the aged, meat processing, taxi driving, security and building. Apart from the building industry, these employment niches are situated in the secondary labour market comprising low-status and low-paid jobs that locals avoid. The article identifies several interrelated mechanisms through which the recent Australian refugee intake has been relegated to undesirable jobs: non-recognition of qualifications as a systemic barrier, discrimination on the basis of race and cultural difference by employers, ethnic-path integration and the lack of mainstream social networks that could assist in the job search, and the recent regional sponsored migration scheme through which government sought to address the shortage of low-skilled labour in depopulating country areas.

<http://jrs.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/19/2/203>

**Flanagan, J (2007). Dropped from the moon: the settlement experiences of refugee communities in Tasmania. Social Action and Research Centre, Anglicare Tasmania.**

Anglicare Tasmania conducted primary qualitative research in 2006 with 78 refugees and humanitarian entrants (17 focus groups and three in-depth interviews) who were living in Tasmania, were over the age of 18, and had arrived within 10 years. Researchers also interviewed a wide range of service providers and conducted a literature review. The findings included labour market participation and barriers. The experiences of refugees included: language, education and training barriers, lack of labour market knowledge, lack of access to formal and informal networks, poor provision of advice (including guidance and training), cultural transition issues and pre-arrival experiences, unpreparedness for departure, lack of possessions and community networks, the experience of torture and trauma, family reunion issues, discrimination in the labour market, child-care issues, lack of relevant skills or unrecognised qualifications, disrupted education, lack of transport and low self-confidence caused by their failure to find work.

[http://www.anglicare-tas.org.au/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=doc\\_view&gid=126&Itemid=81](http://www.anglicare-tas.org.au/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=126&Itemid=81)

**McDonald, B, Gifford, S, Webster, K, Wiseman, J, and Case, S (2008). Refugee Resettlement in Regional and Rural Victoria: Impacts and Policy Issues. VicHealth, Carlton.**

The report was commissioned by the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) and prepared in partnership with a number of organisations. It aims to contribute to the ongoing discussion about regional and rural refugee resettlement policy. The report aims to increase understanding of the impacts of refugee regional and rural resettlement and relocation programs on the health and wellbeing of refugees, to increase understanding about the impacts of these programs on regional communities, and to contribute to the development and evaluation of national, state and local government policies and programs relevant to refugee resettlement more broadly. The report not only reviews national and international research but also uses focus groups and feedback from community members and organisations.

[http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/-/media/ProgramsandProjects/MentalHealthandWellBeing/Publications/Attachments/RefugeeResettlement\\_Web2.ashx](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/-/media/ProgramsandProjects/MentalHealthandWellBeing/Publications/Attachments/RefugeeResettlement_Web2.ashx)

**Mercer Australia (2008). Workplace 2012: Beyond the Global Financial Crisis, October 2008.**

This recent report provides an updated profile of the workplace in 2012 in terms of the demand for and supply of labour. The report reviews economic data and events from February to October 2008

and includes updated demographic projections. The implications of this data and the findings of the immigration simulation support the need for planning for a continued skills shortage.

<http://www.mercer.com.au/workplace2012>

**Productivity Commission (2006). Economic Impacts of Migration and Population Growth. Productivity Commission Research Report, Commonwealth of Australia, Melbourne.**

The Productivity Commission study was commissioned by the Australian Government to examine the impacts of migration and population growth on Australia's productivity and economic growth. The main focuses of the study, which synthesises existing data sets and literature, are on: the nature of international migration flows; the impact of migration, particularly skilled migration, on the labour force, occupations, industries and regions; the effects of migration and population growth on productivity and economic growth; and legislative and other impediments preventing Australia from realising productivity gains from migration and population growth. Relatively little attention is given to the contribution and experiences of humanitarian entrants, aside from highlighting the comparatively lower incomes of humanitarian entrants when compared with other migrants and the Australian-born population. The study finds that English language proficiency stands out as a key factor determining the ease of settlement and labour market success of immigrants, as is length of time in Australia and qualification levels. The Commission acknowledged that discrepancies between entrants coming under the skilled migration program and those coming under humanitarian and family reunion programs are unsurprising considering the self-selection and higher skill base of skilled migrants as opposed to humanitarian and family visa holders.

<http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/study/migrationandpopulation/docs/finalreport>

**Stevenson, R (2005). Hopes Fulfilled or Dreams Shattered? From resettlement to settlement. Background Paper Refugees and Economic Contributions. Conference Papers, 23-28 November 2005.**

This paper argues that these negative perceptions of refugees are frequently unfounded and when given the necessary support and opportunities, refugees are able to make significant social, cultural, and economic contributions to both the region they are settled in and to Australia as a whole. The report covers the social and cultural impacts that refugees have, and are likely to have, on Australian society and the implications of current and past policies for the speed with which they are able to start making positive contributions. The report also outlines the economic argument for immigration, more broadly, considering the demographic characteristics of Australia. It also highlights the quantitative study into the economic impact of refugees in regional areas and provides strong evidence for the positive contributions that refugees can make to rural Australia.

<http://www.crr.unsw.edu.au/documents/Refugees%20and%20Economic%20Contributions.pdf>

**Taylor, J and Stanovic, D (2005). Refugees and Regional Settlement: Balancing Priorities. Brotherhood of St. Laurence, May 2005.**

The Brotherhood of St Laurence undertook a study to explore the settlement experiences of two recent refugee groups (Iraqi and Sudanese) in selected areas of regional Victoria (Shepparton, Colac and Warrnambool) and to examine factors that promote successful settlement in such areas. Interviews and consultations were undertaken with refugees and community leaders and service providers. The report demonstrates that policy planners contemplating future settlements need to think not only about the usual range of issues that migrants encounter regarding employment, housing, income and language, but also about concerns specific to refugees. It also outlines the positive impact that resettled refugees can have on waning host communities.

[http://www.bsl.org.au/pdfs/refugees\\_and\\_regional\\_settlement.pdf](http://www.bsl.org.au/pdfs/refugees_and_regional_settlement.pdf)

### 3. Educational and Labour Force Outcomes of the Second Generation

**Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (2003). 2001 Classification of Countries into English Proficiency Groups. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.**

English Proficiency (EP) groups are a classification of the source countries of Australia's immigration intake, providing a distinction between English speaking and non-English speaking



backgrounds of source countries is based on the level of English proficiency of new arrivals in the past five years. EP1 countries are those from which 98.5% of new arrivals are proficient in English, those in EP 2 rate between 84 and 98.5%, those in EP 3 rate from 57.5 to 84.5%, while EP4 includes countries from which less than 57.5% of new arrivals are proficient in English. EP Groups function as a tool to analyse data on educational and labour market outcomes of second generation humanitarian entrants by isolating languages specific to particular groups from source countries of humanitarian intake. This tool yields especially significant findings relating to occupational differentiation in Second Generation Australians (Khoo et al 2002).

<http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/ep-groups/ep.pdf>

**Economic Development Committee (2004). Inquiry into the Economic Contribution of Victoria's Culturally Diverse Population. Parliament of Victoria.**

This report finds that children of parents with non-English speaking backgrounds actually outperform children of parents with English speaking backgrounds in literacy and reading tests. It is argued that speaking a language additional to English is beneficial for learning and educational outcomes. The report therefore highlights the long-term economic contribution to society of children of non-English speakers, many of whom are humanitarian entrants.

[http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/edic/inquiries/Cultural\\_Diversity/EDC-Report\\_CulturalDiversity\\_2004-09-04.pdf](http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/edic/inquiries/Cultural_Diversity/EDC-Report_CulturalDiversity_2004-09-04.pdf)

**Khoo, SE, McDonald, P, Giorgas, D and Birrell, B (2002). Second Generation Australians: Report for the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs.**

This report analyses the social, economic and demographic outcomes of second generation Australians primarily using data from the 1996 census. The study uses a cohort analysis according to groups aged 0-14 years, 15-24 years, 25-34 years and 35-44 years in 1996. The cohort approach is instructive of the importance of contextualising and examining the second generation in relation to the different waves of immigration to Australia in order to isolate factors affecting their labour force outcomes and levels of educational attainment. Although no distinction is made between humanitarian entrants and migrants, the data is categorised according to national groups, some of which can be identified as primarily constituted of humanitarian entrants. The report shows that educational and employment outcomes for the second generation Hungarian, Polish and Vietnamese ancestries are better than those of the second generation of English speaking background or those of third generation Australians. These groups are more likely to continue their education, hold post-school qualifications and work in professional or managerial positions.

[http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/multicultural/2gen/sq\\_australians.pdf](http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/multicultural/2gen/sq_australians.pdf)

**Liebig, T (2006).**

See citation on page 57.

#### 4. Overcoming Barriers to Economic Progress

**Adult Multicultural Education Services (2008). Review of Employment Services, Prepared for: Brendan O'Connor, Minister for Employment Participation, February 2008, AMES Research and Policy.**

AMES' submission to the Federal Government's 2008 review of employment services presents data and qualitative evidence that indicate that workforce participation rates are lower for newly arrived refugees and migrants than for many other Australians, and that there are underutilised skills within these groups that could, with the benefit of training, work experience and support, help in alleviating some skills shortages present in Australia.

The paper provides some examples of initiatives that AMES has and is piloting to overcome barriers to employment. These include programs working with job seekers with few vocational skills and low levels of English, and programs that provide opportunities for refugees to gain casual employment that utilises their skills and experience. Pilots have included both direct entry to employment and customised training models, such as the Community Guides initiative that has employed 140 casual workers from refugee and migrant communities, and has led to 110 of these trained Guides securing ongoing employment with AMES and other organisations.

AMES recommendations include:

- Earlier intervention for humanitarian entrants by enhancing access to employment services;
- Improved case management within employment services;
- Improved performance management system within Job Network, such that “a life-first not work-first approach that changes the current speed of placement KPI to a more realistic criterion for those requiring intensive support”; and
- Increased support to employers, including: incentive and support that acknowledges employers’ effort and enables greater access by refugees and migrants to work experience and trials, and consideration given to an employer communications campaign that highlights the business benefits of cultural diversity and industry’s role in social inclusion.

<http://www.workplace.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/A0232A93-4D8C-4DC2-904A-28DA595047C7/0/104AustralianMigrantEducationServices.pdf>

**Berman, G and the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (2008). Harnessing Diversity: Addressing racial and religious discrimination in employment, VEOHRC, Melbourne.**

Berman et al’s comprehensive research into discrimination in employment reviewed existing literature on racial and religious discrimination in the workplace in Australia and internationally, held consultations with CALD communities in four key sites in Victoria – Shepparton, Dandenong, Footscray and Broadmeadows, invited individuals and organisations to provide written submissions to the consultation.

The research found that, despite strong legislative and policy framework aimed at preventing discrimination and ensuring equal opportunity in Victoria, discrimination in employment is still a significant issue for these communities. The literature and the community consultations highlighted the systemic nature of discrimination and the high personal impact on CALD community members. For example, the research found evidence of: discrimination in recruitment; underemployment and lack of recognition of qualifications; discrimination and disadvantage in accessing and utilising job search agencies; over-representation of migrants in low skilled, low paid employment; under-representation of migrants in the public sector; bias against migrants in promotion; intimidation in the workplace; religious discrimination; additional discrimination related to gender; discrimination in small and medium enterprises (SMEs); racism in the media and stereotyping of communities; and, difficulties accessing the complaints process.

Recommendations (p.v-ix) for overcoming discrimination in employment are linked to four main areas:

- Changes to the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission functions and processes;
- Changes to Victorian public service processes and policies – such as collecting demographic data on employees and analysing data biannually;
- Encouragement of business to value and support diversity and equity – through initiatives such as social marketing campaigns, voluntary benchmarking and promotion of best practice; and
- Improved support for migrants seeking employment – such as enhancing strategies for greater skills recognition and providing scholarships for approved bridging courses, and ensuring Job Network providers receive regular training on equal opportunity and human rights.

[www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/pdf/Harnessing%20Diversity%20report.pdf](http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/pdf/Harnessing%20Diversity%20report.pdf)

**Bevelander, P and Lundh, C (2007). Employment integration of refugees: the influence of local factors on refugee job opportunities in Sweden. Discussion Paper No. 2551. Bonn: Institute for the Study of Labor.**

Bevelander and Lundh’s (2007) study of refugee dispersal and labour market integration in Sweden, found that local variations of refugees’ integration into the labour market were partly a result of internal migration, mostly from less to more populated municipalities. The researchers monitored regional variations in employment integration and used logistic regressions to estimate the effect of individual and “human capital” characteristics, internal migration, municipality, local labour market and economic sector factors.

Bevelander and Lundh found that local unemployment and employment rates significantly affected refugees’ chances of obtaining employment, as did the size of the local labour market (with refugees more likely to find work in a bigger labour market because of the greater variation in number of jobs). Refugees were more likely to find work in areas with lower general education and

skill levels. They also had more chance of being employed in industry in less populated areas and in the private sector in larger cities.

In terms of recommendations, the study highlights the importance of taking into account local labour market factors in making dispersal plans.

[http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=958714](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=958714)

**Carrington, K, McIntosh, A and Walmsley, J (eds) (2007).**

See citation on page 57.

**Colic-Peisker, V and Tilbury, F (2007). Integration into the Australian Labour Market: The Experience of Three 'Visibly Different' Groups of Recently Arrived Refugees. *International Migration*, 45(1), 59-72.**

Colic-Peisker and Tilbury's study explores the effects of "visible difference" on employment outcomes of three recently arrived refugee groups: ex-Yugoslavs, black Africans, and people from the Middle East. The paper drew on data collected through a survey (150 questionnaire-based face-to-face interviews conducted by bilingual interviewers) of refugees who settled in Western Australia over the past decade.

Findings indicated different outcomes for respondents from the three backgrounds despite similar levels of human capital (English proficiency and qualifications) and similar length of residence. Data showed that employment outcomes such as employment status and income of ex-Yugoslavs are significantly better than those of Africans and Middle Easterners. The highly educated Africans fare significantly worse in these measures than the less educated ex-Yugoslavs; Middle Eastern respondents, also with high human capital, fare worse still. Compounding this result is the fact that ex-Yugoslavs reported lower language ability than the other two groups.

Colic-Peisker and Tilbury conclude that "whiteness" is a facilitating factor in ex-Yugoslavs more positive resettlement and labour market integration (p.79). They argue that differential outcomes in the Australian labour market are due to both structural and interpersonal racism, and cannot be explained using the traditional analysis that suggests that there are four main factors impacting on labour market participation: English proficiency, length of residence in Australia, educational qualifications, and visa type. The researchers further argue that the impact of visible difference on labour market outcomes has increased over recent years as a result of a revival of xenophobic attitudes triggered by internal and international events such as the "Tampa crisis" in August 2001 and the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attack in New York a few weeks later, which have seen those from Muslim backgrounds publicly vilified (p.61). Moreover, while anti-discrimination legislation exists and arguably prevents blatant discrimination, it may also push discrimination underground and make it more covert and subtle (p.78).

Despite experiences of unemployment and discrimination, Colic-Peisker and Tilbury's study paradoxically found that research participants were relatively satisfied with their lives in Australia.

<http://jrs.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/19/2/203>

**Dunlop, J (2005). Part of Society? Refugees in the Australian Labour Market. Hopes Fulfilled or Dreams Shattered? From Resettlement to Settlement Conference, 23-28 November 2005. UNSW Centre for Refugee Research, Sydney.**

- Employment is very important to refugees and integral to the settlement process. The psychological well-being of refugees seems to be partly both dependent on and necessary for successful employment outcomes. However, in terms of service provision, refugee settlement and employment are dealt with separately.
- There is a lack of research into refugees' experience in the labour market. There have been several studies on the experiences of TPV holders, but few on resettled refugees and asylum seekers.
- Refugees who do find work seem stuck in lower skill, lower paid, insecure jobs without assistance to establish a career pathway. Therefore, refugees are often unable to utilise their skills in the Australian labour market or to realise their potential.
- Some refugees encounter discrimination, harassment and unfavourable conditions at work. The pressure to find a job interacts with the difficulty of finding a job, language barriers and lack of knowledge about rights, to make refugees and asylum seekers vulnerable to exploitation.
- In the Australian labour market, education and English proficiency are prerequisites for stable

employment.

- Refugees face many barriers to satisfactory experience in the Australian labour market. These relate to their pre-arrival experience, and the structural and individual barriers they encounter in Australia. Barriers are compounded by other issues such as gender and age.
- Despite similar pre-arrival experiences, refugees are an extremely diverse group with different occupational and educational backgrounds.
- The current intake of refugees have more traumatic pre-arrival experiences.
- Refugees' pre-arrival experiences also distinguish them from migrants, but aside from the Job Network refugee pilot program, Centrelink and the Job Network place refugees in the CALD category. Refugees' misunderstanding of the system and inappropriate behaviour of service providers can lead to payments being breached unnecessarily.
- Although mainstream employment services do not seem to be meeting the needs of refugees, the barriers to satisfactory employment are not insurmountable. Positive outcomes can be achieved by providing a long-term service sensitive to refugee issues. This can be achieved at a cost below that of current Job Network service provision.

<http://www.crr.unsw.edu.au/documents/Refugees%20and%20Economic%20Contributions.pdf>

**Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (2009). Restricted Access: Humanitarian migrant women and employment in Victoria. ECCV Policy Discussion Paper, Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria, Carlton.**

The Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria's (ECCV) policy discussion paper explores issues specific to women coming under the humanitarian program and their interplay with employment outcomes. ECCV argues that the predominant issues for refugee women in entering the Australian labour market are: discrimination, English language difficulties, lower education levels, gender roles, childcare responsibilities, difficulties with government service providers and understanding the Australian job market.

ECCV argues that refugee women who follow the Islamic faith experience heightened discrimination relating to their visible difference (wearing the headscarf, hijab or burqa). As the wearing of the headscarf, hijab or burqa is a visible indicator that a woman follows Islam, some women feel that they have been discriminated against in the recruitment process because of their religious attire. Indeed, ECCV cites a report from the Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Victorian Multicultural Commission, and the Office of Women's Policy - CALD Women's Report - that documents the job-seeking experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse women and notes that "members of some communities who are visibly 'Muslim' or 'Arab' may be unsuccessful in securing a job ... because of their looks". (p.8)

Key recommendations include:

- Encouragement of programs that allow migrants to gain experience in the Australian workforce, such as Given the Chance (see Kyle et al 2004) and VICSEG's New Futures Training Program;
- Development of education and employer awareness campaigns that promote diversity and counter negative stereotypes;
- Expansion of current services to increase migrants' understanding and knowledge of the Australian labour market. This could involve information sessions on working in Australia, the jobseeking process in Australia, and resumé and interview preparation. Programs should be delivered by people who have a solid understanding of the varying cultures, backgrounds and circumstances of refugees;
- A review of the childcare services to which women have access, especially in relation to the cost of such services;
- Provision of appropriate support to migrants once in the workforce, for example in the form of mentors;
- Encouragement of migrants to pursue training and employment in service areas; and
- Increase assistance to community organisations that assist migrants, especially ethno-specific organisations and women's groups and improve the links between these community organisations, service providers and the government.

<http://eccv.org.au/doc/RestrictedAccessMigrantWomenEmploymentDiscussionPaper.pdf>



**Flanagan, J (2007).**

See citation on page 60.

**Joint Standing Committee on Migration (2006). Negotiating the maze: Review of arrangements for overseas skills recognition, upgrading and licensing, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.**

In its report on the findings of its Inquiry on issues relating to overseas skills recognition, JSCM explore issues pertinent to refugees (above and beyond the barriers experienced by other migrants) in having overseas qualifications and skills assessed and recognised in Australia. Data comes from a series of public hearings held across Australia, as well as 107 submissions, 23 supplementary submissions and 86 exhibits received by the Committee, highlighting that humanitarian entrants (p.263):

- have generally not played a role in choosing to settle in Australia (this is determined by the UNHCR and the Australian Government);
- are more likely to have a limited understanding of Australian society, having not done any research;
- are more likely to have departed their home countries in haste, without personal documents such as proof of employment and educational qualifications;
- are not required to meet educational or language proficiency requirements and are more likely to have poor English skills;
- have often faced extended periods of transit with disrupted education; and
- are more likely to have experienced instances of persecution and torture/trauma prior to entering Australia, resulting in mental health conditions impacting on their ability to settle smoothly into the community.

In terms of recommendations for greater acknowledgement and assessment of skilled refugees' qualifications and prior experiences, JSCM (2006: 266) identified the need for clearer communication and better access to information on skills recognition and licensing arrangements for humanitarian entrants. With regards to the financial difficulties experienced by skilled refugees in having qualifications assessed, JSCM suggests that, while the Assessment Fee Subsidy for Disadvantaged Overseas Trained Australians (ASDOT) funding program provided by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) aims to assist overseas trained Australians pay for the cost of examinations and, in some instances, the cost of having professional qualifications assessed, humanitarian entrants who are in work (often not in their professional field) may not be eligible as the criteria for ASDOT is very limited. It was suggested that humanitarian entrants should automatically qualify for access to ASDOT to cover examination and assessment fees, and that DEST should conduct a review of the ASDOT funding program to assess its accessibility to humanitarian entrants (pp.267-8). In addition, the Committee acknowledged the value of mentoring programs, particularly for humanitarian entrants, and encourages governments (both state and federal) to support employment related mentoring programs targeting humanitarian entrants (p.269).

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/mig/recognition/prelims.htm>

**Junankar, PN and Mahuteau, S (2004). Do Migrants Get Good Jobs? New Migrant Settlement in Australia. Discussion Paper No. 1434. Bonn: Institute for the Study of Labor.**

Junankar and Mahuteau use two cohorts of the longitudinal survey of immigrants to Australia data to study how changes in social security legislation in 1997 (i.e. 2 year waiting period for eligibility to social security) affected the quality of jobs held by new migrants. They use bivariate probit models to estimate the probabilities of holding a "good job" in terms of the usual human capital demographic variables (including visa category). The analysis is not specific to humanitarian entrants.

Their results suggest that the policy change had a positive impact on the probability to find a job, but a negative impact to hold a "good job". The researchers define a "good job" using objective and subjective criteria: where the migrant employs their educational qualifications in the current job, is on a similar rank in the occupational ladder, in terms of satisfaction with the job held and not wanting to move jobs.

Junankar and Mahuteau (2004) highlight particular challenges for those who are able to communicate at a basic or even competent level in English, highlighting the paradoxical situation in

which highly-skilled refugees with reasonable English proficiency may end up unemployed while their less-fluent counterparts can find work more easily because, even though the English comprehension of the skilled entrants is high, they are not well-versed in the nuances of the language that are required for some more specialised occupations.

<http://repec.iza.org/RePEc/Discussionpaper/dp1434.pdf>

**Kamp, A (2008). Advocating for young people from diverse backgrounds: Developing job opportunities and employment networks while at school. Migration Action Issue 3, December 2008, 28-29. The Ecumenical Migration Centre, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Fitzroy.**

In this brief journal article, Kamp synthesises existing literature and draws on the experiences of the Ecumenical Migration Centre in providing employment services for refugees and migrants in Melbourne. Kamp argues that there is a need for targeted programs focussed on refugee and migrant young people at an early stage of settlement (while newly arrived students are at school), in order to help overcome barriers to later employment such as lack of Australian work experience. Kamp (2008: 29) suggests that students from backgrounds of lower socio-economic status, as migrant and refugee students often are, are less likely to gain part-time jobs, yet they are more likely to depend on part-time work as the first stepping stone into work (Australian National Schools Network, 2008; Dockery and Strathdee, 2003).

**Khoo, SE (2007). Health and Humanitarian Migrants' Economic Participation. Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health, November 2007.**

In looking at the health impacts on employment outcomes, Khoo analysed data from the Longitudinal Surveys of Immigrants to Australia and examined the influence of three measures of health – self-reported health status, the presence of a long-term health condition and mental health status – on the economic participation of humanitarian migrants. Multivariate logistic regression were used to control for other factors known to affect immigrants' economic participation, such as age, skills and English language proficiency, to see if health has an independent effect.

The results show that migrants resettling in Australia on humanitarian grounds are known to have poorer health than other immigrants. Refugees with poor physical health are less likely than migrants with good health to be in the work force. Mental health status affects the economic participation of male but not female migrants. Overall, the findings provide empirical evidence of the significant role of health in the economic integration of migrants of refugee background.

<http://www.springerlink.com/content/ej37046345k2m759/>

**Kyle, L, Macdonald, F, Doughney, J and Pyke, J (2004). Refugees in the labour market: Looking for cost-effective models of assistance. Ecumenical Migration Centre, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne.**

Refugees in the labour market is probably the most relevant of recent studies and is primarily focused on exploring strategies for overcoming labour market barriers for refugees settling in Australia. With regards to methodology, Kyle et al conducted a scan of state and Commonwealth government programs; a literature review focussing on labour market programs and the labour market experiences of recent immigrants; interviewed a small number of community providers of education, training and employment programs for refugee groups; examined program and outcome data from the EMC's Given the Chance program; and compared the costs and outcomes of programs providing labour market assistance to refugees.

Findings included:

- There are a lack of targeted employment support services for refugee and humanitarian entrants;
- There are indications that lack of appropriate post-arrival support could be contributing to deteriorating labour market outcomes for refugees;
- Refugees within mainstream Job Network and JPET services have poorer outcomes compared with other groups, including "homeless" and "young offenders";
- The reasons for poorer outcomes of refugees in mainstream employment services are in part due to the refugee experience, including disrupted education and employment histories, language barriers, health and other settlement issues;

- Information and services provided by Job Network providers to refugee clients is inadequate or inappropriate to their needs;
- There is a lack of data collected on employment support service outcomes for this target group;
- Positive work and/or education and training outcomes for refugees can be achieved through funding specialist programs without significantly increasing investment in services.

Of particular note, Kyle et al's study (p.iv) identifies elements for an "ideal service" to link refugees more effectively into employment, including:

- Specialist services that: understand differences between refugee groups, their cultures, and needs; employs workers who speak a number of different languages; work closely with ethnic employers; have much closer relationships with employers generally; provide information in the appropriate form about industrial relations in Australia, income support, taxation etc; and are able to link up with services such as local settlement services.
- Job Club model of intensive supervised training and job hunting experience;
- Work experience combined flexibly with language tuition and other training options;
- Partnerships with other agencies and/or link with other service providers (English tuition, counselling, other training) to support refugees using an "holistic" approach;
- Takes enough time to understand each individual's needs (and to enable establishment of trust);
- Is able to provide a long-term service;
- Has good relationships with employers, and offers work experience and support in the workplace;
- Provides casework management, pathways planning, supported referrals, mentoring and other support as required.

The Given the Chance program is discussed at length as a model with successful outcomes (when compared to Job Network and JPET costs and outcomes). Adopting a case management model, Given the Chance combines pathways planning with job skills training, work experience, mentoring and other support (e.g. counselling) as required. Support and assistance are provided for up to a year, and there is flexibility in the program, with various elements provided in different combinations based on the case manager's assessment of each individual's needs. The Given the Chance program's average total cost per actual participant (\$1117) is considerably less than either JPET (\$1500) or Job Network (\$2900).

In terms of outcomes, evaluation of the program indicates higher participation in education, training and employment for participants when compared to outcomes of those "disadvantaged jobseekers" participating in Job Network intensive training and JPET over the same period. The proportion of successful outcomes through participation in the programs was measured at 13 weeks, 26 weeks and 52 weeks. The Given the Chance program had the highest percentage of success at all stages (58% at 13 weeks compared to 42% for Job Network). The highest proportion of success for Given the Chance was at 52 weeks with 73%. Data for JPET was not available, and Job Network data was only available for the 13 weeks evaluation.

[http://www.bsl.org.au/pdfs/refugees\\_in\\_labour\\_market.pdf](http://www.bsl.org.au/pdfs/refugees_in_labour_market.pdf)

**Liebig, T (2006).**

See citation on page 57.

**Productivity Commission (2006).**

See citation on page 61.

**Richardson, S, Healy, J, Stack, S, Ilsley, D, Lester, L and Horrocks, J (2004).**

See citation on page 58.

**Stevens, C (1997). Balancing Obligations and Self-Interest: Humanitarian Program Settlers in the Australian Labor Market. Asian Pacific Migration Journal, 6(2), 185-212.**

This paper reviews the labour market experience of humanitarian program arrivals and considers the policy implications of high levels of unemployment among this group. It is suggested that humanitarian obligations do not end with entry to Australia, and it is in the interests of the receiving

society and humanitarian program arrivals for greater public investment in skills development to help improve labour market outcomes among this group.

**Stevens, C (1998).**

See citation on page 66.

## 5. International Comparisons of Labour Force Outcomes

**Bevelander, P. and Lundh, C (2007).**

See citation on page 63.

**Bevelander, P and Veenman, J (2006). Naturalisation and socioeconomic integration: the Case of the Netherlands. Bonn: Institute for the Study of Labor.**

The research focuses on two aspects of Dutch immigrants' naturalisation decisions – the acquisition of naturalisation in relation to demographic factors and socioeconomic integration, and the effect of naturalisation on employment chances and earnings in the Netherlands. The analysis focused on those aged 18–64 who had been in the Netherlands for at least five years and included both immigrants and refugees (the refugees were from Afghanistan, former Yugoslavia, Iraq, Iran and Somalia).

Regression analysis was used to identify differences between groups of refugees and migrants first in their acquisition of citizenship, and secondly on the effects of having citizenship on employment and earnings. Acquisition of citizenship was found to be positively related to being a refugee rather than having migrated for labour market or educational reasons where the link was weak. Women and those with longer residence also had a significantly higher probability of gaining citizenship than other immigrants. Among refugee groups, having Dutch citizenship was highly correlated with employment rates and wages for women but less so for men.

[http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=908239](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=908239)

**Bloch, A (2002). Refugees' opportunities and barriers in employment and training. Research Report No. 179. London: Department for Work and Pensions.**

The research examined the adequacy of the training and employment support provided to refugees. Of those profiled, 39% had been in Britain for five years or more. Just under a third had moved to a different area since living in Britain. A third lived where they did because of family, 16% because of friends and 10% because of the existence of a community. Nearly two-thirds had attended an English language course, but two-thirds of those who spoke no English and 28% of those who spoke English slightly on arrival in Britain had not attended a language course. Thirty-one per cent did not complete their course because of childcare and family commitments. Participation in training was relatively low, although many refugees expressed an interest in training. They were inhibited by not having language skills, not knowing what was available or what they were entitled to, lack of childcare, and family commitments.

Refugees were less likely to be employed than other ethnic minority groups. Those who were working were employed in a few industries or types of jobs: catering, interpreting and translation, shop work and in administration and clerical jobs. Terms and conditions of employment were poor and notably worse than those experienced by ethnic minority people. The majority of respondents found their jobs through friends than through other sources. They identified lack of English language schools and UK work experience as the main barriers to employment.

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rrep179.pdf>

**Bloch, A (2004). Labour market participation and conditions of employment: a comparison of minority ethnic groups and refugees in Britain. Sociological Research Online, 9(2).**

The study looked at data from the UK Labour Force Survey (LFS) and a survey of 400 refugees and asylum seekers in Britain from five ethnic groups – Somalia, Turkey, Iraq, Sri Lanka and Kosovo – and five regions. It was identified that refugees experienced lower rates of employment than their ethnic minority counterparts, and those refugees in employment were more likely to be in temporary and part-time work with poorer terms and conditions of employment and wages. Male refugees had higher employment rates than female refugees. Reasons for this disadvantage



included structural barriers such as dispersal policies, leaving refugees isolated from social and community networks that provide information and advice and information routes into employment, and in areas of higher unemployment. Other relevant factors preventing economic activity included exile, attitudes to country of origin and insecurity of having temporary status as factors.

The research also included analysis of rates of self-employment by ethnic group, occupations and industry, earnings, and terms and conditions of employment. It looked at differences by length of residence (less than one year, one to three years, three to five years, five to 10 years, and more than 10 years) by age and by region.

[www.socresonline.org.uk/9/2/bloch.html](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/9/2/bloch.html)

**Bloch, A (2007). Refugees in the UK labour market: The conflict between economic integration and policy-led labour market restriction. *Journal of Sociology and Politics*, 37, 21-36**

This survey draws on data from a survey of 400 refugees in the UK and shows low levels of labour market activity. Those refugees who are working are usually in secondary sector jobs with limited opportunity for progression. Moreover, refugees with high levels of skills are often in jobs not commensurate with their qualifications. The research finds that employment is a major part of the refugee integration strategy and that employment initiatives focus on capacity-building rather than discrimination or reversing restrictive policies. The article concludes that strategies need to focus on individual employability as well as measures to overcome personal and structural barriers to the labour market.

**Blom, S (1997). Tracing the integration of refugees in the labour market. *Statistical Journal of the UN Economic Commission for Europe*, 14(3), 243-268.**

The research traces the integration of refugees into the labour market in Norway. The proportion of those employed increased according to length of stay and dropped according to how late during the period from 1987 to 1992 the refugees settled. This may be attributable to the fact that earlier cohorts had easier access to the labour market. The employment rate was higher for refugees from Eastern Europe and South and Central America than for refugees from Asia and Africa. Refugees from Sri Lanka had the most success in becoming economically self-sufficient. Vietnamese refugees appeared to be the least successful. Economic recovery benefited new refugee cohorts as well as those who settled during economic recession.

**Brahmbhatt, K, Atfield, G, Irving, H, Lee, J and O'Toole, T (2007). Refugees' experiences of integration: policy related findings on employment, ESOL and vocational training. University of Birmingham and British Refugee Council.**

The research covered 90 refugees and asylum seekers in Birmingham, and also included a literature review. This identified informal networks as the most common method of job seeking and obtaining employment advice. Key barriers to employment were language skills, recognition of overseas qualifications, little relevant UK work experience, lack of references, problems with cultural misunderstandings in the workplace and difficulties with housing and family circumstances. Other barriers include anxiety, lack of confidence and a lack of geographical and/or systemic knowledge. The interviews found that the many barriers to accessing employment and training were a result of both external structural and situational factors as well as individual level barriers. Those who were not able to participate in employment, ESOL and vocational training found that integration goals were difficult, and in some cases impossible, to achieve.

[http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/policy/position/2007/Integration\\_work.htm](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/policy/position/2007/Integration_work.htm)

**Charlaff, L, Ibrani, K, Lowe, M, Marsden, R and Turney, L (2004). Refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland: a skills and aspirations audit. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive and Scottish Refugee Council.**

The project aimed to audit the skills and aspirations of 523 refugees and asylum seekers living in Scotland. Most refugees and asylum seekers were well qualified and possessed a broad range of technical and professional skills. 16% could speak English "fluently" while another third could speak it "fairly well". Most respondents wanted to improve their English, and two-thirds expressed a desire to access further training. Respondents identified finding employment as critical to the

process of integration. Over a third wanted to find any kind of work, while 58% wanted specifically to find work that matched their skills and experience.

Key barriers to employment identified included lack of proficiency in English and access to training, being able to prove qualifications and accessing appropriate conversion courses.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/03/19169/35275>

**Chile, L and Brown, P (1999). Retraining and professional employment of recent migrants and refugees in New Zealand: the myth and the reality. Paper presented at the Educators and Planners: Symphony or Discord: AAIR Conference, 3 December 1999.**

The study looked into whether there are appropriate avenues for retraining for professional migrants in New Zealand. The research drew on a longitudinal study using questionnaires, interviews and ethnographic qualitative data from migrants and refugees. It focused on migrants and refugees taking the certificate course in Employment Skills English in the School of Languages, Unitec New Zealand. It found that only a small proportion of those who graduated from the English language programs went on to get jobs in their professional area. Non-professional migrants and refugees were much more likely to obtain employment after completing the course. It concluded that policy responses to retraining professional immigrants into professional employment have failed, in part due to the fact that the content of the retraining programs did not match requirements of the professional employment market. It was recommended that there be greater collaboration between the professional bodies, the training institutions and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

<http://www.aair.org.au/jir/1999Papers/chile1.pdf>

**Chile, L (2002). The imported underclass: poverty and social exclusion of black African refugees in Aotearoa New Zealand. Asia Pacific Viewpoint, 43(3), 355-366.**

The research looked at issues leading to social exclusion for black African refugees. It is suggested that the capacity to participate in the democratic process is very severely limited by a lack of literacy skills. Many refugees arrive with a heavy debt burden, which impacts on their ability to save, find appropriate housing or participation in social and cultural activities. The problem of discrimination and prejudice was highlighted. Recommendations included a community development approach that is built on local expertise, local needs and principles of equity to build community capacity. Direct funding of employment and income generating activities may be beneficial.

**Cortes, K (2004). Are refugees different from economic immigrants? Some empirical evidence on the heterogeneity of immigrant groups in the United States. Discussion Paper No. 1063. Bonn: Institute for the Study of Labor.**

The paper explores how the implicit difference in time horizons between refugees and economic immigrants affects their subsequent investment in human capital and wage assimilation. The research uses data from the 1980 and 1990 US Census Public Use Micro Samples to construct a synthetic cohort to compare the accumulation of human capital investments and earnings growth over a decade for refugees and economic migrants. The study found that refugee immigrants had lower average earnings upon arrival. However, their annual earnings grew faster over time than those of economic immigrants. In 1990, refugees earned 20% more and worked 4% more hours than economic immigrants. On arrival, both immigrant groups had about the same level of English skills. Over time, refugees tended to have higher human capital investment than economic migrants. They improved their English skills 11% more than economic migrants.

<http://ideas.repec.org/p/iza/izadps/dp1063.html>

**DeVoretz, D, Pivnenko, S and Beiser, M (2004). The economic experiences of refugees in Canada. Discussion Paper No. 1088. Bonn: Institute for the Study of Labor.**

This paper explores the economic experiences of refugees in Canada post 1981, including the length of time required for refugee economic integration. Two administrative databases provided the information for this research. The first provided information on arrival for 4.1 million people between 1980 and 2001. The second covered approximately two million immigrants who file tax returns. The databases provide information on education, language ability and income since arrival and allowed the researchers to develop some "stylised facts".

The analysis compared refugee earnings relative to independent and family class immigrant earnings over time. Approximately 52% of refugees aged 20 to 64 found employment. Employed refugees earned an equal amount of income both at the time of arrival and in each successive year of residence as family class immigrants. Privately sponsored refugee earnings exceeded other refugee group earnings over the study period. Economic outcome appeared to depend not only on human capital but on opportunity. Regional differences in refugee economic integration suggested that local job market conditions affected refugees' chances of successful integration, regardless of human capital characteristics.

[http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=526022](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=526022)

**Information Centre About Asylum Seekers and Refugees (ICAR) (2003). Navigation Guide to Employment.**

This paper looks to examine a number of questions concerning the economic participation and contribution of refugees. It suggests that little is currently known about the economic contribution of asylum seekers and refugees in the UK because existing data sources generally fail to distinguish between refugees and other migrant groups. Furthermore, ethnic monitoring categories and methods used by official data sources such as household surveys often do not capture refugee populations adequately. The paper references Home Office research evidencing the economic contribution of migrants more generally as well as programs such as that developed by the London Framework of Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESA) and the London Skills Commission targeting refugees to help fill chronic skills shortages in the teaching, health and construction sectors. It also concludes that contrary to popular perceptions, migration does not have a significant impact on overall unemployment amongst the existing UK population.

<http://www.icar.org.uk/download.php?id=81>

**Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) (2005). Paying their way: The fiscal contribution of immigrants in the UK.**

The paper seeks to fill a gap in the public understanding of the actual impact of immigration on public finances in the UK, by estimating the scale of, and changes to, the contributions made by immigrants to government revenue and expenditure. Updating and applying the methodology used for the 2002 Home Office Study The Migrant Population in the UK: Fiscal Effects (Gott and Johnston, 2002), the study undertook a longer study over a period of five years. The research concluded that the contribution of immigrants to public finances is growing, and is likely to continue to grow in the near future. In 1999-2000 immigrants accounted for 8.8% of government tax receipts rising to 10% by 2003-04. Total revenue in real terms grew from 33.8 billion GBP in 1999-00 to 41.2 billion GBP in 2003-04. This 22% increase compares favourably to the 6% increase for the UK-born. Furthermore, in each of the years examined, immigrants have become proportionately greater net contributors to public finances than non-immigrants. However, the researchers caution that the paper discusses aggregate contributions by immigrants who are not a homogenous group. Some groups will make relatively large fiscal contributions and others relatively small or negative ones.

[www.ippr.org.uk/members/download.asp?f=/ecomm/files/Paying%20Their%20Way.pdf&anda=skip](http://www.ippr.org.uk/members/download.asp?f=/ecomm/files/Paying%20Their%20Way.pdf&anda=skip)

**Kirk, R (2004). Skills audit of refugees. Home Office Online Report 37/04.**

This research sets out to provide a greater understanding of the barriers to employment and training needs of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. The study analysed 2000 questionnaires completed by recognised refugees. Overall, two thirds of respondents were working prior to leaving their country of origin, one in 10 were students and less than 5% were unemployed or looking for work. This recommended an economic distribution of activity similar to UK-born residents. About a third recorded English language skills as fluent or fairly good. The results highlighted the differences in skills and experiences of persons from different countries of origin. For example, almost 90% of Zimbabwean refugees had received over 10 years of education and over 90% had qualifications before coming to the UK. In comparison just over a quarter of Iraqi respondents had received 10 years of education or held qualifications before coming to the UK.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/rdsolr3704.pdf>

**Lamba, N (2003). The employment experiences of Canadian refugees: measuring the impact of human social capital on quality of employment. Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, 40(1), 45-64.**

The research investigates the impact of human and social capital on refugees' quality of employment. Interviews were conducted with 525 adult refugees from a range of source countries who had been living in Canada between one and six years. A large majority (82%) of adult refugees held a paying job in Canada at some point after arrival but the quality of employment was often low. Gaining recognition for foreign credentials was a major barrier faced refugees in their efforts to secure employment comparable to their former careers. Experiences of discrimination also interfered with positive employment outcomes, particularly for visible minority refugees. Refugees who used friends and family to find a job were more likely to have a greater quality of employment. Residential stability may increase opportunities to broaden the range of network ties instrumental in securing employment.

**Lamba, N (2002). The impact of capital on resettlement outcomes among adult refugees in Canada. Abstract only. Dissertation Abstracts International, A: The Humanities and Social Sciences, 63(5), 2012-A.**

The research focuses on the value of a refugee's network structure and human capital in shaping resettlement outcomes. The study covered 525 adult refugees who arrived in Canada in the 1990s. Results show that in-group ties, specifically close family and friends from the same community, have a positive impact on employment outcomes and income levels. However, many refugees reported that their human capital has virtually no power in the Canadian labour market and furthermore that the networks refugees are presently employing are unable to restore their former occupational status.

**New Zealand Department of Labour (2007). Refugee Resettlement: A Literature Review.**

This literature review relates to the OECD and the European Union (EU), with an emphasis on Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, UK and US. The review provides a description of policies and practices regarding refugee resettlement. It also summarises available evidence from previous reviews of policy and practice that contribute to the success or failure of resettlement. Concerning the issue of economic participation, while there is consensus internationally that economic self-sufficiency plays a pivotal role in integration, there are significant differences in expectations about how soon after arrival this can be achieved, and about the importance of self-sufficiency in the integration process. In this context, self-sufficiency is defined as the capacity to live independently of government and other sources of income support. Labour market policies adopted in relation to resettled refugees are often framed within the host country's expectations for self-sufficiency among new arrivals. Some countries appear to have high expectations of early economic and social self-sufficiency through employment.

<http://www.immigration.govt.nz/NR/rdonlyres/CB8DD139-9AC0-4FBD-A1BE-678855B3E219/0/DOL10436AnnotatedBibliographySept07lowres.pdf>

**Potocky-Tripodi M (2001). Micro and macro determinants of refugee economic status. Journal of Social Service Research, 27(4), 33-59.**

Using census and metropolitan data analysis was conducted of a nationally representative sample of Eastern European, Southeast Asian and Cuban refugees who had come to the United States after 1948 (Soviet Union and Soviet bloc countries), from 1959 (Cubans) or after 1975 (South-East Asians). Statistical analysis showed that demographic characteristics were by far the most influential in determining economic status. Residency, acculturation and community characteristics all had a relatively small effect on refugees' economic status. The determinants most strongly associated with economic status were education, disability, gender and household composition. These determinants are the same as for the population as a whole and the same across all three groups of refugees. It is argued that, while English proficiency is a desirable outcome in itself and obviously a prerequisite to obtaining higher education, it is clearly not sufficient for enhancing refugee economic status. It is recommended that Interventions beyond English language training are needed. Because refugees' economic status does not improve simply as a function of time, active intervention is needed to improve refugees' economic situation.



**Potocky-Tripodi, M (2004). The role of social capital in immigrant and refugee economic adaptation. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 31(1), 59-91.**

This study examined the effects of social capital on the economic adaptation of Latin American and Asian refugees in the United States. It found that social capital explained relatively little of the variance in employment status, use of public assistance or earnings, after controlling for background variables. Each additional friend in the social network slightly increased the odds of being employed. Those who socialised mostly with their compatriots were less likely to be employed than those who had wider networks. While questioning the importance of social capital as a determinant of immigrant and refugee economic outcomes, the study did find that US citizenship, English ability, education and gender were strongly associated with economic outcomes.

**Shields, J, Rahi, K and Scholtz, A (2006). Voices from the margins: visible-minority immigrant and refugee youth experiences with employment exclusion in Toronto. CERIS Working Paper No. 47. Toronto: Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement.**

Using focus groups, the research examined the experience of immigrant and refugee young people who had been unsuccessful in their attempts to integrate into the Toronto labour market. Many respondents had considerable educational skills and meaningful work experience. Lack of Canadian work experience, lack of recognition of qualifications and English language proficiency were the main barriers. Others included blockages caused by refugee and immigration processes, resource deficiencies in settlement services, lack of coordination between settlement and employment services and significant information deficits. Racism and discrimination were also major barriers.

**Ugbe, U (2007). The new Americans: factors affecting economic integration among African refugees in New Hampshire. Abstract only. *Dissertation Abstracts International, A: The Humanities and Social Sciences*, 67(11), 4354.**

This research focuses on labour market activities, as well as current and potential micro-entrepreneurial activities among the African refugees in New Hampshire. The New Hampshire state government and Lutheran Social Services provided the secondary data for the study, complemented by primary data from a survey of 110 individuals, interviews with 44 African refugees and triangulation of these with six community-based resource persons who work with African refugees.

There was found to be varying degrees of statistical association between human capital and situational indicators (such as gender, age, education, country of origin and length of stay in the USA) and the participants' wage income; a downward occupational mobility for refugees with educational or professional qualifications; systemic barriers to the transfer, recognition, retraining, credentialling and licensing of occupational skills that the refugees bring from their countries of origin; illiteracy and lack of English language proficiency; cultural disconnectedness and lack of familiarity with the American workplace etiquette; and creative uses of the welfare state by refugees as coping strategies in combination with wage income or informal micro-entrepreneurial activities.

**Valtonen, K (1999). The societal participation of Vietnamese refugees: case studies in Finland and Canada, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 25(3), 461-491.**

This qualitative multiple case study looks at the integration of Vietnamese refugee communities in Finland and Canada, using societal participation as an analytic framework. In both locations the high priority placed on economic aspects of participation is indicated by the self-reported resettlement goals frequently expressed as "financial stability" and a "good job". These goals should be seen in the light of the aftermath of widespread disruption of regular economic participation in the country of origin. The research in Canada found that self-employment in areas serving the ethnic community can be a viable alternative in sizeable communities that are able to sustain such enterprises. Longitudinal data revealed that one in five refugees had started his or own business, often employing Canadians. Ethnic small businesses were one of the few strategies to sustaining economic and occupational mobility, a strategy used by resettling persons to cope

with the limited access to economic opportunity. It found that a spin-off of ethnic enterprises is some employment for fellow refugees, including those who had done a considerable amount of job-searching in the mainstream employment market without success.

**Valtonen, K (2001). Social work with immigrants and refugees: developing a participation-based framework for anti-oppressive practice. *British Journal of Social Work*, 31, 955-960.**

The study concerned Vietnamese, Somali and Middle Eastern refugees who had been in Finland approximately five years. The research made a number of findings. High unemployment indicates that resettling groups are in a very marginal position in the labour market. Most refugees had been active job seekers using a broad range of job seeking channels. Young job seekers experienced attitudinal and institutional resistance along the boundaries of the job market. The more highly skilled and educated had not been able to use their education or experience in Finland.

**Valtonen, K (2004). From the margin to the mainstream: conceptualizing refugee settlement processes. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 17(1), 70-96.**

This article explores settlement processes and the difficulties experienced by refugee individuals and communities in Finland. It is based on data from two qualitative collective case studies on refugee settlement in Finland – one undertaken in 1993–94 and the other in 1997–98. Participants included Vietnamese, Iraqi, Kurdish and Cambodian refugees who arrived as quota refugees, plus a group of Somali refugees who arrived as asylum seekers.

Across the groups, there was a strong similarity in settlement goals, which were employment, a place to study, retention of own culture, family reunification, knowing what the settling person's rights and duties were in the society and reduction of negative stereotyping of refugees. Unemployment was around 70% for all groups for both case studies and remained consistently higher than in both the general population and other migrant categories. Job applicants were often rejected on the grounds of presumed lack of language skills. Very few had received vocational training or been admitted to universities. Data on chain employment pointed to the emergence of valuable social capital networks that extend to the majority population. The provision of references from Finnish friends to potential employers is cited as an example of inter-linkages and their potential function in successfully effecting access to mainstream areas for individual refugees. Between the two periods of study, ethnic communities became numerically stronger and more established. They established networks that spread vital information, assistance and support. It is recommended that the recurring phenomena of resistance and discrimination need to be addressed through state intervention. Resources need to be directed to achieving change in the receiving society, to complement the individual adjustment efforts of refugees.

**Zimmermann, K, Kahanec, M, Constant, A., DeVoretz, D, Gataullina, L and Zaiceva, A (2008). Study on the social and labour market integration of ethnic minorities. IZA Research Report No. 16. Bonn: Institute for the Study of Labor.**

This research analyses barriers to the labour market integration of ethnic minorities in the European Union. The report presents findings from several sources including 10 case studies developed by country experts, attitudinal data and findings from an expert opinion survey. The authors note the insufficiency and inconsistency of the available European data. Nevertheless, they find ethnic minorities tend to have higher unemployment rates, lower occupational attainment and wages, and often a smaller labour market attachment when measured by participation rates.

[http://www.iza.org/en/webcontent/publications/reports/report\\_pdfs/iza\\_report\\_16.pdf](http://www.iza.org/en/webcontent/publications/reports/report_pdfs/iza_report_16.pdf)

## 6. Voluntary Work among Refugee Communities

**Atfield, G, Brahmhatt, K and O'Toole, T (2007). Refugees' experiences of integration. British Refugee Council and University of Birmingham, UK.**

This comparative research explores the impact of local context on the social aspects of refugee integration through comparing the experiences of refugees living in two different localities and across different groups of refugees. This qualitative study uses in-depth interviews of refugees in the United Kingdom. The research found that good practice was evident in areas with a relatively short history of refugee settlement as well as in the area with a longer history. Refugees' notions of

integration focused on practical issues, such as employment, education, language acquisition and housing. Refugees also focused on avenues for social integration and aspirations for equal citizenship. The work also examined the role of social networks, finding that the networks generated resources in the form of information, material goods, emotional support and capacity building. The report highlights the significant role that voluntary organisations and inter-faith groups play for successful settlement and integration.

[http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/policy/position/2007/Integration\\_work.htm](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/policy/position/2007/Integration_work.htm)

**Australian Bureau of Statistics (2008). Australian Social Trends 2008: The Voluntary Work Study 2006. ABS 4102.0.**

The Voluntary Work Survey was conducted throughout Australia from March to July 2006 as part of the General Social Survey (GSS). It is the third detailed ABS survey conducted on volunteering, with previous surveys conducted in June 1995 and over four quarters in 2000. The survey collected data on rates of participation in voluntary work, hours contributed, characteristics of volunteers and the types of activities undertaken by volunteers aged 18 years and over. Although the ABS work does not provide data breakdown according to refugee status, it does outline the relationship between participation in paid work and participation in voluntary work.

[www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/4102.0?opendocument?utm\\_id=LN](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/4102.0?opendocument?utm_id=LN)

**Australian Multicultural Foundation (1999). Celebrating Volunteers of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds. The Australian Multicultural Foundation, RMIT University, Volunteering Victoria and The Department of Premier and Cabinet Multicultural Affairs Unit, Melbourne. Unpublished Paper.**

This joint report acted as a pilot study with the potential for national implementation. It evaluated voluntary work performed in CALD communities in Victoria. The research methods included surveys and focus groups. The findings of this project include a point of difference to most assumptions and little empirical data that CALD groups only volunteer in ethno-centric organisations. The majority of respondents participated in voluntary work in mainstream organisations. Although focused in Victoria, the report provides recommendations for future empirical studies and policy formation that would be useful across Australia.

**Australian Multicultural Foundation and Volunteering Australia (2007). National Survey of Australian Volunteers from Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds. Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.**

Volunteering Australia and The Australian Multicultural Foundation performed research to determine the patterns at a national level of the voluntary contribution to Australian society by people of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and to collect information from volunteer-involving organisations regarding the participation of volunteers from CALD backgrounds in their organisation, to promote best practice in the recruitment and deployment of volunteers in advancing Australia's social and economic life. The methods used included questionnaires and focus groups. Although the CALD groups are not necessarily refugee groups, the research is the most recent and comprehensive work addressing volunteer issues within the non-Anglo-Australian community.

<http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/files/ITI311QY40/CAIN%20LYNN%20and%20MAHER%20ANNETTE.ppt>

**Bloch, A (2002).**

See citation on page 69.

**Kerr, L, Savelsberg, H, Sparrow, S and Tedmanson, D (2001). Experiences and perceptions of volunteering in Indigenous and non-English speaking background communities. A joint project of the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs, the South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission, Volunteering SA, the Unaipon School (University of SA) and the Social Policy Research Group (University of SA), Adelaide.**

This study examines non-English speaking background (NESB) people's experiences and perceptions of volunteering and the voluntary sector. Specifically, the study recognises the need to conduct quality research which identifies issues and attitudes in relation to conceptions of volunteering, the nature of volunteer involvements, and supports for and barriers to volunteering.

The methods used include interviews and focus groups. The research was primarily focused in South Australia, and the NESB groups were not identified as particularly from refugee backgrounds. The study, however, identifies the gap in research of outside of mainstream Anglo-Australian volunteers.

[www.unisa.edu.au/SPRG](http://www.unisa.edu.au/SPRG)

**Lalich, W (2006). Collective action of 'Others' in Sydney. University of Technology Sydney, Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies, 3(1), January.**

This article examines the collective action of ethnic communities in order to satisfy their social needs in a place of settlement. It explores scholarly works and points to the creation of communal roots by ethnic collectives in order to navigate the path between exclusion and the various forms of inclusion in the dynamic culturally diverse society of Sydney. The research focuses on the collectively created social resources of ethnic, migrant communities. Lalich provides volunteer participation rates for Sydney-based ethnic communal organisations in the year 2000, so although the data is not sorted to specifically outline the experiences of refugees, it provides a snapshot of volunteer activities in migrant communities.

<http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/ojs/index.php/portal/article/viewFile/127/91>

**Madkhul, D (2007). Supporting Volunteering Activities in Australian Muslim Communities, particularly Youth. Australian Multicultural Foundation and Volunteering Australia, for the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.**

This review paper aims to explore the issues affecting Muslims as volunteers in light of the key findings of the Australian Multicultural Foundation and Volunteering Australia's 2007 National Survey of Australian Volunteers from Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds. This report performed a literature review by exploring previous research on volunteering in the areas of youth, faith-communities and people from CALD backgrounds. The research and anecdotal evidence found that young Muslims identified the same barriers to volunteering as with other youth, including lack of acknowledgement, organisational culture and personal constraints. The work also highlights the role that Muslim organisations play in influencing, or in the case of the findings, deterring young people from joining. The report notes that, although little evidence or literature exists about Muslim-specific volunteering, summaries and participant feedback from recent events served as anecdotal evidence to show that young Muslim Australians have the desire and capacity to be involved in communities as volunteers.

<http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/files/8FF8XEMEEG/AMF%20Muslim%20Youth%20Volunteer-final%20with%20cover.pdf>

**Migrant Resource Centre of South Australia Volunteer Program.**

The MRCSA has an extensive network of over 300 bilingual volunteers it can draw upon at any point of time, speaking over 80 languages and who provide assistance across all program areas supporting the organisation to achieve its objectives. The volunteer program is geared to provide a first entry point into work experience and pathway to vocational training and employment for people of refugee background. Approximately 60% of volunteers go on to further training and or secure employment.

<http://www.mrcsa.com.au/volunteerprogram.html>

**Miralles-Lombardo,B, Miralles, J, and Golding, B (2008). Creating learning spaces for refugees: the role of multicultural organisations in Australia. National Centre for Vocational Education Research.**

This research set out to identify the role of multicultural community organisations as surrogate English language and work skills learning organisations. Through the experiences of refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq and Sudan, the study explored the role played by multicultural community organisations in creating informal networks and learning spaces which connected people from refugee backgrounds to the wider Australian community. The research explicitly moved away from the tendency to position all people from a language other than English background, regardless of cultural, religious, educational and migration history, as a homogenous group with common experiences and needs and to subsequently fashion generic solutions. The research methodology consequently built ways to identify the diversity within and between the



three refugee groups. The methods included in depth interviews and focus groups with humanitarian entrants from Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. The research examined the factors and mechanisms which can promote or inhibit opportunities for developing English language, literacy and employability skills for each of these groups. It identified the specific practices adopted by multicultural community organisations to support informal skills transfer and examined how these might be applicable not only to the wider vocational and adult education sectors but also to help refugees build connections and networks with the wider Australian community.

<http://www.ncver.edu.au/research/proj/nr5L07s.doc>

**Working Lives UK (2005). Refugee women - from volunteers to employees: a research project on paid and unpaid work in the voluntary sector and volunteering as a pathway into employment. Working Lives Research Institute UK, February.**

The research examines refugee women's experiences of voluntary and paid work in the voluntary sector in the United Kingdom. The report explores refugee women's experiences of volunteering, as a contribution to UK society but also as a step on the way to employment. It aims to document the actual experiences of refugee women as volunteers through interviews, organisational case studies and focus groups and workshops. Although the research is focused on refugee women in the UK, the report could act as a useful template for similar research in Australia.

[http://www.workinglives.org/londonmet/library/x67472\\_3.pdf](http://www.workinglives.org/londonmet/library/x67472_3.pdf)

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